

## **Individualizing Instruction for Children with Disabilities Who Are Also Dual Language Learners**

Jennifer Fung: Hi, everybody, good afternoon. Thank you to everybody for joining us for our February Inclusion Series webinar. Today, we are going to be talking about strategies to individualize instruction for children with disabilities who are also dual language learners. I am so excited to talk about this topic, I am so excited to be joined by my guest host today. Let's do a little bit of housekeeping and get started. My name is Jen Fung, and I am the Inclusion Lead for the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, or DTL, as we call it. I am thrilled to be joined today by Dr. Xigrig Soto-Boykin, who is a phenomenal professional expert in this area. Xigrig, do you want to say hello to everybody and introduce yourself?

Xigrig Soto-Boykin: Yes, hola, everyone. My name is Xigrig, like Jennifer said, and I have a background in speech language pathology with a focus on early childhood and dual language learners. We're so excited to have you all join us as we talk about one of my favorite topics in the whole world today.

Jen: Before we jump in, a quick look at our objectives for today. Today, as I mentioned, we're going to be focusing on children with disabilities who are also dual language learners. Two things that we want to explore, and we want our participants to come away from this webinar knowing more about are the differences between a language difference and a language delay when we're talking about children who are learning more than one language. We also are going to explore and see some strategies – evidence-based strategies – in action, strategies to support development and learning across the Big 5 skill areas. If you're not familiar with the Big 5, don't worry, we will talk a little bit about what those Big 5 skills are.

Just a quick reminder before we jump into our content is the Viewer's Guide. This is fairly new to our Inclusion Series webinars. Our friends at Teacher Time inspired us to create a Viewer's Guide for each of our inclusion webinars. The Viewer's Guide is meant to accompany the webinar, fill in some – there's so much to learn. We had a hard time narrowing down what we were going to talk about to an hour, so our Viewer's Guide supplements some information. It has some answers to common questions, has some spaces for reflection and then also has some great – what we think are great resources on this topic at the end of the Viewer's Guide. We definitely encourage you to download that if you haven't already and open it up and follow along.

Before we get started, the first thing that we're going to talk about is, of course, like I said, thinking about the difference between a language difference and a language delay. Before we get started, we want to ground ourselves in a couple of definitions. What you see here on the screen is the definition of dual language learner from the Head Start Program Performance Standards, so many of you have seen this. We wanted to put this up here. you – we won't read through the whole thing, but there are a couple things that we wanted to point out. One, we use the term dual language learner, and that's preferred. That's an important part of the standard, and it's preferred in this community because it doesn't center English as the only

language that's being learned. You might hear English language learner, Limited English Proficiency, but folks in our field have been encouraging providers and professionals to move away and focus on the term dual language learner because, again, it's not centering that English is the only other language that children may be learning.

Another thing we wanted to point out is that, in the first paragraph, you'll see that dual language learner means a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time, so we will talk today about dual language learners. We might say DLL. Xigrid will also talk a bit about bilingualism, but we acknowledge that children – there are many children who are learning more than two languages.

The second definition that we wanted to kind of ground ourselves in today is a working definition of equity from the Office of Head Start and ACF. This work that we're going to talk about today – all of our work, but especially when we're talking about children with disabilities, dual language learners – it's really centered on equity, so we wanted to take a moment to acknowledge and share this definition, this working definition of equity, if you haven't seen it yet. When we ground our work in equity, and when we work hard, as program staff and education staff, to use equitable practices, we do this with the goal of using strategies, using supports and resources and also building our policies and our systems, so that all children and all families have consistent and equitable access to all services, all of the comprehensive services a program has to offer. Today, we're going to be focused on – focusing on children and families who have intersecting identities. Children who are culturally and ethnically or racially diverse and have disabilities or suspected delays. We want to acknowledge that intersection and the importance of that intersection when we're planning and using equitable services, but also acknowledge that children and families might have other identity characteristics or experiences that impact their access to those consistent and equitable services. We encourage you to keep this in mind as you participate in the webinar today, as we explore supports and as we explore strategies that can be used to support all children to access their learning environments, to participate as fully as possible and to reach their fullest potential.

Let's get started. Xigrid, I know that this is a question that's on many people's minds, so really want to start out by thinking about, how do we distinguish, how can education staff and folks who are supporting children and families distinguish between a language difference and a language delay or disorder in children who are dual language learners? Really excited to have you here to help us explore this.

Xigrid: I think that's a great question, and I'd like to start by creating a visual for all of us today that I hope you can remember as we talk not only about the identification or the differentiation between a child who is a dual language learner that might have a language difference, meaning that they're just typically developing as part of their bilingual journey, and children who are dual language learners with communication impairments. Before we really get to answer that question, I'd like to ground ourselves in this idea of the house, and in the green section here, we have the foundation. There are things that all children need to do, regardless of what languages they speak, to be competent learners, and to develop socially, too, in order for them to reach their highest potential. In the green area, the foundational skills will be things like children's attention, children's ability to learn new information, children's capacity to

communicate socially and academically. Those are the things that, regardless of what languages are spoken, all kids need to be able to do. Our goal in Early Childhood is to build that strong foundation, so we can help children move forward in their academic journeys.

When it comes to bilingualism, we have walls. We've built our foundation, and now we're going to think about the walls, and we might have two walls or maybe multiple walls. The walls represent the features of each language that the child might know. For example, that might be the grammatical rules of one language, the vocabulary, the semantics – those are the features. Traditionally, people used to think that bilingualism or multilingualism meant children would be separated into two parts, so they would have a perfect knowledge of one language and perfect knowledge of your second language, and there was little interaction between the two. For the audience members today who are bilingual, you probably know that, in reality, we have doors on these walls, right? There's a lot of interaction, dynamic ways in which we communicate, and there might be features that we start mixing together between the two languages, and that is completely fine. That is typical. Sometimes you might hear that being referred to as code switching, and there's more work now focusing on the idea of translanguaging. But the idea is that bilingualism is dynamic, and our goal is to build that green foundation, the core skills that children need to know. Then, to help them make connections are those strong walls across languages, helping children interact between the two languages with the goal of them building the roof, which is what we see as our outcomes. When we're able to provide children with a strong bilingual foundation, then we'll see high performances in their social-emotional development, their communication skills, and their learning. What happens a lot of times – what happens a lot of times is that we focus on one language. We might only provide instruction in English; we might only assess in English. When we do that, we build a wonky house that ends up dilapidating. I like the idea of this house analogy, because it helps me remember that when it comes to assessment and our learning opportunities, it's crucial that we're looking at the foundation and then building the walls with the children in mind.

Then the question becomes, how do we know the differences between a language difference, which is not a disability, and a real disability? There's three things that I like to keep in mind, starting with gathering information from families and caregivers. We know that caregivers are key, but when it comes to children that are dual language learners with suspected disabilities, we can't really go into an evaluation process without recruiting the family's support. What we want to do in that context is ask the family, "Do you have concerns," or, "Tell me a little bit more about how your child is doing in comparison to siblings or to family members," because the thing that we don't want to do is compare a child who's a monolingual English speaker to a dual language learner. We need to compare children to their peers, and they're the closest peers. The research suggests that if parents show concerns, there's usually a true concern for a disability, but when they're not worried because they're communicating really well at home in their home language, then I wouldn't be as concerned.

The second thing that's important in thinking about the walls of our house is making sure that we assess children in both languages. I understand that that can be a little bit intimidating sometimes, because we may not have the staff in our centers, and one thing realize is, how can we use interpreters, family members, and other paraprofessionals that do speak the language to help us kind of gauge, how is this child doing in their communication? If you're a monolingual

educator, you can have a set of questions and say, "Can you please listen to the child's speaking in this context while they're playing, and can you tell me, how well are they communicating? How is their vocabulary? How is their grammar?" It lets go of that pressure – "I don't speak that language. I'm so intimidated," that we all have – knowing that we can partner with people that know the language. A key thing is to observe the child in various contexts, so whether you're – when they're playing in a structural way, when you're reading a book, having different communication partners are going to get you a complete picture. We don't want to make any rash decisions about a child until we've examined the whole house. It's important to look at the child holistically and look at the different domains outside of language to see if the child is meeting their developmental norms across things like their gross motor skills and their fine motor skills. Of course, we all want the most complete picture of ourselves that represents us, and nothing can be more important when we talk about children with disabilities who are also dual language learners.

Jen: Perfect. You really – that's such a great reminder. We know that development across the domains doesn't happen in isolation, and even though we're talking about – thinking about assessing whether a child has a language delay or difference, that we're looking across those developmental domains.

Xigrid: Absolutely. I'm a fan of charts. I invite you to think about this flow chart. How do we know when to assess? Traditionally, people believe that it's a good idea to wait 3 to 5 years to assess a child who's a dual language learner, but we know that can be dangerous, because then, we're missing that key early intervention piece. I suggest something called not "Wait and see," but "Watch and see," and I'm going to help you understand when it's important to have a plan for you to observe to then make the best possible decision.

On one arm of this flow chart, we have this idea that the child is showing a significant delay across different developmental domains. For example, if you have a child in your program who's 3 years old and is not showing those prelinguistic skills – they're not imitating motor movements, they're not looking like they're maintaining eye contact or showing joint attention, and you see a gross developmental delay – regardless of the language, that's a sign that it's really important to start assessment right away. On the other hand, when the child is communicating verbally and meeting some milestones, but they look like they're mostly delayed in one language, specifically English, that is when we want to put something in place that I like to call "Watch and see." In this moment, you can work in a partnership with you, with the family, and with other professionals that are experts in bilingualism to create a plan for observations – observation and intervention. You can say, "We know that the child's vocabulary is slow, what can we do to support their vocabulary?" Then the question to ask is, "Is the child learning vocabulary or learning the skill when the supports are in place?" If they are, that might be an indicator that they don't have a disability, but even when a lot of support is provided with a bilingual context and the child is not meeting those benchmarks, then that's – that's an indication where an evaluation would be warranted.

Jen: I think that's so helpful. I also am a fan of a chart. To break down that concern across global areas versus a concern in – in one specific area in the language – that was really helpful. Xigrid just shared a strategy, her strategy, "Watch and see." But we're curious – and we're going to do

a little poll now, we'd love to hear from our participants – if your program has a concern – if somebody in your program has a concern about a child who is a dual language learner, a concern that there might be a delay or a disability, what's your first step? I'm going to go ahead and launch this poll now. If you want to, take a moment to look over the poll options, think about what your first step is. Do you meet with the child's family? Do you schedule an observation in the child's home or where they participate in their community? Do you collect screening information or connect with other program staff to – who work with the child and the family to, as Xigrad said, get that broader picture of development, or do you make a referral to your IDEA partners, whether that's your local education agency or a Part C agency?

I see folks are responding, so we're going to leave this poll open for a few more moments just to give folks a chance to let us know, what's your first step? What do you do when there's a concern about a child's language development? If you don't see your preferred strategy, your go-to strategy on this poll, let us know in the Q&A. What's your first step? We're going to have about 10 more seconds, and then I will close this poll, and we'll share the results, so we can see what your peers and colleagues – what their first steps are.

Let's take a look. It looks like the – we're kind of tied here with collecting screening information, but just winning out – really in line with what you suggested, Xigrad – meeting with the child's family. It looks like it's most people's preferred go-to initial strategy when there is that – that concern. Connecting with other program staff who work with the child and family, also high up there. Some folks scheduling an observation, some folks going to a referral, maybe if there's more of that global developmental delay that folks are seeing. Thank you, everybody, for sharing your thoughts. I see some people responding in the Q&A, lots of people reiterating that that practice of collecting screening information in the child's home language. If there's still a concern, then working with the family to gather more information, to do some more observation. But everything is lining up with what you were sharing in terms of strategies, Xigrad, getting that full picture when you're deciding, thinking about that flow chart, "Where do we go next? Do we proceed with that referral, or do we engage in that 'Watch and see' process?"

Before we start talking about specific teaching practices, I'd love to talk about inclusion. I love to talk about inclusion every day, but when we think about the concept of inclusion and the practice of inclusion, and we're talking about disability inclusion, we're generally thinking about strategies and supports and practices that we use to ensure that children with disabilities can access and learn from learning environments and experiences where their peers without disabilities are also participating. Xigrad, I'd love to hear from you – what else should we consider when we're thinking about what inclusion looks like and how we support inclusion for children with disabilities who are also dual language learners?

Xigrad: Wonderful. I can't wait to reframe inclusion, but before we kind of jump into inclusion, there was a wonderful question about, "What would happen if a child is assessed, for example, in Spanish and English, and they demonstrate a significant delay, but only in their communication?" I love this question, so thank you so much for bringing it up to the surface. I'm a speech language therapist, so that's usually our definition of a child who has a communication impairment or a communication delay. If a child only has a developmental

delay on one language, we wouldn't consider that a communication delay, or we – there wouldn't be a need for interventions. However, in this case, the child may be diagnosed as having a language delay. It may not be a global developmental delay, and it will vary based – I know states have different metrics of what they would consider delay, but from the speech pathology perspective, that's when we would provide speech and language services, and then continuing to monitor other areas of development. Understanding that there's a variety, and we know speech language delays are one of the most common diagnoses for children that are dual language learners. Thank you so much for that question, and now let's transition to reframing inclusion.

When we think about inclusion, we oftentimes think of children with disabilities receiving high-quality learning opportunities alongside of – with children who do not have disabilities, and I love that definition of inclusion. I would also like to challenge us, though, a little bit, to think about, what are some other ways in which children who have disabilities, specifically children who are dual language learners and have disabilities, might be included, might not be included? One of those things is not having access to the classroom information because they don't speak English, so I would like to think about inclusion not just as participating in learning opportunities with children who don't have disabilities, but also making sure that we're providing children with opportunities in their home language, so they not only have access developmentally but also linguistically. We want to reduce as many barriers as possible for children with these intersecting identities.

Jen: Perfect. That is, when – like I said, when we think about inclusion, there's a broad definition of inclusion that was put out by the Division for Early Childhood and NAEYC in 2009 that defines the defining features of inclusion as access, participation, and supports. I love that reframe of when we're thinking about access and when we're thinking about participation. It – it should include language, as well, and home language when we're talking about children who are dual language learners, so thank you for helping us reframe that.

We encourage – there's a question about this, or a thought prompt about this in your Viewer's Guide. What are your thoughts on reframing inclusion to also focus on supporting access, participation, and learning for children with disabilities who are also dual language learners? Is this a new concept to you? Is this something you've thought about? How does this impact or potentially shift your practice, and why is this important? We encourage you to take a moment to reflect on that, to come back to your Viewer's Guide later and reflect on that, or, as always, share with us in the Q&A.

Now, let's get started in thinking about effective practices, teaching practices, to support the learning needs of children with disabilities who are also dual language learners. We're going to begin by discussing some universal strategies that we know are foundational to our practice for all children, but specifically how those foundational practices apply to practice, effective practice, with children with disabilities, who are DLL. Then, we'll talk about some specific instructional strategies, like I said at the beginning of the webinar, to focus on promoting skill development and learning across the Big 5 for ALL skill areas. We know in early learning, early childhood, and especially in Head Start, in Early Head Start, that one of our universal foundational practices is partnering with families and engaging with families. When we're

thinking about children who are dual language learners and children with disabilities, a really important part of this is learning about a family's home language. Xigrid, what tips, what strategies and practices, can you share with us about engaging with families to learn about their home language?

Xigrid: Wonderful question. I think the first thing is gathering information from a home language survey. A home language survey is simply a questionnaire that you provide families in a way that they would understand to get you an idea of what is the child's inputs, so who are their communication partners throughout the day, and what is their output? To give you an idea, I usually like to create a table with – hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., for example. Then I'll ask families, "From 8 – before the child arrives to the Head Start program, who is speaking to them the most and in what language or languages, and how does the child respond?" To make it age appropriate, for some children that are prelingual or maybe nonverbal, they may not respond to you verbally, but do they – do they look? Do they pay attention? What is their response? What happens when they go to school, and how does that differ when they go – in the weekends, because weekends might be a time where they spend time with cousins who might speak more English than their home language? The idea is that you want to get a picture of who is speaking to this child, in what languages, and how are they responding?

I love the home language survey because, A, first, it communicates to the family that your language matters to us, and we're partnering with you. We don't want to abandon who you are once we enter our classroom, but also, we can be super strategic about using the home language for instruction. While I'm on this topic, I'd like to highlight that one of the things to consider is that if the child only speaks their home language, and there's no one in your program that speaks that specific language, we're going to give you strategies to help you feel more confident and comfortable to support them. Thinking about the house picture again, I don't expect you to get Rosetta Stone and learn as many languages as possible, though I welcome you to do that, but realistically, you could be the English model and be really strategic on who you're partnered with and how to support the bilingualism. Remember, this is a heavy, heavy house. Remember, you're not carrying the house on your own. You're going to work with people that are going to be able to build that house.

Jen: Thank you. We'll talk about teaming in a moment, then, just like Xigrid said, we're going to be talking about some specific strategies, where we can pair and really build that, the use of both languages in the program.

Xigrid, thank you for sharing that information about the types of questions you ask and the type of information you're looking for in a home language survey or inventory. Thinking about the information that's gathered – again, knowing we're going to go a little more specifically into this in the next section – how do you use that information that you gain and learn in a home language inventory?

Xigrid: Wonderful question. For me, the most important way of using the information from the home language survey is to be intentional, to make sure that the materials that you're providing, your environmental print is shown in all the languages that are represented in – in your classroom community. For example, I really like this picture, because it shows matching icons, so visuals with different ways of saying hello, and it can be – we want it to be intentional

and match the children's languages, so I recommend that you – one thing that I like to do is, I love Google Translate and other kind of translation documents that you can help you model, too. You can download it on your phone or have family members record themselves, and then you can play it and practice in order to make sure that we're supporting kids' bilingualism.

Jen: Perfect. I saw somebody just pointed out in the Q&A that we have a great resource, a Head Start Ready DLL mobile app that has some of those key phrases in several different languages. You shared some great resources, but that's another great resource that we encourage folks to check out, and the link to that is on – in the Viewer's Guide.

Let's move on, and before we – before we start talking about some other foundational practices, I'm interested to learn – I see there has been some great questions coming up and some strategies shared in the Q&A around partnering with families to learn about their home language, but I'm interested to learn from our participants today. Are you using – are you currently using a home language inventory or a home language survey in your program? I'm going to launch what we call a pulse check right now, so you should see a green thumbs-up icon and a red thumbs-down icon coming up in front of you, you can click on one of those. If you're currently using a home language inventory or a survey, even if it's informal, but if that's a part of your process of engaging with families of children who are dual language learners, click on that green thumbs up for us. If this isn't something that you have in practice yet, but maybe you're interested in learning more about, click on the red thumb icon. I see lots of responses coming in already. It looks like lots of folks, and we'll push the – we'll push the results out, but it looks like lots of folks are using a home language inventory or a survey right now, which is great. We have a couple questions I saw come through while folks are still responding to this, Xigrid, one person asked, "Would it be possible for you to share your home language survey?" I'm not sure if that's something that has a name, or if that's something that we could follow up with and share on MyPeers after the webinar?

Xigrid: Absolutely. I have – there's different versions out there, so if you Google "home language survey," you're going to find a multitude of examples, but I would love to share an example that I adapted for Early Childhood in particular. We will follow up. I like my chart idea, because I've seen it to be functional for families and educators. Thank you for that.

Jen: Thank you so much, Xigrid. I'm going to end the pulse check now, thank you to everybody who participated. It's great to see that there are so many folks who are currently using a home language inventory or survey, and it's great to have Xigrid as a resource to – to share her example. If you're not a part yet of the Disabilities and Inclusion MyPeers community, we encourage you to join and post a question, because we saw well over 50% of folks are using home language inventories right now, so hopefully many of those folks are participants in the community and would be willing to share the names of the surveys or the surveys themselves, so definitely encourage that networking with your peers.

Let's just finish up this foundational practice section before we move into those specific strategies. Xigrid mentioned this, but we cannot overstate the importance of intentional coordination and collaboration as part of our foundational universal effective practice for all children, especially when we're talking about children with disabilities and children who are dual language learners. We know that with children with disabilities, children who are dual



language learners, children with those intersecting identities, our teams can be large. There might be many different professionals, community members, specialists who are supporting and engaging with children and families on a regular basis, and we know that all of those team members are important. What they bring to the team, their perspectives, their knowledge – it's so important. That intentional collaboration that we use, we use this to reduce fragmentation of services, to make sure that the strategies we're using are consistent, to ensure that those strategies and the supports that we're using are resulting in inclusion and a sense of belonging for all children and families, and to think about honoring families' needs and their values and maintaining – supporting families to maintain their home language.

Who's on a child's team might be different from program to program, from child to child, but certainly the family, program staff – that might be education staff, a disability services coordinator, family services staff – then as Xigrid mentioned, there might also be specialists. It might be early intervention specialists or speech language therapists, or specialists who are experts in dual language learning, who we might or definitely would want to collaborate with to help make materials more accessible in terms of language or development. Also thinking about interpreters as a really important part of our team, thinking about how we collaborate with them to engage families, to create or modify materials, all with that idea of equitable access, participation, and honoring and supporting families' values and their needs.

Let's move from that foundational practice into these specific teaching practices in the time that we have left. Xigrid, I just can't wait to hear and see what you have. We have some great video examples, so let's dive right into those specific teaching practices. As I've mentioned a couple times, we're going to talk about some specific evidence-based practices to support learning across the five developmental areas that are known as the Big 5 for ALL. The Big 5 For ALL, for those of you who may not be familiar, is part of the Planned Language Approach, which is an important framework and approach, a set of strategies that are presented, to support children who are dual language learners. The Big 5 that you see here on the screen – alphabet knowledge and early writing, background knowledge, book knowledge and print concepts, oral language and vocabulary, and phonological awareness – that's the Big 5. Those are five key skills that we know, from research and from experience, lead to later school success for all children, including children who are dual language learners.

There's more information in your resource guide on the Planned Language Approach and the Big 5 for ALL, but today, what we're going to do is look at some specific strategies to support language development across those Big 5 skill areas for children who are dual language learners who also have a disability or a suspected delay.

Let's get started and talk about that first – that first skill area, alphabet knowledge. Xigrid, what can you tell us about promoting development and learning in this area?

Xigrid: Wonderful, I'm so excited to be able to give you concrete examples that you can take into your programs. I also really value everyone's rich questions and thinking, this makes me very excited.

Let me just take a second before we jump into the strategies to answer a very important question, and that is, what do you do when you're working with a family who, for example,

speaks Spanish at home, but they're hesitant to encourage their children to develop bilingually? That happens all the time, and I think we always want to partner with families and support them in what makes sense for them, number one, but number two, it's also our job to provide knowledge and education. A lot of times, the reason that families are hesitant to maintain their home language is because they're scared that if they continue the home language, that they're going to put their children at risk for greater disability, but we know the research does not support that, so that's important to provide education on that. There's a great resource that's called Brilliant Bilingual Babies in the ECKLC website that you are all invited to look, so just meet families where they are, ask them what makes them draw to those conclusions, and then educate them, because sometimes, even well-meaning service providers, like SLPs, may not be as educated on bilingualism. Now that you are educated on bilingualism, please share the good news that it's okay to be – to have a disability and to develop bilingually as well, and let's talk about how we do that.

In terms of alphabet knowledge and the way that we're going to organize the next few slides, I'm going to tell you, how do you support bilingualism, how do you provide individualized instruction, and then we're going to show you an example. In terms of bilingualism and alphabet knowledge, whenever possible, it's great to make links. Remember the house? We're going to go back to the house. The foundation is improving its alphabet knowledge skills, and then the doors are helping them understand the things that are dissimilar – similar first between the two languages. For example, Spanish and English share 20 letters and sounds, so it'll be wonderful to be able to make these concrete connections for children whenever possible, and then to support them so they can make – they can understand, "Oh, the letter P in Spanish is also the letter P in English."

When it comes to adapting strategies so they're more individualized, it's important to show letters using different modalities, so physical, things kids can touch; things kids can see; things they can hear. We send one letter at a time, provide a lot of repetition throughout the day, review the letters in small groups or individually. These are things that are going to benefit all children, but specifically children with disabilities.

I wanted to guide you through this picture. This is a real picture I took many years ago, working on the letter P and thinking of ways to connect children's knowledge between Spanish and English. So, we drew, we said in English, the letter P makes the sound like in "pig" and "police," and in Spanish, we have the word "papa" and "padrazo," but it's the same idea. If you don't speak that language, it's a good idea to go online and try to get examples of how to pronounce the words in the languages that you don't speak, or partner with families or paraprofessionals that can support you.

Jen: Perfect. We are going to take a look at a video of a strategy that's being used to target alphabet knowledge. Before we look at that, Xigrig, what can you tell us about what we should be looking for when we watch this video?

Xigrig: When you're watching this video, I want you to think about, what is the teacher doing to – to provide instruction using multiple modalities, and what is the format of her group that's allowing her to individualize instruction?

Jen: Here we go.

[Video begins]

Teacher: The beginning sounds of words. I'm going to write a letter on my whiteboard. I'm going to start up at the top, big line down, jump back to the top, put a line across, jump to the middle, put a line across, start at the top, upside-down hook, jump to the middle, put a line across. What letter did I write? Think in your head. Think in your head, Rowan. Ready? Whisper into your hand what letter. Ready? One, two, three.

Children: F.

[Video ends]

Jen: What we saw there, Xigrig, was a great teacher who is targeting alphabet knowledge and using some specific strategies, having kids practice using movement and kinesthetic to feel the breath. What it sounds like you're saying is that an education staff could also partner – or a family could pair a strategy like that that we would use to support language learning for all children and then individualize that to use with a child who is learning – who is learning more than one language.

Xigrig: Exactly, and one thing to think about – Spanish and English share a lot of features together, but what if it's a nonalphabetic language, like Arabic and English? I want you to think again about the house. At the foundation, we want kids to be able to engage with letter names and letter sounds to be strong readers. One thing that you can do is, while you're targeting alphabet knowledge and describing, "This is the way that we write in English, from left to right," partner with the family and tell them, "Hey, we're working on letter names and sounds. Can you work on some activities at home?" One of my favorite resources is the Illinois Early Learning Project, because it provides tons of tip cheats that are available in multiple languages, including Arabic.

Jen: Perfect, thank you. Let's take a look at some strategies to support learning and development in the area of background knowledge.

Xigrig: We know that our understanding of the science of reading is showing us the importance of background knowledge, so everything that we know about a topic, that helps us then build those early literacy skills. For children that are dual language learners, it's important to bridge those gaps between what they're learning about in school and what they already bring from home and, whenever possible, thinking about helping children develop deep background knowledge about a theme or a topic, preview, teaching the vocabulary for them ahead of time or in small groups or individually to help them have access to the information. When it comes to adapting strategies, whenever possible, try to use visuals and objects that are going to make those connections for children, trying to review and repeat the concepts. As you see here, this is a picture of a center area, and there's things around there like a book, materials and interactives that children can engage with to use to learn about construction. One thing that is important is to make sure that, as an educator, we sit with children and build on those skills, so they're not just playing with the items, but they're also receiving input, vocabulary, and language models to help them expand their repertoire about a specific topic.

Jen: Let's take a look at another video. Before we take a look at this video that's using strategies to target background knowledge, what should we be looking for?

Xigrid: This is a great example of why good background knowledge instruction is helpful. This video will be only in Spanish, and I want you to see what the teacher is doing to help you understand the context, even if you're not fluent in the language. I want you to think about what she's doing.

Jen: OK, here.

[Video begins]

Teacher: [Speaking Spanish]

[Video ends]

Jen: I love that. Let's take a look. Anything before we move on, Xigrid, that you wanted to point out about that video or encourage folks to remember?

Xigrid: I think for children that are dual language learners with disabilities, it's key to provide multiple opportunities and multiple exposures, so I love how this teacher really – she drug out the theme of animals inside the classroom, outside the classroom. She said it multiple times, and she provided the children with a rich environment for them to learn those concepts. I think the more that we can do that for children that are dual language learners with disabilities, the more that they're going to be able to learn.

Jen: Great. Let's take a look at strategies to support learning in the area of book knowledge.

Xigrid: In regards to book knowledge, it's really thinking about, how can we provide children with instruction that is going to help them support their home language? One way to do that is, of course, using the information from the home language survey to then find books that match those languages, but I realize that oftentimes, the languages might be really different, and there might not be that many books available. In this case, we can get creative, so one thing that we can do is collaborate with families to adapt the books that are existing to tell them – help them narrate the pictures, then record themselves reading the books using the pictures, so then they can have a model of what the books are like for – in a bilingual context.

Notice that this is an adapted book, so in terms of children with disabilities, it's helpful to think about inclusion once again. What can we do for the books? If children have fine motor skill difficulties, that they would be able to turn the pages, so adding knobs or cotton balls, things that they can manipulate the book is helpful. Also, whenever possible, using sentence strips that have the information in children's home language and also in English, and incorporating all the languages that a child is learning to speak in the communication devices. I'd like to guide your attention to this red button here. It's called a BIGmack, and you can prerecord messages that then the children can engage in literacy activities, and you can have paraprofessionals or a family member record messages in the home language, and you can also have it in English.

Jen: We have a couple videos that demonstrate instruction in the area of book knowledge. What is this first video? What should we – oops, I'm sorry. We don't have any videos. I thought we had a couple for book knowledge. Well, maybe our next videos will be –

Xigrid: That's correct, yep.

Jen: I thought we did, too. OK.

Xigrid: We're just so excited to show videos. We don't have any one on background knowledge, but we're going to have two to make it up for you for oral language.

Jen: Perfect.

Xigrid: In thinking about oral language again, we know that that's such a huge foundation for later development. It's this ability to ensure that we're bilingually supporting children. For example, if you're teaching vocabulary, that you have the vocabulary presented in the home language. If you don't speak that home language, you can use recordings, you can use Google Translate, you can even ask children, depending on their level, "What is this called?" And model what it looks like to be a language learner – and thinking that we're all language learners, so you can say, "Oh, how do you say – you say 'gato' is cat? Let me try to say that." That way, kids also know that their bilingualism is an asset that we value in the classroom.

For children with more significant communication delays, it's important to be able to have communication devices and pictorial supports that validate children's home language and English, so again, collaborating with the family, making sure that we're asking families, "What is the vocabulary that's really important for your home, that you really want your child to be able to know?" I try to remind myself that it's not what I think the child should know, it's what the parents think that is important. The more that we do that and that we collaborate, the better, and I want to give you an example. For me, my earliest experience as a speech language therapist was, I had a child that I started seeing at 3, and when he was 8 years old, he was diagnosed with autism. He was nonverbal until the age of 8, and between the years of 3 and 8 years old, we were working on growing speech services, using alternative and augmentative communication devices, AAC, and it was all in Spanish and English, but this whole time, it was hard for me to gauge how much he was understanding. When I then – because I was doing home therapy, I took him and his mom to McDonald's so he could practice using his communication board to order fries. What was wild is that we sat down, I was looking at the mom, and all of a sudden, I hear the child saying, "I want jugo," which is a very typical bilingual thing to say. He combined his Spanish and his English, and after that, he started verbalizing in both languages, but if I had said, "Oh, he can't learn bilingually," I would have really stifled him. I'm grateful that, with the family, we were able to create a bilingual plan all along, and then he surprised us in the way – in the best way possible.

Jen: I love that. We do have a couple videos. You're right, I was really excited about book knowledge, but we have two videos that demonstrate these strategies that you're talking about to support oral language. I think in this first video example we have, the teacher is counting in different languages and highlighting the languages that the children in the classroom speak. I'm going to go ahead and show that now.

Xigrid: In this first video, you're going to see how the teacher models vocabulary.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Okay, are you ready to go to lunch? Let's put your hands up.

All: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, siete, ocho, nueve, diez. [Speaking native language]

Teacher: Emil, can you help us to count in Russian? OK.

Emil: [Speaking Russian]

Teacher: [Speaking Russian] Excellent! You know, Emil speaks three languages – Russian, Armenian, and English.

[Video ends]

Xigrig: I love how this teacher incorporated all the languages represented in the classroom and had a child that was fluent in Russian, even though the teacher wasn't Russian herself, to provide the model. That just shows you, we're all co-learners in this experience.

Jen: Let's take a look at our second video.

Xigrig: In this second video, you're going to see the teacher previewing vocabulary, and that's one of the most important things that we can do for children that are DLLs with disabilities. Previewing the languages, previewing vocabulary ahead of reading or doing activities is really important.

Jen: Let's take a look.

[Video begins]

Teacher: OK. How do you say that in Spanish?

Child: [Speaks Spanish] Aco. Aco.

Teacher: Is it "aco"?

Child: Yeah.

Teacher: I've heard "gato" before. Is that cat?

Children: Yeah.

Child: But it's not cat.

Teacher: But it's not cat, yeah, so it's gato.

Child: It's gato.

[Video ends]

Xigrig: Notice how the teacher was the student in that context. You don't have to be an expert; you just have to provide children opportunities to bring their entire linguistic selves to the space.

Jen: I love that.

Xigrig: Now we're going to transition over to phonological awareness, and I can talk about this for days, so I'm going to try to focus. With phonological awareness in regards to bilingualism, thinking about, what are the skills, the phonological awareness skills that are shared across languages, so we can target that? One example would be, in Spanish, syllable awareness is key

for reading but not so much awareness at the phonetic level. Starting out, for example, with segmenting two-syllable words that are going to happen in Spanish and in English is helpful, and then you can say something like – practice the segmenting skill in English and say, "OK, now we're going to do the same thing in Spanish." Even if you don't speak that language, get creative. You can use Google Translate. You can ask the children. You can have – one person had a great idea to invite parents in, whether virtually or in person, to provide these models, and what that's going to do is build that green area, the foundation of the home that we hear about.

In regards to adapting for children with disabilities, it's important to focus on one skill at a time. Usually, it's better to work on identification and then production. Sometimes we jump to production. Start using visuals first, then gestures, then auditory only, because that's going to be the appropriate sequence of scaffolding and learning – start by using easier skills and then moving to more difficult skills. A lot of times, we jump right to rhyming, but that's a little bit more challenging than blending and segmenting. Whenever possible, we know that it's more effective to teach individually or in small groups, or you can do a whole group activity and then move the activity to a smaller group or individually for re-enforcement, and always provide feedback. You can say something like, "Wonderful job, you really segmented the word baby. Baby has two parts," or you can say, "Let's try it again." You don't want to give kids a question and then leave them, make sure you're providing that constant feedback for them.

Jen: In our last – we have time to watch one more video and then wrap up. What are we going to see in this video?

Xigrid: In this video, you're going to see how the teacher provides an interactive rhyming activity, which is excellent. I want you to think about and reflect upon, how would you adapt this activity so it represents different languages? I'm not going to give you the answer, I want you to get creative and think about it.

Jen: Let's take a look.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Sit up, you got to help me. Hold it up right.

Child: This way?

Teacher: Yes, very good. Aiden, turn yours around, babe. Crisscross so I can – make sure I can get through. Mm-mm, you had yours the right way. Alright. We're going to look for what rhymes with chair. Say "chair".

Children: Chair.

Teacher: Chair, what rhymes with chair?

Children: Hair!

Teacher: Chair and – what did you say, Gabrielle?

Children: Hair.

Teacher: Chair, hair, chair, hair, does it rhyme?

Children: Yes!

Teacher: Does it sound alike at the end? Very good!

[Video ends]

Jen: I love that. It talked about lots of the things that you've been talking about, the multiple modalities.

[Video begins]

Teacher: Sit up, you got to help me. Hold it up right.

Child: This way?

Teacher: Yes, very good. Aiden, turn yours around, babe.

[Video ends]

Jen: I liked that one so much that I just wanted to keep showing it. Love how that reinforced a lot of the things that you've been talking about, multiple modalities, making things really explicit to kids, giving those, those concepts in small pieces.

Thank you, Xigrid, for all of this amazing information and making it accessible to be able to hear about and see. We'll be sharing these videos in MyPeers. I've seen lots of folks asking, so be sure to visit us in the Disabilities and Inclusion MyPeers community. Be sure to – if you didn't join us for the Disability Services Coordinator Institute, there's a great session with Xigrid and Dr. Shantel Meek that talks about supporting children with disabilities who are also dual language learners, so that's available on our Institute platform. This isn't quite ready yet, but we're so close to finishing it up – our inclusion team, our DTL inclusion team has been working on a series of supplements that's meant to accompany the Big 5 for ALL resources that describe the strategies and the practices that education staff and families can use to support those skill development areas for children who are dual language learners. We will have a series of supplements that describes some of these individualized practices and how we can modify those strategies, so be looking for those Big 5 for ALL disability supplement series very soon. We'll make sure to let everybody know when those are available.

Really quickly before we say goodbye, I wanted to let people know that we have another brand-new resource that is a brand-new iPD course for new disability services coordinators or others who are new to supporting disability services in a coordinated approach. This talks about the Individuals with Disabilities Act, IDEA. This talks about the referral and eligibility process. This talks about what's involved in a coordinated approach. For folks who are new or have questions, we encourage you to check out that new iPD course. Make sure, if you haven't yet, check out our Push Play platform. This is DTL's On Demand platform. The recording of this webinar will be on the Push Play platform within the next 24 hours or so, so that's nice, because we know sometimes it can take a little while for recordings of the webinars to get up on the ECLKC. Be sure to check out Push Play to check out other recordings of all of our inclusion webinars and all of our other DTL webinar series.

Thanks, everybody, for hanging in there with us for a few extra minutes. We wanted to get to those, the illustrations and all those videos of those great strategies. Be sure to join us, mark



your calendars for our next Inclusion Series webinar, will be in May, on Tuesday, May 24th from 3 to 4 p.m. Eastern, when we'll be talking about individualizing instruction to support children with disabilities in their social-emotional learning.

Thank you again. Thank you, Xigrid, for joining us today. This has been such a great webinar. Thank you to everybody for sharing your thoughts and participating with us so much in the Q&A, and we look forward to seeing you next time. Thanks, everybody.

Xigrid: Thank you and bye.