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Bilingualism vs. Special Needs: The Methods and Critiques of Diagnosing Language Acquisition Issues vs. Special Needs

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Poster Presentation ES

**BILINGUALISM VS. SPECIAL NEEDS: THE METHODS AND CRITIQUES OF
DIAGNOSING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION ISSUES VS. SPECIAL NEEDS**

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Many English language learners (ELLs) who are having trouble learning a second language are incorrectly labeled as having special needs. This paper reviews and critiques the assessment methods for diagnosing language acquisition issues so that ELLs are correctly placed in an educational setting. The review analyzes the most relevant research about bilingual special education. First, the terminology associated with the field and preliminary problems are defined and explained. Then, the major themes are discussed, including the disproportionality of English Language Learners in special education programs, the effect of learning environment, level of understanding of the first language, and assessment. Despite the amount of research, there are no clear solutions to the problem of misdiagnosing ELLs. The review concludes that additional research needs to be done and new practices need to be instilled. Findings support the need to improve the manner in which students are tested and placed in special services. Furthermore, creating a better system that will place ELLs in the correct type of program will create a better environment for all students.