

Our Focus on Literacy in Dual Language Immersion:








Research has repeatedly shown that a child who learns to read in their primary language first has a greater degree of success in an English curriculum than does the child who does not. A person only learns to read once. The process of acquiring the necessary decoding skills to “break the code” is a learned process. These acquired skills transfer to the second language and do not have to be “relearned.” This foundation in the primary language assists English learners in achieving literacy in more than one language. We strongly believe that our multilingual students bring linguistic assets to the classroom while acquiring literacy skills. These assets contribute to the goals of becoming bilingual, biliterate, and culturally competent all while maintaining high academic achievement.

Literacy Instruction in Dual Language Immersion:

- Literacy instruction plays a critical role in the development of bilingual and biliteracy skills.
- Understanding that multilingual learners acquire reading and literacy by using assets they bring in multiple languages.
- Students learn to read only once. Therefore, literacy skills transfer from one language to another.
- A strong foundation in literacy skills allows students to successfully engage in reading complex texts.
- Students can engage in culturally relevant texts, using academic vocabulary in support of a variety of writing tasks in varied genres.
- Multilingual learners need a comprehensive and connected approach to foundational literacy skills development.
- A comprehensive and connected approach recognizes the need for language learners to develop both broad language-based skills with related content knowledge to support meaning-making and learning code-based skills that build phonemic awareness and decoding skills. (Council of the Great City Schools, Spring 2023)

Demographics:

As of 2023-2024, Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs are offered at 19 school sites district-wide: 15 elementary schools, one middle school and one high school with a Spanish/English DLI Program, and two elementary schools with a Hmong/English DLI Program. Additionally, the Fresno Unified School District DLI community consists of 208 DLI teachers and 4,375 DLI students.

						
Wawona	Sunset	Roeding	Centennial	Birney Ewing Hidalgo Leavenworth Rowell Yosemite McLane	Calwa Jackson Lane Winchell Balderas* Vang Pao*	Burroughs Herrera

*Hmong DLI School Sites

Mission:

The Fresno Unified School District DLI Program ensures that all students attain high levels of biliteracy and academic proficiency in two languages, while simultaneously developing cross-cultural competence. We are committed to cultivating and maintaining students’ cultural identities by creating a learning environment that equally values and respects both languages and all cultures. We develop confident, continual learners who promote with linguistic abilities and positive cross-cultural attitudes to better appreciate and more fully engage with the rich diversity of multicultural communities.

Vision:

The Fresno Unified School District DLI Program is dedicated to preparing career and college ready graduates who are bilingual, biliterate, and culturally competent.

Goals:

Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in Spanish or Hmong and English

Grade-Level Academic Achievement

High levels of cognitive development in both languages, Spanish or Hmong and English

Sociocultural Competence

Positive cultural and linguistic pride and self-esteem, and understanding of the cultures and traditions of others

90:10 Model:

In the Spanish/English 90:10 model, the amount of instructional time allocated to specially designed Spanish instruction gradually decreases as English instruction increases and reaches a 50:50 balance of the languages with the end goal of graduating fully biliterate and receiving the State Seal of Biliteracy.

GRADES	LANGUAGE PERCENTAGE	SPANISH	ENGLISH
Preschool	90:10:00	135 minutes	15 minutes
Transitional Kindergarten (TK), Kindergarten, & First	90:10:00	225 minutes	25 minutes
Second	80:20:00	250 minutes	60 minutes
Third	65:35:00	210 minutes	100 minutes
Fourth, Fifth, & Sixth	50:50:00	155 minutes	155 minutes
Seventh-Twelfth	30:70	2 courses	4 courses

Current Reality:

According to the 2023-2024 Assessment of Spanish Reading (ASR) - Middle of Year:

- 21% of students have met grade level expectations.
- 52% of students have partially met standards.

Additionally, the table below illustrates the average percentage correct by domain:

AVERAGE % CORRECT BY DOMAIN					
Grade	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Comprehension Literary	Comprehension Informational	Vocabulary
All (K-6)	56%	65%	39%	37%	53%
Grade K	48%	59%	46%	37%	60%
Grade 1	70%	61%	36%	40%	49%



Instructional Resources and Curriculum:

GRADE LEVELS	CURRICULUM	SKILLS	RESOURCES
Preschool - Kindergarten DLI	Estrellita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonemic Awareness Phonics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cuaderno de Sonidos Iniciales Sonidos Iniciales Wall Chart Sonidos Iniciales Wall Cards Picture and Letter Flashcards Libro Grande De Cuentitos Accordion-Style Foldable Syllable Chart Syllable Wall Chart Silabas: Flash Cards Silabas: Pocket Chart Cards Palabras: Pocket Charts Big Books Reusable Phoneme/Sílabas Mats
Preschool – TK DLI	Heggerty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonemic Awareness Phonics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet Songs and Syllables Daily Language Activities with Nursery Rhymes Daily Lessons: Initial and Final Syllables Daily Lessons: Blending and Segmenting Syllables Daily Lessons: Substituting Syllables
Preschool – TK DLI	Creative Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonemic Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Alouds Mega Minutes Intentional Teaching Cards Magazines
K-1 DLI	Maravillas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonemic Awareness Phonics Vocabulary Fluency Comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Frequency Word Cards Photo Cards Retelling Cards Visual Vocabulary Teaching Poster Interactive Read-Aloud Cards Response Board Sound/Spelling Cards Workstation Activity Cards Authentic Literature Books (Anthology & Readers Writers Workshop) Decodable Readers Leveled Readers

Assessments:

GRADE LEVELS	ASSESSMENT	SKILLS ASSESSED
Preschool DLI	Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension of Age-Appropriate Text • Concepts about Print • Phonological Awareness • Letter and Word Knowledge • Emergent Writing
TK DLI	Spanish TK Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print Concepts • Phonics • Phonological Awareness
Kindergarten DLI	Spanish Kindergarten Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print Concepts • Phonics • Phonological Awareness
Grades K-6 DLI	Assessment of Spanish Reading (ASR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological Awareness (Grades K-1) • Phonics (Grades K-3) • Vocabulary (Grades K-6) • Comprehension: Literature (Grades K-6) • Comprehension: Informational Text (Grades K-6)
K-2 DLI	Sistema de evaluación de la lectura (Spanish BAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension • Fluency

Literacy Resources:

- Parent Literacy Website (FUSD): <https://read.fresnounified.org/dual-immersion-literacy-resources/>
- Article: [Supporting Early Spanish Literacy in Dual Language Classrooms](#)
- Spanish Language Arts Staff Website: [Pages - \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions/FAQs – Spanish Literacy: [Tarjetas de fonética](#)
- Suggested Spanish Reading Fluency: [Passages](#)
- Tarjetas Armapalabras - [Resource](#)
- Classroom Library Books
- iStation Teacher Resources
- Estrellita Blackline Masters

Spanish Language Guidelines

The Real Academia Española (RAE) establishes rules and recommendations for the orthography of Spanish throughout the Hispanic world, presented in the latest edition of Ortografía de la lengua Española (2010).

Phonemes

According to the Real Academia Espanola (RAE), Spanish has a total of 26 phonemes including vowel sounds, consonant sounds and digraphs.

- **Vowels:** /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/
- **Consonants:** /b/, /d/, /f/, /g/, /j/, /k/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /ñ/, /p/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /y/, /z/
- **Digraphs:** /ch/, /ll/, /gu/, /qu/, and /rr/

The Estrellita program includes the following considerations:

Hard and soft “c” and “g”

- The “c” of “conejo” is pronounced “hard” (“c fuerte”) and the “c” of “cepillo” is pronounced “soft” (“c suave”).
- The “g” of “gato” is pronounced “hard” (“g fuerte”) and the “g” of “gemelos” is pronounced “soft” (“g suave”).

“s”, “c suave”, “z”

- “s”, “c” (cepillo) and “z” all have the same sound.
- Note: The “x” has three sounds. The sound used in the Estrellita program is the “s” sound.
- Since “s”, “c suave” and “z” are much more common than “x”, this letter is not included with the “s”, “c suave” and “z” sounds.

“c fuerte” and “qu”

- The “c” of “conejo” and “qu” have the same sound. The letter “q” is always followed by “u”.
- Note: “k” also has the same sound as “c fuerte” and “qu”.
- Since words beginning with “k” are foreign words, the “k” is not included with these two letters.

“b” and “v”

- Depending on the regional background of the student, these letters may have the same sound.

“g fuerte” and “j”

- The “g” of “gemelos” and “j” have the same sound.

“ll” and “y”

- Depending on the regional background of the student, the letters “ll” and “y” have the same sound.



Alphabet

The Spanish alphabet is made up of twenty-seven (27) letters. Listed below are the lowercase and uppercase forms of each letter, and underneath, their recommended name according to the RAE:

a, A a	b, B be	c, C ce	d, D de	e, E e	f, F efe	g, G ge	h, H hache	i, I i
j, J jota	k, K ka	l, L ele	m, M eme	n, N ene	ñ, Ñ eñe	o, O o	p, P pe	q, Q cu
r, R erre	s, S ese	t, T te	u, U u	v, V uve	w, W uve doble	x, X equis	y, Y ye	z, Z zeta

Letters With Various Names

Some letters have different names with tradition and validity in different areas of the Hispanic world. The recommendation to use a single name for each letter does not mean that others with validity in use are considered incorrect. The table below shows the recommendation and other names identified by the RAE, and the correlation between the names used in Maravillas McGraw-Hill curriculum.

Note: The Estrellita program does not include a recommendation for letter names.

LETTER	REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA RECOMMENDED NAME	REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA OTHER NAMES	MARAVILLAS MCGRAW-HILL RECOMMENDED NAME
b	be	be larga be grande be alta	be
v	uve	ve ve corta ve chica o chiquita ve pequeña ve baja	ve
w	uve doble	ve doble doble ve doble u doble uve	doble ve
y	ye	i griega	ye
i	i	i latina	i

Research on Spanish Literacy Instruction:

- One of the key differences between Spanish and English literacy development is the **onset-rime structure in English** versus **the syllable unit in Spanish**. Beginning reading material in English is dominated by **one-syllable words** made of three letters (CVC), such as cap, hat, sun, tip, etc. Beginning English literacy instruction is built around the onset-rime structure in these one-syllable words (c-ap).
- Research has indicated that the **syllable** is a more important unit of phonological awareness in Spanish than it is in English (Carreiras, Alvarez, and De Vega, 1993). **Spanish is an alphabetic language** with a regular and well-defined syllabic structure.
- Research has demonstrated that **vowels are best taught before consonants** in early Spanish reading instruction (Escamilla, 1999; Ferreiro, Pellicer, Rodríguez, Silva & Vernon, 1994). This is the direct opposite in English reading programs in which consonants are taught first.
- In Spanish, there are **only five vowel sounds**. General American English has about sixteen different vowel sounds, represented graphically by a myriad of numerous spellings. This presents one of the biggest obstacles for children learning to read in English, regardless of their language dominance. Children who learn to read in Spanish can more easily “break the code” because of this one-to-one letter correspondence.
- In Spanish, each vowel letter makes just one sound, no matter what spelling pattern it appears in, and this greatly simplifies early reading instruction.
- Research on phonemic awareness in English indicates that it should be taught in the pre-reading stage, and in fact, is a precursor to learning to read (Adams, 1990). Research done in Mexico yields very different results (Vernon & Ferreiro, 1999, 2000). For Spanish-speaking students, **phonemic and phonological awareness are not precursors to reading in Spanish** but are integral to the reading process and should be taught concurrently with reading and writing.
- With very few exceptions, there is a **direct sound to symbol correspondence in Spanish**. English does not have this direct correspondence. This makes the decoding process much easier to master in Spanish than in English.
- Spanish has a very **predictable orthography**, sometimes referred to as a transparent orthography. Once children learn the basic sound-symbol correspondences, they can easily decode most Spanish words. Thus, **by the end of first grade, children can read most Spanish text with a high level of accuracy, regardless of the familiarity of the word patterns.**



Spanish Literacy Goals:

By the end of the school year, students in DLI shall acquire the following skills:

PRESCHOOL	TK	KINDERGARTEN	GRADE 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand print carries meaning Engage actively in play with sounds in words or rhymes Talk about and connect story characters, setting, and plot Produce sounds in letters in books and familiar words in the environment Begin to understand that letters stand for sounds Write marks to represent own name or words Use short sentences that contain recently encountered vocabulary to communicate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match uppercase letter names to their printed form Match lowercase letter names to their printed form Begin to recognize that letters have sounds Orally blend syllables with the support of pictures or objects Demonstrate understanding of age-appropriate text read aloud Write first name nearly clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 29 uppercase letters Identify 29 lowercase letters Produce 31 sounds Recognize and read 50 high frequency words Demonstrate understanding of 12 Phonological Awareness Skills Read at Level D (Sistema de evaluación de la lectura) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decode syllabic words Understand grade level texts by comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating different text types Recognize and read 195 high frequency words Read grade level texts with fluency to support comprehension With prompting and support, read appropriately complex text with informational text Fluently read with a rate of 60 words correct per minute (with grade level text)

Instructional Strategies:

- Create labels of words so that children can begin to make connections between the spoken word and the written word.
- With the children’s help, write the labels and place them where children can see and read them.
- Engage children in interactive read-alouds to help them build comprehension skills and expand their vocabularies.
- Provide lots of opportunities for children to write.
- Allow students to use phonetic or invented spelling as they are sorting out the sound-symbol correspondences in Spanish. Attempting to write the sounds they hear in words “as best they can” strengthens children’s understanding of the phonetic structure of the language and helps them gradually learn conventional spelling.
- Use visual or graphic organizers to help children see the connection between ideas and text. For example, on a theme about the farm, use a picture of a barn and draw lines around it with words that the children will learn (e.g. caballo, vaca, pato) in Spanish.
- Engage students in repeated reading of familiar text to help them improve both accuracy and fluency. Repeated reading also helps reinforce new vocabulary by giving children multiple exposures to words.
- Create classroom books with words that the children have read, understand, and can illustrate (e.g., Yo voy a comer. A mí me gusta comer __.)
- Have children help create lists of associated words (e.g., animals, family, workers). Display the words on charts, along with illustrations.
- Write language experience stories in small groups to maximize participation and to help connect speaking with writing and reading.
- Involve children in creating syllables that can be manipulated to form words.
- Use picture cards of words with the syllables mixed up. Have children re-sort syllable cards to form the correct word (e.g., picture of a house: sa ca; picture of a bird: ro, pá, ja).

Response to Intervention in the DLI Program:

English Learner Services recommends that all students in need of academic support, including those enrolled in a DLI Program, are provided strategic, targeted intervention instruction in addition to the high-quality first teaching they receive during core instruction. To maximize all students’ academic potential, implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) Model should be data-driven, developed by school site staff, and designed to meet school-wide and individual student academic goals. The RTI Model should focus on supporting students with achieving high levels of biliteracy and bilingualism. Ideally, in grades K-3 intervention should be provided in Spanish or Hmong.

HMONG/ENGLISH DLI PROGRAM



Hmong DLI Program

The Hmong DLI program is a one-way immersion program in which most students participating in the program speak only one of the two languages used in the program model – predominantly English. It implements the 50:50 immersion model where students learn to read, write, and speak simultaneously in English and Hmong for an equally distributed amount of time beginning in preschool (PK). Students receive Hmong instruction primarily in the morning where they develop Hmong oral language and literacy skills through social studies, science, physical education, and art for 50% of the time based on the instructional minutes allotted for each respective grade. They learn to read and write in English through English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for the other 50% of the day. Hmong history and culture, as well as the study of or connections to other cultures, are integrated into the content areas in grades PK-3. Beginning in fourth grade, students receive more instruction in Hmong language arts as science is switched over to be taught in the English instructional block. Figure 1 shows a general overview of the Hmong DLI instructional block.

Figure 1. Hmong DLI Instructional Block (designated school minutes)

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION	PRESCHOOL	TK-KINDER	GRADES 1-3	GRADES 4-6
	Hmong: 90 min English: 90 min	Hmong: 140 min English: 140 min	Hmong: 170 min English: 170 min	Hmong: 170 min English: 170 min
	8:00 am – 9:30am	8:00 am – 10:30 am	8:30 am – 11:05 am	8:30 am – 11:05 am
HMONG	Students learn Science, History/Social Science, P.E. & Art through an integrated culturally relevant curriculum in Hmong with a focus on oral language production, vocabulary, reading, and writing skills		Hmong Language Arts Social Studies, P.E. & Art	
	9:30 am – 11:00 am	10:30am – 1:30 pm	11:00 am – 2:30 pm	11:00 am – 2:30 pm
ENGLISH	ELA/ELD and Math	ELA/ELD and Math	ELA/ELD and Math	ELA /ELD, Math and Science

Hmong Reading Data

Program Goals and Data Analysis

The Hmong DLI Program shares similar long-term goals as all other DLI programs – Develop students who will (1) become fully bilingual and biliterate in both Hmong and English, (2) achieve grade-level proficiency or beyond in both languages, and (3) develop sociocultural competence. Biliteracy progress is measured in both Hmong and English. Table 1 shows the percentage of students in preschool to grade 3 who met proficiency on the mid-year Hmong Benchmark Assessment that was taken in January 2024. Table 2 displays a comparison of the percentage of Hmong DLI to non-DLI students in kinder to grade 3 scoring on grade level, mid above grade level, and on or above grade level on the iReady Diagnostic 2 (D2) Reading. Table 3 exhibits a comparison of the percentage of Hmong DLI to non-DLI students in grades 3-5 scoring in the different performance levels. Comparison data in both Tables 2 and 3 reveal that students participating in the Hmong DLI program outperformed their non-DLI peers by nearly 10% or more.

Table 1. Hmong Literacy: Percentage of Students Meeting Proficiency on the Hmong Benchmark Assessment

GRADE	PHONICS	LISTENING	SPEAKING	READING	WRITING
PK	Not assessed	Not assessed	32%	Not assessed	Not assessed
TK	51%	Not assessed	29%	Not assessed	Not assessed
K	64%	72%	75%	Not assessed	75%
1	63%	62%	48%	Not assessed	39%
2	64%	55%	58%	60%	68%
3	Not assessed	73%	58%	57%	30%

(Note: Proficiency is defined as a minimum score of 70% on each skill by the end of the school year. The percentages under each domain reflect the percentages of students who met the 70% target.)

Table 2. English Literacy: Comparison of Hmong DLI to non-DLI Students Scoring Early on Grade Level to Above Grade Level on the i-Ready D2 Reading

GRADE	PROGRAM	EARLY ON GL	MID ABOVE GL	ON/ABOVE GL TOTAL	ON/ABOVE GL DIFFERENCE
K	Non-DLI	24%	7%	29%	
	DLI	44%	19%	64%	35%
1	Non-DLI	9%	16%	26%	
	DLI	16%	26%	43%	17%
2	Non-DLI	17%	18%	35%	
	DLI	26%	19%	45%	10%
3	Non-DLI	21%	11%	32%	
	DLI	41%	25%	65%	

Table 3. Grade-level English Proficiency: Comparison of Performance Levels for Hmong DLI to non-DLI Students on the May 2023 SBAC

GRADE	PROGRAM	2023 SBAC ELA PERFORMANCE LEVELS					
		Not Met	Nearly Met	Met	Exceeded	2023 Total Met/Exceeded	Difference-Total Met/Exceeded
3	Non-DLI	52%	20%	15%	12%	27%	
	DLI	28%	36%	16%	20%	36%	9%
4	Non-DLI	40%	35%	16%	9%	25%	
	DLI	35%	30%	15%	20%	35%	10%
5	Non-DLI	38%	17%	34%	10%	44%	
	DLI	19%	12%	50%	31%	81%	37%
TOTAL	Non-DLI	43%	24%	21%	11%	32%	
	DLI	28%	25%	25%	23%	48%	16%

SMART Goal

By the next assessment window (e.g., May 2024) for each succeeding school year, students meeting the 70% proficiency target in each grade will increase by 10% in phonics/phonological awareness, speaking, and reading on the Hmong Benchmark Assessment. (Note: A phonological awareness component in terms of receptive and expressive measure will be added to the preschool, TK, and kindergarten assessments. Likewise, a reading measure will be added to kindergarten and grade 1.)



Table 4. SMART Goal - Percentage Increase on the Hmong Benchmark Assessment, i-Ready Diagnostic, and SBAC

Grade	HMONG BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT (70% TARGET GOAL BY END OF YEAR)			I-READY SMART GOAL FOR END OF YEAR (ON/ ABOVE GL)	SBA (MET/EXCEEDED)
	Phonics/ Phonological Awareness	Speaking	Reading	Reading	ELA
PK	Not assessed to 10%	32% to 42%	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed
TK	51% to 61%	29% to 39%	Not assessed	Not assessed	Not assessed
K	64% to 74%	75% to 85	Not assessed to 10%	Site Goals: 74% - Balderas 89% - Vang Pao	Not assessed
1	63% to 73%	48% to 58%	Not assessed to 10%	Site Goals: 73% - Balderas 59% - Vang Pao	Not assessed
2	64% to 74%	58% to 68%	60% to 70%	2nd -6th grade information not listed in K-1 Literacy Plan	Not assessed
3	Not assessed	58% to 68%	57% to 67%		Not assessed
4-6	Not assessed	50% to 60%	37% to 47%		Total DLI Percentage: 48% to 68%
		63% to 73%	0% to 10%		
		44% to 54%	18% to 28%		



Hmong Literacy Goals

By the end of the school year, a bi-literate DLI student will be able to master skills similar to their English counterparts as laid out in Table 5.

Table 5: Literacy Skills by Grade Level

PRESCHOOL	TK	KINDERGARTEN	GRADE 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand print carries meaning Engage actively in play with sounds in words or rhymes Talk about and connect story characters, setting, and plot Produce sounds in letters in books and familiar words in the environment Begin to understand that letters stand for sounds Recognize the letters in their names Write marks to represent own name or words Use short sentences that contain recently encountered vocabulary to communicate Recognize five high frequency words (kuv, koj, peb, pab, pom) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that print is something that is read and has meaning Begin to recognize that letters have sounds Orally put together and take apart sounds in words with the support of pictures or objects Orally blend syllables with the support of pictures or objects Retell, reenact, or create artwork to demonstrate knowledge of details, including characters and order of events, in a familiar story Understand and use more vocabulary to speak in sentences that combine two to three phrases to communicate ideas Write letters or letter-like shapes to represent words or ideas Write first name nearly correctly Identify the 17 base consonants and their sounds Identify 15 high frequency words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize and produce rhyming words Produce, blend, and segment simple spoken words Blend spoken phonemes to form words Blend letter sounds to read CVT (consonant/vowel/tone) words Recognizes and uses “word families” (onset/rimes) Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. Makes predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories Communicate their ideas through drawing, dictating, and simple sentences Uses new vocabulary in own speech Identify 24 base consonants and blends and match them to their sounds Identify and read 40 high frequency words by sight Read grade level text fluently and accurately (short simple sentences) Read grade level decodable texts with purpose and understanding Spell simple grade level words phonetically Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master all skills from kindergarten year-end goals Read and understand grade level texts of different text types Recognize and read 45 high frequency words Fluently read with a rate of 50 words correct per minute (with grade level text) Isolate and produce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (tone) in spoken single syllable words Segment spoken single syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds Decode regularly spelled words with CVT Ask and answer questions about main ideas and key details in a text Communicate their ideas in writing for opinion, narrative, and informative pieces (this practice occurs across all quarters) Read grade level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension Correctly write sentences by accurately applying capitalization, punctuation and spacing.

Hmong Alphabet and Literacy Instruction

The writing system currently utilized in the Hmong DLI program is the Romanized Popular Alphabet (RPA) developed by Linwood Barney, Father Yves Betrais, and William Smalley in the 1950s. As such, it has the same 26 letters and consists of consonants and vowels like in English. The difference is that the final consonants in Hmong words are tone markers instead and are not pronounced when spoken. Similarly, Hmong words are formed combining consonant, vowel, tone markers as illustrated in Table 6. Tone markers are discussed further under the section titled Hmong Language Structure.

Table 6. Consonants, Vowels, Tone Markers, and Examples

CONSONANTS (60 TOTAL) – SEE FIGURE 2 FOR EXAMPLES	VOWELS (14 TOTAL)	TONE MARKERS (8 TOTAL)	EXAMPLES
17 single consonants	6 single vowels – a, e, i, o, u, w	-, b, m, j, v, s, g, d	Kuv (me)
23 double consonants	8 double vowels – aa, ai, au, aw, ee, ia, oo, ua		Thaum (when)
16 triple consonants			Nplooj (leaf)
4 quadruple consonants			Ntxhais (girl)

Some Hmong letters have sounds and spellings similar to the English alphabet such as the letters “l, m, n, d, f, h, kh, th, ph.” For example, the Hmong grapheme or single letter “p” sounds like the “p” in the English word “spill” and the Hmong cluster “ph” is the symbol that represents the same “p” sound as in English, like in the word “pill”. Table 7 provides more examples of the Hmong alphabet with letter and sound similarities to the English alphabet (Lewis, 1997).



Table 7. Hmong-English Consonant Phonemes and Near Equivalents

PHONEME	ENGLISH		HMONG		
	Grapheme	Key Word	Grapheme	Key Word	Meaning
P	P	spill	P	paj	flower
Ph	P	pill	Ph	phiab	bowl
B	B	bill	Np	npua	pig
T	T	still	T	tiab	skirt/dress
Th	T	till	Th	thawb	push
G	G	gill	Nk	nkoj	boat
S	S	sip	X	xov tooj	telephone
Sh	Sh	ship	S	sov	warm
Zh	Zh	azure	Z	zos	village
J	J, G	jeep	Ts	tsev	house
Ch	Ch	cheap	Tsh	tsheb	car
Y	Y	you	Y	yaj	sheep

The Phonics Progression Chart in Figure 2 (next page) makes note of this in the red brackets next to the first column. The first eight single based consonants (in green) each share the same letter symbol and sound as in English. The second set of six consonants produce sounds that do exist in English but are represented by different letters. Figure 2 also shows the phonic progression for what students are expected to know and master by grade and the letter categories for how the sounds are produced (e.g., aspirated, nasalized, etc.). The last two images are examples of how students can form their mouth or place their lips and tongue when making the sounds of a particular letter as well as examples of words that contain that letter and sound.

Figure 2. Hmong Phonics Progression, Benchmarks, and Letter-Sound Card

Phonics Progression & Benchmarks				
	Grade Kinder (24)	Grade 1: (review Kinder list) (26)		Grade 2: (review Kinder & 1st) (10)
English sounds	Base Consonant Blends "Unaspirated"	"Aspirated" [Base +h]	[h+Base]	"Pre-nasalized Unaspirated" [n+Base]
/m/	m		hm	
/n/	n		hn	
/l/	l		hl	
/v/	v			
/f/	f			
/d/	d	dh		
/y/	y			
/h/	h			
skin	k	kh		nk
stop	p	ph		np
f	f	fh		nf
s	s	sh		ns
x	x			
vision	z			
c	c	ch		nc
r	r	rh		nr
q	q	qh		nq
g (not on assessed)				
Base Consonant Blends "Unaspirated"				
pl	pl	plh		npl
dl	dl	dlh		ndl
ml			hml	
ny			hny	
xy				
ts	ts	tsh		nts
tx	tx	txh		ntx

single consonants	17
double	23
triple	16
quadruple	4
total:	60

/k/

/u/

k

kooj

u

tu

Hmong Language Structure

The Hmong language has a number of structural properties that are different from the English language and are taken into considerations for both instruction and curriculum development. They are as follow:

1. Monosyllabic words - Most Hmong words are only one syllable. Those with more than one syllable are usually not more than two syllables and the two syllables usually can stand alone as independent words, such as in English compound words. For example: the Hmong word "dib" (dee) means "cucumber," "tsom iav" means eyeglasses, and "niam txiv" means "parents." In the last two words, when taken apart, "tsom" means to focus and "iav" means glass; "niam" means "mom" and "txiv" means "dad."
2. Lexical use of tone - Hmong is a tonal language which is different from English intonation. There are eight tones, differing from one another in "relative pitch, in contour (whether rising or falling) and in voice quality (plain or 'breathy' or 'creaky' voice)" (Bliatout et al., p. 52). The tone markers, when written out, appear on the end of words and give different meanings to each word as in the English words "map, mat, and mad" where each has its own meaning because the final consonants are different. Table 8 shows the Hmong tone markers with examples.

Table 8. Tone Markers

tone marker (final letter)	word	meaning	approximate tone contour
- b	Dab	spirit	high level
- j	Daj	yellow	high falling
- v	Dav	wide, eagle	mid rising
-no letter	Da	lie down, bathe	mid
- s	Das	checker	long low
- g	Dag	lie	breathy low
- m	Dam	broken, break	short low
- d	Dad	eagle (like when asking about it)	glottalized, low, mid low

- Noun Classifiers - Hmong nouns are preceded by a classifier that denotes its class membership. There are numerous classifiers that give meaning to a noun. Table 9 presents some examples of classifiers and what they denote.

Table 9. Classifiers

CLASSIFIERS	REPRESENTATIONS	EXAMPLES
Daim	Means a sheet or something that is flat	Daim ntawv (paper), daim duab (photo), daim pam (blanket)
Lub	Denotes anything round, symmetric, or abstract	Lub tais (bowl), lub tsev (house), lub npe (name)
Rab	Denotes anything that is used as a tool	Rab riam (knife), rab rauj (hammer) rab taus (ax)
Txoj	Refers to a hard, long, or abstract string	Txoj hlua (rope), txoj kev (road/way/path), txoj sia (life)
Cov	Represents more than one	Cov duab (photos), cov tais (bowls), cov hlua (ropes)

4. Grammatical Structure –Table 10 shows additional differences in inflections, tenses, adjective-noun order, and serial verb construction.

Table 10. Inflections, Tenses, Adjective-Noun Order, Serial Verb Construction Examples

FEATURES	DESCRIPTIONS	EXAMPLES	
Lack of inflections	<p>No inflected forms to indicate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> plural (contains classifiers or numbers that already indicates there are more than one) possessive nouns (word indicator) tense (present, past, gerund and participle of verbs) 	<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cats, medicines Two cats The girl's jacket That is mine. The window breaks. The window is breaking. The window broke. The window was broken. 	<p>Hmong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cov miv, cov tshuaj Ob tug miv (two reveals there is already more than one cat) Tus ntxhais lub tsho Ntawd yog kuv li. Lub qhov rai tawg. Lub qhov rai tab tom tawg. Lub qhov rai tawg lawm / tawg tas.
Tense	Order of words and word indicators	<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> She will go. She is going... Last night, she went... 	<p>Hmong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nws mam mus. Nws (tseem) tab tom mus... Nag hmo nws mus...
Adjective-noun order	Adjective comes after the noun	<p>English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The red shirt The thick blanket The long rope 	<p>Hmong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lub tsho liab Daim pam tuab Txoj hlua ntev
Serial verb construction	Can use two main verbs in one clause without an “and” or another connective between them	English (ungrammatically correct) - “I took a book went studied at the library,”	Hmong translation (grammatically correct) - “Kuv nqa ib phau ntawv mus saib tom tsev tshawb ntawv.”

Curriculum and Assessments

The Hmong DLI program follows a 50:50 model due to insufficient print materials in Hmong. Since its inception in 2018, the program has continued to internally build curricular and assessment resources to support instruction and provide professional development opportunities to build teacher capacity. Table 11 presents some literacy resources for supporting literacy and oral language development in the PK-2 classrooms. Table 12 shows what literacy domains and skills are assessed in what grades.

Table 11. Literacy Resources

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES	SKILLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alphabet cards, posters and songs Sound spelling cards and sound spelling workboards Language activities and nursery rhymes Phonemic awareness activities High frequency books Decodable books Literacy center activities Visual vocabulary Literature big books Anchor texts Anchor charts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phonemic awareness Phonological awareness Phonics Vocabulary Fluency Oral language development Comprehension Decoding Encoding/Writing Spelling/Dictation

Table 12. Assessment

WHAT DOMAINS ARE ASSESSED?	<p>Students' Hmong literacy is measured by the Hmong Benchmark Assessment in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five primary domains: alphabet knowledge, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Alphabet knowledge encompasses phonological awareness and knowing the Hmong consonants, vowels, and tone markers (both letter names and sounds). 									
Which SKILLS are assessed and in what grade?										
	Consonant letter names	Consonant letter sounds	Vowels	Tone marker names	Tone marker (hear)	HF Words or Sentences	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
	1x1	1x1	1x1	1x1	Small group	1x1	Whole class	1x1	Whole class	Whole class
PK						5		X		
TK	X (17)	X (17)				X (15)		X		
K	X (17)	X (24)	X (6)	X (6)		X (40)	X	X	X	X
1	X (25)	X (25)	X (7)	X (8)	X (8)	X (45)	X	X	X	X
2	X (36)	X (10)	X (14)	X (8)	X (8)	X (50)	X	X	X	X
3					X (8)	X (50)	X	X	X	X
4					X		X	X	X	X
5					X		X	X	X	X
6					X		X	X	X	X

Note: Phonemic awareness, fluency, colors, and numbers are assessed through common formative assessments.

Video Resources

- Kawm Ntawv Hmoob song – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLlSDv6EIug>
- Hmong Alphabets – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpr98Jhlwa4>
- Hmong Consonants – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StCWjxkAYX8>
- Hmong Double Vowels – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mi9e6dp7ltw>
- Hmong Tones – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ILDtNXkRjQ>
- Hmong Vowels – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08yhEBB5gQ>
- Learn Hmong – Single Vowels <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTmVXKG0aRY>
- Learn Hmong – Tones <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIgnKtCinaI>
- Hmong vowels and tone markers – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3ZfFuP_XqU
- Mus Kawm Hmoob Txuj#1 – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtZnTBARYJA>
- Hmong Kids Channel – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNS5UHnWX3PclsDNmJldmdw>
- Five Little Monkeys song in Hmong – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM6Kzltl96w>
- Tus Poj Qaib Liab – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EnG4CMi_Xkc
- Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes in Hmong – <https://youtu.be/Bau10RuOx7E>
- HmongBaby – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUbwe033L8-8Dgwqnt7P4Lg>
- The Hmong Teacher – <https://www.facebook.com/thehmongteacher/>
- Learning Clothes in Hmong – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TOhYZ6Tjk8>
- Learning Food in Hmong – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TE8zvVh38LE>
- Learning Animals in Hmong – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5XL_Lk4IU0
- Learning Colors and Counting in Hmong – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUHKEmfP86s>
- Counting – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ImNxnfl3H3Y>
- Learning Body Parts – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1zxGHU5d-U>
- Family Names – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zf4Ms2VP1q4>

