



Unit 6 – Support for Young Dual Language Learners

Key Topic 2: Characteristics of Preschool Dual Language Learners

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Learners

Focus Statement

Students become familiar with the characteristics of young dual language learners by exploring the benefits of dual language learning and reviewing an overview of the process of second language acquisition.

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.

- Introduction to Curriculum
- Teaching in a Diverse Society
- Practicum-Field Experience
- Administration I: Programs in Early Childhood Education
- Administration II: Personnel and Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Introduction to Children with Special Needs
- Curriculum and Strategies for Children with Special Needs

Instructional Methodologies

- Brainstorming
- Class discussion
- Class presentation
- Creation of a visual representation



- Jigsaw reading
- Pairs or small groups
- Peer review and feedback
- Reflective discussion
- Research overview review
- Role playing
- Video observation

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.

- 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



Unit 6 – Support for Young Dual Language Learners Key Topic 2: Characteristics of Preschool Dual Language Learners

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Before You Start

This key topic will focus student attention on characteristics of the children who are young dual language learners as discussed in Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. The purpose is to familiarize students with the content of Chapter 6 as it relates to these two topics: benefits of dual language learning and second language acquisition. Opportunities to explore these characteristics in more depth are suggested in the following active learning segments. To clearly address two separate but related subjects in Chapter 6, this key topic is divided into two subtopics. The first will focus on the benefits to children of learning more than one language in the early years, and the second will address the process of second language acquisition in the early years. Dividing this material into two subtopics allows faculty to use each subtopic independently or to use them together, depending on how the content fits the course. Each subtopic will help students understand the characteristics of young dual language learners that they need to be aware of as they plan curriculum and interactions

Chapter 6 in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* is organized 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). These papers are collected in *California’s Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers (2013)*, developed by the Governor’s State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care and the California Department of Education. In this key topic, beyond becoming familiar with the content presented in Chapter 6, faculty have the opportunity to guide students in exploring two research overview papers that are specifically related to characteristics of young dual language learners. This is found in the “Deeper Understanding” segment of the active learning in this key topic. If appropriate to course content and student level of experience with research reviews, this will familiarize students with the content of the two research overview papers, including findings and recommendations for practice.

The California Department of Education has also produced a set of two DVDs, titled *California Preschool Program Guidelines DVD Set*, to accompany the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. The third chapter of Disc 2 addresses dual language learning in the preschool setting and is titled “Supporting Young Dual Language



Learners: Considerations for All Programs.” This chapter is about 16 minutes long, and the whole chapter is relevant to this key topic. However, suggestions are made in the active learning for viewing specific segments in this chapter of the DVD. It is important that faculty review the DVD prior to using it in this key topic. Faculty might want to make their own decisions about which segments to use in different parts of the active learning in this key topic based on their students and their course content. The *California Preschool Guidelines DVD Set*, can be ordered through CDE at www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc or contact the CDE Press sales office at (800) 995-4099.

Additionally, the California Department of Education has, as part of the California Early Learning and Development System, developed resources and publications that address the needs of young dual language learners and their families and the professionals who work with them. These have been described in the “Getting Ready for the Unit” section that introduces Unit 6 of this instructional guide. It is strongly recommended that faculty be familiar with these publications and papers before addressing Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* with students.

Among these publications, of special interest to Subtopic 2 is the second edition of the resource guide *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning* (CDE 2009). This resource contains lengthy descriptions of the process of second language acquisition and would provide additional information to students. The Faculty Initiative Project has produced an instructional guide for this resource guide, and both the publication and instructional guide can be accessed through the project’s Web site. These resources could be used as a way to deepen students’ understanding of the information presented in Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*.

Also, the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division has produced a DVD entitled *A World Full of Language: Supporting Preschool English Learners*. The first part of the DVD covers some of the paths taken by children as they acquire a second language. This DVD can be ordered through the California Department of Education; ordering information can be found on the CDE Press Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/rc/ap/pubdisplay.aspx?ID=001703> (accessed January 20, 2016).

The availability of multiple resources from the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division means that faculty can choose to supplement, expand, or enhance their coverage of the characteristics of young children who are dual language learners in a variety of courses and in a variety of instructional modalities.

Handout 1, “Benefits, Challenges, and Implications for Practice,” provided with Subtopic 1, is a table that students can use to note the benefits, challenges, and implications for practice for different groups of 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).



If students do not have copies of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, the Portable Document Format (PDF) version can be downloaded from the California Department of Education Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/preschoolproggdlns2015.pdf> (accessed January 20, 2016).

California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers can be downloaded from the California State Advisory Council Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/sacresources.asp> (accessed January 20, 2016).

Information Delivery

Subtopic 1: Benefits of Bilingualism



Slide 2

Let students know that there is as much diversity within the population of preschool children who are young dual language learners as there is in the preschool population as a whole. It is important to remember that children who are young dual language learners bring their own individual experiences and developmental contexts to the preschool environment.



Disc 2

It is suggested that faculty begin this subtopic with a review and discussion of the diversity of children who are young dual language learners. A segment in Disc 2 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines DVD Set* is specifically related to this topic, and viewing this segment would be an appropriate way to start the discussion.

This segment can be accessed by opening the disc to the main menu, clicking on “Select Chapters,” and choosing the chapter “Supporting Young Dual Language Learners: Considerations for all Programs.” The first segment in this chapter, which runs approximately 2 ½ minutes, discusses the diversity of children who are young dual language learners. The next segment, running about three minutes, focuses on the use of home language as a base for learning but also addresses the diversity of home languages in California’s preschool programs.

After watching these two segments, ask the students to brainstorm as many ways as they can how children who are young dual language learners might vary. Some examples might be family income, family immigration story, urban or rural community, family members’ levels of education, language experience in their home language, family size, cultural traditions, and individual temperament. There are many more examples of individual circumstances or characteristics that can influence a child’s development as a young



dual language learner. Record all the students' ideas on chart paper, electronically, or some other way so that the list is visible to all students.

When reviewing the list, emphasize the importance of understanding each child as an individual, even as young dual language learners are discussed as a group.

Active Learning

Getting it started

It is helpful for students to understand that there are some ways in which children who are young dual language learners can be grouped and that there are some differences between groups of preschool children who are learning two or more languages at the same time. These groups include children who are described with these three terms:



Slide 3

- Dual language learners
- Bilinguals
- Emergent bilinguals

Ask students to form pairs or small groups and find definitions in Chapter 6 for the three terms. These definitions are all found on pages 76 and 77 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. It is helpful if everyone finds the definitions for all three terms. Briefly review the students' responses to be sure there is consensus for these definitions.

Keeping it going

Ask students to continue reviewing pages 76, 77, and 78 to find examples or descriptions of these three topics:



Slide 4

- Benefits of learning more than one language
- Challenges for learners of more than one language

Online Options

Subtopic 1

Students could post their lists for their classmates to review. Faculty could then facilitate an in-class or online discussion of the similarities and differences among the students' lists. If the class has online-discussion capability, faculty could also facilitate a discussion on the three topics—benefits, challenges, and implications for practice. A separate discussion thread could be used for each topic.



- Implications for practice

While students are compiling their lists, suggest that they can incorporate benefits that arose in the DVD but might not be in the text.

Then divide the class into pairs or small groups to list their findings. After the groups have had a chance to complete their lists as much as possible, ask them to share their lists with the whole group. Students could write their lists for each topic on a separate sheet of paper for each topic. Alternatively, faculty could post chart paper for each of the three categories or designate an area of the room for each category, and students could write their findings on sticky notes and attach them to the appropriate area. Facilitate a classroom discussion about similarities and differences in what was found.

There is a short segment of the DVD that addresses the benefits that could be inserted into the discussion here. It is at the very end of the discussion of different program approaches when working with children who are young dual language learners. Although different program approaches are addressed in another key topic in this unit, the very short piece at the end relates to understanding dual language capacity as a gift and is worth viewing. This can be accessed by opening Disc 2 to the main menu, clicking on “Select Chapters,” and choosing the chapter called “Supporting Young Dual Language Learners: Program Approaches.” Then go to the segment that starts at approximately 13 minutes and 47 seconds called “Embracing the Benefits of Dual Language Learning.”



Disc 2

If it has not emerged in the discussion, ask how the definitions for the three groups of children would influence each of these three topics—benefits, challenges, and implications for practice. For example, how might benefits of learning two or more languages be different for children who are bilinguals versus children who are emergent bilinguals? If faculty choose to expand this conversation, Handout 1, “Benefits, Challenges, and Implications for Practice,” can be used as a worksheet to consider these cross influences. After discussing the benefits and challenges, ask students to identify what might be some implications for practice.



Slide 5

Some of the ideas expressed in the text that could be benefits, challenges, or implications for practice might not have fallen neatly into one category or another. For instance, enhanced facility in learning a new language could also result in language loss and the resultant disconnection from home and cultural identity.



Remind students that dual language learning is multifaceted and it is important for adults working with children who are young dual language learners to be alert to each child's learning and be intentional in supporting it.

Putting it together

Provide the following directions as students continue to work in their pairs or small groups on this subtopic:



Slide 6

- Discuss what you found particularly interesting in this learning experience.
- Summarize in one or two sentences what more you would like to learn regarding the benefits of dual language learning for young children.

Reflection

Conclude Subtopic 1 with a reflective discussion.



Slides 7-8

- What values influence your work with young dual language learners? How do they support that work?
- What experiences have you had that motivate and support your work with young dual language learners?
- What might be some personal barriers to working with young children who are dual language learners? How can you work to remove them?

Information Delivery



Slide 9

Subtopic 2: Process of Second Language Acquisition

If students are not familiar with the information in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* and *California Preschool Curriculum Framework* regarding young dual language learners, it is strongly recommended that this information be reviewed here. In particular, information on the levels of dual language learning, referred to as stages in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, is available in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1* on pages 107–111. This information applies to the English-language development domain in the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* as well.

However, keep in mind that the purpose of this subtopic is to familiarize students with the content of Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. Suggestions for exploring further



background information through the use of the research overview papers is provided in the “Deeper Understanding” segment of this key topic.

Active Learning



Slide 10

Getting it started

Let students know that they will be preparing a brief presentation for fellow staff members in a preschool setting or for fellow students. The point of this presentation will be to describe why “. . . it is essential for preschool programs to recognize the critical importance of oral language and vocabulary development for young DLLs” (*California Preschool Program Guidelines*, p. 80). It is important for faculty to point out that this oral language and vocabulary development is critical in both the home language and English.

Students need only draw on the information on pages 79 and 80 in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* and focus on oral language and vocabulary development. The presentation should address these questions:

- Why is it important to pay attention to these skills?
- What are some ways in which young dual language learners might differ from monolingual language learners in developing these skills?
- Knowing this, what are some implications for practice?



Slide 11

First convene the class to consider various ways this information could be presented. For example, what would a poster presentation look like for this information, or how could role playing be incorporated into this presentation? Are there other visual ways this could be presented? Decide as a class how these presentations will be done. It would be interesting if students do not all use the same format for presentation.

Keeping it going

Organize students into pairs or small groups to work on the presentations. Remind them that the intent is not to develop a comprehensive presentation but to use it as a way to understand what information is available in the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* and is backed by the overview of research on which this chapter is based.



Taking it further

In addition, students could consider how this information could be presented to parents or other family members. Would the presentation differ for family members? How and why? Would different modalities of presentation work better for staff, colleagues, or families? If so, why?

Putting it together

When students have had time to develop their presentations, provide time for them to deliver them for their classmates. After all the groups have presented, facilitate a discussion about where some modalities worked well and where some presented challenges. Consider this from the perspective of both those who developed and presented and those who were the audience.

Online Options

Subtopic 2

Students could share their presentations online by posting photographs or scanned images of presentations such as posters. If students choose role playing, they could post copies of the scripts or a video. Faculty could then facilitate an online peer review as described in the “Putting it together” segment.

Reflection

Conclude this subtopic by asking students to reflect on the following questions. This reflection need not be done as a class discussion; it could be done as individual writing or journaling for students’ own understanding of their relationship to the topic.



Slides 12-13

- What strengths would you bring to working with young dual language learners in supporting children’s development of academic vocabulary and oral language as well as general oral language and vocabulary in both their home language and English?
- How are you challenged in working with young dual language learners regarding academic language, oral language, and vocabulary in children's home language? With staff or colleagues? With families? Can you think of some ways to overcome these challenges?

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 14-16

- 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?

Deeper Understanding



Slide 17

As mentioned in Subtopic 2, Chapter 6 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* is based on *California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers (2013)*. This key topic relates to the first and second papers in that collection. Paper 1 is "Neuroscience Research: How Experience with One or More Languages Affects the Developing Brain." Paper 2 is "Cognitive Consequences of Dual Language Learning: Cognitive Function, Language and Literacy, Science and Mathematics, and Social–Emotional Development." This "Deeper Understanding" segment provides suggestions for exploring those two research papers. They are addressed together, since they apply to both subtopics.

Keep in mind that the suggestions here are intended to support students in familiarizing themselves with the content of Papers 1 and 2. They are not intended to produce research critiques or reviews. Each paper can be addressed individually or can be addressed at the same time for this key topic.

Two instructional methodologies are suggested.

1. The first is to assign or let students choose sections of each paper to work on. This might work best for students to be in pairs, either in class or as an assignment done out of class, and then discussed in class as a whole group. Each pair would work with a section of the research overview and find key ideas to list and bring back to the whole group.
2. A second approach, which could be used in place of or in addition to the first, would be to again have students work in pairs with the



same sections of the research overviews but ask students to develop a true-false exam. This exam would also be brought back to the whole group to either take in sections with discussion following or simply use as a way to discuss the material in the research overview papers. If the exam is administered, students' responses should not be shared or examined, since this is intended as a way to become familiar with the materials and not to test students' knowledge.

Online Options

Students could share online their reviews and/or exams developed for the two research overview papers. If online-discussion capability is available, faculty could then facilitate a discussion of the reviews and exams. Students could ask for clarification about the key points and exam questions from the students who posted those materials.

Suggestions are provided to divide these papers into sections for exploration, but faculty might find other ways to divide the content, based on class size and students' familiarity with overviews of research. For each paper, review the few introductory pages as a whole class.

For Paper 1, "Neuroscience Research: How Experience with One or More Languages Affects the Developing Brain," keep in mind that this is fairly challenging content. Faculty might want to divide the paper further, but there is a flow of information through the paper that is not all independent of what precedes it or what it is combined with.

The following sections are suggested from Paper 1, "Neuroscience Research: How Experience with One or More Languages Affects the Developing Brain," from *California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers*:



Slide 18

- A Conceptual Framework: Neuroconstructivism and Language Learning (pp. 3–11)
- Experience Affects the Organization of the Neural Systems Involved in Learning, Storing, Processing, and Producing Language (pp. 11–22)
- Involvement of Different Cognitive Processes in Dual- Versus Single-Language Learning and Use (pp. 22–33)



Following students' work on these topics, review the section on "Recommendations and Implications for Program Practice" (pp. 33–37) as a whole group.

For Paper 2, "Cognitive Consequences of Dual Language Learning: Cognitive Function, Language and Literacy, Science and Mathematics, and Social–Emotional Development," from *California's Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners: Research Overview Papers* the following sections are suggested:



Slide 19

- Cognition (pp. 52–58)
- Language (pp. 61–69)
- Mathematics (pp. 69–71) and Science (pp. 71–72)
- Social–Emotional Development (pp. 72–74)

After reviewing students' work on these topics, review the "Recommendations and Implications for Program Practice" on pages 74–76.



Benefits, Challenges, and Implications for Practice

The following table can be used as a worksheet when considering how the benefits and challenges might be different for young children who are described as dual language learners, emergent bilinguals, or fully bilingual. When you have completed work on the benefits and challenges, briefly consider how these might influence classroom practices.



Unit 6: Support for Young Dual Language Learners
 Key Topic 2 – Characteristics of Preschool Dual Language Learners
 Handout 1: Benefits, Challenges, and Implications for Practice

	Benefits	Challenges	Implications for Practice
Dual Language Learners			
Emergent Bilinguals			
Bilinguals			