

# HANDOUT

## EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT

### Assessing Young Dual Language Learners:

### *Observation and Documentation of Young Dual Language Learners*

## STRATEGIES TO ASSESS YOUNG DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Follow along as the facilitator reads about an observation Farzana makes of a young dual language learner, Bo.

One morning, Farzana notices Bo initiates play with a Mandarin-speaking peer in the outdoor area. Bo and the other child trace leaves onto large pieces of paper with crayons. The children chat mostly in Mandarin, but Bo says a few words in English: "leaf" and "green." Farzana notes Bo and the other child take turns speaking to each other. They also point to leaves and laugh. Farzana's co-teacher, Lin, a bilingual Mandarin/English speaker, discusses the colors and shapes of the leaves with the children in Mandarin.

Turn to a partner and discuss the following question:

Though Farzana does not speak Mandarin, what can she learn about Bo from her observation?

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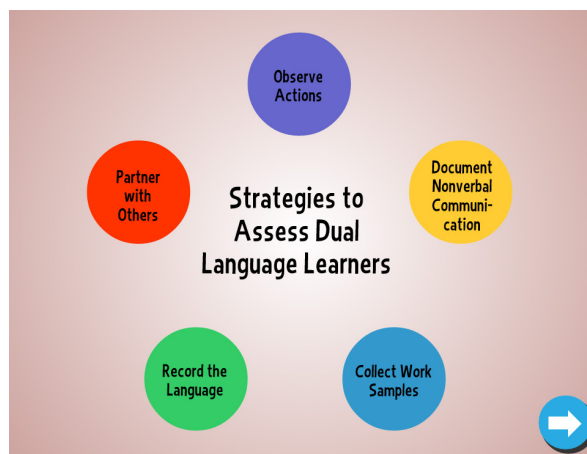


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1. **Observe actions**, such as what the child does with other children and adults, and with objects.
2. **Document nonverbal communication**, such as gestures and facial expressions.
3. **Collect work samples**, such as the child's artwork, the child's writing, and photos or videos of projects completed during child-initiated and/or teacher/provider-guided activities.
4. **Record the language** the child uses in different contexts, and record what the child says.
5. **Partner with others** who speak the child's home language and know the child.



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#### Continued

In your small groups, read through the scenario the facilitator assigns you, and discuss how Farzana can observe and document the child's learning and development.

#### Scenario 1

Farzana notices Maria, a child whose home languages are Spanish and Huasteca Nahuatl (wah-stay-kah nah-wah-tel), uses flannel pieces to build different parts of a plant. Maria puts the flannel piece for roots on the bottom of the board, the pieces for stem and leaves in the middle, and the piece for petals on top. Farzana asks Maria about the plant, and she responds by smiling, pointing, and saying "leaf" in English. Farzana wants to learn more about how Maria might describe the plant in her home languages. She knows Maria spends her afternoons with her grandparents, who speak Huasteca Nahuatl.

#### Scenario 2

One morning, Farzana observes Bo, a child whose home language is Mandarin, during small group time, as the group sorts leaves into piles. Bo puts similar leaves in a pile, gestures at the pile, and smiles. Farzana is interested to learn more about how and why Bo sorts the leaves, so she asks Lin, her bilingual co-teacher, to have a conversation with Bo.

The following questions can help guide you in thinking about Farzana's observations:

Which of the five strategies can Farzana use?

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What can Farzana learn about the child in each of these observations?

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What questions will Farzana ask her assessment partner to learn more about the child's knowledge and skills?

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