

Centering Family Voices WIDA Webinar Transcript

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Welcome to WIDA Webinars, and thanks for joining today. Um, we have more WIDA Webinars coming up this year, so you can check out the schedule and register on the WIDA Webinars webpage on the WIDA website. In today's webinar, we're gonna hear from WIDA researcher Delis Cuéllar, student researcher Lauren Collins, and Director of Assessment Representation Research, Laurene Christensen. They have a great presentation for you today, so I am going to get us started after a couple intro slides here. Um, so first, just a reminder to pop in the chat and communicate. There's gonna be a few points throughout the presentation where our presenters are gonna ask you to chime in with some thoughts. So please jump into the chat and let us know what you're thinking. Um, just a reminder here that this webinar is for instructional purposes only, and attendance or completion of the session will not result in a certificate. And also, just a disclaimer on artificial intelligence. Because we are a part of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we cannot allow artificial intelligence in these webinars. So if you are using an-, any sort of AI bot, we will h-, let you know that you need to remove that bot or leave the webinar. Thank you for understanding. And with that, I'll turn it over. So welcome Lauren, Laurene, and Delis.

Delis: Thank you, Hannah, and hi, everybody. We are so excited. Thank you for being here and sharing part of your afternoon with us. Uh, we're, we're very glad you're here. Um, I'm gonna be taking us into the content by sharing about who we had in mind when we first designed the session. Uh, and we're hoping that it provides a lot of knowledge and that it offers something meaningful to everybody. So we'll go ahead with that. Thank you. So who is this session for? Um, so you can look at the list there a little bit. So in terms of who it's for, you may actually see yourself in one of these roles or, you know, perhaps you wear multiple hats, and you see yourself in several of these roles. Um, essentially, it doesn't matter. We want you to know that you don't need to be an expert



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in multilingualism or augmentative and alternative communication or special education to be here. Uh, the session really is about how we listen to families and how we interpret children and when they try to communicate with us. So we're gonna be approaching all of this from a lens of cultural humility, and what we mean by that is we wanna stay open to families' lived experiences, and we wanna stay, um, curious about how multilingual students communicate. Okay.

So I would like to start, with a quick check-in. Um, everybody, will be able to, I hope, or has access to the chat. And all that I'll ask is for you to type one word that comes to your mind when you hear the phrase family voice in schools. Um, sort of like, what are some of your thoughts? What are you thinking, um, when you s-, when you hear the phrase "family voice in schools"? Uh, of course, there are no right or wrong answers. Uh, this is just a way to get a sense of what experiences and what background we have. And I'm gonna let the chat populate a little bit for a few seconds. And I see some, uh, the chat going and going. I'm so glad. Um, Lauren, would, would you, please read us some of those words, maybe five, six of those words, just to get an idea?

Lauren: Yeah. A lot of words I'm seeing over and over again are inclusion, collaboration, participation, perspective, um, consistency, communication.

Delis: Yeah.

Lauren: Yeah. There-

Delis: Thank you. Yeah. Thank you for that. And it flew by inconsistent, so I saw inconsistent as well, and you saw consistent. So this, it's a really great list of words, and it kind of lets us know that we come from different spots and different experiences. So I think we all have something to, to learn together, so I'm excited about that. Uh, we can move to the next slide. Okay. So, to make this really concrete, we want to name a few things that we hope that you take with you that this session will offer you. Uh, these learning objectives frame the kinds of ideas that we're gonna be discussing, the types of ideas that we're gonna be talking about. And I'm gonna invite Lauren to read through the learning objectives, just so that everybody can hear them or read them.

Lauren: Yeah. So the first learning objective is to name key elements of cultural humility when working with families of multilingual learners. Then consider how schools understand multilingualism and complex communication and how those understandings can be expanded through a cultural humility lens. Then become familiar with the Tell Us About Your Child Survey as a tool for centering family voice in practice. Then finally, learn from mothers' perspectives on multilingual learners with complex communication needs.

Delis: Thank you, Lauren. And so those objectives really are gonna--, they kind of build a clear path of what we're gonna be talking about today. We're gonna be starting with

cultural humility and discussing that, defining it, seeing what it is, what it is not. Uh, we'll move to communication and multilingualism. Uh, we're gonna be also discussing the Tell Us About Your Child Survey tool. This is a WIDA tool that we're very proud of. Uh, and, and finally, we're gonna be getting to hear some of, what parents have to say. Some mothers, we did a study with them, and we, uh, it's exciting to be able to hear their perspective as well. And we'll finish with that.

Laurene: All right. I think, Delis, this is coming over to me-

Delis: Mm-hmm

Laurene: ... to talk a little bit more about what is cultural humility. And as we think about cultural humility being really a lifelong process of openness and also humility when we're thinking about how we engage with people from different cultural backgrounds. One of the things that I think about here especially is that word, humility. You know, it's a word I think that we don't always think a lot about what it really means and sort of where it comes from. And in this particular case, humility is really referring to sort of a, an equalness, re-, recognizing that there's no one culture that is better than another culture, but that we should really approach cultures from a standpoint of equality and openness. And in a lot of the work that I have done in my past, I've focused on things like building cultural competence, for example, but we know that one of the challenges when we're building cultural competence is that schools these days are really diverse. So it's not like we can just learn about one culture and feel like we've really, you know, come to understand the nuances of that one culture because we might have a lot of cultures. You know, there are some schools in my neighborhood that have, you know, over 50 different languages spoken, maybe even 75 languages spoken. And if we think about all of those different cultures, we just don't have the time to learn all of the detailed nuances.

Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't learn about your students' cultures, because you should, but I think that when we use a cultural humility lens, we can really approach cu-, learning about cultures from an engaged perspective of openness and recognizing that we do have a lot to learn. And so we can take an approach of recognizing that, you know, we might not know everything, and so having a questioning attitude can be really important. Um, let's move on to the next slide and talk just a little bit more here about some key elements that we wanted to emphasize when we're thinking about cultural humility and working with families and schools, that really cultural humility is others-oriented. So we're not focusing so much on ourself, but we're focusing on learning more about the lived experiences of others. So again, taking that questioning approach to understanding the experiences of our students as well as their families. And it's also really receptive, so we're not thinking about our own val-, cultural values as more

meaningful or worthwhile but instead recognizing that we can see beyond our perspective and learn from others and how they do things as well. So I think that this can really create an important school–family partnership because we already know that in the school culture, of course, there are some cultures that are just, as part of the school culture, sort of given a little bit more priority, I'll say. And so, you know, as we think about some of the challenges that kids might have in school, sometimes it's from that lens of the school culture maybe being a little different from the student's home culture, and this can kind of help us take a more values-neutral approach to thinking about what might be going on in these kinds of situations and how we communicate with families. So, I'm gonna turn it back to you, Delis, 'cause I think you had some things that you wanted to add as well.

Delis: Correct. Thank you. Thank you, Laurene. So maybe we'll move it to the next slide, and I will take it from there. Um, so rather than starting with a definition, like right off the bat, I want us to think about what can get in the way of cultural humility in practice. So Laurene did an excellent job at explaining what it is, what it could be, what it's impacted, or, or how it's impacted in our schools. And so now we wanna think about what can get in the way, and that's what this term is about. Uh, the cul-, the opposite of it. It's the cultural encapsulation. Um, really that means that we're being closed off, and we're not able to see beyond our cultural views. So we interpret everything from the way that we grew up or from the stories that we know, and that's just the way that we interpret, in our cases as, as teachers, the students that we serve, or just in general, and an unwillingness to understand the lived experiences of others. So that's the opposite, and that can really get in the way of cultural humility. Um, so maybe we'll move to the next slide. Okay, so I think this is a great time to do a quick poll or a quick check in the chat. The participants or everybody, please just feel like you can answer yes or no. Um, have you seen encapsulation show up in any of your school contexts?

Laurene: So I think you could answer the poll, and then if you wanted to just put a brief example in the chat, you certainly could do that as well.

Delis: Correct. Thank you for saying that. And again, encapsulation, it's those things that gets in the way of us being able to practice cultural humility. Um, I'll let the chat... It, it feels like the chat is slowing down a little bit. Um, Lauren, could you tell us a little bit about the percentages, the yeses and the nos?

Lauren: Yeah. So I'm seeing an overwhelming amount of people, about 85% to 90%, saying they have seen cultural humili-, or a cultural

Delis: Yeah.

Lauren: encapsulation show up in school contexts.

Delis: Yeah. And so what that tells us, I really wanna take a few moments to think to ourselves what that could mean. Um, I love the anonymity of this because we don't have to say it's me or it's my neighbor or it's the teacher next door. But we've seen these sort of like closed off behaviors or closed off attitudes that don't allow us to, to practice cultural humility, so I really appreciate that, the, the honesty. And, it's a, it's a pretty big number, so that tells us as a group that we need to be having these conversations. Uh, we'll move to the next slide. Okay. So I would like to have a little point of clarification here before we go on some conversation about how we should look at the world, and it should be in a particular way because it's, you know, it's not about that. It's not about pointing fingers or labeling people that think in particular ways or assigning blame. Uh, cultural humility is really, it's not something that you either have or don't have, so that's one thing. Uh, it's something that we practice. Um, it's something that we practice, and it's an imperfect practice, right? And we have to remember that it is within a system that already shapes the way that we see families and children. So we take it back to what Laurene was saying. Sometimes the culture of the school, it's something, right? Uh, part-, we look at particular students a particular way. So we have to sort of remember that there is a system that already kinda shapes the way that we think about things. Um, and so it's not about assigning blame but kinda slowing down a little bit and really staying open so that we can better understand families. Okay. That moved a little bit fast for me. Thank you. Uh, so now when we talk about communication... Oh, no, you can, you can move it back. That's okay. Thank you. Um, what I wanna point out here is that when we're talking about communication, it's like a lot much more than just the verbal skills or speaking abilities. Um, and a lot of the times that's, the, the focus is that when we talk about communication in schools. So, what are some of those additional things that I might be talking about? That's like body movements, gestures, vocalizations, pointing at objects, using clear and unclear verbal speech—that counts as communication, using sign language, et cetera. So I want us to think about an expand, an expansive way of thinking about communication and not just language or verbal skills. Maybe we can move to the next slide. And, this would be for you, Laurene, if I can pass it to you.

Laurene: Yep, sorry. Um, yeah, so one thing that we wanted you to think about, and I just wanna also point out, too, that as we're talking about some very specific special education examples, again, this presentation and, these concepts that we're presenting, really don't just ... They're not just limited to students in special education. But I think it's important for us to also think about how these concepts resonate within the special education field as well. So, we wanted you to answer this poll about, talking about what kinds of complex con-, communication do you think is most underestimated in the schools, and we've got some examples there for you. So hopefully you'll get a chance to answer the poll.



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Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: And I think, Lauren, are you gonna read off the answers on these again?

Lauren: Yeah. I would say the biggest two I'm seeing is gestures or body movements and home language use.

Laurene: Mm-hmm.

Lauren: But many people also would say AAC and intonations and sounds.

Laurene: Yeah. So it looks like we're kinda split here with some different examples. That's great.

Lauren: Yeah.

Laurene: Although it's also challenging that we know that all of these things really do exist as challenges, right?

Delis: That is correct. It is great, and it isn't great, Laurene, so it's, it's the way that it is. Um, so understanding multilingualism from a cultural humility lens. Uh, really what the, what the poll is surfacing is that we do underestimate the way that students and children communicate, and it's not because communication is not taking place, but it's because it shows up in ways that we don't expect, right? So we don't, we don't even think about those things as communication. And so they are happening. They're underestimated because they are kinda, as a community, a school community, they come at us, and we don't know how to interpret them in, in the commun-, in a communication kind of way. So a cultural humility stance is really gonna ask us to pay attention to the context, to the exposure, to the use of, of their voice, their bodies, et cetera, their tone of voice. Um, so-, that's, it really asks us to pay attention essentially. Uh, also it's, it's gonna be recognizing that multilingualism is an asset, even when it doesn't look fluent or balanced. So I noticed that some of the, the checks, one of the words was the home language. So it's gonna ... If we look at it from a cultural humility lens, it's gonna allow us to see it that way. Um, and essentially it's gonna push us to think differently about how we invite families and how we interpret their knowledge. So it's important to think about multilingualism from that perspective, a more expansive open perspective.

Laurene: Delis, can I just jump in and-

Delis: Yeah.

Laurene: ... add, add a comment to that, too?

Delis: Yeah.

Laurene: I think a lot of the time, you know, as educators, we really want students, of course, to be growing in their proficiency in English.

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: And so, you know, we might ask our families about the use of English at home, right? And that would be an example where we might be taking a little bit more of a cultural encapsulation kind of approach-

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: ... by assuming that it's important to speak English at home. It might also be really important for the family to speak their home language at home. They may be concerned about making sure that the child continues to maintain bilingualism-

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: ... that they can make connections to their families and, you know, their heritage. And there may be-

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: ... even additional reasons why the family chooses to prioritize speaking their home language over English, and I'm sure a lot of you have examples of just why that's so important. But I think that's an example where sometimes the school culture might be, you know, pressuring us to say some things, but really if we take a more cultural humility kind of approach, we can learn more about, you know, what is the family's, you know, needs and priorities and approaches. So I just think that since that one did come up in our survey, that it's just an important one to sort of address as an example.

Delis: Yes. Thank you for adding that, Laurene.

Laurene: Okay. So now let's take a brief moment to situate where we are exactly in the session. So, so far we've grounded ourselves in cultural humility and spent time thinking about communication and multilingualism in practice. Next, we're gonna take a look at the Tell Us About Your Child Survey, a tool designed to help center family voice, and then we'll share what we learned from conversations with mothers who filled out the survey. And then, before we dive in, feel free to download some materials from the website we'll be focusing on. This includes the Tell Us About Your Child Survey itself, its implementation guide, and a letter for all families, and all these resources are available in over 16 languages. A link is also in the chat if you would like to click on that, or there's a QR code on the screen.

Delis: Thank you, Lauren. So, we'll move to you, Laurene, on the next slide when-

Laurene: Yeah, sounds good.

Delis: Okay.

Laurene: All right. So I'm gonna tell you just a little bit of background about the Tell Us About Your Child Survey tool. Um, this is a tool that was developed as part of our work in updating our Alternate ACCESS tool. Um, this is a family-facing survey designed for you to share with families to get more information about how a s-, your student would communicate across settings. And the purpose of this tool really is to get more information from families and center the knowledge that they have and how they make sense of their own child's communication and language. Right now, this survey is designed to be a part of information-gathering with students who are multilingual learners with significant cognitive disabilities. I think it's fair to say that Delis and I both agree that this tool wouldn't need to be limited, even in its current form, to only students who have significant cognitive disabilities.

Delis: True.

Laurene: Um, but we also are working on some additional tools, some additional family and caregiver questionnaires that can be used in other settings. So, this is kind of where we started, but it's-

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: ... not necessarily where we're going to be finishing. So, that's just a little bit of background about it, and then I think, Delis, I'm turning it over to you to share a little bit more about some of the questions.

Delis: Okay. Sounds great. Thank you. I'll start a little bit by just talking about how it's organized. So the survey begins by inviting families to describe how their child communicates. So families are prompted to check all the ways that apply, so it's just, just checking boxes essentially, but they're special boxes. They're boxes that the parents, as you will see, are excited to fill out because they can, they have an opportunity to say, "Yeah, my child can do this. My child can do the other." Uh, things such as gestures, vocalizations, eye gaze for communicating, sign language, and other augmentative and alternative communication. Uh, so importantly, also part of the survey is that there's space for families to add meaning in their own words, so kind of their interpretation. Or they check a box, and also there's room for, "Well, this is what I mean," or, "This happens, you know, contextually in one place, not the other," et cetera. Uh, the survey then asks families about what their child can do with support. That's also really important. Um, how they understand language, how they follow directions, how they attend socially or how they respond socially. So this really shifts the focus from deficits to capabilities, and it changes to access essentially. Um, families are also asked about how their children's comprehension and ability to respond vary. So it's very contextual across English language and the home language. Uh, the emphasis here is on variability and context,



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and it's not about labeling proficiency, as Laurene said. It's, it's part of the information gathering and making decisions. Um, it's just one more point, more information for us. Uh, throughout the survey, families are repeatedly invited to add additional information. There's some open space. The open space in the survey is intentional, and really it positions families as interpreters of their children's communication and not just responders, right? So it's not just checking boxes, but they can interpret, they can tell us what they mean, they can tell us when they see it, et cetera. So there is that, that room for additional information that can be very helpful. And, we'll move to the next slide.

Laurene: So firstly, I want to show you question one of the survey, and here we can see what families encounter. This question invites families to describe how their child communicates across multiple modes. And if you zoom in, you can see that families can check all that apply, and there is no expectation that communication fits into one single category. And what's important here is that families are also invited to add meaning in their own words. Like Delis said, the survey does not simply capture what a child does, but it also captures the way the family understands and makes sense of that communication. And then we can move on to the next question.

Laurene: Yep. And I'm gonna talk just a little bit about the next question, which is really about how the child understands and responds to communication.

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: And again, here you can see that we're really focusing on understanding what others communicate. Um, this is always asset-based, so supporting what they c-, what they can do with support. Um, we're asking questions about some social engagement cues and following directions. And of course, again, there's lots of space for, you know, the family to write some additional information about their child.

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: I think we can move on to the... Yep, there we go.

Laurene: Yeah. And then these questions ask families to describe how their child understands and responds across English and the home language. And what's important here is that English and the home language are treated symmetrically. Neither is assumed to be the default. The sur-, survey also separates responding from understanding and allows for "Sometimes" to be an answer and provides additional space for explanation. That makes room for variability, context, and support. And then we can move on to the next question.

Delis: Thank you, Laurene. And yeah, so these are--, and this is a short survey with a lot of information and a lot of room for, you know, additional information. Uh, we get to the last set of questions and, question seven and question eight, um, and they really focus

on complexity. They ask if the child can follow multi-step directions in English, and also if the child can do so in the home language. So in these two questions together, they're really great because we can begin to detangle cognition from language. Like maybe they can do things, you know, follow multiple, multi-step directions in the home language, but they cannot do it in English. And that kinda tells us that it's developmental and that it is possible cognitively, right? And that the language will catch, will catch up. So it's, it's a really great, way to begin to detangle, you know, the thousand-year question of cognition and language. Um, so I really like these questions for that reason.

Lauren: The last page of the Tell Us About Your Child Survey is a resource for parents and educators of reference for augmentative and alternative communication, also known as AAC, devices and images. This is a crucial part to emphasize the ways AAC and assistive technology seen in the resource, speech-generating devices, communication apps in tablets, picture-based systems, and different eye-gaze tracking support the various communication needs when filling out the survey.

Delis: Thank you. Um, so I kind of... I wanna name this explicitly. Uh, what you've just seen is cultural humility built in into the structure of the tool. So instead of asking families to fit their children into fixed categories, which we kinda did because there are boxes, the, the survey also makes room for variability and for context and for families' viewpoints and interpretations, and this is all before any conclusions are drawn. So, I just wanted to point that out, that cultural humility piece, it's embedded within the survey.

Okay. So before we move on to the family's perspectives, we got some very interesting findings with, with moms. Um, I want to take a pause and name how using the tool can really strengthen everyday practice. So, we can develop a fuller understanding of students' language development and communication. Again, so, you heard me say this, you know, the focus is not just language, or it's not just verbal skills. We wanna expand, we wanna move from that. Um, we can center students' strengths in ways that build confidence. You're not only focusing on what they cannot do. And consider contextual factors that shape how families can engage with the recommendations. Because we have so much more information and room for, like, explanations, we get an idea of the, the context, and we get an idea of what recommendations we can make and which ones would be like-, likely to be, implemented. So, I wanted to point that out as well. Okay, so the survey also supports teams in being more open to students' lived language experiences. So instead of assuming consistency across language or context, it invites families to describe patterns. And that's really important because that's how, how it works. There are patterns and, you know, ups and downs, and the languages are not static, and they're not the same. Uh, for example, families may note that their child consistently responds in a preferred language regardless of the language that you

address them. And so that happens to a lot of bi-, in bilingual homes. The, the family members may ask the children in English, and then the kids answer in English, but then maybe the adults ask the children in the home language, in my case Spanish, and the children will still answer in English. So these are sort of, they're important things to note. Um, also, looking at the survey information carefully can also help us learn whether a student can follow one-step directions in one language or multi-step directions only in one language, et cetera. Uh, these kinds of insights can help teams move away from simplified conclusions. So again, it's about complexity, it's about describing patterns, it's a little bit more accurate and contextualized.

So I think we're ready to shift a little bit and talk about the mothers' perspectives and talk about the implementation of the Tell Us About Your Child Survey, sharing with you a little bit of the pilot study.

Laurene: Yeah. So before we do that, Delis, just-

Delis: Mm-hmm

Laurene: ... and while people are thinking about their one word that they might wanna use in describing the survey so far, and you're welcome-

Delis: Okay.

Laurene: ... to put that in the chat, I just wanted to mention two things that are coming up in the chat.

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: So the first one, is that the survey tool is available in 17 different languages. Um, so that was mentioned, and there's a link in the chat about that. But I also, we got a question that I wanted to have you answer just briefly before we move on, and I think that this is a nice segue into the next section of this. Um, so the question is, "Are there strategies to get parents and families to respond to the tool without feeling inhibited or reluctant to respond?" So, that's a question that was asked. I think you're gonna kinda answer that in h-, when you talk about, your work with the mothers. Um-

Delis: Yeah.

Laurene: ... but I just wanted to make sure we didn't lose track of that question before we moved on.

Delis: Okay. No, I really appreciate you bringing it up and making the moment for it. I saw the question fly by my, my screen, and I thought, "Oh, that's a really good question." Um, one of the... So the implementation guide, Lauren talked about it, how we can download it, that gives you some ideas. Um, I'll briefly talk about one that I can think of

from the top of my mind. It's making it an interview. So this survey could be an interview, right? Like a talked tool versus something that you send home and that they fill out on their own. Um, as a matter of fact, that's how we used it for the pilot. We didn't simply send it home and got answers back, but we talked through the answers, and that, that's really helpful. Uh, another strategy is definitely using it in the home language, in the language that the parents speak best. If you can have a culturally competent person that speaks the language, preferably a native speaker, that will be able to understand the nuance answers, that would ... that's also very helpful. But, there's more information in the implementation guide, but that's something that I can sort of offer right now, Laurene. And thank you for making the space for that.

Lauren: I can share a couple words that I'm seeing in the chat before we move on, too.

Delis: Yeah.

Lauren: Um, a couple words I'm seeing are, insightful, also informative-

Delis: Ooh.

Lauren: ... supportive, helpful, useful, inclusive, comprehensive. So, I'm seeing a couple, there's a couple other new ones. A lot of, definitely a lot of supportive and inclusive.

Delis: Yeah.

Lauren: I'd say those are the two main ones.

Delis: Wow. Thank you, Lauren. I think we should, you know how sometimes websites have, like, comments from users? Like, just put a bunch of bubbles of what everybody's saying, and it's so great, and it's so wonderful to hear that the field sees it in that way, that it's, it, it is remarkably short and remarkably comprehensive at the same time. So I appreciate you reading those words to us, and I really appreciate that the, that everybody feels that way. Okay. Okay. So now we're gonna move a little bit and talk about what the mothers t-, told us. So as I mentioned earlier, we did, completed a pilot study, and I'm sharing these perspectives to help us listen more carefully. Like, at the end of the day, that's what it's about: cultural humility and listening and not jumping to interpretations. Uh, the mothers that you're gonna hear from participated in the pilot study where they offered their reflections on both their children's communication—so essentially, they filled out the survey, they gave us information, and because it was a pilot study, they also gave us their input o-, on what it was like to take the survey. The actual experience of being asked those questions. Uh, so it's, it's informative in that way. Uh, for the next few slides, I'm gonna read the mothers' words in Spanish so that we can sort of keep that authenticity, and Lauren will speak the English translation so everybody can follow along. So we'll go, go ahead and get the first quote. Okay.

Delis: Dice: Él dice “hola” con distintos tonos. Cambia la entonación para decir lo que quiere. No señala. Él me toma de la mano. Yo lo entiendo, pero a otras personas a veces les cuesta entenderlo.

Lauren: He says “Hi” in different tones. His intonation changes to show what he wants. He doesn’t point. He grabs my hand. I understand what he is saying, but it can be hard for others to understand.

Delis: Okay. Thank you, Lauren. And so this description shows how much meaning is really carried through intonation. I think that is so powerful. He says “Hi” in different tones, and the mother can understand that it means something different. Uh, the mother in this quote also interprets the child’s communication in ways that are often not visible in school settings because we’re not looking sometimes or listening hard enough, right? To catch intonations and things like... Sometimes we are, sometimes we’re not. Um, again, this mother is describing, you know, that there’s so much meaning that gets carried through with gestures and just the relationships and intonation. So, we’re good to go with the next quote.

Okay. So, habla los dos idiomas igual. El contexto es importante. Inglés en la casa o cuando viene alguien que habla inglés a la casa. En la casa, español. Ella usa el español con los perros.

Lauren: She speaks both language equally. The context matters. English at school or when someone who speaks English comes to the house. At home, Spanish. She uses Spanish with the dogs.

Delis: Okay. So I think this is really great. I love this quote. Uh, it’s ... And at the same time, it’s describing a, a sophisticated language awareness. You know, the mother is well aware that the child chooses languages that are based on the context, on the relationship, on who they’re speaking to, on the setting. And of course, I think it’s a very sweet example, you know, when the mom talks about the, the use of Spanish with the dogs, that they’re very attuned with the choices that children and students have for their languages. We can move to the next one. Okay. I was waiting for you, Lauren. It’s my turn. Um, mi niño llora para comunicarse.

Lauren: My child cries to communicate.

Delis: Okay. So I’m gonna let this one land a little bit on all our teacher hearts because I think that this really reminds us that when communication isn’t understood, the stress can become the message, and that initial message is gone. Like, we didn’t understand what they meant initially, and now they’re frustrated. Now they feel like they’re, you know, they’re distressed. Now they start crying, and it becomes compounded. So, listening with cultural humility, it really can make a huge difference when we look at moment-to-moment interactions. Okay. So, gracias por hacer las preguntas más

detalladas. Porque cuando tengo que contestar “no” a todo, no me siento bien. Aquí es bueno poder escoger ejemplos de lo que sí puede hacer.

Lauren: Thank you for asking more detailed questions because when I have to say “no” to everything, I don’t feel good about that. It’s good that here I am able to choose from examples of what you can do.

Delis: So this mother here is sharing gratitude for having the opportunity to talk about what her student, her child, can do. Um, and from this quote, we can glean that these parents or these families are put in a position where they often have to answer questions in the negative, essentially w-, focusing on what they, what, what skills or what attributes their, their children don’t have or what they cannot accomplish. And so they appreciated being able to have all those boxes and, and checking all of these things that, that they see their, their s-, their children do at home. Okay. So, across these examples, mothers demonstrated deep expertise about their children’s communication. Um, they noticed patterns, meaning, they talked about intention in ways that are often very specific and grounded in daily life. Uh, they also shared how communication strategies vary depending, via the context or the familiarity, who their child is with, who they’re talking to, and what kind of s-, what kinds of supports are available. So that’s where we come in. That’s where we have an idea how we can support specifically. Uh, multilingualism also came through as something valued and lived and not as a problem to be solved, right? It’s interesting because they didn’t say, “We love multilingualism,” in those words, but they just talked about it. It’s lived. The child talks to the dog in Spanish and the cousins in English, et cetera. Um, importantly, mothers reflected how being asked different types of questions that allow them to focus on what their children can do was kind of a breath of fresh air. They appreciated that. Uh, that tell us something, essentially that, that the, this tool that is framed from a cultural humility lens can make things visible that sometimes we cannot see. Uh, sometimes we just don’t see them, but this tool and this information can make things visible for us. Okay. And that was the end of the presentation and hearing a little bit about the voices from the families, talking about the survey, you know, all kind of in the framework of cultural humility and the importance of multilingualism. And now we kinda leave it up to if anybody has questions. Um, Lauren, I know that you have that document open. Um, maybe the questions were put there. Laurene, if you see any additional questions, I know you kind of flagged the one that you could see clearly, also. Uh, all three of us can, you know, answer questions.

Laurene: It looks like we do have a question about data collection in elementary versus secondary. Um, Delis, I don’t know what the age ranges of the children were that-

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: ... were involved in the study, but maybe you have some thoughts on that question.

Delis: Yeah, I do. Uh, for the pilot, want to make it clear, it was mothers of students who were multilingual or, in their district, English learners, with significant cognitive disabilities. So one of the things that was different was that, when I spoke to mothers of older kids, so the range was from 6 to 17, so we kinda had all, all of the K through 12. Six to 17 was the age. And the older the student was, the more confident the mom was to, with talking about their skills and the, and the, they were just more confident and more comfortable. And frankly, they were also more in tune with the school system. They've already been through the, you know, bunch of IEPs year after year. They know how to talk about goals, et cetera, but that comes with time. Um, so that's what I noticed. That, that was different. Any other questions?

Laurene: So we also have a question coming up about experiencing students who are multilingual and are deaf and hard of hearing and may have some limited exposure to language or-

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: ... I would also say language deprivation.

Delis: Mm-hmm.

Laurene: And, I'm just going to respond to that question by saying that we're definitely working on that. That's actually one of the-

Delis: Yes.

Laurene: ... tools that, is in the works. So, stay tuned. Uh, we'll have more opportunities for, for that conversation as well, so.

Delis: Yeah. Thank you. So I feel like... D- Is there anything, any other questions, Lauren? Or how are we on time? Do you think we can go more?

Lauren: Um, there's a couple more questions.

Delis: Okay.

Lauren: Yeah. Um, I guess one of the questions is, like, is this questionnaire available to schools, and how could it be, like, implemented into school districts?

Delis: Okay. So it, it is available on the WIDA website. So, we've shared the QR code. That'll take you to the webpage where you have other resources. So you would get the survey, the implementation guide, that sort of a, a district sort of explanation, and also a letter for, for families. So, and it's in, as we mentioned, many languages, 16 or 17 languages.

Laurene: We also have a question about, the relationship of this tool and the WIDA Screener and the AI-, and the WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and I'm-

Delis: Ooh.

Laurene: ... just going to respond to that question by saying-

Delis: Yeah.

Laurene: ... that, how you choose to use the Tell Us About Your Child Survey tool in relation to WIDA Screener, for example, is really up to your state. Um, we see this tool, as a separate, data-gathering instrument, so I think you could definitely use it in that way. But I think if you want to make any connections with the WIDA Screener, I would encourage you to talk to your state about that. Um, and then we also had a question about students who are multilingual and may have autism, um-

Delis: Oh.

Laurene: ... or limited, communication verbal skills. Um, and I'll just say that I think that that's also another important area for us to consider for the future. So, we can definitely add that to our list for future research possibilities.

Delis: Yeah. Absolutely. Um, well, I think that kind of does it for us, Laurene, unless you see another question that you think we can address in the last few moments. But I think it was a great conversation. I hope that our participants were able to do some internal reflection and, and that we all could learn. I know that I, I learned quite a bit from the answers in the chat and from the poll, so thank you, everybody.

Laurene: Yeah. Thank you, all.

Lauren: Thank you.