

How adult ESL learners can help children become bilingual

CATESOL 2015

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Introduction

- A. Role of ESL teacher in encouraging or discouraging L1 use.
- B. Asset-based perspective vs. deficit-based perspective

Activity 1: Reading: Maintaining a child's home language

A. Match the words and phrases with their synonyms on the right. (See screen.)

B. Discuss the following questions with a partner.

1. What is your home language? What was your grandparents' home language?
2. Do you know any children whose home language is not English? How do they learn English?
3. What does it mean to support a child's home language? Who supports a child's home language?

C. Read the quote below and answer the questions that follow.

All children need English in order to thrive in their new country. They also need support in maintaining their home language in order to stay deeply connected to their families, as well as for the many advantages of being bilingual.¹

1. How can adults help children to maintain their home language? List 6 ways.
2. How does a language help children stay connected with their family?
3. What are some of the advantages of being bilingual?

Activity 2: Listening to a passage about language development

A. Before you listen, discuss the following questions with your classmate.

1. What do parents and caregivers do to help young children learn language?
2. What does 'talkative' mean? Do you know someone who is talkative? What is a talkative environment?
3. Guess. What happens when children know few words when they start school? What happens when children know many words?

¹Derman-Sparks, Louise, and Julie Olsen Edwards. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2010): 63.

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B. Listen to the following mini-lecture. Fill in the blanks with the missing words. After you listen, compare your answers with a classmate.

In talkative _____, children hear many words every day. They hear stories and _____ and descriptions and advice. Some children _____ as many as 20,000 and 30,000 _____ a day. In other homes, however, there is a lot less _____. Over time, there is a big difference in how many _____ the children have heard. By age 3, children from _____ homes have heard 20 to 30 _____ more words than children from non-talkative _____. This difference has a big _____ on children's ability to succeed in school and life. _____ children need to hear a lot of words to help them develop their language _____. Parents and teachers can use _____ conversational strategies to increase the _____ of words that children hear. _____ main strategies are: tune in, talk more, and take turns.²

C. Read the statements below. Mark them as T for true or F for false based on the information above. If a sentence is false, change it to make it true.

1. ____ A child may hear 10,000 words a day in a talkative environment.
2. ____ Talkative environments include descriptions, stories, and advice.
3. ____ By age three, children from non-talkative homes have heard 20 to 30 million more words than children from talkative homes.

D. Discuss the questions with your classmates.

1. What happens when a child knows a lot of words? What happens when he doesn't?
2. Are you surprised by the information above?
3. What do you think adults can do to help children hear lots of words?

Activity 3: Speaking: Repeating and expanding children's words

Now read the child's words below. Repeat and expand these phrases. Say your answer aloud to a partner. Listen as your partner repeats and expands the phrase. Choose the answer you like best and write it down.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Cat outside! | 2. Mommy hungry. | 3. No school. | 4. Ball right here |
| 5. Have it! | 6. Daddy home. | 7. Go store. | 8. Grandma come. |

Activity 4: Integrated Skills: Bilingual Book Project³

Conclusion

- A. Encourage bilingualism by taking an asset-based perspective.
- B. Use activities that foster bilingualism.
- C. Find everyday ways to encourage adults to help their children become bilingual.

Available now: [English for Child Care: Language Skills for Parents and Providers](#), Brems, Chan, and Rosner. [Sunburst Media](#)

Coming soon: [English for Child Development: Language Skills for Parents and Providers](#), Brems, Chan, and Rosner. [Flyer p1](#) [Flyer p2](#)

² These strategies come from the Thirty Million Words website: <http://tmw.org/>

³ This assignment is from the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project.