

## Lesson Plan: Classroom Environment

This set of activities is designed for teacher educators to use to introduce teachers to the work of creating a **classroom environment** that supports multilingual children’s learning. It could be integrated into courses on elementary or early literacy methods or teaching Multilingual Learners (MLs), or used for professional development.

In this two-hour sequence of activities, teachers:

- Draw a representation of their own classroom and reflect on how it supports learning for MLs.
- Read and discuss profiles of teachers who use their classroom environment purposefully to support MLs.
  - Choose culturally relevant texts or materials to use in the classroom to connect to student identity(ies) and experiences.

In an optional extension activity, teachers participate in a gallery walk of resources related to considerations for classroom environment on the [Multilingual Learning Toolkit](#), and share learnings with colleagues.

<b>Learning Goals</b>	Teachers will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand key strategies for creating a supportive environment for MLs.</li> <li>• Analyze texts for themes, lived experiences, and identities that match those of children in the classroom.</li> </ul>
<b>Pre-Work</b>	Before the session, teachers should review the <a href="#">Website: Environment and Materials to Support Dual Language Learners</a> from the California Department of Education. Be sure to tell teachers to click on the PDF link at the bottom of the webpage which will take them to <a href="#">Tip Sheet: Creating Environments that Include Children’s Home Languages and Cultures</a> .
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of <a href="#">Note Catcher</a></li> <li>• Copies of <a href="#">Quick Draw: My Classroom Environment</a></li> <li>• Copies or access to <a href="#">Booklist: Mirrors and Windows Literature</a> (since this resource has many embedded links digital access is preferred)</li> </ul>

## Suggested Activities

Time & Activity	Notes
<p><b>Introduction to Classroom Environment</b></p> <p><b>(15 mins)</b></p>	<p>Tell teachers: Today’s session will focus on setting up a classroom environment to support Multilingual Learners (MLs).</p> <p>To activate teachers’ prior knowledge about the topic, distribute the attached <a href="#">Note Catcher</a>, and invite teachers to work in pairs to generate responses to the prompts. Let teachers know that we’ll be using the Note Catcher to capture learnings throughout today’s session (so they should leave room for notes).</p> <p>Then, give teachers a brief introduction to considerations for a supportive classroom environment, highlighting key points from the <a href="#">Starter Guide</a> and inviting teachers to add to their Note Catcher as they go. (If helpful, teachers can follow along the paragraph following “What can I do to set up my classroom environment to support the learning of MLs?” on the <a href="#">Multilingual Learning Toolkit</a>.)</p> <p>Suggested points to highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A classroom’s environment can enable 23 language-rich experiences with hands-on, inquiry-based, and content-rich lessons.</li> <li>• It is important that the classroom environment is both culturally and linguistically responsive and that it demonstrates to children that their cultural backgrounds are valued.</li> <li>• Children should “see themselves” in the classroom.</li> <li>• Materials must be actively used and made accessible to children. It should be easy for anyone who comes into the room to receive the message that multilingualism is widely appreciated.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity: Classroom Quick Draw with Discussion</b></p> <p><b>(35 mins)</b></p>	<p>Tell teachers: As we consider classroom environment today, we are going to start with a reflection of a classroom that you know very well: your own.</p> <p>Pass out the <a href="#">Quick Draw: My Classroom Environment</a> handout. Give teachers 5-10 minutes to complete the quick draw. Read the directions and reiterate that this is something that everyone can do, regardless of artistic ability! When they are done they will find a partner and use it as a discussion tool.</p> <p>(If working with preservice teachers or teachers who do not have a classroom of their own, encourage them to draw one that they are familiar with or that they remember from their own training or schooling experiences.)</p>

Transition to discussions:

**Partner Discussion (Part 1):** Using the visual you just created of your classroom describe what you drew to a partner. Feel free to comment about how you think the environment supports Multilingual Learners (MLs) in your classroom. You also have the chance to describe what you might not have been able to draw. Make sure both partners get the chance to discuss their drawings. Then say: *when you are done please switch papers with your partner.*

**Whole Group Reflection:** Now you are looking at the classroom that your partner drew. You are going to have the opportunity to label your partner's drawing three times.

The first strategy for classroom environment from the Multilingual Learning Toolkit is use of labels and functional language in the home language in the classroom. If you see evidence in your partner's classroom drawing of labels and functional print in the home language(s) of children (or if they spoke to this in your prior conversation) please write "labels in home language(s)" on the appropriate place in the drawing (or draw an arrow from the label). If you do not see this, draw in where you think they could best be located.

The next strategy in this area of the Multilingual Learning Toolkit is about texts and materials in the home language(s) of children (or if they spoke to this in your prior conversation) please write "texts and materials in home language(s)" on the appropriate place in the drawing (or draw an arrow from the label). If you do not see this, draw in where you think they could best be located.

The last strategy on the Multilingual Learning Toolkit is about culturally and linguistically relevant texts and materials. Again, if you see evidence of this on your partner's drawing please label "culturally and linguistically relevant" on the appropriate place in the drawing (or draw an arrow from the label). Again, if you do not see this, draw in where you think they could best be located.

Finally, for the pre-work you took a look at [Website: Environment and Materials to Support Dual Language Learners](#) which also included the [Tip Sheet: Creating Environments that Include Children's Home Languages and Cultures](#). Using the language and suggestions from these resources, feel free to label your partner's drawing with more features of an optimal classroom environment for MLs. (As a reminder, you can say or post some of the labels that come from these resources. Ex: visual aides, small group set-up, regular routines and procedures)

	<p><b>Back to Partner Discussion (Part 2):</b> Now that you have labeled and perhaps drawn into your partner’s drawing, turn and talk with them to hear what you did. Take turns discussing the drawings using any of the following sentence stems (you can post these for all to see):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I added the label/drawing _____ here because...</li> <li>• I could add the label/drawing _____ here if you...</li> <li>• Another label that would make sense for your drawing is...</li> <li>• I want to draw in _____ so that children will...</li> <li>• A question or comment I have about the classroom environment which we drew is...</li> </ul> <p>As partners discuss, be sure to remind them to capture all of the strategies and ideas discussed either by adding a label into the <a href="#">Quick Draw: My Classroom Environment</a> handout or by taking further notes in their <a href="#">Note Catcher</a>.</p>
<p><b>Activity: Find a book that...</b> <b>(30 mins)</b></p>	<p>Transition: We have had the opportunity to have a broad conversation about many of the environmental supports and design decisions we can use to support Multilingual Learners (MLs) and encourage language-rich learning. Now we are going to further focus on one aspect of a classroom environment: access to books that depict the diverse cultural and linguistic identities and experiences in the classroom.</p> <p>Tell teachers: Think about your own personal experiences with texts.</p> <p>Initiate a group discussion using some of the following prompts (you can break this up into table talk with small groups, or keep the conversation whole group):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you read something that described or depicted content that connected to your own identity(ies) and experiences in the world? What was the result?</li> <li>• How did your experience with that text compare to other books you have read? What messages do you receive as a reader when this connection occurs?</li> <li>• If you have never had this experience for yourself, why do you think that is the case?</li> <li>• What is the value of the reader “seeing themselves” inside a text? Can you give an example of this happening in your own teaching practice?</li> </ul> <p>Remind teachers: It is a powerful experience to have one’s personal experiences, preferences, and identities reflected back while reading a text. Students with diverse backgrounds do not have as much opportunity with this experience due to a “mismatch” in their lived experience and assumptions in curricular materials and texts. Teachers often need to seek out materials and texts that reflect the diverse experiences of MLs.</p> <p>Pass out (or set up teachers to digitally access) the resource <a href="#">Booklist: Mirrors and Windows Literature</a> and the handout <a href="#">Find a Book That...</a></p> <p>Give teachers some time to skim through the boxes on the Find a Book That... handout. For the next 20 minutes they will skim and explore the Booklist: Mirrors and Windows Literature and try to fill in as many boxes as they can. (Facilitator’s/teacher educator’s choice: this activity can be collaborative or competitive.)</p>

	<p>When time is up give teachers 5 minutes to compare the texts that they found, and to share the titles which they circled for upcoming use. Remind teachers to hold onto this page for future reference.</p> <p>(Note: If working with preservice teachers who do not have students they are teaching, you can have them imagine the identities and experiences of children to which these texts connect.)</p>
<p><b>Jigsaw: Analyzing Strategies in Action</b></p> <p><b>(30 mins)</b></p>	<p>Transition: Let’s put everything we have discussed today “back together” with some vignettes of teachers who intentionally cultivate a classroom environment that supports Multilingual Learners (MLs).</p> <p>Break the class into trios and assign each group to read and discuss one of the “strategies in action”: PreK–TK, K–1, or 2–3 (or choose just the ones that best fit the focus of your session). Remind teachers that even if they read a vignette that is different from their own grade band, many of the environmental supports work across different ages of children.</p> <p>Within groups, each group should identify a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reader—to read the strategy out loud to the group</li> <li>• Facilitator—to ask the discussion questions</li> <li>• Recorder/reporter—to share out highlights from the group’s discussion at the end</li> </ul> <p>Give groups about 15 minutes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read their assigned text</li> <li>• Have a discussion using the included questions as prompts</li> <li>• Add any new strategies they learned to their <a href="#">Note Catcher</a></li> </ul> <p>Then, invite groups to share out, charting responses on the board. Suggested prompt for share out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies did the teacher you read about use to intentionally set up a classroom environment to support MLs?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Optional Extension: Resource Gallery Walk</b></p> <p><b>(60 mins)</b></p>	<p>If you have time, engage teachers in a <a href="#">Resource Walk</a> to give them a chance to explore resources on the Multilingual Learning Toolkit focused on classroom environment.</p>

<p><b>Conclusion</b> <b>(15 mins)</b></p>	<p>Invite teachers to reflect on and consolidate their learning by engaging in a 10 minute quick write in response to the following prompt, using their <a href="#">Note Catcher</a> as reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why is it important for me to set up a classroom environment to support Multilingual learners (MLs)? What are three strategies I can try out in my classroom this month?</li></ul> <p>Then summarize key learnings about classroom environment and close the session. Key learnings to highlight might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A classroom’s environment can enable language-rich experiences with hands-on, inquiry-based, and content-rich lessons.</li><li>• It is important that the classroom environment is both culturally and linguistically responsive and that it demonstrates to children that their cultural backgrounds are valued.</li><li>• Children should “see themselves” in the classroom.</li><li>• Materials must be actively used and made accessible to children. It should be easy for anyone who comes into the room to receive the message that multilingualism is widely appreciated.</li></ul>
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## Note Catcher

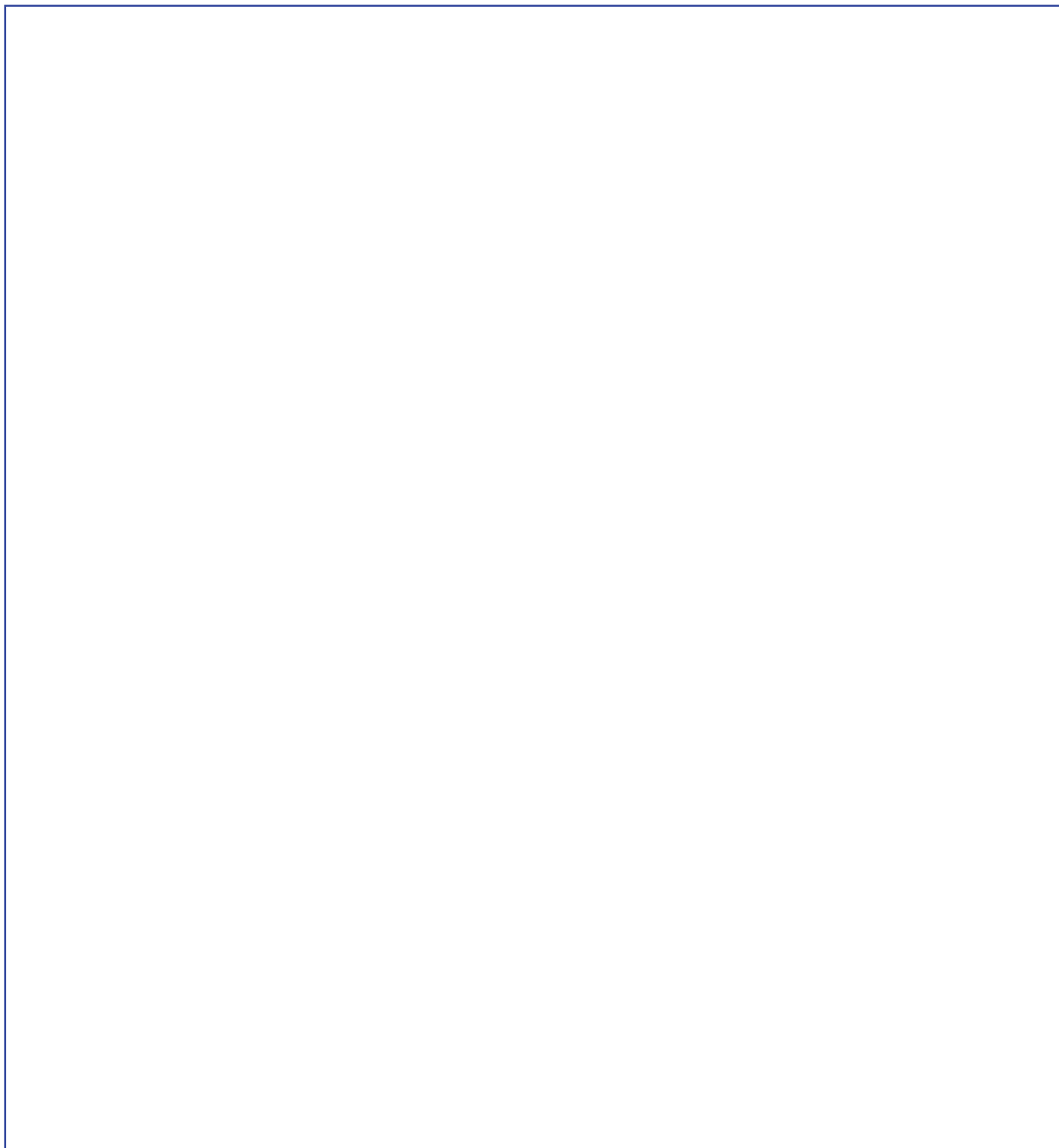
What features of the classroom environment best support hands-on, inquiry-based instruction?

What can teachers do to make sure students feel "seen" in the classroom and receive the message that their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are valued?

What else do teachers do to set up a classroom environment that supports Multilingual Learners?

## Quick Draw: My Classroom Environment

Draw your classroom. This is a “quick-draw” activity (not an art project!). Do not worry about how it looks—you will use it as a tool for discussion. You can include the physical features of your classroom, add in stick figures to represent where the teacher(s) and children are situated, and note what materials are available and also displayed on the walls. Include details of your classroom’s environment that support multilingual children’s learning. Note: If you don’t have a classroom, draw one that you are familiar with or that you remember from your own training or schooling.





## Find a Book That...

Use the provided booklist and/or the expertise of those in your small group to find a book that meets the requirement of each box.

When you are done, circle three titles that connect to the identities and experiences of students in your classroom. You can plan on using these books in upcoming instruction!

<b>Find a Book That...</b>		
When you find a book that meets the requirement in each box write in the title and author.		
<b>...has a female character who defies gender stereotypes:</b>  Title:  Author:	<b>...is written in more than two languages:</b>  Title:  Author:	<b>...is an immigration/ "welcoming" story:</b>  Title:  Author:
<b>...has a setting outside of the United States:</b>  Title:  Author:	<b>...shares the perspective of a multidimensional BIPOC character:</b>  Title:  Author:	<b>...explores the music, dance, food, holidays, or customs of a particular culture:</b>  Title:  Author:
<b>...disrupts the "typical way" a family is represented:</b>  Title:  Author:	<b>...intersects or blends features of two or more cultures into one narrative:</b>  Title:  Author:	<b>...tells a tale of a new friendship:</b>  Title:  Author:
Don't forget: When you are done, circle three titles that connect to the identities and experiences of students in your classroom. You can plan on using these books in upcoming instruction!		