Strategies to Address Children’s Learning when they are Dual Language Learners. A Self-Reflection Tool

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Know your Children

❖ Culture of the child and family
❖ Family priorities, concerns and decisions
❖ Language (s) spoke at home and at school
❖ Strengths the child brings to the learning opportunities you provide
❖ Prior experiences of the child and family
❖ Other challenges
❖ Where the child is in learning English as a second language... A starting point

Strategies:
Responsive Interactions

❖ Start with what the child knows... at level of comprehension if instruction in English...
❖ Start slowly
❖ Use ‘wait time’
❖ Scaffold communication with appropriate comments and questions
❖ Utilize peer interactions
❖ Model, expand, and extend language

Environment and Expectations

❖ Where are pictures that the children can relate/resonate to? Family, Culture and Home
❖ Create meaningful and engaging learning areas... “Hands on”
❖ Develop a schedule that promotes child engagement and success, “Predictability” is key!
❖ Plan for transitions ... “Preparation” is helpful!
❖ Engage children in constructing classroom expectations “ A Learning Community”
❖ Enhance children’s emotional literacy ...“create trust and conflict resolution strategies” (e.g. Peace Table)
❖ Create small collaborative versus competitive learning groups

Specific Strategies to Introduce Stories and New Information:

❖ Use actions (TPR) and illustrations to reinforce oral statements ... provide “high context”
❖ Prime the pump...review specific vocabulary prior to reading
❖ Use visual prompts, facial expressions, gesture...these are more effective than just repeating commands
❖ Ask for completion versus production; choose answers, cloz technique versus generation of answers depending upon level of second language acquisition and to address “affective filter”/anxiety
❖ Model correct usage rather than “correct” errors
❖ Use visual aids and multiple modalities in interactive story book reading
(e.g. print referencing, show illustrations, use prompts to engage children in interaction)
Say it with meaning: explain, define, restate, and paraphrase

Selected References


Web sites

❖ www.colorincolorado.org/ Colorin Colorado
❖ www.puentesculturales.com