

WOMAN: Our two presenters here are Teri Duckett and Luz Hernandez. Ms. Teri Duckett serves as an educational content consultant, excuse me, for the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network and is my colleague.

She taught in the Philadelphia School District for 28 years, and she is a Certified Trainer of LETRS – Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling. She serves on the PaTTAN statewide teams under these initiatives, reading, math, leadership, 4Sight, PVAAS, Standards Aligned Instruction on IEPs and Distinguished Educators.

Ms. Luz Hernandez has been the Executive Director of Philadelphia HUNE, H-U-N-E, and you know that, what it means there, since it was established in 1998. HUNE's original board of directors and Ms. Hernandez are HUNE's founding fathers.

Ms. Hernandez worked as an advocate for another organization and saw the need for the Hispanic community to understand and advocate for their children with special needs . . . free and appropriate public education. HUNE is an independent organization and founded through the federal Department of Education and other private foundations. Welcome.

DUCKETT: Good afternoon, everyone. Excuse me for just a second.

[Spanish Role Play]

DUCKETT: That's the scenario that occurs quite often in the schools across the state of Pennsylvania, except it's the flipside of the coin. It's the Hispanic parent coming into our schools seeking support, seeking information and not having anyone in the school who can communicate and bridge the cultural gap.

So our session today, *What Every Educator Needs to Know: The Critical Spanish Phrases for Enhancing Communication with Hispanic Parents* is an essential one, because we know that in successful schools, parent engagement is a key component of student achievement.

And our country is becoming more global. Our schools and our communities are becoming more diverse, so it's very important for educators and those in our schools who work with our Hispanic parents to work towards bridging the communication as well as the cultural gaps.

HERNANDEZ: When we talk communication, we're not talking, we don't expect everyone to know Spanish, obviously, much less any other languages. The most important part of communication is to show an effort on your behalf, to be able to try to communicate with the parents. Since Spanish is the second language, the most common language we . . . Spanish, obviously, the idea is just to know enough to be able to communicate with that parent initially.

DUCKETT: And I just want to give you some data and some information about the student population here in Pennsylvania. As I said, our school district is becoming more

diverse. In Philadelphia, where there about 270,000 students, 17% of the student population is Hispanic, so that's close to maybe about 50,000 students.

In the Reading School District, 72% of the student population is Hispanic. In the Allentown School District 59%, in Lancaster School District 54%, in Lebanon 44%, and in York City, 37%. So those are our top five school districts across the state that have the largest population of Hispanic students, and it's growing.

HERNANDEZ: When we think percentages, we have to distinguish the difference between percentages and the actual amount of children. There's a misconception that because Philadelphia has only 17% of children that are Hispanic, that means that it isn't that high, because it's only 17%. But we have to look at the total population as, when you compare that to the amount of percentage of children, as opposed to Allentown, which was 70% . . .

DUCKETT: Seventy-two . . .

HERNANDEZ: Seventy-two percent. The population is a lot less dense, so, obviously, it's going to have a higher percentage of children with Spanish-speaking abilities.

DUCKETT: Okay. The projector went to sleep.

HERNANDEZ: Well, while they work with the projector, we'll talk a little bit about what we do. Philadelphia HUNE is a parent run organization. We basically try to work with the parents and the schools in trying to get the children an appropriate education. So there is some advocacy involved, but our basic component is training. It's training parents and professionals, so they can know the rules and regulations, and they can move forward in working together more productively.

DUCKETT: Okay. And I think most of you are familiar with PaTTAN's mission, that we provide support, and we serve the local education agencies in the state of Pennsylvania. But what you might not be aware of is that in our State Performance Plan, which is required by the Bureau of Special Education, we have 20 indicators, promises, and a plan. And, specifically, indicator eight relates to exactly what we're talking about, and that's the increase of parent engagement.

And, also, we just want to remind everyone that when we talk about the least restrictive environment in the state of Pennsylvania, we are talking about when a student's IEP is being developed, the IEP team always considers the general education environment first with those supplementary supports and aids and services being considered before a more restrictive environment is considered. Okay. Sorry about that. Okay. Thank you. You talked about HUNE.

HERNANDEZ: Yeah. We talked about HUNE.

DUCKETT: Okay. All right. We can move on. I think this is a really powerful quote that you can't teach students or people that you don't know. It's very essential that educators and school personnel become aware of and responsive to the culture of the

children in our schools in terms of communication, first beginning with trying to bridge that communication gap between the parents and the school community, as well as just learning about the culture, because, quite often, we have misconceptions about a specific culture, because we are not aware of them.

An example would be that because a student has limited English proficiency, that it's a reflection on their intellectual ability. When, in fact, in Spanish-speaking families, English may be the third language, Spanish the second, and the first language being that of the indigenous or native country that they come from. So that's something, I think, is very important for all of us to be aware of.

Also the fact that many of the children that are English language learners are, at the same time that they're trying to pass the milestones of developing their own language structure, specifically between the ages of five to ten, we're asking them to also learn English. So I think it's very important to keep those things in mind.

HERNANDEZ: I have this beautiful picture. These are all the Hispanic-speaking countries. There are 21 Hispanic-speaking countries in the world. And as we think about that, you know, we've been taught that Hispanics are one culture, and in reality, we're 21 different countries, different beliefs, different religions, different cultural values and ethics, beautiful countries.

So as we think about that for a moment, we have to think we cannot stereotype when we're working with Hispanics. We cannot assume that because one Hispanic does things one way, the other one will follow suit. I've had many the times where people ask me can't you write tips on how to work with Hispanics? Impossible. Impossible. Okay. Can't be done. Okay?

Why? Because, again, we come from 21 different countries, and within those countries, you have a variety of different values and ethical issues. So, you know, I just wanted to make that, I guess, paint a clear picture of that when you look at these pictures, and you think of the variety of people that we are working with.

In Philadelphia, we have Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Colombians, Venezuelans. You name it, we have it. So, and in Pennsylvania, it's becoming just as diverse, so we have to ensure that we're thinking more outside of the box when we're thinking Hispanics. We do have a very common language, of course, when we bring it down to the basic Spanish.

However, even the language that we speak means something different. A word can mean something different to me than it means to a Peruvian, for example. So we have to be careful even with the languages that we use, which is, you know, it's difficult, which is why we say we don't pretend for people to know how to speak Spanish much less than in an hour presentation.

But we do hope to, at the very minimum, give you an idea of what the struggles are, and how to try to overcome some of those struggles that you face every day in working with your parents and children.

DUCKETT: And I'm just going to ask Luz to just take a second to explain to all of us the terminology Latino and Hispanic, because, quite often, I find out in the community, when you're working with schools, they're not really clear about what's appropriate, what it means, etc. Could you speak to that just for a second?

HERNANDEZ: Sure can. Actually, that's a very controversial subject even within the Hispanics or Latinos. People often ask me what do you prefer to be called, Latino or Hispanic? Honestly, I don't care. It doesn't make much of a difference to me, personally, and, you know, however, it does make a big difference to many of the populations that you'll be serving.

The definition between Latino, Hispanics, what's the difference between the two? Latinos are basically from Latin America. Okay? They are, they do not only speak Spanish. They can speak Portuguese, other indigenous languages as well as Spanish, okay, where the Hispanics, they speak Spanish. It's a derivative of Spanish speakers period.

So you have the islands which speak Spanish. You have Spain which speaks Spanish, and you have Latin and, you know, South and Central America, which also speaks Spanish. But not all of the country speaks Spanish. So, for example, it wouldn't be appropriate for you to call a person who speaks Portuguese Hispanic. They're not Hispanic. They're Latinos. Okay? So that's the difference between the two.

And, like I say, take that with a grain of salt, because you'll still have some people who get offended if you call them Latinos. And it's just a matter of really getting to know the parents and do you know if they come from, what country do they come from and being able to make that, distinguish between the two. Just ask them. People ask me all the time. Do you prefer to call Latino or Hispanic? And, in my case, I'm like whatever works. It's fine.

WOMAN: What country are you from?

HERNANDEZ: I'm Puerto Rican, so, actually, I'm Hispanic. I'm really not Latina, because I'm not from Latin America. However, you have Puerto Ricans who will argue that and say we are Latinas. So, you know, we just take it for what it is.

DUCKETT: We just want to make sure we make you aware of that.

HERNANDEZ: Yes. Cultural identity. One of the things that we've moved, in America, they used to talk about the melting pot theory. Has anybody here heard about the melting pot theory? Okay. Has anybody heard about the soup theory? What's the difference between the two?

Okay. The melting pot theory had the idea that we would come to America, everyone come to America, and they would kind of leave their cultural beliefs and values to the side and learn the American culture and assimilate the American culture. That is obsolete. Obviously, we're not forgetting our roots. We're not forgetting where we come from, and we don't want to lose our languages and our ethical values.

So, basically, the soup theory says that we come to America with our beliefs and our cultures from our descendants, and we bring it here to America. We learn the culture, the American culture, and we combine two, so we learn to value both our Hispanic culture and our American culture.

So that's the difference between the melting pot theory and the Hispanic theory, I mean, sorry, the soup theory. Okay? And, I mean, there's really, think about it,

everyone here comes from a different place. Unless you're Native American, you have roots in different places, right, and you have cultural values that may come from those places depending on your parents, and whether they instilled that.

You may have visited your home country or may not have, but you still have that connection with your home countries. So with Hispanics, we're either first, second, or third generation Hispanics in the United States of America.

I am a second generation Hispanic in the United States of America, so I've learned, of course, to assimilate much more so the American culture than many other Hispanics have, where first generation Hispanics are still struggling with trying to learn the American culture and knowing where to define their own identity.

Diverse definitions of culture, different ways of looking at culture. You know, we have topical, historical, behavioral, normative, functional, mental, structural, symbolic. There's different ways that you can look at culture and define culture. The best way to look at culture is just to say that it is unique. It is unique to that person. It is unique to that place that they come from.

I'm Puerto Rican. That doesn't mean every Puerto Rican is going to think the way I think or do things the way I do things. There is just no way. It's impossible, you know. I don't believe, or we don't practice, I'm a second generation Puerto Rican, I don't do . . . which is Three Kings Day, but many Puerto Ricans do Three Kings Day, and still in Puerto Rico, they practice it.

So, you know, that's a difference between a first- and a second-generation Hispanic that we have to think about. So as you're looking at culture, just think about the difference in everything in your life from the way you think, to the way you do thing, to the way you behave. It's all different, so we need to ensure that we make that distinction when we're working with our parents.

DUCKETT: And I think that leads us right into this terminology in terms of cultural responsiveness. It's not a new term. When we think about the 1940's through the 1970's, when African American students were being integrated into public schools, cultural responsiveness was a topic of conversation that occurred in many of our education entities in terms of educators being able to learn about the culture of the students that they were teaching.

There wasn't so much of a language barrier, but there were barriers and challenges as related to the culture of African American students. And so now that we have a growing population of Hispanic students across the state of Pennsylvania, it behooves us to make sure that within our schools, we are also building and bridging those gaps, those cultural gaps for our Hispanic students as well as their families.

I just want to read just a little bit of the definition of cultural responsiveness. The goal is to foster effective programs, policies, and practices that are respectful of the cultural conditions within a school community. So that's what we're talking about needing to happen within our schools and our school buildings.

And I think about what the speaker said, I don't know how many of you saw the keynote last night, I thought he was awesome. But when he said that one quote about the illiterates of today are those who are unwilling unlearn, learn, relearn, I just, when I think about this topic, it really brings that to heart, because we all bring our own cultural beliefs with us every day.

And an example would be a perceived behavior of a student who does not look you in the eye would be that student is being disrespectful. When, actually, the cultural source of that might be that that is a sign of disrespect in a culture to look an adult in the eye when you're having a discussion.

Another example might be a student in a classroom who may be unwilling to be actively engaged in debate or challenging conversations. Well, it could be a cultural source of the fact that you don't debate or challenge the teacher's point of view or ideas, and that the goal of the individual plays second to the goal of the whole group in a classroom setting.

So just building that awareness within a specific culture is going to be important for us as educators. We have to do some introspection and look at some of our ideas and some of our beliefs and then do some relearning. Go ahead, Luz.

HERNANDEZ: Since we're talking about Hispanics, I'm going to jump in with both feet, Teri.

DUCKETT: Go ahead.

HERNANDEZ: When we talked about not looking yourself in the face. I'm, as I say, a second generation, right, so as I was growing up here in America, my parents would tell me not to look at them in the face when they were talking to me. They were scolding me. I was to look down. Okay?

And when I went to school, they were telling me the contrary. Look up when I speak to you. You're ignoring me. That's disrespectful. I mean, I didn't know where to go, whether to look up or down or to the side. But it's funny, because I've spoken with many of our other colleagues. Indian Americans, the very same thing. They look down. It's a form of respect. Asians, same thing, they look down, form of respect.

So, you know, we have to think about that. And I obviously have learned to look up when I speak or when I talk to people, but even then, I still kind of tend to shy away and not always look at the person straight in the eyes as I'm talking to them. That's a cultural issue, and that's something that I'm struggling with, still struggling with.

Even to this day, I still have that issue. Our children are struggling with that a lot more, especially the first-generation Hispanic children. They're still struggling with trying to figure out which way do they look. Forget about speaking back to the teachers or joining a conversation, you know. They're taught to be quiet, sit there, and learn.

Where, you know, the presenter who was here this morning, he talked about the importance of team building, teamwork. And that is something that we still have to break the barrier with our children, is to teach them that they, the best skills is when everyone works together at building something. So we have to think something about that.

And one other thing I need to say is that you can only change one person. Who's that? Yourselves. Absolutely. That's the only person that we can change. There is no way we can absolutely change, we can teach behaviors, but we can't change the behavior completely. We can only try to revamp and make it look differently, but you can only change yourself.

DUCKETT: And I think what's really important too in terms of bridging that gap is you want to understand the culture, so that you don't fall into the trap of building stereotypes and misconceptions. And this is, this specific misconception, stereotype, I have found, is huge within many of our public schools.

HERNANDEZ: To think that Hispanics don't value education. It's not that we don't value education. We value education just as much as anyone else values education. What we think about is just, when we think about education, it's viewed at maybe differently than the American culture views education.

We believe in going to school. The difference is that many of the Hispanics that we're working with at the schools are working parents at very difficult jobs trying to struggle and move forward. Many of them do not know English themselves. That isn't because of lack of education, or because they didn't want to be educated.

Most of it is because they have to stop going to school so that they can earn a living. And there's still some of the ideology that once they graduate high school, they need to start earning a living. That doesn't mean that they don't value education, they don't want their children to move forward, but they're really being pushed two ways.

Go to school and get a job, so you can maintain yourself, because they can't, the parents can't do it both for them. They value education just as much as everyone else. I just wanted to reiterate that, because I think that's a misconception that's just being held, and we need to break it down and realize that it's just different, and everyone is different.

WOMAN: Excuse me.

HERNANDEZ: Yes?

WOMAN: I had an opportunity to spend couple of years teaching in Bolivia, South America, so I know I'm only talking about Bolivia, and I'm only talking about the town I lived in . . . but I really saw the struggle that parents had. And parents were, worked hard to allow their children to attend school. I mean, it was a privilege that they were letting them out of rural work that would sustain life to be able to come to school.

So, and my experience as an educator in that community was that I was really held up and respected greatly, surrounded by people who were working very, very hard just trying to live, just trying to survive. So, you know, I kind of translate that, that in this country, that's still going on. That struggle is there, and I'm still valued, but sometimes our paths don't cross as easily as when I was there living next door to my neighbors.

HERNANDEZ: Absolutely. And, you know, even as I grew up, my parents, my father was a factory worker. My mother was a homemaker, and then she decided she was going to go back to school and got her GED and became a . . . technician. They, it's not that they didn't value education.

She had to stop going to school when she was young, so she could help with her siblings. She had 15 siblings. She was the oldest of all of them, so she had, her responsibility was to the home. Her parents wanted her to go to school, but they couldn't afford for her to go to school. So when she finally caught that opportunity as

she got older, she seized it, and she encouraged us to go to school and move forward in our lives.

So it's just a different way of looking at things, you know. When we think about education and all different cultures and races, you really have to stop and look at the roots of the situations, and where they come from. So that was a perfect example about Bolivia and the struggles that they face.

WOMAN: I had two girls that were, I hired as, to help me exist, because it just became so difficult there. So that my paying job was to try to cook and clean, so that I was freed up to be able to teach. And they were very young, nine and ten years old, and their family, you know, needed the income, and the arrangement was that I sent the \$5 a month that I paid them to do this back to their families in the area.

And I did make sure that they spent part of the day in school with me, but, just, I really understand when you're there, and you see the struggle to survive. And sometimes we don't live in the same community as our students' parents, so we don't see that same struggle. We get to drive outside of that community and go elsewhere.

HERNANDEZ: Yes. So parent participation, and we're going to look at the very same things. We're going to keep going in circles around this. Right? We all want our parents to come to the schools and participate in the school meetings and become involved in schools. Absolutely. That's the perfect case scenario.

We want to partner with our parents. We have to make sure if we're looking for that is that we have a welcoming school environment that encourages parent participation. If we want Hispanics' parents to become more involved, we have to have somebody who can be able to communicate with them when they come to the meetings. Otherwise, they're not going to come.

I mean, would you be here, si you solamente . . . hablando Español? No. You wouldn't be here if I would only be speaking in Spanish, because you wouldn't understand what I'm saying. I mean, whether or not the information I was giving you was great information, you still wouldn't be here. I wouldn't be here if you guys were speaking French.

So, you know, it's that same idea, you know. We have to make sure that someone, it could be another parent that's bilingual that's willing, that you're willing to, you know, work within the school system, but somebody needs to be at that meeting, so they can communicate with that parent.

You know, parent relationships are very important, and I understand firsthand how difficult they are to keep. I mean, I run a parent organization. Does that mean that parents are in my doorsteps every day knocking down the door to come into the trainings? No. It's difficult to bring parents into trainings and get them to be able to partner up with us even as a parent organization.

So I do realize that the schools are facing that much more difficulties in this process, but we ensure that the environment that we have is very welcoming. I mean, pictures. We don't only have pictures, as you saw, of Puerto Rican country, because the executive director is Puerto Rican. We have pictures of all the different countries of Hispanics.

Our staff are all Hispanics, but we're not all Puerto Ricans. We're Venezuelans, we're Puerto Ricans, we're Colombians, we're, you know, we try to keep as diverse as humanly possible within our Hispanic culture, so that the parents can feel comfortable in coming to us. Is it easy? Not always.

You know, when you're looking for a job applicant, and you're trying to fill that position with the right person, that isn't always the easiest thing to do. But it's imperative. Otherwise, you're going to lose that essence of being able to get that parent participation that you're really looking for. So communication is the key. Keep it as realistic as possible. I do realize that there's many barriers, but there are some that we can overcome, and that's why we're working at trying to help you guys get . . .

DUCKETT: So Luz just said communication is key, and respect opens the door. And one of the ways of being able to open the door in terms of the building starts right in the office, and that's why we set up that little scenario, because that's where it starts. So when we talk about making everyone sensitive to cultural differences and the communication gap, we're talking about everyone in the building beginning with the office.

But some of the ways that schools can show respect is by having a welcoming environment, by, if necessary, having parent liaisons, people from the community who can serve to bridge that communication gap, providing interpreters in school buildings, and then of most importance is having professional development that's going to provide them with the tools that they need to be able to communicate with Hispanic parents.

So what we did, and you all have the publication, Luz and I worked together to put out this publication that can be made available to you. You can call the, any of the PaTTAN offices, and any number of the documents that you would like to have, PaTTAN would be happy to put in your hands.

The front of the document pretty much goes over some of the key points that we talked about today. But the back of the document is what we're going to focus on right now, and that's some of those key phrases that we think is going to help school personnel to be able to bridge the communication gap. And we provided the Spanish, the English, and a phonetic translation of it. I think it's going to help all of us who speak English to be able to translate the pronunciation.

And one of the things you need to know about Spanish is that Spanish is pretty easy to decode for us, because some of the speech sounds are very similar to the English language. When we think about languages, Spanish and English, Spanish is considered in linguistics terms, it's considered a shallow language, and English is considered a deep language.

Now that in no way is a value judgment about the, either one of the language systems, it's just that, as I said, it's easier to decode Spanish, English to Spanish, or Spanish to English, because there's a one-to-one correspondence between the letters and then the speech sounds. Well, we know in English that's not so. For instance, when we think about the speech sound A, well, when you think about that in print, it could be spelled with A and a silent E as in the word sane.

It could be spelled a-i as in pain. It could be spelled e-y as in hey. It could be spelled e-i-g-h as in neighbor. I mean, I could go on and on. But we don't have some

of that difficulty in the Spanish language, so that translation is going to be a lot easier for us.

So what we wanted to do, we wanted to have an opportunity for you to practice some of these phrases in hopes that you'll pass this on, and we'll see this publication being used in some of our districts across the state. We're starting right here at the PDE Conference. So I'm going to hand it over to Luz.

HERNANDEZ: While we get a copy of the publication, I'm just going to start with, I'm just going to mention one quick thing and that's interpreters. When we think about interpreters for our schools and who should be translating or interpreting the information in meetings, we have to make sure that we're prepared. We have to make sure that the interpreters know educational language.

You know, an NTA interpreting at an IEP meeting can be a disaster, so they really do need to know the educational terminologies, and what to expect at IEP meetings. They need training just as much as anyone else would need to be able to do this. We've seen horror stories. We've been at meetings, and we always ask for interpreters to be present, although we are bilingual, because there's no way we can do two things at one time. Nobody can.

We can't pay attention to what's happening at the meeting and be able to help the parent, guide the parent through that meeting, work with the schools in trying to make sure the communication piece is there, and at the same time, interpret. Impossible, again. You know, there's no way.

But making sure that an interpreter is able to interpret the information correctly, unbiased is very important. With that said, we're going to go in twos. I'm going to say it, and you're going to repeat. So good morning. Buenos días. Good afternoon. Buenas tardes. Have a good day is tenga un buen día. What's your name? ¿Cómo te llamas?

Do you have a meeting or appointment with someone? That's a mouthful. ¿Tienes una reunión o la cita con alguien? ¿Tiene una reunión o cita con alguien? It's not verbatim English and Spanish, guys, which means that, you know, you look at the English version and try to say, oh, this is what this word means. No. Not necessarily. So be careful when you, you know, don't worry about that. That's not important as we're doing this. We just wanted to let you know that.

With whom? ¿Con quién? Who? Quién? Simple. Who would you like to speak with? ¿Quién quieres hablar con? Do you need to speak with the principal? ¿Necesita hablar con el principal o director? In Spanish, they use, they say principal. Some people will say director. Some people will say principal. That's why we put both in there. Okay?

Do you need an interpreter? Which is, necesita un intérprete? I am getting the assistance of an interpreter, which is what Teri didn't understand when I was saying in Spanish. Okay. I mean, she come in like, um, you know, just sit down. We're getting an interpreter, and she was like whatever I'm out. You know, because if you don't understand, you have no idea what they're trying to tell you. So, you know, necesita intérprete. Okay?

I am getting the assistance of an interpreter. Voy a buscar la ayuda de un intérprete. So I'm going to say that slowly. Voy a buscar la ayuda de un intérprete. The

interpreter will be here. El intérprete llega en cinco minutos, in media hora, o una hora. And I didn't say that in English because you . . . in English. And can you wait? It's common courtesy when you're telling somebody that they'll be here, can you wait. So puedes esperar? Si no puedes esperar . . . puedes esperar y cuando.

That's you cannot come back, you know, if you can, can you come back and when. Okay? So si no puedes esperar. ¿Puedes regresar, e Cuándo? So please sit down, we are looking for interpreter. So it says puedes por favor de centrarse le estamos buscando un intérprete. The interpreter is not available today. So el intérprete no puede llegar hoy.

When you come back, when can you come back so that we can assure that an interpreter will be present? I'm forgetting my English. ¿Cuándo puedes volver para a ayudarnos?

DUCKETT: Say it one more time, Luz. Say it one more time.

HERNANDEZ: Sure. Hacerle saber a nosotros. Okay. There you go. ¿Que el intérprete este presente? Okay. We will be with you in a moment. Estaremos aquí como usted en unos momentos. You know, I have to actually look at the page, and the reason is because there's different ways of translating this again. You know, so I have to remember that I have to go by the page.

What is the name and grade of your child? ¿Qué es el nombre y el grado de su niño? What is the name of your child's teacher. ¿Qué es el nombre de la maestra de su niño o niña? And in English, we distinguish the genders. Niño is boy. Niña is girl.

WOMAN: Is the letter a pronounced like an O?

HERNANDEZ: The letter? No. There's niño and niña. Yes. Niño is boy. Yes, in Spanish as opposed to just saying children in English, or child, in Spanish they actually say niña or niño. They actually make the distinction.

WOMAN: That's the gender of the child.

HERNANDEZ: That's the gender of the child. Absolutely. Okay. Does your child receive special education services? ¿Su niño o niña recibe educación especial? Okay. So, remember, as you're looking at this, you're going to decide, when you're talking to this parent, they'll let you know it's a girl or boy. So you're not going to say niño or niña, you'll just say niña or niño. Okay?

So does your child have an IEP? ¿Tiene su niño o niña un IEP? We have tried, and this will change, and we'll talk about it if we have the time, but we've tried to keep the acronyms the same in English, keeping the English acronyms for obvious reasons, because it's a lot easier for a parent to come in say, tiene un IEP, and you can probably understand IEP than if they come in there and say PEI. That just totally changed it around on you guys. You're not going to be able to understand what they're trying to tell you.

The reason that I say it's going to be changing is because the federal government, and I'm part of that initiative, is now decided to translate the terminologies,

the special education terminologies into Spanish officially, so that everyone will know how, what the terminologies are in Spanish and make everybody's lives a little bit easier.

That's something to come hopefully within the next year or so. We will be with you in five to ten minutes. Estaremos con usted en cinco o diez minutos. We are awaiting a return call from the interpreter. Estamos esperando la llamada del intérprete. The interpreter is on the way. El intérprete está en camino. So there's a couple words which totally stick out here. Intérprete.

WOMAN: . . . I'll call you back.

HERNANDEZ: I'll call you back. Okay. We'll keep that in mind when it's updated. Absolutely. If you're speaking over the phone. I think this was meant more so for physical, physically walking into your building.

WOMAN: Can you just call me back right now?

HERNANDEZ: Sure, sure. I'll call you back. Te llamare luego.

DUCKETT: Luego. Is that what you said? Are you writing it phonetically?

HERNANDEZ: Okay. Okay. L-I-u-e-g-o. That's the Spanish, and that's the short way of saying it. That's just saying I'll call you later, so that that way they'll know they're going to get a return call. Okay.

DUCKETT: And I think it's really important to emphasize the fact that you should not be embarrassed about making mistakes and saying it incorrectly, because it's the effort that really shows the parent that you respect them, and I think that's really important. So if you have your card in front of you, and you're doing like this, it's okay, because I know that's what I would need.

HERNANDEZ: Yeah. That's been a barrier for the Hispanics in this country and continues to be a barrier, and, because they're afraid. They're afraid to speak in English, because they're afraid to be ridiculed. They're afraid that if they say it wrong, someone is going to laugh at them and ridicule them. There's such a thing as constructive criticism, but, unfortunately, it isn't always done the right way.

So what we have to make sure is that they'll see that you're making mistakes in their language, and that's okay. And most of the time what you're going to get back is they're just going to tell you how to say it the right way, which is just going to help you in the learning process of Spanish.

And it's going to tell them that it's okay for me to try too, because they're trying. So it's going to create that two-way street that we're looking for, once they see that you have the very same difficulties that they face every day in their lives.

DUCKETT: Okay. All right. I'm sorry, Anna, what time is it? Okay. So what, we have a question.

WOMAN: You talked about having interpreters that correctly interpret . . . are you going to have . . . IEP meetings that we can take back with us . . . so that our interpreters have a tool to use . . .

DUCKETT: That's a suggestion that I will definitely take back.

WOMAN: Yeah, because. . . when the parents come in the door or actually during the meeting. And, you know, and you also have to be careful, because a lot of times children are used as interpreters. The district wants to, but oftentimes the families . . . they'll bring in a friend, or they'll bring in a relative or something like that. And yet you want to communicate those words . . .

HERNANDEZ: Yes. And that's one of the reasons the federal government has decided to translate their terminologies into Spanish, so that that way, everyone can at least have the terminologies on a more universal base as opposed to everyone translating it differently.

There's so many ways of translating something, and that doesn't mean that one way is correct, and the other way is incorrect. It just means that there's different ways of interpreting and translating. So that's going to help with that very same question that you had. And as we roll this out, I will definitely share that information with PaTTAN.

DUCKETT: Well, we wanted to have some time for you to practice on your own, to like pair up with someone.

WOMAN: We had one more question.

DUCKETT: I'm sorry.

WOMAN: I was just curious about the . . . j sound with the double l. Is that . . .

HERNANDEZ: It's the J sound, yes.

WOMAN: . . .

HERNANDEZ: Well, and I'll tell you why. That's cultural right there. You said the key word. For Spaniards, they use the Y. So in most of the books that were written, it will say the Y, but it's not, but for the Hispanics that you're working with here in America, it's the J. So, you know, for the most part, most of the Spaniards here in America would say jo not yo. Okay?

But that is something that my daughter was struggling with in school, because her teacher is Anglo-American, has learned Spanish through the books, you know, and she's teaching the Y sound. So she tells me, mom, that's wrong, and she corrects the teacher every so often, and I'm like touché.

She is her mother's daughter after all. But, however, you know, it is a cultural issue. I mean, it isn't that it's wrong, it's just that here, for the most part, America, they all use the J sound.

WOMAN: Yeah. And every time I've been taught Spanish, like I was taught by an Anglo, you know, the Spaniard way . . . every time I was corrected in something that was taught previously. So whether I was taught by a Cuban or an Argentinean, or when I lived in Mexico or Bolivia, I had to learn to make some of the adjustments. But the point is I think that it does carry through no matter what you do. So if you slip up, and you use it without, they don't lose the meaning.

HERNANDEZ: Yes, yes. And roll your R's and say your S's. Can anybody go rrrrrr?

WOMAN: I do have another question. Again, I'm . . . as well, and I notice that you switch back between the formal and the informal tense when you're talking to people . . . a form of address. Will people be offended if you were to, for example, use the informal?

HERNANDEZ: You say tú instead of usted, for example? I think, for the most part, they're just going to be happy that they can understand. Okay? No. I can come in from a Hispanic, Puerto Ricans, for example, we're more informal with that word. We use the word tú a lot more, where a Spaniard would use usted a lot more.

WOMAN: And most of American culture is . . . we would prefer to be addressed . . . you are not familiar with that person as usted . . . you know, when you say you have to come here tomorrow and it is the first time you see him, they expect . . .

HERNANDEZ: Usted . . . yes.

WOMAN: . . . that's, again, it's mostly just a way that people address people . . .

HERNANDEZ: But, for the most part, people will not get offended. People understand that, you know, the most important piece of this whole thing is that you're trying, that they see that there is an effort, and that you're being humanized just like they have been, and they feel that they're on the same level.

Because there's no way that we can work with parents or anyone, or parents can work with teachers if we feel we're at different levels. We have to be equals, and that's one of the most important things that we all have to learn. We're all equals. I'm a parent in front of you, sure . . . but I am a parent of a child with disabilities first and foremost, you know.

Teri is an educator at heart, you know. She's also a parent, but she's an educator at heart. But we've been able to work together with PaTTAN, with staff, with everyone. Why? Because we're equals. We see each other as equals. I don't think I'm any more important than Teri, and Teri doesn't believe she's any more important or knowledgeable.

We look at everything, and we work at things together and really look at what I know and what she knows and put it together. And that's the most beautiful part of this whole process is being able to create that togetherness.

WOMAN: Another suggestion on the pamphlet we have. I love the little pictures at the bottom, but I think it would confuse someone to put the acronym out so that it's identified, not just the acronym.

HERNANDEZ: Okay. Because HUNE stands for Hispanics United for Exceptional Children in English, and in Spanish it's Hispanos Unidos para Niños Exceptionales. Long and very often misconstrued, because then parents think, or people think that we only work with Hispanics, and that's not real. We work with any parent and/or educator or professional who needs assistance or wants to work with us. But, yes, we will definitely keep that in mind.

DUCKETT: Okay. Yes? That's all right.

WOMAN: . . . interpreters for that . . . hearing folks go through a training process. Is there any training opportunities for interpreters that can come into our schools and work with IEPs and, you know, in my former job, I was . . . so confused that the parents left . . . thought their child was mentally ill instead of had, you know . . . you know, it was very confusing.

HERNANDEZ: Unfortunately, interpreting and the translation world has not evolved as nicely as we need it to evolve. There are courses at different . . . universities, online courses. University of Denver offers online courses for interpreting and translations, however, you do have to have a bachelor's degree to be able to get into those classes.

The University of New York also offers courses in interpreting and translations online as well for professionals, and then there's the, there's no real accreditation process. You don't have to be accredited to practice interpreting and translations. There are some, of course, but there's not, it's not mandatory for you to practice it.

That is something that is one of my pet peeves. That people really need to start creating a certification program and a process or a training process, so that that way all interpreters are, you know, able to translate correctly.

WOMAN: Like they do with the hearing impaired.

HERNANDEZ: Exactly.

WOMAN: I think . . . also Philadelphia has a course.

HERNANDEZ: They do. They do. But that's in, that's not online. There are many universities who offer it as well. I shouldn't say many. There's a couple of universities that offer that as a major, but they're not online, which creates a barrier for some of our professionals if we're talking, that's why I mentioned the online ones, because

regardless of where you are in Pennsylvania or nationally, you can still take those courses. Any other questions?

DUCKETT: Well, I don't think we have too much time left to practice. I think you all asked those questions to avoid having to practice. Just kidding. It worked. But, anyway, just to finish things off.

There are some key things that I think are important for schools to take into consideration, and that is to be sure that any handouts or any publications that are going home, that they also need to be written in Spanish for our parents, our Hispanic parents to understand. And any of the policies that schools have really need to be laid out. I know I hear a key complaint about Hispanic students and attendance.

Well, it's really important, I think, that the school makes a real effort to assure that the parents really understand the attendance requirements. So I think that's really important to remind everyone of and to make sure that, we already spoke about the fact that we need a competent interpreter. Okay. All right. Were there any other questions? Thank you for attending.

HERNANDEZ: Thank you very much.