

Dual Language Weekly Focus

Bilingual/Biliterate Environment

The classroom environments in a DLE program must reflect the **goal of bilingualism and biliteracy**. To that end, there should be equal representation of both languages in the each classroom environment. The environmental elements of the Dual Language Classroom serve the purpose of promoting and valuing the language development that is occurring. The labels, word walls and student-generated alphabets are references that students can use in writing and LOD activities: vocabulary development in two languages is the ultimate goal. Academic content area center activities in both languages promote language and vocabulary development as well as content knowledge. Your classroom is a book and you want to “read the room” with your students as much as possible in the LOD or LOI.

Reflect on your dual language classroom environment:

- ★ Are student desks arranged in small groups to promote the use of listening and speaking skills as students work on grade level tasks?
- ★ Are grade appropriate items clearly labeled in both languages so that children can read/use them?
- ★ Are there two separate word walls, one for English and one for Spanish, with equal prominence in the classroom?
- ★ Are the word walls maintained with current vocabulary from student writing and reading? Does the teacher review vocabulary from word walls in LOD and model the use of the word wall during think alouds and shared and interactive writing?
- ★ Is a Bilingual Pairs List posted and used to group students for maximum language development?
- ★ Is there a consistent use of color to help children make associations between the similarities and differences in English and Spanish? (red: Spanish, blue: English)
- ★ Are content area bulletin boards/posters and resources in the correct language of instruction?
- ★ Is authentic student work posted in both languages?
- ★ Is there student ownership of the walls or is it all teacher made or store bought material?
- ★ Are there student-generated alphabets in both English and Spanish with grade appropriate vocabulary that can be reviewed during LOD activities?
- ★ Do students have access to materials in BLCs? If there is room, are there well defined areas for centers in each of the content areas?
- ★ Are there well defined academic activities in each center in both languages?
- ★ Can/do the students utilize the resources posted on the wall?
- ★ Is there equal representation of Spanish and English literature?

A special note for our two-way teachers: Do both rooms reflect equal representation of both languages? Is there student work posted in both languages? Even if one teacher may only teach Spanish or English, teachers should try to share student work, label items and post word walls so that both environments support student development in both languages.

**The classroom environment is very important to the students!
What messages are being conveyed through the walls around them?**