Mental Health within Bilingual Education

By Hannah Siapos
Agenda

- Introduction to the Problem
  - What is the problem?
  - Definition of the problem
- Discussion of the Problem
  - Understanding the problem
  - Who the problem effects?
- How the problem impacts our students
- Solutions to the problems
  - Educators Culturally Responsive Journal
  - Cultural Survey
  - Calming Corner
  - Guide to Safe Learning Environment
  - Monthly Newsletter to Parents
  - Student Mental Health Survey
- The Future
  - Intended Outcomes for the Future
OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about the mental health of bilingual students
2. Learn how the mental health affects these students
3. Learn about the resources provided and implement them into the classroom
DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM
WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

There is a shortage of mental health support within the field of bilingual education due to a shortage of trained professionals and other external factors that may negatively affect students' ability to learn.
Students’ mental health may be severely compromised due to language challenges, poverty, family stresses, and immigration procedures (Abdulaal, 2021; Mendez et al., 2012).

If bilingual children's cultural identities are not valued and respected at school, their sense of self-worth and happiness may suffer (Mendez et al., 2012).
WHO DOES THIS PROBLEM EFFECT?

- Teachers
- Parents
- Mental Health Staff
- School Personnel
- STUDENTS
HOW THE PROBLEM IMPACTS OUR STUDENTS
Anxiety

**STRESS VS ANXIETY**

**STRESS**
- short term
- in response to a recognized threat

**ANXIETY**
- can linger
- may not have an identifiable trigger

**SYMPTOMS**
- moodiness, irritability, or anger
- loneliness
- dizziness
- nausea
- anxious thoughts
- general unhappiness
- a feeling of being overwhelmed
- faster heartbeat
- diarrhea or constipation

- restlessness
- tenseness
- sweating
- nervousness
- a feeling of unease or dread

(MEDICAL NEWS TODAY)
**Negative Self-Esteem**

- The importance of students’ sense of self-worth is particularly evident in the lives of bilingual students.

- A negative sense of self-worth or identity arises when bilingual kids are confronted with obstacles that undermine these positive sentiments (Azher & Anwar, 2010).

- When bilingual students experience social isolation, have trouble adjusting to new environments, or develop a negative view of who they are, they are more prone to have low self-esteem (Azher & Anwar, 2010).

- Bilingual students’ low self-esteem often stems from their perceptions of academic failure brought on by difficult school experiences.
Negative Self-Esteem

- The self-esteem of multilingual children is in danger when they are made to feel inferior or ashamed.

- The vicious cycle of low self-esteem feeding into even deeper emotions of inadequacy and isolation may devastate a person’s psychological health and academic performance.
Depression

The symptoms of depression can vary slightly depending on the type and can range from mild to severe. In general, symptoms include:

- Low energy.
- Feeling very sad or hopeless.
- Thoughts of self-harm or suicide.
- Irritability.
- Changes in eating behavior.
- Sleep changes.
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.

(Cleveland Clinic)
Negative impact on social functioning
DIVERSITY AMONGST SCHOOL PROFESSIONALS

- Bilingual educators and service providers play an important role in supporting the mental health and academic, social-emotional, and behavioral development of bilingual students (Harris, 2017).
- Surveys conducted by the National Association of School Psychologists, there has been indication that “86%–90% of school psychologists have been monolingual since 1995” (Harris, 2017, Pg. 370).
- When it comes to mental health staff or any educational staff, they are expected to follow the professional guidelines whilst providing services to bilingual students.
- Some students may be suffering from mental health problems, but they might not know due to the inadequate evaluations of these students.
SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM
Mental Health Aid Amongst Bilingual Students

- Mental Health Survey for Students
- Educators Culturally Responsive Journal
- Cultural Survey/Home Language Survey
- Monthly Newsletter to Parents
- Guide To Safe Learning Environment
- Calming Corner
When an educator is culturally responsible, they are not only connecting the students’ cultural backgrounds into the learning, but they are creating a space where students feel a sense of belonging.

By reflecting on their practices, it can help teachers strengthen the lessons they are teaching their students, and the environment in which these students are in.

When you implement culturally responsive practices, you are recognizing and valuing the identities of your bilingual students and incorporating their lived experiences as an asset to their learning which they can build upon.

Muniz (2020) states, “Research shows that actions such as guided reflection, reflective journaling, and group discussions can help teachers overcome those feelings” (p. 4).
Take 5 Minutes to answer 2 questions throughout the journal—when the timer runs out, I will then ask for volunteers to share their answers to the group.
Cultural Surveys for Families

- As part of culturally responsive classroom, it is important to incorporate a student’s culture into what they are learning.

- When an educator shows that they have knowledge and appreciate their students’ cultures, the interactions between the teacher and student become powerful.

- Muniz (2020) states, “Learning about one’s own cultural background, history, traditions are associated with positive racial and ethnic identities, which in turn benefit young people’s self-esteem, socio-emotional well-being, and the ability to overcome discrimination” (p. 4.)

- When a bilingual student does something that is respectful in their culture, we may consider it disrespectful in our culture.

- With the use of a cultural survey, we can incorporate our students’ cultures into the lessons that we are creating, into the classroom, and it can give them an opportunity to express their cultures in different ways.
Family Culture and Language Survey

Child’s Name: _____________________________ Date: ____________

Dear family: This survey is designed to help us gather important information about your child’s language experiences. This will help us plan ways to support your child’s home language and bring his/her culture into the classroom. Thank you for completing and returning the survey and partnering with us to support your child!

1. What language(s) do family members speak at home?
List household members, relation to the child, and language in which each person speaks to your child:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relation to child</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. What language does your child use at home?

- [ ] Only English
- [ ] Mostly English but sometimes home language
- [ ] Mostly home language but also some English
- [ ] Only home language (not English)
- [ ] Both languages equally
- [ ] Not Applicable

If more than one language is spoken at home, please specify which language the child uses most or with which family member the child uses each language.
**Discussion on Cultural Survey**

There will be chart paper throughout the cafeteria with these 3 questions on it. We will count off by 3’s and each group will go to the assigned poster that has the question on it. The group will get 10 minutes to write down answers to the questions.

1. How can incorporating a cultural survey into the school be beneficial for all students?
2. Will a home language survey benefit you with translation needs? If yes, how?
3. How can having a cultural survey be beneficial in the classroom?

When the time is up, the group will designate someone to share what they might have answered on their poster. We will go around. I will then ask if anyone wants to add anything else to other posters, or have any questions or comments regarding cultural surveys.
Calming Corner Tools

You can offer your students a wide variety of sensory tools, coping strategies, and activities such as:

- Calming bottle with glitter
- Stuffed animals
- Book to read with a focus on a character, quality or conflict resolution
- Fidget toys

CHILL OUT ZONE

- Squishy ball
- Noise-cancelling headphones with peaceful music
- Worksheets designed for emotional regulation
- Journaling supplies
- Breathing technique guides
- Stretching instructions and illustrations
- Positive thinking prompts
- Sequin pillow
- Bubble wrap
- Puzzle cube
- Slinky
- Coloring books

YOUR FEELINGS ARE VALID

Sources: socialemotionalworkshop.com, counselorsrent.com, whatihavelearnedteaching.com, starr.org
Examples of Calming Corner at School

Images provided by Google as examples.
Examples of Calming Corner at Home

Images provided by Google as examples.
Activity on Calming Corners

Grab a pencil and piece of paper and do the following:

1. Draw a picture of what your dream calming corner would look like. As you draw think of the following:
   a. What furnishings should my calming corner contain?
   b. What materials will be provided to help students?
   c. If I do not have enough room, how can I still incorporate a calming center into my classroom?

When the time goes up, you will share your calming corner to the group they are sitting with
# Guide to Safe Learning Environment

## Inclusive Environment Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the classroom have a positive and welcoming environment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the materials and resources in the classroom easily accessible?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the curriculum include and reflect on the diverse backgrounds of all students?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are accommodations and modifications provided?</td>
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<td>Is the classroom physically accessible for all students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the classroom environment free from bullying and discrimination?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are students encouraged to accept all students even if they are from different backgrounds?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are students given the opportunity to work with other peers and learn from each other?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the students cultural experiences and backgrounds valued in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the language used in the classroom respectful?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are students given opportunities to express themselves?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are students challenged to take risks?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the classroom environment activate and engage learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the expectations for behavior consistent amongst all students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a system in place for the individual needs of students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the classroom have the proper equipment to support the learning of all students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the students guardians involved in their child's learning and the classroom environment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the unique learning styles of the students considered?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does the classroom show diversity of the different cultures, languages, ethnicities that are in the classroom?

Are there diverse resources included in the classroom so students can relate to what they are learning or reading about?
When you create a safe environment, you are creating a space that is emotionally and psychologically safe.

Bilingual students need direction when it comes to their self-esteem, confidence, and emotions.

When a classroom is psychologically and emotionally safe, students will know that the classroom is somewhere “where risks can be taken, mistakes can be made, and understanding can be gained” (Gayle et al., 2013, p. 2).

The National Council on Teacher Quality (2014) stresses that positive relationships are developed not through friendship but through a teacher’s implementation of “fair rules and productive routines”

When students have a safe and supportive learning environment, this can accompany successful school experiences amongst bilingual students.
Some Examples of Safe Learning Environment
1. Take a minute and think: How do you make sure your classrooms are safe and welcoming to individuals of diverse backgrounds?

2. After you have thought about the question for a few minutes, I want you to turn and talk to the person next to you and discuss your answers to the questions.

3. If you learned something new, write it down and try incorporating it into your classroom!
STRENGTHENING HOME/SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS: MONTHLY NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS

OCTOBER
Class Newsletter

What are we learning?
Letters: T, S, I, F
Math: Counting and Shapes
Science: Predictions, Sorting, Classifying
Social Emotional:
Feelings

Dates to Remember
Family Project Due:
10/14
Ready To Read:
10/21: Pete the Cat-Falling for Autumn

Reminders
My ParentSquare is officially working! Feel free to reach out at anytime! ☺
Family events are going to be happening- stay tuned for information! ☺

OCTUBRE
Información de Nuestra Clase

Que estamos aprendiendo
Letras: T, S, I, F
Matemáticas: Contar y formas
Ciencias: Predicciones y Clasificar
Social Emocional:
Sentimientos

Días Importantes
Proyecto Familiar:
10/14
Lista Para Leer:
10/21: Pete The Cat-Falling for Autumn

Recordatorios
¡Mi ParentSquare está oficialmente funcionando!
¡No dude en comunicarse en cualquier momento! ☺
Los eventos familiares van a estar sucediendo, ¡estén atentos para obtener información! ☺
Parents or caregivers often from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, work long hours to provide for their families, leaving little time to be involved in their child’s education (Korinek, 2021; McNeely et al., 2020).

There have been scholarly suggestions that there is a lacking correspondence between schools and the home.

When teachers send home a monthly newsletter, it can make parents aware of what their children are learning in school.

In the Every Child Succeeds Act, “schools are required by federal law to include parents in the education of their child through specific programs and activities and through specifically designed district initiatives” (Avnet, 2019, p. 477).
Student Mental Health
Survey

SELECT THE BEST ANSWER ACCORDING TO HOW YOU FEEL

Name:

1. I have had times recently when my mood feels down, depressed, or low for 2 weeks or more
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

2. I worry so much that it affects my day-to-day life
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

3. I am not able to control if I worry
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

4. I am optimistic about the future
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

5. I love myself in a healthy way
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

6. I often have a difficult time making day-to-day decisions
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

7. I have not been interested in new things or things I normally love
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

8. I have been feeling confident in how I look
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

9. I have experienced significant weight loss or gain recently
   a) Not at all
   b) Somewhat
   c) Very Much

10. I am overly tired or have little energy which affects my day
    a) Not at all
    b) Somewhat
    c) Very Much

11. I have trouble concentrating on things
    a) Not at all
    b) Somewhat
    c) Very Much

12. I have been feeling like I am a failure
    a) Not at all
    b) Somewhat
    c) Very Much

13. I have experienced thoughts that the world would be better off without me
    a) Not at all
    b) Somewhat
    c) Very Much

14. I would like further support from the school regarding my mental health
    a) Not at all
    b) Somewhat
    c) Very Much
Many bilingual students may not be open to talking about their mental health problems due to not knowing how their parents are going to react or the judgement that they might receive from their peers.

Universal school-based screening has been proposed as an essential first step toward identifying the mental health needs of students (Glover & Albers, 2007, p. 242).

When schools provide mental health screening from the student’s perspective, it provides students the opportunity to give information about how they are feeling.

Mental health surveys give students an opportunity to express how they are feeling without the shame of expressing themselves out loud.

If educators, counselors, psychologists, or school personnel can’t find time in their schedules to give out the survey, you can make it shorter by creating one as an exit ticket. This short one can just be a check in on the students to see how they are doing. At this time, I would like everyone to create a few questions that they would use as a check in exit ticket.
No student should have to suffer alone, feel as though they are not good enough, or that no one wants to help them. With the information that was provided during this professional development, the counselors, psychologists, educators, and administrators will write down how they will start incorporating these mental health activities into either the school or into their classrooms.

Overall, the mental health of bilingual students is at risk. Students from other countries who migrate to another country may experience various negative psychological effects. Anxiety, low self-esteem, sadness, and difficulties interacting with others are only some of the negative outcomes.

By incorporating these items, we can help students with their mental health, or provide the proper support that they need in order to succeed. Mental health can have lifelong effects if they are not helped or stopped early.
Thank you for coming! Any questions or comments?
Exit Ticket

Take a moment before they leave to fill out how they are going to use the items that were discussed today in their classroom or within the school district.
References:


