Assessment of the bilingual child

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ASSESSMENT OF THE BILINGUAL CHILD

by

Jane Cecilia Wendland

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

A RESEARCH PAPER
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REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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This research paper has been approved for the Graduate Committee of Cardinal Stritch College by

Sister [Signature] (Advisor)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper was to review and bring together criteria which may be used in assessing bilingual children or children who speak only Spanish. These children are assessed in the schools with tests which have been standardized on norms with a low incidence of culturally different children. "A test is valid only to the extent that the items of the test are as common to each child as they were to the children upon whom the norms were based." Applying this criterion, it becomes evident that many tests which are commonly being used today are not being used in the best manner possible when dealing with the bilingual child. Present assessment procedures fail to utilize the unique cultural and linguistic background of the bilingual child. A concerted effort must be made to avoid using such scores to label these children. The contents of these tests may be used with due consideration to language difficulties and cultural differences. The question at hand is

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not the validity of the scores. The scores provided by the tests in themselves are valid. What must be dealt with is the appropriateness of the tests.

Statement of the Problem

Problems to be surmounted when assessing the culturally different child include: a) lack of awareness of shortcomings of tests in use; b) lack of knowledge and availability of tests that deal predominantly with the bilingual child; c) standardization procedures which may use inappropriate population representations; d) ignorance of the laws which deal directly with the civil rights of the bilingual child; e) the conspiracy which seeks an abandonment of one's own culture. Several bilingual educators believe "there is a social conspiracy to label particular groups inferior and propagate the status quo." Another possibility is that there is a lack of awareness of what good assessment procedures are when dealing with the bilingual child. If the latter is the case, education as to present day assessment shortcomings will go a long way in alleviating the problems. In addition, the advent of recent litigation in this area has begun to create an awareness of the bilingual child's educational rights. This may well help procure the necessary changes.
Definitions

Armando Ayala's definition of bilingual is used in this paper. His definition separates bilingual into two different categories, compound and coordinate bilinguals. A compound bilingual is a person who functions cognitively in one language and must continually translate his second language into the first. A coordinate bilingual is a person who has two automatic and independent language systems. In using the term bilingual, this paper will be referring to a compound bilingual. This type of bilingual child usually has substandard functioning not only in English but often in Spanish as well. Only with special help can these children become coordinate bilinguals.

Assessment and testing are used synonymously and refer to procedures used in evaluating children's abilities within the school environment. Special education programs refer to "any class or instructional program to which students are assigned after an evaluation of a student's intelligence or educational potential including, but not limited to, classes designated as educable mentally retarded, educable mentally

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handicapped, minimally brain injured, special learning disabled, educationally handicapped and trainably mentally retarded. 1

Scope of the Study

This paper considered the following points in regard to the assessment of the bilingual child:

1. Constitutional rights of the bilingual child as interpreted by the Courts;
2. Factors requiring the use of special assessment procedures;

Summary

The bilingual child differs in specific ways from the Anglo child on whom most present day assessment procedures have been standardized. Due to unique cultural and linguistic differences between these children and their peers, special procedures and techniques must be used to insure proper and adequate assessment. The bilingual child is guaranteed equal educational opportunities under the fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Recent court litigation has interpreted this to mean proper and adequate assessment of abilities and programming to comply with these needs.

This chapter stated the problems under investigation, offered definitions of pertinent terms, and outlined the scope of the study. The following chapter considers the bilingual child's rights guaranteed by the fourteenth Amendment as interpreted by the courts. Also under consideration in this paper are the factors of cultural and linguistic differences which require use of special assessment procedures. Finally, the chapter deals with procedures and instruments which can be used to assess these children and with the implications these findings have for future innovations.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Constitutional Rights of the Bilingual Child

Five million school-age children in the United States of America come from non-English speaking homes. Only 2 percent of these children receive assistance in learning English. It comes of no surprise then that statistics show the bilingual child as being over-represented in special education programs, as well as having a high incidence of poor academic performance and high dropout rate.¹ This over-representation in special education programs of the bilingual child has resulted in litigation on his behalf. "When common sense and fairness are unable to effect change concerning a school issue, litigation finally moves the system to undo its bureaucratic red tape." Were it not for "expert legal power in pursuit of their ends many more students might be denied due process and their right to equality in education."²

Through the courts, parents are challenging the school administration's use of standardized tests as criteria for


enrollment of the culturally different child in special class programs. It is imperative that special educators initiate change in assessment practices or change will be imposed by the courts and with this comes the possibility of punitive damages being awarded.

The bilingual child's constitutional rights under the fourteenth amendment are being violated when: (1) A bilingual child is not tested in his dominant language. (2) Tests used reflect white middle class values. (3) Tests are insensitive to characteristics of minority group children. (4) Disproportionate numbers of minority group children are assigned to special education programs.¹

In the past two decades, the courts had limited themselves to defining what equal education opportunity involved. Recently courts have begun to examine practices within schools in which there is a question as to whether equal educational opportunities are being provided for children.

A landmark case is the case of Brown vs. the Board of Education heard by the United States Supreme Court in 1954. The Supreme Court declared that where a state had undertaken to provide for education, it then must be available to all on equal terms.² From this point forward


it appears that legislative action has been sought in order to guarantee equal educational opportunities for all. In regard to special education placement, the courts have not condemned sorting practices as harmful. Placement according to need is seen as necessary in order to cope with the diverse capabilities of the school population. The question to which the courts have addressed themselves is when does a particular classification become harmful. In deciding this, the courts consider whether or not inequitable deprivation of educational opportunity has taken place. Deprivation of educational opportunities due to special education placement is most visible to judicial scrutiny when dealing with cases in which bilingual children are administered tests in English and placed in special education classes based on these findings.

Another significant point in the eyes of the court is the use of a single test as a device for tracking or special education placement of children. Classification decisions greatly affect a student's career. Thus, the courts have decreed that schools must bear the legal burden of demonstrating that the intelligence test scores upon which many decisions are based can predict school performance for different types of students. If this cannot be done then this may not be used as a placement criterion.

Some administrators have contended that they are aware of intelligence tests short-comings but they are the best assessment instruments available. The courts have not
accepted this as an adequate defense for the use of these tests, whose appropriateness for certain segments of the population is questionable.

The equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment of the Constitution has also been interpreted to include a right to due process. Due process refers to development of procedural safeguards to ensure that accurate assessment procedures are used and appropriate treatment instituted. Parental involvement may also be required in order that the parent may have the opportunity to question assessment techniques, class placement, or remediation strategies. In representing their children they have a right to disagree with procedures which they view as being erroneous.

The arguments most often levied against current placement procedures are applicable and highly relevant to the case of the bilingual child. They are as follows: (1) Tests do not accurately measure the bilingual child's learning ability. The tests are standardized on a middle class population and are, thus, based on middle class values. The bilingual child comes from a different cultural setting which has a different value system. Therefore, the tests used do not accurately measure the bilingual child's abilities. (2) Tests are often administered incompetently.
Competent administration calls for an awareness of the cultural background and an understanding of the bilingual child's language.¹

Following are synopses of specific cases which establish the legal rights of the bilingual child. Even though some of these cases deal with minority children other than the bilingual child, they are applicable to the case of the bilingual child as well.

In the case of Hobsen vs. Hansen, Judge Wright found that the tracking system used in Washington D. C. was illegal. A disproportionate number of black children were placed in special education classes. This inequity was attributed to tests which were deemed culturally biased. Relying on Brown vs. Board of Education, the court found that the rights of the children to equal educational opportunities had been violated. On appeal, the higher court, in the case of Smuck vs. Hobsen, upheld the lower court ruling.²

In the case of Spangler vs. Board of Education, the practice of interclass placement of students based on intelligence test scores had developed. The defense acknowledged that the tests were racially discriminatory. The


²Ibid., p. 6.
court found that there was a racial imbalance in the Pasadena Public Schools and attributed it to conscious policies on the part of the school to maintain disproportionate racial distribution.¹

In the case of *Diana vs. State Board of Education*, nine children who came from families whose predominant or only language was Spanish, claimed they had been improperly placed in special education classes. The children were administered the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children and the Stanford Binet Intelligence Tests and on the basis of these scores were placed in special classes for the mentally retarded. The arguments for the plaintiffs were that (1) The test relied on English abilities, ignoring the verbal ability of the children in Spanish. (2) The standardization was done only on white native Americans. The case was settled with a stipulated agreement which set forth the following six points:

1. Children whose primary language is not English must be tested in English and their primary language.

2. Only sections of the test which do not depend on vocabulary, general information and other similarly unfair questions may be administered.

3. Mexican-American and Chinese-American children enrolled in classes for the mentally retarded must be

¹Ibid., p. 7.
retested in their primary language and only on non-verbal tests or sections of tests.

4. All school districts were to submit a summary of the retesting and a plan to provide each child with supplemental help in the regular classroom.

5. Revision of the old or creation of a new intelligence test which would reflect the abilities of the Mexican-American child were ordered.

6. School districts with a discrepancy between percentages of Mexican-Americans in regular classes and classes for the retarded must submit an explanation for the disparity.1

The plaintiff in the case of Larry P. vs. Riles asked only that school personnel provide a rational defense of their classification procedure. In determining the matter, the court found the use of intelligence tests was not deemed rational and the argument by the defense that they were the best means of classification available was not accepted. "Best available" the court decreed did not provide a rational defense of their means of classification.2

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1Ibid., pp. 7-8.

The United States Supreme Court decided the case of Lau vs. Nichols. This case determined that providing of Chinese children, who did not speak English, with equal facilities, books, teachers and curriculum did not provide them with equal educational opportunities. The lower trial court was ordered to prepare an adequate program which would meet these children's particular needs.1

The above cases demonstrate the judicial system's stand when confronted with issues dealing with minority children's rights to equal educational opportunities. The courts hold the schools accountable for proper education programming of all students. Included is the proper utilization of assessment techniques and test scores in placing children in special classes, regular classes and in providing remedial help. In order for the schools to provide these services they must have a working knowledge of the culture and language from which a particular child comes. Just behavior on the part of the school is expected by the courts. It is hoped that this will occur. New York City, Chicago, Los Angeles and Houston have begun this step forward by curtailing or eliminating norm-referenced testing.

Factors Requiring the Use of
Special Assessment Procedures

Testing enables educators to make decisions regarding children's growth, in the academic, social, and emotional areas. Tests can identify learning problems, paving the way for remediation. The question being dealt with in this section is whether or not present assessment instruments used in the schools to identify human resources, deal realistically with the individual differences of the bilingual child. The prevalent feeling among "blacks and Chicanos is that tests are misused to denigrate their dignity." These views are justifiable when tests are misused to severely limit educational and vocational opportunities.1

As early as 1934, Chicano educators made their first plea for testing and assessment in one's native tongue. This plea is based on the fact that current standardized tests "assume a universality in community of experience".2 To date considerable evidence has documented the inadequacy of standardized tests for some bilingual children.3 The


3Ibid., p. x.
danger of using standardized tests is in their misuse. Use of standardized test results as a reflection of the innate potential of children is misuse. Continuation of these assessment procedures can then only question the commitments to equal educational opportunity of the individuals involved in this practice.

There has been "little response on the part of most educators and psychologists"¹ to evidence presented which indicates the inadequacy of standardized test use with the bilingual child. If one does not agree with this point of view then they need only refer back to the various law suits referred to in the preceding section. Tests continue to be used as if they do effectively evaluate the bilingual child.

The Bay Area Bilingual Education League held a Bilingual/Bicultural Testing and Assessment workshop in Berkeley, California, on January 27 and 28, 1972, and drafted a resolution which included this point:

Testing of children whose language is other than standard English with instruments that were developed for the use of standard English violates the norms and standardizations of those instruments and therefore raises serious questions as to the results obtained. We therefore, take the position that such users of these instruments with children whose language is other than standard English is invalid.²

The Office of Civil Rights on May 25, 1970, issued a memorandum to school districts. The memorandum was the result of research, evaluation and discussion regarding the need for immediate action in the curtailment of discrimination against children of national origin. The memorandum stated that the schools must adopt a system in which their culture and language are accepted and valued; thus, the minority is not penalized nor must it conform.\(^1\)

After the release of the memorandum, a task group was created to develop additional policies and possible programs of remedial action. A working committee of the task group found that minority children were over-represented in special education classes due to: "(1) a failure to understand, value and utilize the unique cultural and linguistic backgrounds of minority children and (2) a conscious or subconscious effort to retain minority groups in subordinate status."\(^2\)

The task force's findings indicate that minority children tend to score approximately one standard deviation below non-minority children on individually administered intelligence tests. The following were suggested as reasons for the discrepancy:

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\(^1\)Gerry, "Cultural Myopia," p. 309.

\(^2\)Ibid.
1. The tests do not measure intelligence; rather they measure cultural influences. Variables involved in test administration included (a) compatibility between language and cultural referents, (b) skill of tester in giving and interpreting results, (c) the testee's familiarity with testing situations, (d) the testee's feelings of comfort, anxiety, relaxation, hostility, or escape towards the test and (e) motivation in the testing situation.

2. Tester expects failure--pygmalion effect.

3. More minority children are referred by classroom teachers due to their inability to function in the classroom than are Anglo children of comparable abilities.

4. There is a lack of communication between school and parent in discussing assessment procedures.1

Clifford Drew brings out the fact that the problem in the assessment of the bilingual child is not with the technical precision of tests but rather with the conceptual precision.2 Another question he deals with is what causes the differences between the scores of the minority child and the Anglo child. The differences he contends are due to the language of the test and standardization using one norm group. This causes the test to be fairer to one group of children.

When assessing the bilingual child with a standardized assessment tool it is valid when it has been established

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1Ibid., p. 311.

that the investigator is dealing with a single population, statistically and socioculturally. "1 If this criterion cannot be met then "some type of multiple-norms are needed clearly differentiating the populations for which different normative frameworks are appropriate." 2

"If one acknowledges that differences in average test performance may exist between populations A and B, then a judgment on test fairness must rest on the inferences that are made from the test rather than on a comparison of mean scores in the two populations." 3 Robert Thorndike agrees with Drew on the concept of test fairness being in the inferences drawn from a test. Rather than stating a test is unfair, the statement should be that the test is irrelevant to the assessment of the bilingual child.

If one looks back to 1916 to the initial standardization of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, one finds that in order to insure the test's validity only children who had White-English speaking parents were used in the standardization procedure. This step was taken in order


2Ibid.

to ensure that all the children who took the test understood the language of the test.\(^1\) Today the same test is used to place the bilingual child in special education programs.

Mercer states that I.Q. tests are culture-specific and measure one's exposure to the Anglo culture. She concludes that a system must be developed that takes cultural differences into account and leads to equal education opportunities.

Testing as a technique for obtaining information is neutral. With proper regard for the limitations of a test no problems arise. For example, use an English test with a child whose dominant language is Spanish only if testing the child's ability to succeed in an English situation. Misuse comes about when a test in English is used as a measure of innate ability.

In addition to the problem of translating a test into the appropriate language, there is the problem of adjustment to another culture. William R. Holland states that "evaluation with psychometric methods which are partially adjusted can yield inexact results at best."\(^2\)

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Learning refers to a process by which an individual takes in the culture of his society. The utilization of cultural information becomes indispensable in construction of a conceptually precise testing instrument for use with the bilingual child. Specific criticisms of present assessment instruments are greatly concerned with the Anglo culture orientation of tests, in regard to vocabulary, illustrations, and reading skills. In effect, the criticism is directed at tests which measure acquired acculturation to White middle class culture of which the bilingual child is not a member.

Most standardized assessment techniques are incapable of dealing with the individual differences of the bilingual child. They are unable to discriminate between problems due to language and cultural bias and problems due to individual learning differences such as learning disabilities, mental retardation and emotional problems. Present assessment instruments produce imperfect predictions and cause undesirable biases. These problems are due to the bilingual child's membership in a social system other than the White middle-class system. Membership in his social system provides him with a language and cultural heritage vastly different from that of the Anglo child. Tests used on the bilingual child reflect the Anglo culture and not his own.
Traditional tests of intelligence are inappropriate for the minority child. They are particularly inappropriate for those who come from non-English speaking backgrounds. Such diverse groups as the popular press, the courts, civil rights organizations as well as state and federal agencies have all been involved in pointing to the failure of the testing industry to fully consider the cultural and linguistic differences of minority children when constructing, publishing, and selling these tests.¹

Suggested Assessment Procedures and Variables

Language Dominance

The type and degree of bilinguality in a coordinate bilingual child is diversified. In order to assess a bilingual child's ability, the first step that must be taken is that of determining the language capabilities of the child. Betty Lou Dubois states that the initial step in assessing language capabilities is to determine the degree of dominance of English and Spanish in each child's language. A determination is made as to which language is stronger. An absolutely strong language is used one hundred percent of the time, while a strong language is used more than half the time. There are a number of commercial tests which assess language dominance. The test usually places individuals into one of the following categories:

Dominant in English
Dominant in Spanish
Dominant in Spanish, capable in English
Dominant in English, capable in Spanish
Dominant in neither

Once the language in which the child is dominant is determined, the child may then be tested in his dominant language. Special consideration must be made for children who have fallen into the category of being dominant in neither language. This variable must be considered in making decisions as to which tests to use and in test interpretation. Care must be used in diagnosing. What may appear to be a problem in reception could in reality be a problem in comprehension or perception.

**Perception**

In addition to determination of language dominance and competency, one must also be aware of the problem of perception. Dubois points out the phonemic differences between the Spanish and English language. There are fourteen phonemic contrasts that must be learned: /ch/-/sh/, /ch/-/dz/, /s/-/z/, /v/-/ng/, /b/-/v/, /t/-/th/ (as in think), /th/-/s/, /d/-/th/ (as in that), and /y/-/i/. If the child's native or dominant language does not use a particular phoneme such as /sh/ then a child is unable to make a

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1 Betty Dubois, "Cultural and Social Factors in the Assessment of Language Capabilities," *Elementary English* 51 (February 1974): 257.
phonemic distinction between /sh/ and /ch/. Upon hearing /sh/ the child assigns that sound to the nearest equivalent phoneme in his language, /ch/. Thus /sh/ and /ch/ are heard as identical sounds. Many similar words such as witch--wish, watch--wash, will be heard as identical words. This will continue to happen until the fourteen phonemic contrasts are automatically recognized as being different.¹

In addition to the problems of phonemic contrast, Spanish speakers are usually unable to hear the fourteen phonemes in the final position in words as they rarely occur in Spanish. Consonant clusters never occur in the final position in Spanish. In English, many words end in anywhere from two to four consonant phonemes. Minimal contrasts between many of these words exist.

Vowels also present a perception problem to some bilingual children. The Spanish language has five vowels, while the English language has eleven vowels. Again, the bilingual child will have trouble in hearing the necessary contrasts.²

The fact that a child speaks English may be deceptive. If a child has not mastered phonemic contrasts, auditory stimuli may be received but, due to perception difficulties,


²Ibid., p. 377.
comprehension could be nil. In order for a child to comprehend spoken English one hundred percent of the time, he must first master phonemic contrasts. It may be wise to assess a bilingual child's mastery of auditory discrimination of the fourteen phonemic contrasts and eleven vowel sounds used in English speech when evaluating a child.

**Adaptive Behavior**

Many bilingual children have problems in the school setting while outside of the school situation and within their own social milieu they have no problems. Mercer's research indicates that "discrepancies between adaptive behavior and I.Q. test scores were particularly marked for persons from minority groups."\(^1\) It is important that children who have normal adaptive behaviors should not be labeled inappropriately due to test scores which may not be valid estimates of learning potential. One way to ensure that this does not occur is to measure bilingual children's adaptive behavior. A measure of adaptive behavior should include questions about the child's social role in (1) the family, (2) the community and (3) in school.\(^2\)

When a measure of adaptive behavior is used, it is important


\(^2\) Ibid.
that the administrator be aware of cultural variables which would influence the child's behavior in the home and community. A bilingual child's behavior in the home and community may differ from that of his Anglo peers. The examiner must be aware of what these variables are in order to accurately measure adaptive behaviors.

Examiner

The third resolution drafted by the Bay Area Bilingual League contends that:

The development of valid test instruments for bilingual and/or bicultural children must be directed by bilingual and/or bicultural qualified personnel in the education field or similar fields; otherwise, the test instruments will not reflect the particular values, skills, etc. of the ethnic or cultural group being tested.¹

Not only must authors be competent but evaluators must also have the same competencies. However, this is not to say that an Anglo cannot test a bilingual child. The examiner should be familiar with the cultural characteristics of the particular social group to which a child belongs. Some studies indicate that Mexican-American children do better when tested by a Mexican-American examiner than when tested by an Anglo-American examiner. Other research indicates that test performance is influenced by the personality of

¹Bay Area Bilingual Education League, "Resolutions," p. 42.
the examiner.\footnote{Matluck and Mace, "Language Characteristics of Mexican American Children," p. 384.} Facts pertaining to the examiner's effect on the bilingual child's test performance are not conclusive. The author's contention is that in order to understand a child's test performance, behavior, and speech, the examiner must speak the same language as his subject and have an awareness and understanding of the bilingual child's culture. Only through the examiner's awareness of the child's culture can cultural factors be accounted for.

The examiner should also be aware of discrepancies between cognitive styles of different social groups. This does not conflict with the Piagetian theory of development. Piaget's theory assumes that some environments expose children to intellectual tasks which compel the child to organize his thinking more often than others.\footnote{Ibid.}

Research indicates the language of a test significantly affects the results. Tests have been translated from English into Spanish for use with the bilingual child.

\textbf{Translations}

Translation indicates the language of a test significantly affects the results. Tests have been translated from English into Spanish for use with the bilingual child.
phonology of the respective languages and dialects plus
the underlying culture precludes translations from being
the final answer.«1

Upon initial examination translations appear to be the
answer to the testing dilemma. On closer scrutiny the prob-
lems of translating existing tests seem almost insurmountable.
To begin with, translating from one language to another
does not insure that the level of difficulty of the vocabu-
larv will remain constant. Problems with cultural
differences are not alleviated by changing the language. If
the decision is made to translate a test, care must be
taken to insure that the language levels of the two tests
are comparable and that the test initially was not culture
specific.

Criterion Referenced Instruments

An alternative open when testing bilingual children
is the use of criterion-referenced tests. These tests can
actually test what has been taught or is going to be taught.
A benefit to using this type of test is that teacher input
is received. Teachers can in effect design the tests to test
what they are teaching. "A problem does arise in that a

1Sylvia Cruz, Inez Hunrikar, Rose Guezada, and Perry
Zerkel, "Spanish Speaking Students and the Language Factors
child's learning potential cannot be measured through this procedure.¹

In reviewing the literature and tests available concerned with the assessment of bilingual children a very impressive assessment system developed by Jane R. Mercer was found. The system is based on research indicating that "tremendous cultural biases exist in the I.Q. test and the test is not appropriate when used with many lower class persons and certainly when used with many Mexican-Americans. . . ."²

A System of Multi-Cultural Pluralistic Assessment

Jane R. Mercer and June F. Lewis have designed A System of Multi-Cultural Pluralistic Assessment (SOMPA) which is "a system for assessing the current level of functioning and the potential of children from English-speaking Caucasian, Chicano-Latino, and Black cultural backgrounds which does not discriminate on the basis of race, cultural heritage, or ethnic group."³


SOMPA is based on three conceptual models: the Medical, the Social System and the Pluralistic Model. The use of three models each with its own definition of abnormal provides three different parameters through which a child's performance is viewed.

The Medical Model assumes that pathological symptoms are caused by some biological condition. Sociocultural background is of no importance. The focus of this model is on the defining of the nature of "abnormal" in biological terms. The Social System Model defines abnormality as a violation of norms of a status or violation of general behavior expectations set up within a social system. The assumption the Pluralistic Model makes is that all tests measure learning. Children with similar cultural backgrounds are assumed to have had the same opportunities to learn the material in the test, have been similarly reinforced in that learning, and have had similar experiences with test taking. Each child's performance is compared with that of other children with similar backgrounds. The score yielded from this model is referred to as Estimated Learning Potential (ELP).

Measures utilized in SOMPA's Medical System Model include Physical Dexterity Tasks, the Bender-Gestalt Test, the Health History Inventory, a measure of vision and the weight by height ratio. The Social System Model measures include the WISC-R (using standard norms) and the Adaptive
Behavior Inventory for Children (ABIC). The Pluralistic model assumes that the WISC-R scores are influenced by socio-cultural background and that they can be used to make inferences about a child's ELP. This potential is arrived at by use of a multiple regression equation. This equation is based on social cultural characteristics of each particular child's background. In comparing children with similar backgrounds to one another the Pluralistic Model is able to uncover potential in children which due to cultural differences might not have been discovered.

Information is gathered from an interview with the child's mother or principal caretaker and from a test session with the child. Urban acculturation family structure, family size, and socioeconomic status are used to measure the difference between the culture of the school and home. A Veracity Scale is used to determine the validity of the responses.

The measures have been standardized for profiling on three Models, the Medical, Social System and the Pluralistic Model. When findings on all three models concur, interpretations can be made with a high level of assurance. When the findings differ, caution is required in interpretations and individual program intervention is indicated.

SOMPA is the only in depth system which has been developed which corrects cultural biases in I.Q. tests. SOMPA does not establish ethnic norms nor does it award bonus points. The Pluralistic Model compares children of
similar experiences to one another thus devising an ELP. Since no lower score is granted to the minority child, the assumption that minority children have a lower potential is avoided.

**SOMPA** appears to be a thorough and fair system of assessing the bilingual child's potential. The development and norming of the measures has been completed. As soon as the copyright details are worked out, it will be available from the Psychological Corporation.

Other assessment instruments the author is familiar with which could be used in the assessment of the bilingual child include:

1. **Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration**—available through the Follett Educational Corporation;
2. **Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test**—available through the Psychological Corporation;
3. **Marianne Frostig Developmental Test of Visual Perception**—available through the Consulting Psychologist Press.

These three tests measure visual-motor perception. It is suggested that for use with bilingual children, the English directions be translated into Spanish. The use of the norms
is questionable. For the Bender-Gestalt, Mercer found ethnic difference between Chicano's and Anglo's beyond the .01 level at all but three age levels. Her data indicated sociocultural factors may influence test scores. Use of these tests is recommended as visual-perception problems can be deduced without strict adherence to the tests' norms.


This test is designed to test language dominance in Spanish and English. The results are classified as Spanish or English dominant, bilingual with Spanish as home language or both languages as home language, or English dominant with bilingual comprehension.

Preschool Language Scale, Irla Lee Zimmerman—available from Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co.

This test measures verbal ability and auditory comprehension for children ages two to six. The test is only available in English. The author of this paper has translated it into Spanish as cultural influences were felt to be minimal. Administration of this test is recommended when an estimate of a child's receptive and expressive language skill is needed.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Lloyd—available through American Guidance Service.

This test measures receptive vocabulary for ages 2.5 to eighteen. This test is not available in Spanish but has been translated. Some of the illustrations have cultural referents which are not easily identified by the bilingual child. As the test progresses the items become more culturally complicated. The format of the PPVT is good, making modifications possible. Some of the pictures could be changed in order to make the test relevant to older bilingual children. As a straight translation (regionalism considered), the PPVT is best used as an accurate measure only with young children. The question of culture fairness increases as the test progresses.

(A literal translation is available from the Southwestern New Mexico Bilingual Program.)

BOEM Test of Basic Concepts, Boehm—available from The Psychological Corporation.

This test measures a child's knowledge of basic concepts and can be used with children in grades kindergarten to two. The test is available in English and Spanish. Overall the Spanish version is good. Variations in dialect may require minimal vocabulary changes in order to facilitate comprehension.
With the growth of bilingual education programs throughout the nation, there are numerous tests which are being used in evaluating bilingual children. Some assessment instruments are adaptations of English tests, others are project-developed instruments (Title VII ESEA), and others are commercially published instruments. Educators involved in assessing bilingual children should review the tests currently available for this purpose.

Specific sources for securing testing and assessment bibliographies include:

`Tests in Spanish and Other Languages; ESL and Non-verbal Tests for Bilingual Programs, and An Annotated BEARV Bibliography.`

Bilingual Education Applied Research Unit
Hunter College
Box 340
695 Park Avenue
New York, New York 10021

`English as a Second Language Tests`

Bureau of Basic Continuing Education
State Education Department
Albany, New York 12224

`Evaluation Instruments for Bilingual Education: An Annotated Bibliography`

Dissemination Center for Bilingual/Bicultural Education
6504 Tracor Lane
Austin, Texas 7821

**Summary**

Jane R. Mercer with SOMPA has a mechanism which comprehensively measures children who are culturally
sensitive. In assessing the bilingual child, the testers' duty is to assess the bilingual child's abilities. The lack of appropriate tools cannot be accepted as a valid reason for the continual use of inappropriate measures.

People involved in working with the bilingual child are aware of test shortcomings. This is not enough. For more than twenty years, this awareness has existed. The first step to take is education of those involved with the bilingual child. This education should include knowledge of bilingual children's rights, an understanding of cultural and linguistic factors which separate the bilingual child from his Anglo and Black peers and a fundamental understanding of statistical procedures which make necessary the use of a pluralistic model.

It is then that the bilingual child who does not need a special education program will not be misdiagnosed. The bilingual child in need of compensatory education will be programmed appropriately. The bilingual child who does need a special education program will receive it along with the appropriate remedial strategies.

The responsibility of testing falls on the tester to know the child, his culture, his language and to then work to develop appropriate assessment tools. In that way the child tested will be provided with equal educational opportunities as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.
CHAPTER XIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Experts in the field of education have concluded that assessment of a bilingual child using tests normally used on the Anglo child produce results which cannot be viewed as realistic measures of ability or potential. The research indicated that the bilingual child's scores are one standard deviation below those of the White child. Bilingual children do not have the same linguistic and cultural background as the Anglo child. Assessment tools currently used within most school systems reflect the culture and language of the Anglo child rather than that of the bilingual child. Variations of these test scores are attributed to these factors. Placement of bilingual children in special education programs based on these test scores is questionable practice.

The continued use of inappropriate assessment tools has been challenged in the courts. Litigation thus far has protected the constitutional rights of the bilingual child as guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The courts have found that the bilingual child's rights are violated when the child is
tested in a language other than his dominant language, tests are insensitive to minority children’s characteristics and the tests used reflect White middle-class values.

The courts and experts concur in their opinion that present assessment procedures do not adequately meet the bilingual child’s needs. Educators who deal with the bilingual child must develop appropriate assessment procedures. A review of the research indicated that the variables that should be taken into consideration in assessing a bilingual child are: (1) determination of language dominance; (2) assessment of perception skills (determine whether or not the child has acquired the needed phonemic contrasts in order to comprehend spoken English); (3) awareness of the child’s ability to deal with life outside of a school setting (adaptive behavior).

The evaluator should have an understanding of the culture from which the child comes and should be fluent in Spanish. He should also be aware of tools which have been or are being developed for the assessment of bilingual children. The most promising instrument, which will shortly be on the market, is SOMPA. This instrument deals with a child from medical, social and pluralistic perspectives. It provides the examiner with a current functioning
level and with an estimated learning potential. There are several tests which have been translated into Spanish which in certain circumstances can be used. A number of tests are available which were developed specifically for assessing the bilingual child. As of yet, there has been little research as to their usefulness or validity and reliability.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made which are directed towards solving some of the problems associated with assessment of the bilingual child:

1. Research into the effects different cultures have on cognitive development.
2. Research into the cultural strengths brought to school by the bilingual child.
3. Research into ways which the schools can deal with bilingual children.
4. Development of assessment systems which take into account the cultural background of the bilingual child.
5. Development of training programs at the college level dealing with the bilingual child in need of special education programs.
Conclusion

The clear conclusion of this research is that the bilingual child is different from his Anglo peers in cultural background and language. This makes use of standard assessment tools invalid as indicators of his ability. Proper assessment procedures and tools must be used and developed in order to meet the requirements set forth by the courts. Currently the only system which meets the specifications of the courts and the research findings in this field appears to be the forthcoming System of Multi-Cultural Pluralistic Assessment.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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