



Dual Language on Demand

Issue 9
Fall 2011

Using Cooperative Structures to Develop Academic Language in a Dual Language Classroom: Language Use is Language Learning Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

The Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning, developed by Spencer Kagan, provides multiple options for developing language in Dual Language classes. In this approach to cooperative learning, student interaction is explicitly structured. This kind of explicit structuring of student interaction – and the explicit planning and

The First Day of School in a Dual Language Classroom

Are you a first time dual language teacher looking for some structures for the first day of school? Are you a veteran dual language teacher looking for some new ideas on how to establish routines in the beginning of the year? Check out “The First Day of School in a Dual Language Classroom” in the August 2008 edition of Dual Language on Demand: http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_duallanguage-news.html
Enjoy !

support of student oral interactions – is crucial to the success of dual language instruction. Dual language classrooms are noisy classrooms, because language use is language learning. But this “noise” needs to be explicitly planned, structured, and supported in order to enhance language and content learning.

Each cooperative structure has specific directions for the interactions. After students have learned the structures, teachers can quickly give directions for cooperative interaction by simply naming the structure to be used during a learning activity. In this article I will introduce some of the basic structures.

Think-Pair-Share

The simplest structure is the first structure to teach: *Think-pair-share*. The teacher poses a question that all students are able to answer. After think time, students pair with a designated partner to answer the question. For example, the teacher can ask students in groups of four to pair with their “elbow” partner or their “nose” partner, so they aren’t always sharing with the same person. If students are seated together on a rug, they should know who their partners are before taking their places. This saves time and avoids students being left out or too many groups of three. After the partners share with each other, student volunteers from different pairs share their ideas with the class. Using think-pair-share, even in small groups, provides far more opportunities for students to use language than calling upon a few volunteers.

Whenever teachers ask a question in a classroom and call on those who raise their hands, the students who most need the practice are not the ones volunteering to answer. Even if teachers draw names to call on students, only those called on get to speak. With cooperative structures, all students are involved in answering or discussing all questions. To further enhance language growth, teachers can give differentiated language prompts for students to use during the cooperative activity. For example, “Are the animal pictures I share mammals?” For each animal, the teacher asks the question using the name of the animal. “Is a frog a mammal?” Students would think-pair with a partner. For additional language rather than just having the students answer the question, I would suggest having the first person repeat the question using the sentence frame, “Is a(n) ____ a mammal?” before his/her partner answers using the answer frames, “Yes, a(n) _____ is a mammal. No, a(n) _____ is not a mammal.” If time permits, they would try the challenge to explain their answer. A _____ is a mammal because it has _____.” An example challenge might be: “Mammals have _____. Mammals don’t have _____.” After students are familiar with challenge options, a Super Challenge can also be given; for example, “A(n) _____ is a mammal because it has _____.”



Continued from page 1

Using Cooperative Structures to Develop Academic Language in a Dual Language Classroom: Language Use is Language Learning

Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

After partners pair to tell each other what they think about each animal, the teacher could call on a student with very limited language proficiency to place the animal in the correct section of the model T-chart while a student says the correct sentence using the yes or no prompts. The teacher would then call on a more proficient student for the challenge sentence frames. To further enhance engagement and language practice, all students would repeat the sentences. They could also ask the question together as a class when the teacher holds up a new animal, "Is an elephant a mammal?" Students not familiar with the name of the animal in the picture would be more engaged if they hear it and are saying the repetitive part of the question.

Roundrobin

Teachers can use whole-class modeling with *Think-pair-share* to prepare students for a similar group activity. In this instance, students in teams would be classifying animals in a T-Chart as either mammals or not mammals. To do the activity, the cooperative structure of *Roundrobin* would be effective. In *Roundrobin*, students take turns orally sharing their answers. I would have each student "draw from the top of a deck" of animal pictures face down on the table. (I wouldn't suggest dealing the "deck" of animal pictures to each student because they tend to get distracted by the pictures in their hands, rather than focusing on the animal being discussed.) As each child shows a picture, they could all ask, "Is a ____ a mammal?" Having team members ask the question engages everyone even when it is not their turn, provides practice with question patterns, and supports students who may not remember the animal names. The student with the picture then answers the question and places it in the T-Chart. If ready, the student would also say one of the challenge sentences. If not ready, another student could orally share a challenge sentence. During the *Roundrobin* activity, I would encourage all students to repeat as they take turns to get additional practice and to maintain engagement. You can teach students to ask, "Do you agree?" as they answer the question to check whether their answer is correct. Other team members explain if an error is made.

During the activity, the teacher circulates to look over the T-Charts for correct placement of the animals and to listen to some of the sentences, focusing on those students who may have the most difficulty. Of course the first time you introduce a structure, it is important to have a team model what to do, perhaps through a fishbowl.

Roundrobin, like *Think-pair-share* is used to ask questions where all students have an answer. However in *Roundrobin*, there are more opportunities for student feedback when someone makes an error since four rather than two students would be involved. As demonstrated in the description above, both the content objective and the language frames were modeled using partners and whole-class instruction before using *Roundrobin* in a team with a task requiring correct answers. Both *Think-pair-share* and *Roundrobin* can also be used to ask questions where there are multiple answers, but where a right answer is not required. Examples include: "What do you think will happen next in the story? What do you know about the needs and behaviors of animals?" (Most teachers realize that having students *Roundrobin* to take turns reading in a whole classroom is not an effective reading strategy. I wouldn't even suggest using *Roundrobin* to read in a group of four. However, the use of *Roundrobin* to orally share in a group is very helpful.)

As teachers become more familiar with the structures, they will recognize which structure would be the most appropriate for a particular task. For example, use *Think-pair-share* for questions where having lots of answers is not particularly important and when you want the activity to move quickly. "What do you think will happen next in the story?" is a question where many students would have similar ideas. Hence, *Think-pair-share* would be more functional than *Roundrobin*. As previously mentioned, students tend to be more on task when sentence prompts are also included. When asking students to predict the next event in a story, the language models might be, "I think _____ will _____." Challenge: "I am making this prediction because _____."



Continued from page 2

Using Cooperative Structures to Develop Academic Language in a Dual Language Classroom: Language Use is Language Learning

Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

Use *Roundrobin* when you want lots of answers and are willing to devote more class time to that end. In *Roundrobin*, students need to take turns sharing new ideas, so this structure will generate more answers than *Think-pair-share*. As students *Roundrobin* share prior knowledge, I would suggest having pictures available in each team for students to discuss and point to as they take turns. The use of pictures helps provide more comprehensible input for students with lower language proficiency as well as evokes additional sharing from all team members. Sentence prompts can support sharing of what students know.

"I know (think) that mammals _____. _____ is a mammal. Mammals have _____. Mammals can _____."

In *Roundrobin*, teams continue to share ideas until time is called. As the activity continues and students need to come up with additional ideas, the task becomes more difficult. To maintain contributions by all members, students who don't have a new idea can comment on what another teammate says or can ask a question. When time is up, I would suggest that the teacher call a number and that the student from each team with that number stands. They take turns sharing one original idea from the group as the teacher records them on a chart using the sentence prompts, "We (know, think, predict) that mammals, OR student name (knows, thinks, predicts,) that mammals _____. " Because the sentences are shared orally with the class, students will gain additional practice, and the teacher can assess the level of proficiency from those sharing. I prefer to have the students who are standing call on each other. To promote additional practice of question patterns, they can use a modeled sentence; for example, "What is something your team knows about mammals?" As the teacher records the answers, I would suggest having all students repeat the answer, perhaps asking students to spell a word or write a word in the air as they spell it. When finished, students can also choral or pair-read the list.

Stand-and-share

The next structure I would teach is *Stand-and-share*. Spencer Kagan usually doesn't teach this as a separate structure, rather as a way of sharing. However, to me it is comparable to other simple structures.

1. The teacher poses a question with multiple answers.
2. All students think of an answer, and then all stand up with an answer.
3. A student volunteers to share an answer.
4. Other students with the same answer take their seats.
5. After each student answers, that student would call on another student who is still standing before sitting down.

I suggest challenging students to think of another idea if they can before taking a seat. Once students get used to this, they often think of new answers to continue standing as long as possible before someone calls on them. When introducing this structure, I would suggest having students *Think-pair* first before they stand up. This would provide additional language practice as well as help to lower anxiety that some students may have initially about standing up to share. In that version, students could also choose to share a partner's idea. *Stand-and-share* is a great way to have students summarize their learning. Unlike either *Roundrobin* or *Think-pair-share*, the teacher gets to hear all the answers when the option to share first is not used. Hence, the teacher or other students can provide any corrective feedback needed.

Stand-and-share is an effective structure to practice specific language patterns while focusing on essential content. For example, a teacher may say, "Today we learned the characteristics of mammals. Everybody think of one of the characteristics. If you're ready for the challenge, try to use one of the sentence frames we used during class." "Mammals are _____ because they all have backbones. Mammals all have _____. All mammals are _____. All mammals _____. Another characteristic of mammals is that they _____."



Using Cooperative Structures to Develop Academic Language in a Dual Language Classroom: Language Use is Language Learning

Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

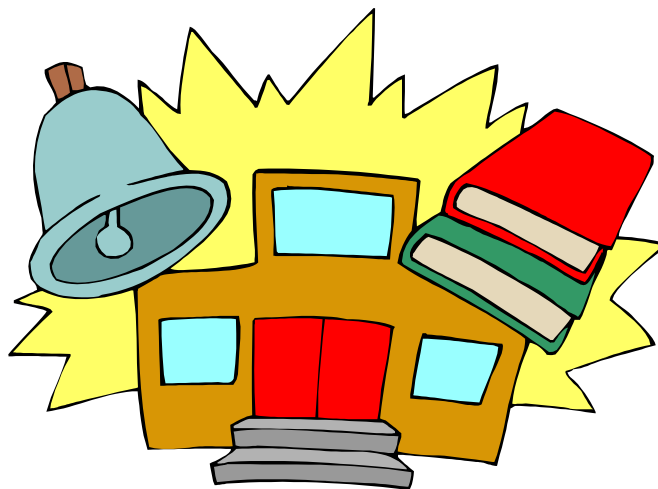
When students are fairly comfortable with a structure, they can use *Roundrobin* to practice problematic language patterns in a new language, such as 3rd person singular in English. For example, “How does a bat meet its basic needs? The teacher would stress the need for 3rd person singular when speaking about the bat. Teammates can help monitor by putting their pencils up when they hear an “s” ending. In this example, it would be preferable for students to first *Roundrobin* how *elephants* meet their basic needs before answering the question in 3rd person singular.

Implementing Cooperative Structures with All Students

Since it is often difficult for young learners to take turns, I would suggest having them pass a pencil, a sign that says, “your turn” or even a small plush animal to make taking turns more visible and fun. Be attentive to any additional supports that may be needed to maximize success. For example, it is difficult for young learners to *Roundrobin* retell a story. Some students will tend to retell everything. Another student may forget the next event in the story. Students can take turns explaining a page of a big book, or each page of a picture story in their teams. Older learners can retell a story using a graphic organizer with the elements of the plot to structure their sharing.

It takes time for teachers to become familiar with which structure best fits a particular goal. Another implementation problem is that sometimes students are struggling with a task that the instructor thought would be easy enough for individual students. Often, simply switching to a different structure is helpful. For example, if students have trouble individually sharing ideas during *Roundrobin*, switch to *Numbered-heads-together*. Let’s say the students were asked to use *Roundrobin* to identify protest actions during the Civil Rights Movement, and the teacher realizes the question is too difficult for many students. The teacher could say, “This is a little harder than I anticipated. Switch to *Numbered-heads-together* and identify at least four protest actions. Some of you can do more than four. I’ll give you two minutes. Go.” (It is helpful when using any structure to say, “Go,” after giving appropriate think time.)

In this article, I have introduced the first structures I would teach and the most versatile simple structures I would use to begin implementing cooperative learning. In the next edition of *Dual Language on Demand* I will share additional structures with focus on pair-tasks and how they can be used to practice language patterns. For additional support on the structural approach to cooperative learning, go to www.kaganonline.com for access to the multiple resources provided by Spencer Kagan.





Dual Language and Spanish Focused Workshops and Classes at the Illinois Resource Center

The Illinois Resource Center is proud to sponsor a growing number of workshops and courses specifically designed for Dual Language and Spanish language arts educators. Below is a table that summarizes the workshops and courses offered through the Illinois Resource Center, 2626 S. Clearbrook Dr., Arlington Heights, IL 60005.

Please note that all dates are tentative, until published in the Illinois Resource Center Professional Development Program Catalog for 2011-2012. The catalog will be available on-line by mid August, 2011.

To register for these courses and workshops, or for additional course and workshop information, please go to the IRC website at: thecenterweb.org/irc or contact Cheryl Urow at curow@cntrmail.org.

Workshop	Language(s) in which the workshop will be conducted	Date(s) and Time
Dual Language Program Development and Enrichment	English	This is a three part workshop series designed for district level teams. All team members are expected to attend all workshop dates: Part I: October 26 & 27, 2011 Part II: January, 18 & 19, 2012 Part III: March 21 & 22, 2012 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. all days
Spanish Literacy for Administrators	English	October 4, 2011 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



Dual Language and Spanish Focused Workshops and Classes at the Illinois Resource Center

<p>Introduction to Spanish Literacy Instruction, Pre-K - 8</p>	<p>Spanish, with some English</p>	<p>This is a two-day workshop: October 19 & 20, 2011 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. both days</p>
<p>Introduction to Dual Language Instruction</p>	<p>English, with some Spanish</p>	<p>This is a two-day workshop: November 2 & 3, 2011 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. both days</p>
<p>Advanced Topics in Spanish Literacy: Focus on Reading Comprehension and Writing, K-5</p>	<p>Spanish, with some English</p>	<p>This is a two-day workshop: February 15 & 16, 2012 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. both days</p>
<p>Advanced Topics in Spanish Literacy: Focus on Word Study (Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, Spelling, Vocabulary)</p>	<p>Spanish, with some English</p>	<p>This is a two-day workshop: April 11 & 12, 2012 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. both days</p>