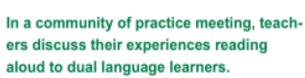
Storybook Reading for Young Dual Language Learners

Cristina Gillanders and Dina C. Castro



Susan: When I am reading a story, the Latino children in my class just sit there. They look at me, but you can tell that they are not engaged in the story.

Lisa: That happens in my class too. The little girls play with their hair, and the boys play with their shoes.

Beverly: And when you ask questions about the story, children who speak English take over and you can't get an answer from the Latino children.

Facilitator: What do you think is happening here?

Lisa: I think they just don't understand what the story is about.

Facilitator: How can we help them understand the story so they can participate?

Cristina Gillanders, PhD, is a researcher at the FPG Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill. She was an investigator in the Nuestros Niños study, and has worked with dual language learners as a bilingual preschool teacher, teacher educator, and researcher. cristina.gillanders@unc.edu

Dina C. Castro, PhD, is a senior scientist at the FPG Child Development Institute. She was the principal investigator for the Nuestros Niños study. Her research focuses on improving the quality of early education for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. dina.castro@unc.edu

Photos courtesy of the authors.

A study guide for this article will be available in mid-January online at www.naeyc.org/yc.



happens when the children are read to in a language they are just beginning to learn? What happens when an English-speaking teacher reads a story to a group of children who are learning English as a second language?

As illustrated in the vignette at the beginning of this article, teachers often describe young dual language learners in their class as distracted and unengaged during read-aloud sessions in English. In this article, we describe teaching strategies that English-speaking teachers can use when reading aloud to young dual language learners. These strategies are part of the Nuestros Niños Early Language and Literacy Program, a professional development intervention designed to improve the quality of teaching practices in prekindergarten classrooms to support Spanish-speaking dual language learners (Castro et al. 2006). The intervention was developed and evaluated in a study funded by the US Department of Education. Teachers from the North Carolina More at Four Pre-Kindergarten



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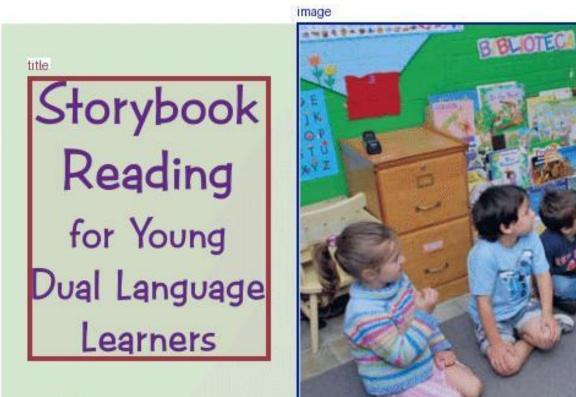
The image depicts an indoor classroom setting with a group of children and an adult. The children are seated on the floor, facing a woman who is standing and appears to be reading or presenting to them. The woman is wearing a brown sweater and blue jeans. The children are dressed in various colors, with some wearing short pants and others in long pants.

The classroom has a green wall with educational posters and a bulletin board. The floor is covered with a gray carpet. To the left, there is a wooden dresser with a drawer partially open, and a chair is visible behind it. On the right side of the image, there is a purple bean bag chair.

The children are engaged with the woman, with some looking at her and others looking down or away. The room is well-lit, and the overall atmosphere seems to be one of attentiveness and learning.

The text "BIBLIOTECA" is visible on the wall, suggesting that the room may be part of a library or a section dedicated to books. The presence of educational materials and the organized layout of the room indicate that this is a space designed for learning and reading.

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Dina C. Castro

text

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