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To be a good reader, students
with multiple language exposure
must practice harder at only
their English skills.



Brain and Language Laboratory for Neuroimaging

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Dr. Laura-Ann Petitto, Scientific Director

www.gallaudet.edu/petitto | vl2.gallaudet.edu



- ▶ To be a good reader in English, students gain great benefits from having competence and practice in the multiple languages to which they have been exposed.
- ▶ Most common across these studies is that all children need access to the patterning at the heart of language in early life to facilitate a cascade of other developments that are central to learning vocabulary, language learning, and reading success.
- ▶ Research shows that early sign-exposed deaf children have a larger vocabulary size in English and at a younger age, and are ready to write letters earlier, because of early experience with sign language and its patterning. In fact, these students are bolstered by their proficiency in ASL and fingerspelling patterning, which in turn strengthens their literacy skills in English. Surprisingly, some early sign-exposed deaf children have been observed to become faster and more accurate readers in English as compared to monolingual hearing peers.

Implications: Exclusive focus on drilling in only one language, e.g., English, is not optimal. Building language skills in each of a child's languages (e.g., Spanish and English) will provide powerful reading advantages in English. Likewise, building ASL and English skills in a young deaf child will provide the same powerful reading advantages in English.