



Unit 6 – Support for Young Dual Language Learners Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience

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Focus Statement

Students explore some key terms and phrases related to young dual language learners as a way to reflect on their own understanding and knowledge base. Students also reflect on their own experiences where they did not know a language used by others and to consider the impacts it had on them at the time and how these experiences can inform their work with young children and their families.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses, CAP expansion courses, and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Child Growth and Development
- Child, Family and Community
- Introduction to Curriculum
- Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience
- Administration I: Programs in Early Childhood Education
- Administration II: Personnel and Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Instructional Methodologies

- Class discussion
- Pairs or small groups
- Personal reflection



- Reflective discussion

California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

These competency areas are from the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division's *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies* (CDE 2011). The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Child Development and Learning
- Culture, Diversity, and Equity
- Family and Community Engagement
- Dual-Language Development
- Special Needs and Inclusion
- Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism
- Administration and Supervision



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Getting Ready for the Unit

In recent years, the demographics in California’s preschool programs have increasingly reflected the growing diversity in California’s population at large. This has heightened awareness of the need for the field of early care and education to pay attention to specific needs of children who are developing and learning in diverse communities and families, as well as with diverse languages.

As the California Early Learning and Development System was developed over the last decade, dual language development and learning was addressed as a separate developmental domain in both the foundations and curriculum framework. This domain was included early in the system, in Volume 1 of both the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* and the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework*. Initially, this domain was called English-language development, but as more was learned about children whose home language was not the dominant language of English, these children were recognized as young dual language learners. Though referred to as young dual language learners in much of the recent literature, the term English-language development is still used as the name of the domain in the foundations and curriculum framework.

In 2009, the California Department of Education (CDE) published the second edition of *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning: A Resource Guide*. This has served as a rich resource regarding young children who are dual language learners, the process of dual language acquisition, and considerations for working with families and communities as well as children who are young dual language learners with special needs. This publication was intended to be used as part of the California Early Learning and Development System and in conjunction with other publications within that system, including the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. The *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning*, as well as its accompanying instructional guide, can be accessed through the Web site of the Faculty Initiative Project. The resource guide could serve as a source of further breadth and depth for students regarding young dual language learners and their families, and the instructional guide suggests ways to engage students with the content of this publication.

English-language development is presented as a separate developmental domain in both the foundations and the curriculum framework. However, it is essential for students to know that dual language learning is a part of learning in every domain for young children



who are dual language learners. Additionally, most practices recommended for young children who are dual language learners are good practices for all children. As stated in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*, teachers need to account for this as they plan across the curriculum.

Integrating Dual Language Learning into Curriculum

There is opportunity presented in each instructional guide for the preschool curriculum framework to directly apply the information from the English-language development domain in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* to planning across the curriculum:

- In the *Faculty Initiative Project Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*, this integration opportunity can be found in Unit 7, Key Topic 3, entitled “English-Language Development Across Curriculum,” and relates to the domains in Volume 1.
- In the *Faculty Initiative Project Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*, it is found in Unit 5, Key Topic 3, entitled “Integrating English-Language Development Across the Domains,” and relates to the domains in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 2*.
- In the *Faculty Initiative Project Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*, it is found in Unit 4, Key Topic 3, which is entitled “Young Dual Language Learners.” Also Unit 4, Key Topic 4 of the same instructional guide concerns “Exploring Key Elements of the Curriculum Framework Across Domains” and explores the interrelatedness of all nine domains, including the domain of English-language development.

To further support programs and teaching staff in this work, two additional resources have been developed. The first is by the Governor’s State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care and the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division and is titled *California’s Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers*. These papers are an overview of critical research-based understanding and knowledge about the benefits to young children of dual language learning, the characteristics of children who are young dual language learners, the processes of second language acquisition, the importance of collaborating with families, curriculum approaches, and interactive strategies that support dual language learners. Additionally, recommendations derived from research findings have been developed and made available in these papers. These are summarized in Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* and are important to recognize as teachers and administrators plan and deliver programs for all young children.

The second resource is the *California Preschool Program Guidelines DVD Set* that is designed to illustrate and highlight the content of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. Disc 2 in this DVD set contains three chapters devoted exclusively to working



with young dual language learners. The segments in these chapters are referred to in the key topics of Unit 6 as they relate to the information in the key topic.

Unit 6 of this instructional guide is designed to support faculty in guiding students through Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. Keep in mind that Chapter 6 in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* is provided to “present recommendations on best practices for preschool [dual language learners] . . . drawn from six research overview papers written by leading experts across multiple disciplines” (*California Preschool Program Guidelines*, p. 75). Unit 6 of the instructional guide will familiarize students with those findings and recommendations as they are presented in Chapter 6. Additionally, the unit provides ways for students to more deeply explore the research overview papers, if that is appropriate to a particular class or group of students. In each key topic, the learning experience has been designed so that it can be used with or without further exploration of the research papers in the “Deeper Understanding” segment. Each key topic will support students in understanding the content of Chapter 6 and point to resources for further and deeper understanding of the topics contained in that chapter.

Additional work from other resources described previously can enhance and broaden students’ understanding of working with children who are young dual language learners and their families and understanding that work in the context of integrated curriculum and recommended practice is for all children.

Motivator and Connection to Experience

Before You Start

This learning experience is intended to help students connect their own experiences with dual language learning to the content of Chapter 6 in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. This includes their own experience as they have learned more than one language or their experiences with dual language learners in their families or in programs where they currently work or have worked in the past. Hopefully, this will support students in understanding how many lives are touched by this process and how important it is to intentionally support those who experience it.

Students will be asked to recollect their experiences and any barriers they might have encountered or barriers they could imagine that might have had an impact on that experience for themselves or others. It will be important to guide this conversation as an introduction and exploration and not as a source of judgment. Faculty might want to go through this exploration themselves before working through it with students.

Handout 1, “Terms and Concepts Relating to Dual Language Learners,” provided with this learning experience, is a list of words and phrases related to young dual language learners. An electronic version of this handout will be available when this instructional



guide is available online at <http://facultyinitiative.wested.org/> (accessed January 20, 2016).

Active Learning



Slides 2-3

Getting it started

Let students know that they will be working with some key phrases and ideas from Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, “Support for Young Dual Language Learners.” They will be asked to look for familiar words or phrases from a list taken from the chapter. Remind them that this is not a test but a way to become familiar with their own understanding and knowledge base.

Ask students to review Handout 1, “Terms and Concepts Relating to Dual Language Learners,” and check those words or terms with which they are familiar. They are doing this individually, so they are the only ones who will see their responses.

Keeping it going

After they have had a chance to review the list, let students know that you will be asking them to reflect on their responses. Whether or not faculty decide to ask students to share these responses will depend on their knowledge of the students and how open they can be to one another.

Ask students to think about the following questions:



Slide 4

- Were there some words or phrases that you knew well and some that were not familiar to you?
- What did you learn about your familiarity with the words and phrases that you might encounter in Chapter 6?
- Were there some in particular that you would like to learn more about?

If students are asked to share these responses, suggest they reflect on the range of responses to these questions. That is, some—or even most—students might be familiar with many of the words and phrases, and others—or most—with few. Faculty can point out that this could be the range of language development in either home language or a second language of children whom they encounter in preschool settings and to note how this might affect interaction strategies and curriculum planning. Also it is important to point out here that there is no value placed on knowing or not knowing. It is just a description of a kind of variability that students might see in a preschool setting or among colleagues with whom they are working.



Taking it further

Next, ask students to think of experiences they have had where they did not speak the language—either at all or fluently enough to converse—of adults or children with whom they needed to communicate. This could be neighbors, families of children they work with, colleagues, or children.

Organize the students into pairs or groups of three. Ask them to describe their experiences and responses to the questions that follow, making sure that each student has an opportunity to share.



Slides 5-6

- How did you feel in that situation?
- What skills did you need when you were faced with that situation?
- What barriers did you have to overcome?
- What strategies did you use?
- How could this influence the work you do with young children and their families?

Responses to these inquiries can vary dramatically between students, but that is part of what will be useful for discussion.

Putting it together

Ask students to report to the whole class some of what they discovered as they discuss these questions:

- Did your experiences differ?
- Did your feelings differ?
- What barriers were discovered?
- What strategies were used?
- In general, what did you learn from this and how does this apply to your work with children, families, and colleagues?

Online Options

Students can post online a one- or two-paragraph summary of their experiences and responses to the questions in the “Taking it further” segment for their classmates to review. The instructor can then facilitate an in-class or online discussion based on the questions in the “Putting it together” section.



Slide 7



Reflection

The questions in the “Putting it together” serve as a reflection for this learning experience. This second set of more general reflective questions can be used in this and other key topics for additional class discussion or to guide individual student journaling.



Slides 8-10

- Which ideas or part of this class session stood out most for you?
- What seemed familiar or reinforced what you already know or have experienced? What gave you a new perspective or insight that causes you to think differently about teaching preschool children and/or engaging their families?
- Why do you think the content of this class session was presented the way it was? How did this approach help you understand the content? What else would have helped? What does this tell you about how you learn?
- How will you decide what to apply from this class session in your work with preschool children and families? What will you do to ensure you will implement what you have decided to use?



Terms and Concepts Relating to Dual Language Learners

Listed below are some terms and concepts relating to young dual language learners. As a way to explore your own connection to this focus of Chapter 6 in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, briefly review these terms and check the most appropriate box indicating your familiarity with each term or concept. This is not an assessment but a way for you to see how you connect to the topic in Chapter 6.

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Terms and concepts relating to dual language learners	Not yet familiar	Familiar to some extent	Could describe to a peer
Oral language			
Home language			
Academic language			
Emerging bilingualism			
Balanced English- and home- language development			
Instructional support for home language and English			
Social language			
Levels of English-language development			
Barriers for families of dual language learners to participating in their child's school			
Language switching			