Strategies to Address Children’s Learning when they are Dual Language Learners
A Self-Reflection Tool
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Know your Children

- Culture of the child and family
- Family priorities, concerns and decisions
- Language (s) spoke at home and at school
- Strengths the child brings to the learning opportunities you provide
- Prior experiences of the child and family
- Other challenges
- Where the child is in learning English as a second language... A starting point

Strategies:
Responsive Interactions

- Start with what the child knows…at level of comprehension if instruction in English…
- Start slowly
- Use ‘wait time’
- Scaffold communication with appropriate comments and questions
- Utilize peer interactions
- Model, expand, and extend language

Environment and Expectations

- Where are pictures that the children can relate/resonate to? Family, Culture and Home
- Create meaningful and engaging learning areas… “Hands on”
- Develop a schedule that promotes child engagement and success, “Predictability” is key!
- Plan for transitions … “Preparation” is helpful!
- Engage children in constructing classroom expectations “ A Learning Community”
- Enhance children’s emotional literacy …“create trust and conflict resolution strategies”
  (e.g. Peace Table)
- Create small collaborative versus competitive learning groups

Specific Strategies to Introduce Stories and New Information:

- Use actions (TPR) and illustrations to reinforce oral statements … provide “high context”
- Prime the pump…review specific vocabulary prior to reading
Use visual prompts, facial expressions, gesture…these are more effective than just repeating commands

Ask for completion versus production; choose answers, cloz technique versus generation of answers depending upon level of second language acquisition and to address “affective filter”/anxiety

Model correct usage rather than “correct” errors

Use visual aids and multiple modalities in interactive story book reading

(e.g. print referencing, show illustrations, use prompts to engage children in interaction)

Say it with meaning: explain, define, restate, and paraphrase

Selected References


Web sites

- www.colorincolorado.org/ Colorin Colorado
- www.puentesculturales.com