

WATCHING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS GROW

Key Focus: Language Development

Observation: Mr. Moreno has completed a picture-naming activity with children who are dual language learners. Children were shown pictures of four items and asked to point to the picture of the item named in English. There are a total of 20 items.

Here is the tally sheet in September:

Student	Date	Number Correct
Tran	September 10	0
Miguel	September 6	4
Ifeoma	September 9	10
Mik-yung	September 12	3

Two months later Mr. Moreno re-administered the activity and obtained the following results:

Student	Date	Number Correct
Tran	November 10	2
Miguel	November 6	4
Ifeoma	November 9	15
Mik-yung	November 12	10

At the end of the school year here is his tally sheet:

Student	Date	Number Correct
Tran	June 10	5
Miguel	June 6	15
Ifeoma	June 9	20
Mik-yung	June 12	20

Reflecting on the documentation:

**Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

Ask: What are the advantages of this type of assessment and documentation?

Sample Responses: It is a quick way to summarize what children can do. It allows the teacher to see change over time within and across children's development; and it neatly organizes information.

Ask: What are the disadvantages of this approach?

Sample Responses: When children are improving it is apparent, but for children who are making slower growth, it is not clear which vocabulary words are easier for them. Also, there is no way with this summary sheet to compare what they know in their home language with what they know in English.

Ask: What might be some other ways a teacher could observe and document this information in context?

Sample Responses: While reading a Big Book or a child's picture book, ask children about what they see. Have a list of words created before reading (based on what is in the book) and note which child names each picture—coding the language in which they say it. Have children name pictures in a matching or memory game or on a game board. Code whether the child names correctly (N); names with a prompt such as the initial sound of the word (P), imitates the name (I), or if the child has the opportunity but does not do any of these (X).

Interpretation of the observation:

**Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data.*

Ask: Describe each child's individual growth in picture-naming skills across the school year.

Sample Responses:

- All children improved over the course of the year. Only Miguel did not make progress between observation 1 and 2.
- Tran went from knowing no pictures at the beginning of the year to knowing five at the end.
- Miguel went from knowing four at the beginning of the year to knowing 11 at the end of the year
- Ifeoma went from 10 pictures to 20 and Mik-yung went from three to 20.

Ask: Describe children's performance in relation to one another in picture-naming skills across the school year.

Sample Responses: It seems that Mik-yung made the greatest progress over the course of the year, with Miguel making the greatest gains from observation 2 to observation 3. Ifeoma and Mik-yung scored the highest of the four children at the end of the year. Tran still seems to be falling behind the other children.

Relating your observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

**Although participants can defend other interpretations, there should be general consensus that this observation demonstrates:*

1A4 (Language Development/Listening and Understanding): For non-English-speaking children, progresses in listening to and understanding English.

Next steps for large group instruction:

**Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas or learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children's*

progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.

Ask: Describe the activities that you would provide the children to improve their receptive language.

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- Throughout the year take pictures of common objects in the classroom as well as in the community and ask parents to bring in pictures of objects in their homes. Post these pictures on the wall and make individual books for children in the class to serve as their “dictionary.” Each Monday, add a new picture to the dictionary.
- Name pictures in books and have the children point to the object and repeat the name. Match objects to pictures.
- Name pictures and objects in both home language and English when using in large group.

Next steps for individualized instruction:

Ask: What would you recommend that the teacher do next for individual children?

** Responses will vary but might include:*

- Tran and Miguel: At a specified time during the day, meet with Tran and Miguel separately to read simple books in English using a book reading apron that contains objects from the story (for example “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”). Read the story with Tran and work with him to practice manipulating the objects in the story, while speaking about the objects. Match objects to pictures, naming both in English.
- Ifeoma and Mik-yung: To introduce a new challenge in the task, play matching or concentration (memory) games with these two children and ask them to name the cards as they turn them over.

Additional Notes:

Remember that family engagement is a critical component in promoting children’s language and literacy development, especially for dual language learners. Ask participants what information they may want to gather from families—particularly Tran’s and Miguel’s (for example, what pictures are they able to identify at home in their home language). You might also consider making recommendations for activities that the families of these children could do at home throughout the year and over the summer.

Consider what additional information it would be helpful to have in understanding how the children’s language is developing.

Keeping records of items and pictures that the children can name or recognize may tell you that it is easier for them to recognize objects

than actions, or that they seem to be having trouble with words with certain sounds.