

SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY LANGUAGE AND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS- A SUMMARY

Los Angeles County
Office of Education

Leading Educators • Supporting Students
Serving Communities



Multilingual Academic Support Unit

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR CALIFORNIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS: SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY LANGUAGE AND DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this summary in the use of primary language support and instruction including **bilingual and dual language programs** found in the English Language Arts /English Language Development Framework is to provide individuals a document useful in professional learning discussions, and in designing programs for English Learners (ELs). It is not meant to replace the reading of the Framework but to locate where references to **primary language and dual immersion instruction** occur within the document.

PROVIDING PRIMARY LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Depending upon their age, education, and developmental levels, ELs possess a wide range of language competencies in their primary language, which they use to develop English (Chapter 2, p. 102). The Framework makes note that an EL's primary language is a valuable resource that enhances learning of English through **cross-language transfer of language and literacy skills** (Chapter 3, p. 136 and 217). Teachers encourage parents and other caregivers of ELs to **read aloud in the primary language** (see Chapter 3, **Vignette 3.2**, p. 196 for an example of homework practice in retelling stories in primary language) and if possible, in English, and "ask in the primary language the same types of questions asked during school read-alouds." This fosters **biliteracy**, the development of **comprehension skills in the primary language**, which enhances comprehension in English because these types of skills transfer across languages (Chapter 3, p. 145 and 204).

"Effective programs ensure that students do not lose valuable time relearning what they already know" (Chapter 2, p. 106)

The more developed the primary language and literacy skills, the more **linguistic and cognitive assets** ELs have to transfer (Chapter 2, p. 105-106). Mainstream teachers can enhance this development through the use of **primary language resources**, such as the use of **cognates, collaborative conversations** in both primary languages and English. The use of **primary language content texts** and **collaborative discussions** allow ELs to read and discuss in their home language, "allowing them to engage with texts above their English reading level." Teachers should ensure that they call attention to **cognates**, "to ensure that all students are aware of their power" (Chapter 2, p. 82). Teachers can ask their ELs but in particular the "newcomer EL students to quickly **write responses to text-based questions in their primary language**" (Chapter 8, p. 831).

In the Transitional Kindergarten to First grade span, it is important to intensely expose ELs to language, "stretching children's language, drawing attention to and commenting on interesting sentences and discourse structures and new or key vocabulary...whatever the primary/home language and language of instruction " (Chapter 3, 142). School environments should include **multilingual presentations** (Chapter 3, p. 147), **books and other media in the primary languages** of the children (Chapter 3, p. 149).

As mentioned before, the Framework points out frequently that an EL's **primary language is a valuable resource** that enhances learning of English through **cross-language transfer of language and literacy skills** (Chapter 3, p. 136). Many skills are **transferable between languages**. The section on Foundational Skills for English Learners discusses these concepts as it relates to phonological awareness, alphabetic and non-alphabetic writing systems (Chapter 3, p. 162). "**Decoding skills** that students have developed in their primary language can be transferred to English (Chapter 3, p. 217)."

Vignette 3.3, Interactive Storybook Read Aloud **Integrated ELA/Literacy ELD Instruction** and **Vignette 3.4**, General Academic Vocabulary Instruction from Storybooks during **Designated ELD** in Kindergarten provides two examples of a classroom where the teacher scaffolds and strategically supports ELs with **primary language support** as a way to promote **English language acquisition** in these two settings (Chapter 3, p. 228m 234).

Vignette 4.1 Close Reading of *Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* (Narrative Text) ELA Instruction in Grade Two provides insight as to how a teacher **previews** a story in the primary language to support comprehension of the story in English and improve her ELs ability to interact in conversations about the text in English (Chapter 4, p. p. 341). The **preview strategy** is also applicable in the upper grades as "the students return to the primary language text to compare the meanings...as well as similarities and differences between the language used in each text" (Chapter 4, p. 444).

As ELs develop **literacy** in grades two and three, there is increasing emphasis on how English works on multiple levels: discourse, text, sentence, clause, phrase, and word levels. The abundance of words with Latin roots in English science and history texts grows at these grade levels and to make the use of **cognates** is an especially rich linguistic resource to develop **academic English** language development for Spanish-speaking ELs and other ELs whose primary language is derived from Latin (Chapter 4. p. 297).

In **Vignette 5.2** General Academic Vocabulary in Biographies, the teacher's lesson for the English Learners at the late Expanding to Bridging level highlights academic vocabulary from text using **cognates** and making **primary language connections**. The meaningful discussions and the "just in time scaffolding" provide contextual support in their writing (Chapter 5, p. 458). **Vignette 5.3** showcases a cognate word wall in ELA and science (p.488). Other glimpses of the use of primary language support are found in Chapter 6: **Vignettes 6.3** Close Reading of an Informational Text (p.601); **6.5** Freedom of Speech: Analyzing Complex Texts Collaboratively (p. 638); and **6.6** Using Persuasive Language (p. 648).

Schools can create classroom environments that reflect the diversity of all students. Building upon **prior knowledge promotes positive self-image** and builds respect for different cultures and languages as student develop proficiency in English (Chapter 2 p.101). "Language and culture are inextricably linked, and students' dispositions toward school learning are affected by the degree to which schools convey that students' **cultural and linguistic heritage** are valued. Therefore, teachers allow and indeed encourage their students to use their primary language(s) and/ or home dialects of English when appropriate in the classroom and infuse

*"Instruction
can be
accelerated
by building
on what
students
already
know"
(Chapter 3,
p. 217)*

cultural and linguistic heritage” (Chapter 9, p. 918). In particular, strategies that support ELs through the use of primary language are showcased in **Figure 9.14** Strategies for Supporting Learners’ Engagement with Complex Text (Chapter 9, p. 925m 926).

DUAL LANGUAGE/ TWO WAY PROGRAMS

The *Introduction* to the Framework promotes **bilingualism and biliteracy for ELs, English only students, heritage language speakers and students in world language programs** as essential for participation in a global society, “Fluency in a second language helps our students be well-prepared to compete in a global marketplace” (Introduction, p. 2). The Framework states, “California has the opportunity to build on the linguistic assets that our English learners bring to public schools while also supporting the acquisition of biliteracy and multiliteracy in students whose home language is English” (Introduction, p. 2). The Seal of Biliteracy (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/sealofbiliteracy.asp>) provides recognition of this asset.

Research studies demonstrate the metalinguistic and metacognitive **benefits of bilingualism**, including providing access to complex, grade level content, better working memory, abstract reasoning skills, attention control, problem solving skills, and delay of age-related cognitive decline. It also promotes healthy self-image, pride in one’s heritage, and greater connection with one’s community (Chapter 2, p. 61).

Statements discussing language include both English and the home languages of English Learners to fulfill the goals of accessing intellectually rich, academic grade-level concepts while developing proficiency in English. Primary language development is accomplished in an **alternative bilingual program**, which has been shown to have a positive impact on overall academic achievement (Introduction, p. 10-11). Instruction in these types of programs is designed according to the same standards and principles indicated for language arts and literacy instruction outlined in the Framework. The **Common Core en Español for Spanish Language Arts and Literacy** (<https://commoncore-espanol.sdcoe.net/>) provides valuable guidance for bilingual programs where Spanish language arts are taught (Chapter 1, p. 61).

Across the grade spans covered in Chapters 3 (TK-Grade 1), 4 (Grades 2-3), 5 (Grades 4-5), 6 (Grades 6-8), and 7 (Grades 9-12) dual language programs and primary language development are discussed, albeit in less detail as the grade level increases.

Vignette 3.1. Retelling and Rewriting *The Three Little Pigs* **Integrated ELA/ Literacy and ELD** Instruction in Transitional Kindergarten highlights instructional practices in a **Two-Way Immersion school Spanish/English**. This vignette outlines a lesson that reviews concepts that had previously been presented to the children in both languages. The Integrated ELA/ELD lesson focuses on retell and collaborative writing (Chapter 3, p. 191).

Vignette 3.2 Retelling *The Three Little Pigs* Using Past Tense Verbs for **Designated ELD** in

“Oral language development in the primary language should also be promoted and fostered, whether in an alternative bilingual program, an extracurricular heritage language program, or in the home with close collaboration and support provided by teachers.”
(Chapter 3, p. 206)

Transitional Kindergarten expands the integrated lesson with a focus on the language (Chapter 3, p. 199).

Snapshot 3.7 Learning Two Languages in an Alternative Dual Language Program Kindergarten, presents a lesson with the **goals of bilingualism, biliteracy**, high academic achievement in both English and Spanish, and cross-cultural understandings. The snapshot explains a model of dual immersion that begins in kindergarten and expands to the twelfth grade focusing on social justice and culminating with the **Seal of Biliteracy**. Some useful **dual immersion website links** are provided (Chapter 3 p.223-226).

Figure 9.3 Dual Immersion Program models at both elementary and secondary levels are identified by their instructional characteristics: literacy and language goals, typical models, use of home language, use of English for ELA/content instruction, and ELD (Chapter 9, p. 892). This useful chart helps to identify the model most likely to be successful within a given community.

The Framework describes **Program 3 Basic Biliteracy** as “instructional materials in English and in a language other than English,” that is “designed to ensure that students are successful in developing literacy in English and another language” which are aligned with the standards and reflect current research. Reading selections must be of “high quality, depth and breadth, and reflect a balance of instructional time for literary and informational texts appropriate to the grade level.” Texts in languages other than English must be of **parallel quality and quantity**, include authentic literature in both languages, provide a progression of complexity with appropriate scaffolding, appeal to student interests, and cover all aspects of language and literacy development. In addition, materials must include linguistic augmentations and modifications addressing **cross-linguistic transfer**. All materials must meet the identified standards for **Common Core en español**, if one of the target languages is Spanish, as well as the CA ELD Standards and the CA CCSS for ELA. Materials should be designed to encourage parental/guardian involvement in student learning at home (Chapter 12, p. 1011 and Appendix 12-A).

SUMMARY

Teachers should treat all languages and all dialects of English in the classroom as equally valid and valuable and take the stance that multilingualism and dialect variation is natural (Harris-Wright, 1999). In fact, one of the characteristics of a globally competent person includes communicating ideas effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers (Chapter 10). Obviously, the most efficient and effective way to bridge linguistic barriers is by knowing multiple languages.

Authors: Magdalena Ruz Gonzalez, Project Director III, Multilingual Academic Support Unit, CIS,
Bobbi Ciriza-Houtchens, Consultant, Los Angeles County Office of Education

“When instruction is provided in English and in an additional language in alternative bilingual or dual language programs, classroom assessment for academic an language development progress in both languages is necessary.” (Chapter 8, p. 865)