

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Benchmark Education Launches Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit a First of Kind Program that Bridges English and Spanish Languages

New program for grades K to 2 promotes language acquisition

NEW ROCHELLE, NY, Sept. 25, 2017 – Literacy and language publisher Benchmark Education Company (BEC) announced a new [*Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit*](#) to support students in grades K–2 as they become bilingual readers in English and Spanish. Designed specifically for dual language and bilingual education classrooms, the first of its kind kit reinforces the foundational skills learned and explicitly shows students how the majority of the learned foundational skills transfer from Spanish to English or English to Spanish. Available now, the program was created by Silvia Dorta-Duque de Reyes, senior biliteracy national consultant and author at Benchmark Education, as a combination of digital and print formats.

Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit provides teachers with explicit instructional lessons and support components in English and Spanish to accelerate students’ learning of how to read in both English and Spanish. Students first learn reading skills and strategies in their language of instruction, and then they are explicitly taught whether those skills and strategies transfer or don’t transfer to the other language. The kit can be used with any English and Spanish core reading program, since the lessons are flexible and can be used in any order based on when a letter and sound are introduced in the core reading program.

The English-Spanish *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* is an innovative, research-based approach to promote language acquisition and learning leading to bi-literacy. It affirms bi-directional transfer from Spanish to English and English to Spanish as language learners use their linguistic resources to negotiate meaning within and between languages on their pathway to becoming biliterate.

The cross-linguistic *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* provides routines, literacy manipulatives, picture-word cards and other resources to facilitate intentional, strategic and systematic cross-linguistic instruction. Transfer is important in all learning, but it is especially important in language learning contexts. It is in learning a new language that language transfer is most evident and critical, as students seeking to learn a new language apply what they already know about language in their first language to help them in their pursuit of developing high levels of oral language proficiency and literacy in the new language.

“Our innovative new *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* was developed based on multiple research studies that proved explicit teaching for linguistic transfer builds deeper knowledge about the shared, as well as the unique features of each language and how each language works,” said Tom Reycraft, President of Benchmark Education Company. “By intentionally providing a comprehensible connection between languages, teachers can guide students to become more strategic thinkers, and as students think about the languages they are using and learning, they develop the skills needed for proficient biliteracy.”

(more)

Two separate research studies in 2007 by Dr. Ellen Bialystok at York University and the team of: Elizabeth R. Howard; Julie Sugarman; Donna Christian, Center for Applied Linguistics; Kathryn J. Lindholm-Leary, San José State University; and David Rogers, Dual Language Education of New Mexico, proved that explicit teaching of cross-linguistic transfer enhances students' mastery and control of linguistic resources across languages. The 2002 research study, "Reading Skills in Bilingual Children," by Diana August, Center for Applied Linguistics; Margarita Calderón, Johns Hopkins University; and Maria Carlo, University of Miami, found that a positive effect of cross-linguistic transfer in English and Spanish exists for phonemic segmentation and blending skills, letter identification and word reading skills. In a follow up study, the same researchers pointed out that to reap the potential benefits of this linguistic interdependence, instruction must focus directly on explicitly teaching for transfer. When cross-linguistic transfer is explicitly taught, students use the concepts and skills already known in one language to learn the other, resulting in biliteracy.

Cross-linguistic transfer is important in all learning, but it is especially important in language-learning contexts. It is in learning a new language that language transfer is most evident and critical, as those seeking to learn a new language apply what they already know about language in their first language to help them in their pursuit of developing high levels of oral language proficiency and literacy in the new language. Rather than leaving linguistic transfer up to chance, cross-linguistic sound-spelling transfer can be intentionally and strategically taught.

Features

The *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* lessons include both digital and print components, as well as online resources that are downloadable and printable to facilitate instruction and active learning. Digital resources are interactive with functionalities that include highlighting, audio and annotations.

The lessons in the *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* are intended to reinforce skills that students already possess in one language and provide an instructional opportunity for teaching cross-linguistic skills and strategies that will enable students to explicitly transfer those skills by comparing and contrasting the sound-spelling relations that exist in their target language. While these lessons do not replace the foundational skills instruction in a core program, they do amplify, reinforce and support the bridging of instruction for transfer.

Routine Cards outline the instructional sequence for teaching transferable and non-transferable sound-spellings. The suggested pacing guide in the Teacher's Handbook provides an overview of the mini-lessons, materials, routines, metalinguistic skills and workstation activities for each day. These lessons can be implemented in a whole-class or small-group context and are intended to last no more than 20 minutes per day.

There are separate Teacher's Handbooks for English and Spanish. The lessons in the handbooks offer a review of letter sounds and names, engagement in phonemic awareness through rhymes, movement and chants, phonics instruction supported by picture word cards, activities for cross-linguistic vocabulary and word study, shared reading, comprehension, word play and writing. English transfer lessons include all A–Z sound-spellings, long vowels, vowel combinations and consonant digraphs and blends. The lessons in Spanish include all A–Z sound-spellings, vowel combinations (diphthongs), consonant digraphs, and consonant blends.

Assessment tools are included as an online, downloadable print resource to facilitate monitoring students' biliteracy trajectories. Each lesson includes suggestions for formative assessment and dictation.

Availability

The *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* program for grades K-2, with schoolwide online access is available now for \$695. A computer or mobile device with Internet access is needed for the digital components. For information about *Sound-Spelling Transfer Kit* and other Benchmark Education products, visit www.BenchmarkEducation.com or call 877-236-2465.

Benchmark Education Company

Headquartered in New Rochelle, NY, Benchmark Education Company is a leading publisher of PreK–12 core, supplemental, and intervention literacy resources in English and Spanish. These resources are supported by instructional technology solutions as well as on-site and online customized professional development training for teachers and administrators. Benchmark Education’s print and online resources are research-based and differentiated to support all learners in a wide variety of instructional settings. In addition to extensive educational use in the USA, Benchmark Education resources are also used in schools and training centers in the Middle East, Canada, South America, and Asia.

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