Chapter 4

Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners

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The research base shows that attending to the social, emotional, and cognitive skills of dual language learners in early childhood enhances their schooling experiences. Children from linguistic minority households also require language instruction, which is sensitive to their unique backgrounds. Instruction in oral language proficiency, vocabulary, and pre-literacy skills provides a strong foundation for later success. In particular, it is crucial that educators understand how best to effectively support the home language so that early literacy can be fostered in the home as well as school.

—BALLANTYNE, SANDEERMAN, D'EMILIO, & MCLAUGHLIN, 2008, P. 35

77

Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you will be able to:

1. List and explain the components of research-based best practices for young dual language learners (DLLs).

2. Describe the specific instructional enhancements that promote oral language development based on the POLL approach.

3. Explain how to conduct observational assessments and use assessment data for instructional planning.

4. Discuss the importance of engaging dual language families and describe several effective outreach activities.

WHAT ARE *BEST PRACTICES* WHEN TEACHING YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS?

As with all young children, those who are acquiring English as their second language need to develop certain language, cognitive, socioemotional, motor, and general knowledge skills in order to succeed and thrive in an academic environment. In addition, young DLLs need to learn basic language and literacy skills in a new language. All states have identified the key competencies typical of children who are making progress toward being ready for kindergarten and defined these in their early learning standards. In most states, these learning expectations are defined and assessed in English. Only a few states (e.g., California and Alaska) and the Federal Head Start Program have specific guidelines for preschool DLLs and encourage programs to support and assess skills and abilities in a language other than English.

Basically, most research suggests that during the preschool years DLLs are capable of and benefit from learning a second language and that those DLLs who are making progress in their English language development (ELD) are better prepared to succeed in kindergarten. Therefore, it is imperative that all preschool programs have policies and practices that support both the ongoing development of home languages while also promoting the acquisition of English. This can be accomplished through several program models from a full two-way dual language program to an English instructional program that supports home language, but does not use the home language(s) for instruction.

This chapter focuses on the specific classroom, instructional, assessment, and parental engagement practices that extend the research described throughout the earlier chapters into teacher practices. For many years, our profession has suffered from the lack of "procedural knowledge" on best practices for young DLLs. The goal of this chapter is to fill that gap and present specific, practical strategies that all early childhood education (ECE) teachers, curriculum supervisors, and related staff can implement. The primary audience of this chapter is monolingual English-speaking teachers and curriculum supervisors who have children in their classrooms who speak languages other than English.

> There is a scientific consensus that children have the capacity to learn two lan-guages from birth and that this early dual language exposure does not confuse children or delay development in either language. In fact, dual language learn-ing provides children with many cognitive and linguistic benefits. DLL children should be provided with high quality language experiences and support to master both of their languages. An excellent way to provide children with high-quality language experiences is in prepared social settings in which chil-dren practice their new language with proficient speakers of that language. Parents should also be encouraged to continue to use their home language during daily interactions (Sandhofer & Uchikoshi, 2013).

IMPORTANCE OF GOALS

We have found that one of the most important steps for early childhood pro-grams is to collectively decide on explicit language goals for their DLLs. This process of developing a shared vision and program-wide consensus on the desired outcomes serves as a useful reference point when making decisions about specific strategies. Without such clearly stated and explicit goals, many programs migrate toward practices that promote rapid English acquisition at the expense of the child's home language, or they sometimes resort to a haphazard approach with no clear direction. Much recent research has found that the home language and cultural practices of young DLL children are fragile and suscepti-ble to dominance by the English language and mainstream culture (Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004).

Many well-intentioned early childhood teachers and administrators have implicit beliefs about the value of immersing the child in English versus main-taining the child's home language as the road to academic success. (See Challenging Common Myths About DLL Children discussed in Chapter 3 and available at fcd-us.org/resources/prek-3rd-challenging-common-myths-about-dual-language-learners-update-seminal-2008-report). These deeply held beliefs about the role of home language and the early acquisition of English can uncon-sciously influence the classroom teacher's use of language and send messages to the children about which language is more highly valued.

One large citywide preschool program that the first author worked with over 2 years had an enrollment of over 90% Spanish-speaking children from low-income homes. The staff professed a desire to support the children's home language and incorporated many multicultural activities, Spanish language books, and culturally appropriate materials. However, during the second year, when she videotaped their daily lessons and activities, she found that 80% to 90% of the students' instructional and academic language interactions were in English. The most striking finding from the videotapes was that the staff, all of whom were fluent in Spanish and English, spoke almost exclusively in English during the instructional time (small group, large group, and individual tutoring), and they used Spanish mainly for transitions, group management, and simple

directions. For example, the teacher might tell the child "venga aqui" (come here) and then commence to instruct the child in English. For example, the teacher might say, "We are going to write in your journal now. What did you see at the zoo yesterday?" While this emphasis on English language instruction might help foster English achievement, it is also sending messages about the value of each language that may eventually contribute to home language loss. Of course, it is important to systematically introduce preschool children to English (see Chapter 3 for discussion of cognitive benefits of early bilingualism), but it is also important to intentionally integrate the home language throughout the curriculum. This chapter presents specific recommendations for ECE teachers on how to scaffold English language interactions to increase comprehension while also supporting and building upon the home language.

A program that has qualified bilingual staff and bilingual resources might decide to implement a dual language program and agree to the following language goal:

> All children in ABC program will learn two languages. The native English speakers will learn Spanish (or Japanese, Chinese, or Vietnamese, etc.) and the dual language learners will learn English while continuing to develop their home language. Our goal is for all children to eventually become bilingual and biliterate and to function competently in a multicultural setting.

In contrast, a program whose children speak many different languages and has few, if any, qualified bilingual educators might decide on the following goal for the DLL children enrolled:

> The language of instruction in XYZ Preschool shall be primarily English. In addition, XYZ Preschool believes in the value of supporting the ongoing development of each DLL child's home language and family culture. Instructional activities, classroom materials, family interactions, and all communications shall respect, value, and incorporate the home language and culture to the maximum extent possible.

Once all staff members have thoroughly discussed the language goals for DLL children, then specific instructional methods and materials, curriculum approaches, and assessment procedures can be designed. This explicit statement of language goals for young DLLs will turn out to be critical as the program decides on the primary language of instruction, methods to support each child's home language, how to assess progress, and outreach approaches to families who may speak a different language and hold distinct cultural values. We have found that educators' beliefs matter; in fact, their deeply held beliefs and attitudes toward language development—and whether or not they believe that being exposed to more than one language will confuse a preschool child

and delay English acquisition or contribute to overall cognitive growth and English fluency—will influence how they respond to each child's attempts to communicate and color their daily interactions.

> *Unless you believe "in your bones" that having a second language in addition to English is a gift, and not a disadvantage, and diversity is a resource, not a problem to be solved, you are likely to respond to DLL children in ways that discourage the continued use of their home language—especially if you are not fluent in the child's home language.*

First Steps: Getting to Know *Who* You Are Teaching

Ideally, DLLs will learn English *in addition to* the language they first learned at home; learning English does not have to mean losing their home language. Teachers can support this goal by using specific strategies that *intentionally activate knowledge and concepts in the home language* and then explicitly help the child transfer this knowledge to the new language, English. But before teachers can specifically address instructional strategies for DLLs, they must first get to know the child. In order to better understand each child's exposure to and use of both the home language and English, teachers will need to gather formal and informal information on their students' backgrounds and early language learning experiences as well as abilities.

THINK ABOUT . . . ADMINISTERING A FAMILY LANGUAGES AND INTERESTS INTERVIEW   In Figure 4.1, we provide a sample Family Languages and Interests Interview that teachers can use to begin the discussion and partnership with parents. It is intended as a tool to help teachers concisely collect relevant information about a child's early language learning environment and better understand the child's development from the parents' perspective. It will also help teachers form partnerships with families centered on common educational goals for their children. This survey tells us whether or not and to what extent the child is exposed to languages other than English in the home environment. Some surveys only ask if the parents/guardians speak English to their child. However, this question may be culturally biased, since in many cultures the main caregivers for young children are grandparents, and they may provide more linguistic input than the child's parents. A good home language survey not only determines what language the child speaks with his or her parents, but also asks what other language(s) the child may be hearing and using.

- The home language interview should be administered in a collaborative face-to-face session in the parent or guardian's primary language. An interpreter may be required if no one on staff is proficient in the family's preferred/dominant language. These family interviews can usually be completed in 30 minutes or less and ideally should be scheduled close to

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **81**

CHILD'S NAME: _____   **Date:** _____

                              First   **Middle**   **Last**

Date of Birth: _____   **Gender:** ☐ **Male** ☐ **Female** **Age:** _____

                Month   **Day**   **Year**

1. How many family members live with you and the child? _____

2. Who are the members of your family? _____

3. Who is the primary caregiver of your child? _____

4. What language does the primary caregiver speak most often with the child? _____

5. What language did your child learn when he or she first began to talk? _____

6. Please tell me what language(s) each of the following people in your household uses when speaking to your child.

	Only English	Mostly English, some other language (identify)	Mostly other language (identify), some English	Only other language (identify)
Mother (or you)				
Father (or you)				
Older siblings				
Grandmother				
Grandfather				
Aunt/Uncle				
Others, after school, community members				

7. What are your feelings about maintaining your home language? _____
_____

8. What special talents or interests does your child have? _____
_____

9. Who does your child play with most often? _____

10. What are your hopes and dreams for your child? _____
_____

11. What are your expectations for the preschool year? _____
_____

12. Do you have any hobbies or interests that you would like to share with your child's class? _____

13. Would you be interested in volunteering in your child's class? _____

14. If yes, preferred day and time _____

FIGURE 4.1 Sample Family Languages and Interests Survey

the beginning of the school year or when the child enrolls. (In some cases, it will also be necessary to provide the information orally, since parents or guardians may not have the literacy skills to complete a written version of the form in their primary language).
• It is important to ask when a child was born as well as the child's age (in some Asian cultures, age is calculated differently than it is in the United States).
• It is important to ask about the significant people the child spends much of his/her time with and what language they speak together.
• Remember that this is an opportunity to begin a conversation with parents about the unique talents and characteristics of their child—and to initiate a partnership on behalf of a young, eager DLL.

Developing Instructional Goals for Young Dual Language Learners

With this information about the child and family background in place, teachers can begin to create a working plan that will promote the academic goals and provide the emotional support of every DLL child. This working plan comprises key components of teaching and learning that are at the heart of creating an appropriate program for all students.

When planning an effective instructional program, teachers begin by looking at the standards and objectives of each content area by specific age or grade level. State and district learning objectives, foundations, frameworks, and standards provide valuable guidance when creating long-range and short-term goals (i.e., pre-K early learning standards/foundations). The federal Head Start program, some states, and local districts also have specific guidelines and objectives for DLLs (i.e., Illinois and California standards for DLLs), which guide teachers to intentionally focus on ELD while also supporting each child's home language.

For example, the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1 (2008) includes a whole learning domain focused on ELD. The first strand of it, Listening, starts with the objective for DLLs, "Attend to English oral language in both real and pretend activity, relying on intonation, facial expressions, or the gestures of the speaker" (California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1, 2008, p. 112). This learning expectation states both what teachers should look for in DLL children's development that indicates the child is acquiring English as well as a goal to promote during instruction. The revised Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (2010) also has a new domain focused on ELD for DLLs. In this domain, Head Start has included three elements: *Receptive English Language Skills; Expressive English Language Skills;* and *Participating and Engaging in English Literacy Activities: Understanding and Responding to Books, Story-Telling, and Songs Presented in English*. This updated framework also provides guidance to programs on setting instructional goals for children and assessing progress. In both examples, it is clear that the young DLL child does not necessarily come to our programs with these

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **83**

language and literacy abilities, but must be systematically instructed on English language skills.

The following example in Figure 4.2 illustrates how a teacher can use specific information from observations of a DLL child's language usage to plan for the "next steps." The instructional goals included in the plan reflect the state learning expectations for preschool ELD. At this stage, the teacher understands the child's language abilities in English, the process of second language acquisition (see Chapter 3), and is able to formulate appropriate instructional goals.

English Language Development Instructional Goals

Student: Carolina XXXXX

ELD Measure	Date(s) Observed	Observations	Teacher Reflection Appropriate Instructional Goals
Begin to use English vocabulary, mainly consisting of concrete nouns and with some verbs and pronouns (telegraphic speech).	10/20 10/22 10/26	• Mouths "tar" after peers chorally say "star" when I point to a picture of a star during circle time and asks, "What is this?" • Names many animals featured in the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* after hearing it read aloud several times • Names common objects aloud in English, such as "juice," "blocks," and "music"	• **Scaffold communication by combining English words with some type of body gesture or visual cue.** • **Be thoughtful about helping children understand what words mean** (e.g., explaining, defining, showing). • **Plan for vocabulary development.** Identify key vocabulary words to be introduced in pre-teaching groups used in both formal and informal activities. Connect vocabulary words to a visual aid or a gesture. Use key vocabulary words throughout the day to help connect concepts. • **Expand and extend the child's language.** Listen for Carolina using English and extend and expand upon her words. For example, if she says "car," I ask, "Oh, you want the red car?"; or if she says, "more," at the snack table, I will point to the milk and ask, "Do you want more *milk* or more *orange juice*?"

FIGURE 4.2 Receptive Language Measure: Vocabulary Development

Source: Based on English Language Development Standards, Measures, and Instructional Goals taken from California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1 and California Curriculum Framework, Volume 1

Culturally Responsive and Emotionally Supportive Climate

Since we know that culture and language and learning are intertwined and that young children need to feel closely connected to the language and culture of their home, all classrooms with DLLs need to reflect and be responsive to their students' cultures and languages. Culturally responsive classrooms have teachers who specifically acknowledge the presence of culturally and linguistically diverse students and the need for these students to feel comfortable, accepted, safe, and intellectually engaged. In such programs, teachers recognize the strengths and needs of their students and develop instructional approaches that will support these areas. In doing so, teachers create a climate that recognizes the unique characteristics of each child while setting common goals. The Family Languages and Interests Interview form will help begin the process of learning more about each child's and family's cultural beliefs and values. As stated earlier, teachers with DLLs need to systematically and intentionally promote English language acquisition while also providing support and attention to the child's home language and culture.

Emotionally warm and supportive classrooms convey to children that they are valued and cared for; each child is respected, understood, encouraged, and challenged. Culturally sensitive and responsive classrooms are those that have

Opportunities for children to share family experiences in school support the importance of building home and school connections.

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners   **85**

engaging centers and displays with culturally familiar pictures and materials in addition to quiet spaces so that children have a place to go to interact with others or to have some time alone. For DLLs, it is especially important to display environmental print, materials, and resources that are labeled in their home language and English and reflect the daily environments they recognize. Family photos depicting important traditions such as births, family gatherings, and celebrations provide important linkages between the home and school settings. Maintaining daily routines and procedures also build trust between teacher and student so that DLLs in particular begin to feel comfortable and safe in their learning environment.

Classroom Environment—Setting the Stage

The physical environment of the classroom sets the stage for active and engaged learning. It conveys a crucial message to students that they will be safe, nurtured, and comfortable there. They feel from the moment they walk through the door that fun and interesting things will happen in this room. The physical environment also creates learning spaces that can support instructional goals. When children have room and materials to build, create, collaborate, discuss, and practice what they are learning, the curriculum will come alive and learning will be deepened.

Here are some ideas to get you started in the process of creating your early learning environment. This will be a guide for your reference and consideration.

DECISION MAKING AND CONSIDERATIONS: WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? HOW?
Before you begin to create your learning environment, consider viewing your space at the level of a child, particularly, a DLL. Observing the space through the eyes of a child will help guide your decisions about furniture, accessibility, utility, and whether this space is welcoming and instructive for a child who has limited English language skills. Several key questions will guide you:

Think About . . .

Who? Who am I serving in this space? What needs might they have? What languages do they speak and what is familiar to their lived experiences? What interests do they have? What talents, skills, customs are important to their families?

What? What should go into my spaces? Do my materials, puzzles, books, displays, realia, etc., represent and reflect culturally familiar themes and objects to my students?

Where? Where will I place my learning spaces? Where will large and small group gatherings take place? Where will noisy and quiet areas be so that they minimize distractions and maximize active learning?

When? When will I utilize space and specific areas—at specific times or throughout the day? Will children flow through the room and transition to and from designated areas with ease?

How? How am I utilizing areas and space? How will I modify or adjust the environment to meet the needs of my students? How does my space value and support DLLs?

Label classroom supplies, designated spaces, and key furniture in English and home languages of children. Color coding and photos provide additional support for all learners.

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **87**

Think About . . .

Ways to support DLLs when creating the classroom environment:

- All areas should be labeled in both English and home languages of children. (Color-coding each language and pairing text with a photo works best.)
- Visual displays should represent the languages, cultures, and family practices of the children enrolled in the classroom (include greetings, alphabets, daily schedules/routines).
- Children's photos and names (written in the home language and English) can be placed at designated spaces for their work/belongings.
- Family posters, cultural regalia, and "All About My Family" projects can be displayed in a designated area throughout the year. (Teachers: share and display your history and cultural heritage first to provide a model, share your background, and build rapport with your students.)
- Offer opportunities for students to help you "read" the room labels in the multiple languages represented.
- Provide books and materials that authentically represent the cultures, lived experiences, and languages of your children and families. Family members can help you understand and read them, or, if possible, a child can explain the meaning of a book, picture, or illustration.
- Incorporate word walls, cognate charts, greetings, and routines with pictorial supports in the languages of the children and families on the classroom.

Designing a learning environment that works best for your students is an ongoing process. Some spaces and interest areas can be introduced at the beginning of the year while others would be more relevant later. The areas that are more permanent will have materials that might change frequently by adding tasks or components that shift in level of complexity and difficulty. Teachers can also add specific books, pictures, activities, and materials to centers that will reinforce and extend the weekly themes and topics. By knowing the language and learning needs and strengths of the DLL children, as well as the specific instructional goals planned for each child, teachers can make adjustments as necessary. The classroom will be an enriching experience for all of the children from the moment they walk through the door.

Label Classroom Objects in Both Languages

Labeling classroom objects will allow DLLs to better understand their immediate surroundings and to visually connect written language with the objects they represent. These labels will also assist you when explaining or giving directions. Start with everyday items, such as "door/puerta/門," "book/libro/書," and "chair/silla/椅子." Be sure to include languages spoken by your students. Teachers can also display additional print based on student needs and interest—for example, displays of child-generated stories in English and the home language or restaurant menus in multiple languages in the dramatic play area. Teachers can display schedules, signs, and directions with both words and pictures or symbols, so young DLLs can start to connect the printed word with the action in the home language and understand that it is a different word in English.

Co-creating dual language word walls with your children will provide multiple interactive opportunities to identify common patterns of language while developing meaning.

VISUAL CUES AND STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS   Visual cues support all children but are especially effective for the DLL. They support and increase both receptive and expressive communication by providing a visual map to follow. Just as adults use handheld devices, calendars, and "to do" lists to enhance memory, children also benefit from visual reminders. The static nature of visual information helps students remember what is expected because they remain present after words are spoken.

Visuals serve as a reminder of the verbal direction and as a cue when children begin to repeat and remember directions. In addition, visuals assist children in knowing exactly what is expected of them (e.g., washing hands independently, cleaning up toys).

Labeling classroom procedures helps children connect written language with concrete visual representation.

Regular routines, when represented visually, can be taught to children at a very young age. Teachers can include the languages of the students to reinforce vocabulary in their home language and English. Once taught, the teacher can fade out of the routine and allow the child to self-monitor the routine to completion. Visual supports are most beneficial when used in conjunction with spoken languages that are representative of students in the classroom.

Picture Tips

1. Remember that DLLs communicate and understand at **different levels**.
2. Determine your child's **"visual stage"** (or combination of):
   • **Object Stage:** use of actual objects and items for communication needs.
   • **Photo Stage:** use of real photographs (photo, digital, scanned, magazines, catalogs) for communication needs.
   • **Picture Symbolic Stage:** use of colored line drawings (hand drawn or commercially produced) for communication needs.
   • **Text Stage:** use of written words and/or numbers for communication needs.
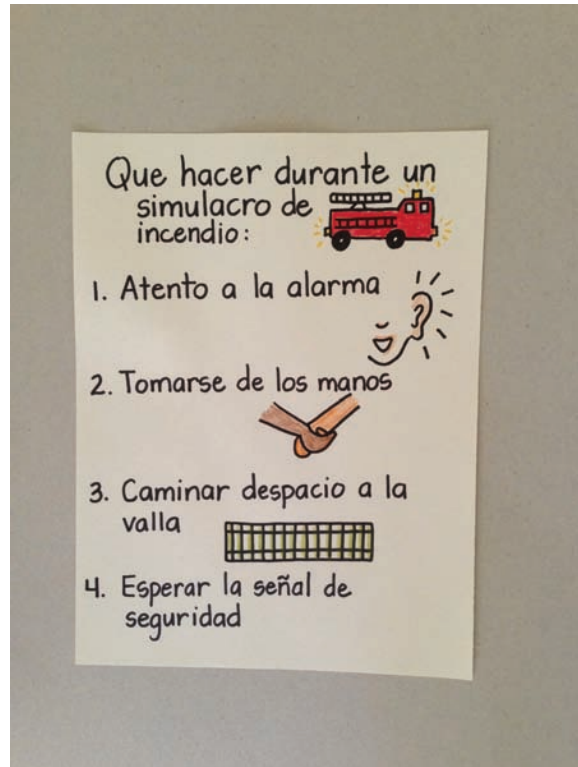
Use written text in multiple languages paired with pictures as a teaching tool to help support students in learning important classroom routines and procedures.

3. Use **written text** (in multiple languages) along with photographs, pictures, and line drawings to promote reading.

4. Present **visuals** from left to right. (Horizontal orientation will also prepare the child for reading.)

5. **Pictures** can be obtained from a variety of places: photographs, camera, digital images, computer scanning, magazines, catalogs, coupons, advertisements, Internet sites, commercial computer programs, etc.

Think About . . .

- a balance of active and quiet times during the day
- a developmentally appropriate length of time in teacher-led activities
- opportunities to learn and practice language and academic skills individually and in small groups
- sufficient time for child-initiated individual and group activities
- visual support so DLLs can navigate a daily schedule and know what to do next

M04_ESPI7854_02_SE_C04.indd Page 91 20/05/14 8:28 PM /207/PH01412/9780133017854_ESPINOSA/ESPINOSA_GETTING_IT_RIGHT_FOR_YOUNG_CHILDREN2 .

Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **91**

The daily schedule should reflect opportunities for group interaction and dialogue throughout the day to promote language development.

The Daily Schedule

When designing your schedule to support DLLs, build in multiple opportunities for small group and child-initiated learning time. During this time, children interact with peers, practice their emerging English skills, and build important social relationships. They develop vocabulary and language through conversations with you and their peers, gaining skills and confidence with a support system. Provide time for children to explore materials and engage in peer activities on their own terms without the worry of producing new language before they are ready.

INCLUDE TIME FOR CHILD PLANNING AND REFLECTION

Consider building into the daily routine a plan-do-review (P-D-R) sequence. P-D-R is a process in which children make choices about what they will do (the PLAN). During small groups time, all children decide what area of the classroom

they will "work/play" in during child-initiated time of the day; they talk about which center they will go to, perhaps the materials they will need, what they plan on doing while there, and maybe even who will be with them. They can dictate their plan, write it out with adult support, or discuss the details with their group. Then they go to interesting learning centers that are equipped with science, art, literacy, dramatic play, or other engaging materials, possibly hang up their name tag, and implement their plan (the DO). Finally, after an extended work/play time, they reflect upon their work back in their original small groups and perhaps show a product or discuss what happened during P-D-R time with an adult and peers (the REVIEW). Many ECE curricula incorporate a P-D-R sequence into their daily schedule because it supports children as they learn how to make decisions, regulate their own behavior, meet complex challenges, and take responsibility for their actions.

Some call it play planning, others call it choice time, but essentially it is a good way to help children think in more decontextualized time frames—anticipate what will happen, engage in active learning that is focused on their own initiative, and then analyze and reflect about what has occurred at an earlier time. These skills are particularly important for DLLs.

Using planning sheets like the one in Figure 4.3 will help guide this process for all students while supporting DLLs who may not be quite ready to articulate their plan in English. The children can dictate or write their plans on the lines before they go to centers, which helps them anticipate and think about the future. Then after the work/play time, they can draw a picture showing what they did on the open space below the lines—or if they are ready, they can again dictate or write out what happened during work/play time. Remember, this planning activity should allow the DLL child to use either the home language

Nombre: _____	Name: _____
Fecha: _____	Date: _____
Hoy Yo. . . .	Today I plan to. . . .
_____	_____
_____	_____
Esto es lo que hice. . . .	This is what I did today. . . .
_____	_____
_____	_____

FIGURE 4.3 Planning Sheets

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **93**

or English—or in some cases both languages (see discussion of code-switching in Chapter 3).

The "planning" activity fosters both the cognitive skill of anticipating the future, and the language skill of dictating or writing one's intentional goals for the "doing." These thinking, reasoning, speaking, and writing skills can be conducted in any language in which the child feels capable—the most important part is the activity. The extended "doing" part of P-D-R allows DLLs the time to interact with specifically chosen materials to carry out an intention. Most frequently they are cooperative activities that require DLLs to use their emerging bilingual abilities to negotiate rules, share materials, coordinate imaginative play, and/or extend the academic themes introduced by the teacher. These are also times for teachers and staff to listen and observe DLLs for their use of language, mastery of academic content, and social competencies. The review part gives children an opportunity to reflect on what happened, what they accomplished, and what, if any, problems they encountered. This process is similar to the teachers' reflective practices—we can all learn more and improve by thinking about what has just happened and what went right or wrong.

ORAL LANGUAGE SUPPORT, INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, AND ADDITIONAL ENHANCEMENTS FOR DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Oral language skills play a crucial role in long-term literacy and cognitive development for all students, but are especially critical for young dual language students. We now know that most young DLLs learn the necessary code-related skills important to early literacy, such as letter sounds and knowledge of the alphabet, but have a much harder time developing the oral language abilities like extended English vocabulary and grammatical knowledge needed to understand complex text. Therefore, daily instruction must provide targeted and responsive opportunities for young DLLs to listen to, comprehend, and practice—across classroom contexts—the vocabulary and concepts integral to oral language development.

Language development is not isolated and restricted to a topic or time of the day; rather, students should be encouraged and provided with extensive opportunities to practice language skills all day long. In response to the instructional need for a robust and comprehensive oral language support program, teachers can implement Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL) strategies (Espinosa, Matera, & Magruder, 2010).

Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning (POLL) Strategies

The needs of DLLs are best met in classroom settings where teachers consistently use teaching practices that focus on building students' vocabulary, productive language, and comprehension skills. Research shows that typical instruction (even high-quality reading instruction) is not enough for DLLs and that additional focused enhancements should be embedded in teachers' daily

instructional practice in order for the students to succeed academically (August & Shanahan, 2006; Goldenberg, 2013). The following POLL strategies are based on current research on effective instructional approaches for young DLLs. Instructional approaches that have been linked to improved academic achievement have been integrated into a set of strategies that all ECE teachers, monolingual or bilingual, can implement to improve young DLLs' oral language abilities.

With that in mind, teachers must implement activities and strategies to become familiar with children's early language learning environment and cultural background, and then teachers must learn how to systematically incorporate children's home language into targeted language activities that build on what the child knows conceptually and linguistically in order to facilitate the language transfer into English (Espinosa, 2010).

Important Features of POLL That Promote Learning for Young Dual Language Learners

FAMILY LANGUAGES AND INTERESTS INTERVIEW As described earlier, at the beginning of the school year, teachers meet with parents to learn critical information about the child and family using the Family Language (s) and Interests Interview (see Figure 4.1). This information will support teachers in developing culturally and linguistically responsive instruction as well as in identifying potential parent/community volunteers for ongoing classroom support. This survey should not be sent home for parents to complete, but rather it should be used as a guide during a face-to-face conversation with parents. Meeting with parents soon after the child enrolls and engaging in a meaningful conversation about their child will contribute to a successful school-family partnership.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS ECE teachers understand the importance of providing a rich, nurturing, and engaging language environment where language learning is integrated into general learning about important concepts with layers of support for DLLs. As described earlier, classrooms include interest areas/centers designed to support and promote conversations around exploration and discovery as well as books, materials, displays, and artifacts that comprise all cultures, languages, families, and communities of students and allow children opportunities to apply and practice the skills they are learning in during the teacher-directed instructional time.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT USING POLL STRATEGIES THROUGHOUT THE DAY Through both formal and informal assessments and observations, teachers gather data to determine language levels and developmental skills of the students (see section on assessment later). Knowing children's proficiency levels in their home language and in English will help make informed decisions about what specific strategies to implement in order to build on what the
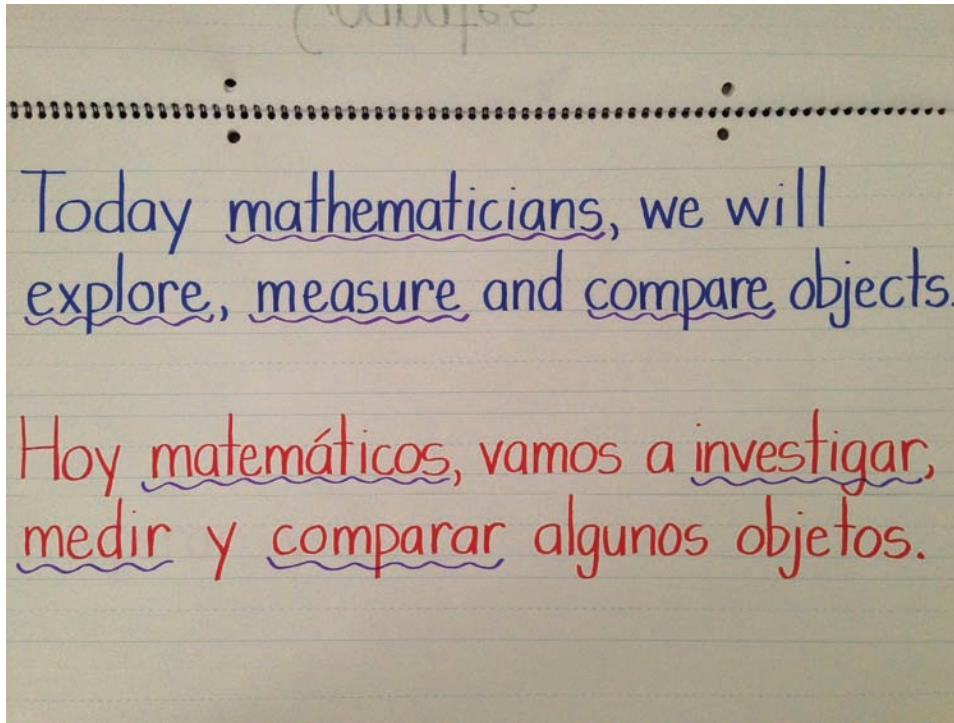
Intentional messages, embedded with content and academic vocabulary, can be used throughout the day to define the purpose of a unit or lessons that will be explored.

students already know and to develop new understandings. Good assessment information will also help to set appropriate expectations and design the next steps for targeted instruction.

Intentionally integrating POLL strategies throughout the day both within activities and across classroom contexts will reinforce the learning of new concepts and vocabulary as well as language skills while placing emphasis on linking new knowledge to students' personal life experiences.

Intentional Message: *Embedded with content vocabulary, this written message sets the purpose of each lesson. The message can be pre-written or co-written depending on the instructional purpose. Think about verbally cuing the words in home languages to support concept development.*

Examples:

During circle time: "Welcome **friends**! I am happy to see you. I like to **sing**. What do you like to do?"

During math time: "Today, we will be **mathematicians** and **explore** which **group** has **more**."

For DLLs, writing key words in their home language and reading the intentional message in their home language are both key to bridging concept and language development.

Anchor Text: *Picture books are selected intentionally and used repetitively to foster vocabulary and concept development.*

Planning and Preparation:

- Choose at least three to five key vocabulary words to introduce throughout the week.
- Learning these key words in students' home languages ahead of time will help build the comprehension connection.
- With DLLs, introduce the text and vocabulary (in home languages and English) in small groups before introducing it to the whole class. Family members or community volunteers can do this if staff does not speak the languages of the children.
- Implement interactive reading strategies with DLLs (i.e., dialogic reading) one on one or in small groups (no more than three or four) to prepare for whole group reading. This **video** discusses the importance of using interactive reading strategies for DLLs.
- Elicit support from parents or community volunteers to assist with home language needs. (Picture books can be adapted and read in any language.)

Have three to four key books (anchor texts) in mind when teaching a particular unit or concept. When teachers select the specific books that are best suited to the instructional objective ahead of time as well as ensure their DLLs are exposed to key vocabulary and concepts in their home language, those students are able to actively participate in whole group literacy activities with more confidence. They already understand the content of the lesson and are better able to apply their knowledge to learning in English. This stage is important for young DLLs' self-esteem and their language acquisition. Teachers can also learn words and concepts in the children's home languages; frequently, ECE teachers report how much they enjoy learning communication skills in those languages—and how much the DLL children enjoy teaching them.

Vocabulary Imprinting: *Use photographs, pictorials cognate charts, and word walls to introduce new concepts and vocabulary as well as to deepen comprehension.*

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners   **97**

Cognate charts help children transfer vocabulary knowledge from one language to English.

Examples:

- Photographs and labeling
- Vocabulary walls
- Cognate Walls
- Recipes

Teachers can learn key words ahead of time in the children's languages and make a list of cognates (words that sound the same and have the same meaning in two languages, e.g., telephone/telefono and elephant/elefante). Cognates are especially prevalent in Spanish and English, and they can be important when helping children transfer vocabulary knowledge from one language to English. In many lessons, teachers and children can co-create cognates and benefit from seeing patterns and connecting the sounds and meanings of words across multiple languages. Teachers can place key words and photos in a pocket chart, so students can come up at any time during the day, pull them out, and work with them interactively.

Visual Cues/Gestures: *Physical movements and signals are repeated as specific content vocabulary is introduced to imprint meaning. Often, when children use a specific physical cue, it will activate memory and help them recall vocabulary. This strategy is part of the layering opportunities for comprehension and language learning that is so important for DLLs.*

Examples:

- Choose movements/gestures for a few key words only.
- Repeatedly use these gestures throughout the day and week so that children begin to connect gesture with word and apply vocabulary.
- **Key word:** explore
- **Gesture:** hold a flat, extended hand up to your eyebrows and look back and forth

Using gestures and movements for key words really makes learning fun. All children can participate. Some teachers go a bit overboard at first with pairing gestures to many words and find that it is too much for the children and adults to remember. Choosing a few movements for the more difficult words is more effective. If teachers use fewer gestures more frequently, they will help the children learn and understand meaning in a deeper way.

Songs/Chants: *Academic and content vocabulary are woven into familiar rhythms, songs, and chants to encourage repetition.*

Examples:

"MORE" Chant: Key Vocabulary: more, greater, bigger, few, less
More means greater, and greater means more.

Incorporate Music and Movement into Content Lessons: *When teaching a key concept such as more and less, teachers can design specific targeted lyrics and combine them with familiar melodies that offer a chance for children to hear, say, and repeat the key vocabulary. The brain research also tells us that when children hear words combined with music, they are more likely to remember them.*

Example:

More is bigger than ever before!
More is many while few is less,
More is a lot—no need to guess!
More means greater and greater means more,
More is bigger than ever before!
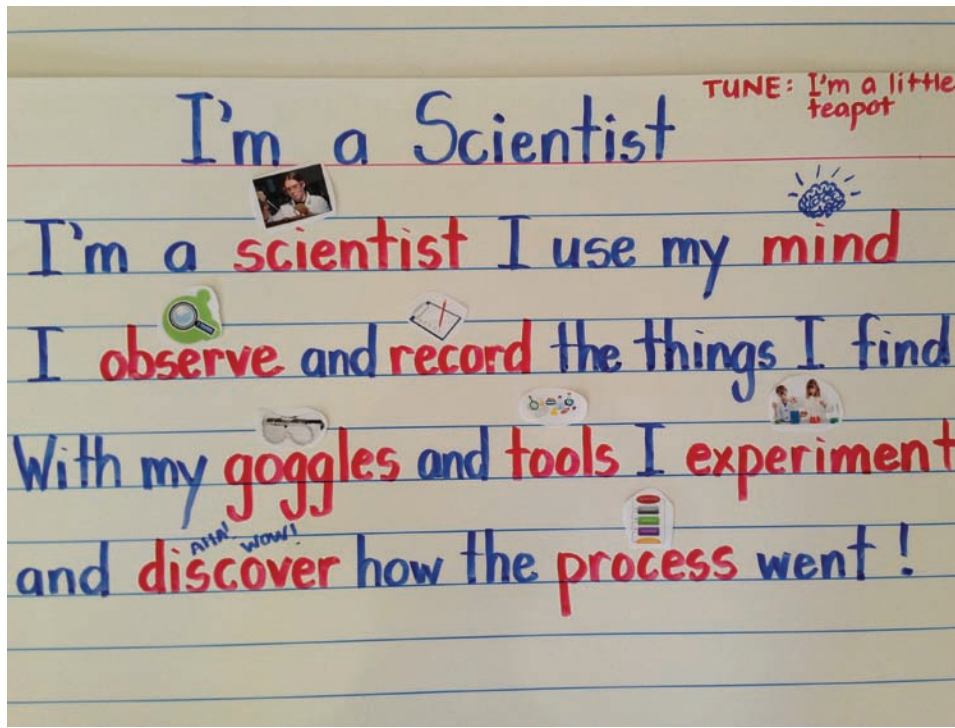
Create a song for a science unit that rhymes, contains content vocabulary, and is sung to a familiar tune.

All young children love music and movement, and they can use it all day long and for many different purposes. Thankfully, children do not care if you can a carry a tune. This new approach allows teachers to teach strategic vocabulary with music. They can create chants and songs using key words that the DLL children are working on, which offers another way for students to learn new words. Whenever possible, use songs and chants that rhyme because young children respond to those sound patterns—and they need to learn rhyming sounds. Make sure to post the songs, so all children and adults can use them as shared reading experiences and also so that all adults in the room can refer to them during language interactions.

Center Extensions: *Plan center-based opportunities for independent and/ or small group time to explore the concepts presented and practice the language being learned. These are child-initiated and teacher-facilitated learning times.*

Examples:

- Library Corner
- Science/Discovery Area
- Cultural Exhibit
- Dramatic Play
- Art
- Construction Area

Frequently, ECE teachers use centers as a place for children to go to when their teacher-directed work is completed. With POLL, teachers need to plan very differ-ently for centers. Center time is an opportunity for children to interact with each other, use the carefully selected materials that extend and reinforce targeted lan-guage and concepts, talk, talk, talk, and practice the vocabulary being taught. Teachers can observe and facilitate conversations around learning and, most importantly, listen to children's use of language. Young DLLs get so much out of this time. They have the opportunity to work with same language friends and practice their English speaking models. This time is ripe with opportunities for DLLs to grow in their oral language abilities.

Planning for POLL Strategies Across Lessons and the Day

To extend learning in other contexts (such as during center time) and to design focused enhancements for DLLs throughout the day, consider using a planning map to organize lessons, materials, strategy work, and enrichment opportuni-ties. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 are examples of how to develop and structure inte-grated as well as comprehensive plans to support all children, especially DLLs, ensuring that learning is interconnected, meaningful, and promotes language-rich experiences.

Areas for exploration during structured learning and child choice capitalize on children's interests, support both languages, and extend important concepts.

	Description	Example
Anchor Book	A book that is rich in language and supports understanding of the topic	*Grandma's Button Box* by Linda Williams Aber
Vocabulary	Selection of words that are instrumental for learning concepts outlined by standards	Mathematician, match, compare, observe, explore, discover, measure
POLL Strategies Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning	**Intentional Message:** This sets the purpose of the lesson each day. It is written for everyone to see and read along. Every activity planned for the week for this standard will begin with setting the intention for the lesson. Each day the message can build from what was posited the day before (see example).	**Intentional Message:** "Today we are going to be mathematicians and explore math by comparing, matching, and observing with our eyes, feeling with our hands, and thinking with our brains."
	Songs/Chants: Songs, chants, or poems can be used to integrate new vocabulary and in this way enhance language learning.	**Songs/Chants:** To the tune of "Row Your Boat": *Math, math here we go* *Show me what you know* *Match, compare, observe, explore* *Let's go learn some more!*
	Vocabulary Imprinting: Use photographs, realia, and manipulatives to authenticate meaning	**Vocabulary Imprinting:** Use gestures for key words in the song. Display photos or realia of key words.
	Visual Cues: Use of gestures and photographs	**Visual Cues:** Use photographs and take pictures of the children doing the actions.
Guided Practice	State the purpose for the lesson, guide activity, and provide lots of praise..Set up the procedure and monitor groups.	Introduce students to math exploration through language-rich conversations. Provide students with junk boxes filled with manipulatives and encourage exploration. **Whole group reflection:** "Mathematicians, what did you notice when you were exploring today?" "Turn to your neighbor and tell her/him what you observed/noticed/explored with." "You are mathematicians when you . . . use your finger to count each button!" (Affirm concepts and skills.)
Enrichment Activities	Small group activities for one-on-one discussions	In small group, use junk boxes to manipulate materials and scaffold language, explore, and sort collaboratively.
Cultural & Linguistic Connections	Whole group, small group, one-on-one opportunities to connect to home language, cultural identity, and community. Find ways to show connections in language and cultural perspectives.	Plan for opportunities to connect home language to concepts in English (botones, buttons, 버튼). For example, ask, "Does your grandmother sew or make things? Does she use buttons?"
Centers & Choice Time	Extend the activities for students to access and explore during their free choice time (when they choose where to go for play-based learning).	Place the junk boxes at centers for purposeful tasks (add trays to encourage students to compare, match, observe, and explore). Provide additional materials to support their ongoing learning and to build in complexity.

FIGURE 4.4 Example of how to plan for POLL strategies

102

Week of : *Week 1*   **Content Area:** *Science*   **Foundation/Standard:** *Investigation & Experimentation – 4 a,b,e*

	What is science?	*What is a scientist?*	*What is a scientist?*	*Scientists ask questions.*	*We have the nerve; now let's observe*
Anchor Book	*What is science?*	*What is a scientist?*	*What is a scientist?*	*Scientists ask questions.*	*We have the nerve; now let's observe*
Vocabulary	Science Investigate Explore Safety	Scientist Observe Lab coat	Experiment	Rock	Inquiry journal record
POLL Strategies: Personalized Oral Language(s) Learning	**Intentional Message**: Science is a way of learning about our world by investigating and exploring safely. **Songs/Chants**: See Attachment A **Vocabulary Imprinting**: See Attachment B **Visual Cues**: See Attachment C	**Intentional Message**: Some scientists wear a lab coat and goggles when they observe and investigate. **Songs/Chants**: See Attachment A **Vocabulary Imprinting**: See Attachment B **Visual Cues**: See Attachment C	**Intentional Message**: Scientists investigate and explore by doing experiments. **Songs/Chants**: See Attachment A **Vocabulary Imprinting**: See Attachment B **Visual Cues**: See Attachment C	**Intentional Message**: Scientists learn by asking lots of questions. **Songs/Chants**: See Attachment A **Vocabulary Imprinting**: See Attachment B **Visual Cues**: See Attachment C	**Intentional Message**: Today, we will write in our journals about what we observe when we explore a rock. **Songs/Chants**: See Attachment A **Vocabulary Imprinting**: See Attachment B **Visual Cues**: See Attachment C
Enrichment Activities	Nature Walks: collage collections	Expert Guest Speaker: physician nurse lab tech	Home Project: recycling program collection growing seed to plant	Field Trip: museums technology conservation agency zoo	Home Science: cooking gardening building inventing
Centers Extension	Explore and describe materials and tools using a variety of supplies. scales magnifiers tubes tweezers rulers or measuring tape flashlight clipboard/paper	Be a scientist and put on your appropriate gear. Talk about different protective clothing and how it helps scientists do their job. lab coat safety goggles gloves cap	Conduct an experiment using the scientific method: observe hypothesis experiment conclusion What did you discover?	Conduct an experiment using the scientific method: observe hypothesis experiment conclusion What did you discover? What happened? Why do you think it happened?	Let's take notes! Use your inquiry journal. Practice recording what you observe, what you think will happen, what actually happened. Draw about it. Talk about it with your fellow scientists!

FIGURE 4.5 Sample POLL lessons that correlate to a Science and Discovery unit

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners   **103**

Tips for Integrating POLL Across the Day and Activities

1. **Set your Environmental Stage: Design a Learning Space for Them and WITH Them!** The days before a new year begins, teachers busily prepare their rooms to welcome a new group of eager learners. They paint, nail, hang, glue, Velcro, label, photograph, and tape assorted items to walls, floors, doors, windows, and desks. Do not forget to let your students take ownership in the process. Co-creating a learning environment is as much fun for children as it is for you. Having children with the help of family and volunteers label the room in home languages is a way to honor each child and promote dual language learning for *everyone.*

2. **Conduct a Family Languages and Interests Interview: Know Your Families First!** This meeting is your first insight into the interests and abilities of each child and how s/he operates within the family unit. It is your opportunity to listen, interact, and bond with the family. This interaction will help you make decisions about environmental support, language support, and instructional support. It will also give you the opportunity to elicit volunteers, utilize language skills, and promote family-school collaboration.

3. **Build in Your Instructional Supports Slowly: Be Intentional and Practice!** It takes time to organize curriculum and plan purposeful lessons. When integrating POLL supports, begin with your Anchor Text. Then choose key vocabulary to focus on. (Make sure to learn and teach these words in home languages represented in your class). It may be easier to choose gestures or cues to pair with vocabulary then branch out later and create a catchy tune/chant to embed key vocabulary. Do not forget that the focus is on multiple and repetitive ways for children to hold on to and imprint words and meaning. Remember "more" and "faster" usually means "overwhelmed" and "confused" for everyone. Work deeper not faster.

4. **Implement POLL Throughout the Day: Once or Twice Is Not Enough!** Providing multiple opportunities for DLL children to develop understanding and to practice their new language is important. When integrating POLL elements, be intentional about how and when you will integrate them. Perhaps you will use your songs or gestures/cues during transition times, while lining up at the door, before going out to recess. Weaving these supports into your daily routine, not only during instructional time, will set the stage for your students to begin using these words in their daily conversations.

5. **Provide Time and Space for Daily Practice: Give Students a Chance to Dialogue!** In your planning, carve out time and space a few times each day for children to dialogue. Take the role of facilitator and observer while your students engage in small groups. (This period may be dedicated center time, task work, and/or collaborative projects). Think about how you might group students and for what purpose. As you move around to different groups, help support conversation by asking open-ended questions that will scaffold language. Use this time to take notes on your students' strengths as well as challenges. This process will help you set goals and modify your instruction.

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104 Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners

Think About . . .

- **If you do not yet speak the languages of the children you work with, start learning!** Even if you do not master a student's language, learning a few words and courtesy phrases is a sign of respect and effort on your part. Some common phrases that will help DLLs feel more comfortable in your classroom are the following: good job, sit down, bathroom, help, come here, time to clean up, go outside, and, of course, please and thank you. If you already speak your students' languages, congratulations. Continue to work at improving your other skills.
- **Learn about the cultures of the children you teach.** Listen to your students and show interest in their cultures as the children experience it in their families while being careful not to put students on the spot or assume that they are experts on their cultures. Plan assignments that bring students' cultures, families, languages, and experiences front and center.
- **Hold informal meetings with parents and caregivers to learn about their child.** Understanding each child's interests, favorite things, and cultural background will help you set instructional goals and plan lessons that will best support the child's development.
- **Provide and display authentic materials to support home languages and English acquisition.** Labeling the room, providing multilingual books, cognate charts, and songs in students' home languages not only honors the children in your classroom but also supports and deepens their work in learning two languages. Parents can record stories, songs, or rhymes in their native languages that can be placed in the listening center.
- **Adult support provides additional assistance and opportunities to enrich language development.** Adult volunteers or assistants who speak the student's language can work with DLL students individually or in groups to extend content and concepts.
- **Assign a peer partner.** Identify a classmate who really wants to help your DLL as a peer. This student can make sure that the DLL understands what he or she is supposed to do. It will be even more helpful if the peer partner knows the home language.

6. **Dual Language Support for the Monolingual English Teacher: Find Ways to Support Your DLLs!** Reach out to families (i.e., during your initial "interview"), community volunteers, and cultural centers. Encourage them to help in the classroom and at home. During planning and preparation, learn common terms and key vocabulary in students' home languages. You will not only enrich your cultural and linguistic experiences but also model this learning process for all of your students. Bilingualism benefits children as well as adults and builds a more connected community. Encourage students to maintain and develop their first language at school, at home, and in the community while acquiring English.

ASSESSMENTS TO INFORM INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND MONITOR PROGRESS

Assessment plays an important role in the education of DLLs. When DLLs with diverse linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds enter new educational settings, an initial assessment of their skills and abilities helps teachers know their students and set goals for the year. Ongoing assessments provide continuous feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and indicate areas

where modifications might be needed. Teachers and administrators analyze information from initial and ongoing assessments to inform instruction and provide evidence for progress in language development. An effective practice for supporting DLLs begins with getting to know the child and family (see preceding discussion of Family Languages and Interests Interview).

Instruction builds on what a child already knows, and effective instruction for DLLs means that teachers need to understand what their students know and what they can do in any language. In order to provide DLLs with the support they need to succeed, teachers collect ongoing data from multiple sources across a variety of developmental areas and use this information for curriculum planning. Information about DLL students' language development in both the home language and English will provide the most accurate picture of what the child knows (versus only knowing what the child can respond to in English).

Assessing to Inform Teaching and Learning

It is essential that teachers assess student progress according to the developmental continuum outlined by their state guidelines for early learning. Using formal standardized assessments as well as more informal observational tools to record specific behaviors provide a comprehensive picture of each child's progress that is aligned with state, district, and school site learning objectives. As teachers use various assessment tools, they better understand each child's stage of development and progress, and they can set challenging, but achievable, learning goals.

Some strategies for collecting observational data on children's development include the following:

1. **Preparation:** Gather materials to record observations, have in mind which students you will observe, and the targeted area of development that you want to focus on; choose a time to observe when children are engaged and you are free to observe and interact with them.
2. **Observe "in the moment":** Plan to observe at any moment—children may be with you in whole or small group, with peers at interest areas, or outdoors playing a game. Observe children in the natural learning environment and record authentic learning. Write down your observations as you notice them, so you do not forget valuable information.
3. **Observe for range and reliability:** It is important to observe and collect information consistently and when children engage in a variety of activities. Ongoing observation allows the teacher to capture growth over time.
4. **Observe for purpose:** Have a goal or a few objectives in mind when observing children. One observation might capture several learning objectives in a given setting.
5. **Record factually and daily:** It is important to record what the child does—not what you think he or she is doing. Interpretations are misleading. Recording daily helps you and your students get accustomed to the routine and practice of ongoing observation.

DRDP-SR® (2012) Rating Record

Child: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Record the child's level of mastery by marking (x) for each measure

If English IS NOT the only languages spoken in the child's home, complete measures 1–30
If English IS the only languages spoken in the child's home, complete measures 5–30

Domain	Measure Number	School Readiness Measure		Mark the Developmental Level the child has mastered						Unable to Rate
				Discovering	Exploring	Developing	Building	Integrating		
English Language Development (ELD)	1	ELD1:	Comprehension of English (receptive English)							
	2	ELD2:	Self-expression in English (expressive English)							
	3	ELD3:	Understanding and response to English literacy activities							
	4	ELD4:	Symbol, letter, and print knowledge in English							

Domain	Measure Number	School Readiness Measure		Mark the Developmental Level the child has mastered					Unable to Rate
				Exploring Competencies	Discovering Competencies	Building Competencies	Integrating Competencies	Applying Competencies	
Self and Social Development (SSD)	5	SSD1:	Identity of self						
	6	SSD2:	Recognition of ability						
	7	SSD3:	Relationship and social interaction with adults						
	8	SSD4:	Relationship and social interaction with peers						
	9	SSD5:	Social and emotional understanding						
	10	SSD6:	Conflict negotiation						
	11	SSD7:	Curiosity and initiative in learning						
Self-Regulation (REG)	12	REG1:	Self-control of behavior and feelings						
	13	REG2:	Engagement and persistence						
	14	REG3:	Responsible conduct						
	15	REG4:	Shared use of space and materials						
Language and Literacy Development (LLD)	16	LLD1:	Understanding of languages (receptive)						
	17	LLD2:	Follows increasingly complex instructions						
	18	LLD3:	Communication of needs, feelings, and interests (expressive)						
	19	LLD4:	Reciprocal communication and conversation						
	20	LLD5:	Comprehension and analysis of age-appropriate text, presented by adults						
	21	LLD6:	Letter and word knowledge						
	22	LLD7:	Phonological awareness						
	23	LLD8:	Emergent writing						
Mathematical Development (MATH)	24	MATH 1:	Number sense of quantity and counting						
	25	MATH 2:	Number sense of mathematical operations						
	26	MATH 3:	Measurement						
	27	MATH 4:	Shapes						
	28	MATH 5:	Patterning						
	29	MATH 6:	Problem solving						
	30	MATH 7:	Classification						

FIGURE 4.6 An example of an observational progress rating record – Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP-SR) used throughout the state of California to capture children's progress (California Department of Education, 2012).

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Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **107**

Assessing to Support Language Development

When students begin the school year, teachers assess English language profi-ciency for those students whose families identified their child's primary language as different than English. Teachers should assess their students' English oral lan-guage proficiency using standardized tools combined with repeated observation of language usage across different contexts. Because many students speak lan-guages at home that are different than English, teachers need to know the level of proficiency in both the home language and in English to be able to meaning-fully and accurately support their language development (i.e., determine which areas of the curriculum have been mastered in any of the languages and plan accordingly). Focusing assessments on both home language proficiency *and* English language proficiency provides crucial information about the DLL and helps guide your instructional decisions. If you do not speak the language of the child, ask school staff and/or volunteers to help you in this process.

Ongoing Assessment Strategies

HOW SHOULD A DLL'S PERFORMANCE BE ASSESSED BY A CLASSROOM TEACHER OR A GROUP OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS? Performance-based assessments such as portfolios are widely used as a method of gathering student work and evaluat-ing progress in areas of reading readiness, developmental writing, mathematics, as well as expressive and receptive language skills.

Teachers using portfolios to assess DLLs need to understand how second-language acquisition impacts student learning and the products that demon-strate learning. Teaming with teachers who have had training in second-language acquisition to examine student work with a shared perspective is recommended. By collaborating with other team members, teachers can make informed judg-ments about a DLL child's rate of progress and whether the child is making

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Think About . . .

When implementing an assessment system for your DLLs, you might ask, is it comprehensive, informative, unbiased, and authentic?

Assessments are **comprehensive** if they . . .
- show the range of skills the student is working on as well as growth in cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development in whatever language the child can demonstrate competence.

Assessments are **informative** if they . . .
- contain meaningful data about the child's progress. A story re-tell or developmental writing sample taken at the beginning of the year compared to one from the end of the year should be valuable evidence of the student's growth.

Assessments are **unbiased** if they . . .
- include a process that ensures every child, not just those who are native English speakers, is evaluated in the least discriminatory manner possible and oc-curs across contexts by multiple assessors.

Assessments are **authentic** if they . . .
- come from ongoing classroom activities that incor-porate oral and written literacy activities designed to foster both academic skills and English language development.

M04_ESPI7854_02_SE_C04.indd Page 108 20/05/14 8:29 PM f-207/PH01412/9780133017854_ESPINOSA/ESPINOSA_GETTING_IT_RIGHT_FOR_YOUNG_CHILDREN2 .

108 Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners

Think About . . .

Listed below are questions that may help teachers analyze oral language development. For each question, teachers will want to ask themselves, how do I know and what is my evidence? For young DLLs, it may be necessary to get the perspectives of native speakers of the child's language to answer these same questions in that language.

- Does the child understand what is being said?
- Does the child understand conversational as well as academic language?
- Can others easily understand what the child says, or does pronunciation interfere with communication?

- Does the child speak at a natural pace or is speech halting and dysfluent?
- Does the child make many grammatical errors? What types of errors are made? Are these errors typical of a beginning language learner or of someone who is at a higher level of language acquisition?
- What types of vocabulary words does the child use? Does the child use academic vocabulary appropriately? Is the vocabulary used appropriate to the message being conveyed?
- Is the child employing code-switching to communicate with others?

good progress through the typical stages of second language acquisition or whether there might be a concern that requires further evaluation (see Espinosa & Gutierrez-Clellan, 2013).

How Can English Oral Language Proficiency Skills Be Assessed?

English oral language proficiency is an essential prerequisite skill to literacy in English. Students who have not developed sufficient oral language skills in English will struggle to comprehend what they read. DLLs should be given multiple opportunities to develop and practice oral language before and during their development of literacy skills (see earlier section).
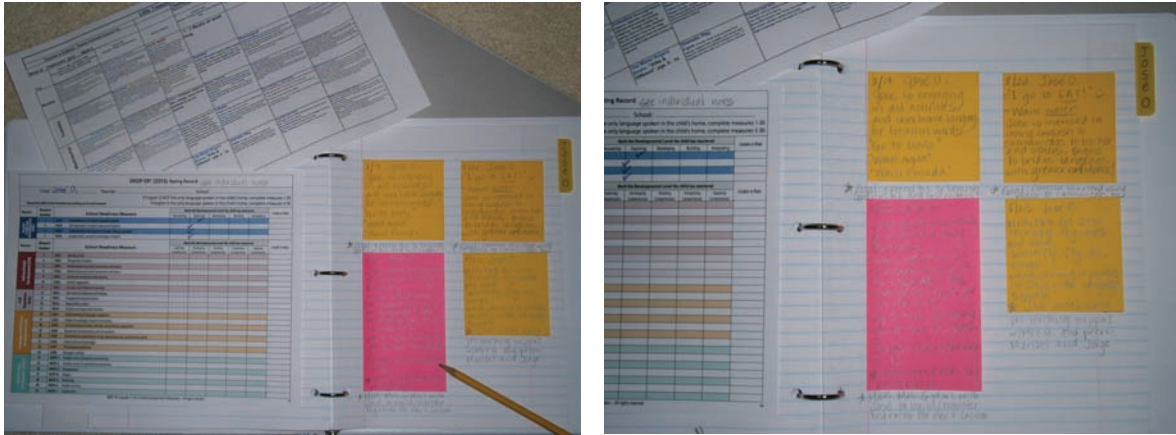
RECEPTIVE AND EXPRESSIVE ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS: LISTENING AND SPEAKING
It is important to carefully observe how individual DLLs use both receptive and expressive language.

Much of the effort put into implementing an effective program focuses on defining instructional and assessment components that fit with the particular age

Think About . . .

- Using flexible time (center-based learning, project-based activities, choice time, outdoor play) to observe students individually and in groups
- Using Post-it Notes to record observations and placing anecdotal notes in a tabbed notebook organized by student
- Using a clipboard, place index cards in two columns ladder style. Each card has a name, goal, and date titles for teachers to easily take observational

notes and place in a binder organized in tabbed sections by student.
- Using student portfolios to store and organize documentation by transferring observational notes collected on an ongoing basis
- Using a checklist that includes specific language goals and objectives to measure and mark which areas/indicators have been observed and what additional observational data need to be collected.

M04_ESPI7854_02_SE_C04.indd Page 109 20/05/14 8:29 /207/PH01412/9780133017854_ESPINOSA/ESPINOSA_GETTING_IT_RIGHT_FOR_YOUNG_CHILDREN2 .

Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **109**

Various materials can be used to capture observational data to help organize information, inform instructional planning, and reflect on growth and development.

and background of the children and families in your classroom. It is vital to measure ongoing progress in English language development with DLLs. Collecting observational data and analyzing it to inform practice can be done in a variety of ways.

Teacher Reflection Based on Daily Assessments

It is critical that teachers take time daily to reflect on instructional practice and student observations and assessments. This process will provide constructive feedback and help guide instructional decisions to best support your DLLs.

ENGAGING FAMILIES IN THE CHILD'S LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Getting to Know the Family

State and districts nationwide recognize the importance of parents and teachers working together, and that teachers and schools play a critical role in promoting and fostering parental participation. It is imperative that parents and teachers

Think About . . .

Listed below are questions that teachers think about as they reflect:

- What did I teach, and how does my learning goal match the needs of my DLL students?
- To what extent did my DLLs comprehend the lessons? To what degree were they engaged in the learning activities? How much and what types of home language support were provided?

- What was the importance of my lesson? Did I meet my goals?
- How did my DLLs show me they were making progress? When did they seem confused?
- What should I do next? How can I build on what I started?

collaborate and build strong school-family relationships. Teachers must be responsive to each family's cultural and linguistic background and demonstrate that the home language is valued and is an asset for their children's success in school and beyond.

Taking time to meet with families provides more detailed information about the child, his/her strengths, background, interests, languages spoken, and personality traits. This meeting is crucial in that it establishes a relationship of trust among teacher, child, and parents as well as forms a connection that can be fostered over the school year by involving families in school activities both at home and in the classroom.

Teachers can also provide support to parents and families through a variety of parent engagement activities that empower families to become partners in their child's education. In order for parents to collaborate and become partners with the schools, targeted support needs to be provided.

These activities might include the following: family literacy and math nights, family literacy home lending literacy program, parent education classes, and community field trips.

Think About . . .

Family Math and Literacy Nights

Family literacy and math provide students with a foundation for the development of school literacy and numeracy skills. Many schools require parents of children in elementary grades to participate in family literacy and math activities. These family events are designed to help parents engage in learning with their children that fosters school readiness. This approach helps teachers to connect with families, build strong relationships, and encourage strong parental participation. If you do not speak the language(s) of your families, consider inviting staff and/or volunteers to assist in the activities. Just as we utilize specific instructional strategies for our DLLs to bridge from their home language to English, as previously outlined, it is equally valuable to use these strategies when working with parents and families. Topics for these events might include the following:

- Hands-on Literacy/Math Activities (e.g., learning stations that model how to extend conversations, develop math concepts, and use everyday materials to demonstrate to families how to bridge home language concepts to English)
- Reading Rocks! (e.g., home reading programs demonstrate to parents how to participate in

shared reading experiences with a variety of literature—include strategies for home language and English language development)
- Extending Reading/Math Activities at Home (e.g., provide concrete examples and strategies for parents to do at home—send home materials in the home language and English to assist families in supporting language development)

Take Home Literacy Program

Create a home lending library by making quality books available to all families in English and home languages that are represented in your class. This program can be a rotational system that allows students and families to engage in multiple reading activities during the year. The main goal is to support parents as they engage in literacy behaviors at home, increasing family literacy as well as learning to enjoy reading together. Parents and other family members can be given a simple form to complete indicating the amount of time spent with family literacy activities each night. The forms can be made up of clocks and other simple graphics. Individual school sites might have additional parent engagement initiatives that would further support families and children in this effort.

M04_ESPI7854_02_SE_C04.indd Page 111 20/05/14 8:29 /207/PH01412/9780133017854_ESPINOSA/ESPINOSA_GETTING_IT_RIGHT_FOR_YOUNG_CHILDREN2 .

Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **111**

A literacy log is an interactive approach for parent/adult and child to connect and reflect on their reading together.

Parent Education Classes and Community Support Organizations

Parents are unquestionably their child's first and most important teachers. Parent outreach programs can help families gain the skills to support stronger home-school connections. The goal of this training is to encourage and support families through parent classes that focus on supporting children's academic learning, growth, and development. One such program, Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (www.familiesinschools.org/abriendo-puertas-opening-doors/) is a national school readiness program that strengthens the leadership and advocacy skills of Latino parents with children ages birth to five. The curriculum is based on popular education and draws on the real life experiences of participants. Other organizations like AVANCE (www.avance.org) and Parents As Teachers (www.parentsasteachers.org) are dedicated to promoting school readiness and strengthening families in at-risk communities through effective parent education and support programs. Another valuable advocacy organization, the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE, www.ncpie.org), provides resources to support relationships between home, school, and community to enhance the education of young children.

Connect with your district, local Head Start, or County Office of Education to learn about hosting parent education classes at your site.

112 Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners

Think About . . .

- Implement a strong parent-school partnership to support children's long-term academic success.
- Involve parents from the beginning of the school year in a variety of activities that foster development of positive communication and active participation.
- Identify strategies that best promote active and ongoing participation. Examples of specific strategies for engaging parents starting in the fall are listed below:
  - Use the Family Language(s) and Interests Interview to identify parent interests and availability to volunteer.

- Recruit and reach out to families by using different venues to educate the community and families on key topics.
- Establish welcoming classroom environments that encourage parents to participate and collaborate.
- Emphasize that continued learning of the home language will positively affect learning English at school. Teachers should actively communicate this message to parents. Speaking in their home language is an asset that is an essential part of one's culture and identity and provides the foundation for children to successfully learn English.

Community Field Trips

Site administrators and teachers can organize family field trips throughout the year to visit parks, museums, local businesses, and colleges or universities to encourage and support students and their families to pursue and complete their education.

To enrich a unit of study, teachers should explore opportunities to involve families in learning outside of the classroom. Your classroom, for example, might be studying a unit on living things, plants. To deepen and extend concepts, you might plan a visit to your local arboretum where classrooms can adopt a tree, plant it in a needy community, care for it, and track its growth. This activity is a unique opportunity to extend prior knowledge, develop a local partnership, provide community service, and include families in their child's learning process.

The overall goal is to create a partnership between parent and child that values education and encourages students to improve their academic and life skills, develop leadership qualities, and pursue professional careers.

Summary

In summary, the research on the most effective teaching practices for young DLLs suggests that best practices for DLLs are similar to best practices for native English-speaking children. High-quality instruction for all students is important for and also benefits DLL children; however, they need special classroom and instructional enhancements and attention to their background knowledge as they develop proficiency in two languages—their home language and English. The evidence also underscores the need to provide focused attention on English oral language development for DLL children.

The latest research and program evaluations are helping us to answer the question, what exactly does it mean to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate instruction to young DLLs? While we do not know all the answers, the available evidence does lead to specific program and classroom recommendations. Early childhood educators need to make specific instructional adaptations for DLL

M04_ESPI7854_02_SE_C04.indd Page 113 20/05/14 8:29 /207/PH01412/9780133017854_ESPINOSA/ESPINOSA_GETTING_IT_RIGHT_FOR_YOUNG_CHILDREN2 ...

Chapter 4 • Practical and Proven Strategies for Teaching Young Dual Language Learners **113**

children: supporting the child's home language; spending time getting to know each child and family; creating as much individualization and small group instruction as possible; setting up the classroom and including materials that are culturally familiar and represent children's home languages; incorporating and building on each child's prior conceptual and language knowledge; using specific personalized oral language strategies that enhance comprehension; frequent and continuous monitoring of the child's stage of language development; building effective partnerships with parents; and finally, using a general high-quality, intentional curriculum.

The strategies described in this chapter offer concrete approaches to lessons that are consistent with the research and easy to implement for *all* teachers. These recommendations are not meant to be exhaustive—but a starting point. As we all become better informed about how to promote long-term achievement for young DLL children, creative teachers and curriculum developers will surely add to this material. These basic principles derived from research can be used to guide specific decision making. For it is in the day-to-day, minute-to-minute decisions that teachers make about

when to respond, how to respond, which language to use, who to include, and how to judge progress that will determine the educational fate of DLL children.

One thing we know with certainty—with continued support for each child's home language combined with targeted instruction for English acquisition, DLL children are able to achieve multiple linguistic, cognitive, social, and cultural competencies. For as the California State Department of Education has stated: *"Being exposed to two or more languages at a young age is a gift. It is a gift because children who are able to learn through two or more languages benefit cognitively, socially, and emotionally."*

> *"Exposure to more than one language should be celebrated as a growth opportunity that offers many learning and social advantages. Children who are developing bilingual abilities are developing unique strengths that will add to the cultural and linguistic resources of California."*
>
> —CALIFORNIA PRESCHOOL FRAMEWORK, VOLUME 1, (2010), P. 224

Reflection Questions and Extended Activities

1. How many different languages do you speak? If you speak more than one language, at what age did you learn the second language? What do you remember about learning a second language?
2. Discuss the major components of best practices for young DLLs.
3. Describe how you would implement the elements of POLL with a pre-K classroom, with a kindergarten classroom.
4. After you have practiced observing and documenting the language development of a DLL child, describe the process you used, the challenges you experienced, and the insights you gained. What additional questions do you have about the child's overall growth and progress?
5. How would you know if a young DLL child understood basic concepts like *fast, bigger than, up, down*, etc., if they knew them only in Mandarin, a language you do not understand?
6. How might you proceed if you suspected that a child from Thailand who had just recently enrolled in your program had very limited home language abilities? Who would you contact and what resources might you use?
7. Describe one curricular adaptation described in this chapter that you could try out with a DLL child. What music, video, or book materials might help you with this adaptation?
8. Describe the importance of developing effective partnerships with DLL families and one specific outreach strategy that you plan on implementing.