

English-Language Development: **Understanding the Rationale for the English-Language Development Domain**

Strands:	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Speaking</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>
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GETTING READY

Instructional Component(s): Motivator and/or Connection to Experience; Information Delivery; In-Class Activity; Out-of-Class Activity; Assessment

Strands: This activity can be used to deepen understanding of all strands.

Focus: Students explore their own experience with learning a second language or consider how this experience affects the lives of many in California.

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY

Students will demonstrate **knowledge** and **skills** that are consistent with an increased understanding and application of the concepts addressed in this activity.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of:

- The introduction to the English-language development domain of the PLF, V1 including the use of these foundations (*Standards 1 & 5*)*
- Considerations related to the language and literacy development of children who are English learners (*Standards 1 & 5*)*
- Some of the considerations related to bilingualism (*Standards 1, 2, & 6*)*
- The characteristics of the preschool population in California (*Standards 1, 2, & 6*) *

Students will be able to:

- Reflect upon bilingualism (*Standards 1, 2, & 6*)*
- Describe the characteristics of the preschool population in California and some implications for working with young children (*Standards 1, 2, & 5*)*

* See Appendix A

English-Language Development: **Understanding the Rationale for the English-Language Development Domain**

Before you start

The introduction to the English-language development domain in the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1* (PLF, V1) suggests that there are some compelling reasons for considering how young children whose home language is not English are negotiating learning in all content areas:

- 1) California is experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of children from birth to five years of age whose home language is not English (PLF, V1, p. 103)
- 2) The home language is the vehicle by which children are socialized into their families and communities (PLF, V1, p. 103) and from which they derive their sense of self-efficacy and social and cognitive development (PLF, V1, p. 104)
- 3) The development of language and literacy skills in a child's first language is important for the development of skills in a second language (PLF, V1, p. 104)



Slides 2-4

These three reasons are the basis for the following activity. Content from this section is reflected on PowerPoint slides 2-4.

Getting it started



Slide 5

Ask students to form pairs and discuss the advantages of bilingualism for themselves or for people they know who are bilingual.

Ask those who are bilingual how they learned (or are learning) English.

- What was easy or difficult about learning another language?
- How does your home language keep you connected to your cultural and family traditions?

If there are students who lost their first language, you might ask this question:

- Can you describe the process of how that happened?

Keeping it going

Slides 6-9

The California Department of Education has published *Preschool English Learners: A Resource Guide (PEL)*. Chapter 2 of this publication, titled “Preschool English Learners, Their Families, and Their Communities,” contains information regarding the increasing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of California.

To establish the context for understanding the complexities of working with English learners and their families, use the demographic data and figures from Chapter 2 of the resource guide to present information about these topics:

- Enrollment and percentage of English learners in California public schools
- The diverse ethnic population of children in California preschools
- Most prevalent non-English languages spoken by students in California

Be sure to discuss how the demographics of California have changed in recent years and the implications for programs. Consider including additional demographic data specific to your local community and the population of children and families in early childhood programs in your area. There is wide variation in California demographics by community and region.

Demographic data are available on many Web sites and helpful resources can be found at these sites:

- Dataquest: <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>
- Child Care Portfolio, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network: <http://www.rnetwork.org/our-research/child-care-portfolio.html>.

Taking it further

Slide 10

Have the whole group discuss current demographic trends. Then discuss some of the implications of the demographic data for preschool programs and professionals. Students can do this in pairs, small groups, or as an entire class.

After this discussion, ask the following reflective questions:

- What ideas stood out most for you?
- How can you apply that information to your work now or in the future?
- To apply these ideas, what further information or support do you need?
- What actions do you need to take?

**Taking it
out of class**

This activity is taken from the *Instructional Guide for the Preschool English Learners: A Resource Guide*. The complete instructional guide is available on line at:
<http://www.wested.org/facultyinitiative/pelguide.html>.

Focusing on the six most prevalent non-English languages spoken among students in California (PEL, p. 12), ask students to find population figures for all countries that speak Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Hmong, Tagalog, and Korean. Ask students to then calculate the approximate number of people in the world who speak each of these languages.

After determining the number of people that speak the languages, have students list five advantages of communicating effectively in a variety of places and situations in a language other than their own.

Consider modifying the assignment to focus on the most prevalent language(s) in your particular local region.

To better understand the relationship between learning language and literacy in the home language and learning language and literacy in English, see activities in this instructional guide that compare these two domains, such as “Relating the English-Language Development Domain to Other Domains.”

Assessment

Slide 11

Pass out index cards and ask students to complete these two sentences:

- Something new I learned is . . .
- One real world application of what I just learned is . . .

In pairs, students could exchange and discuss each other’s cards before you collect them for review.