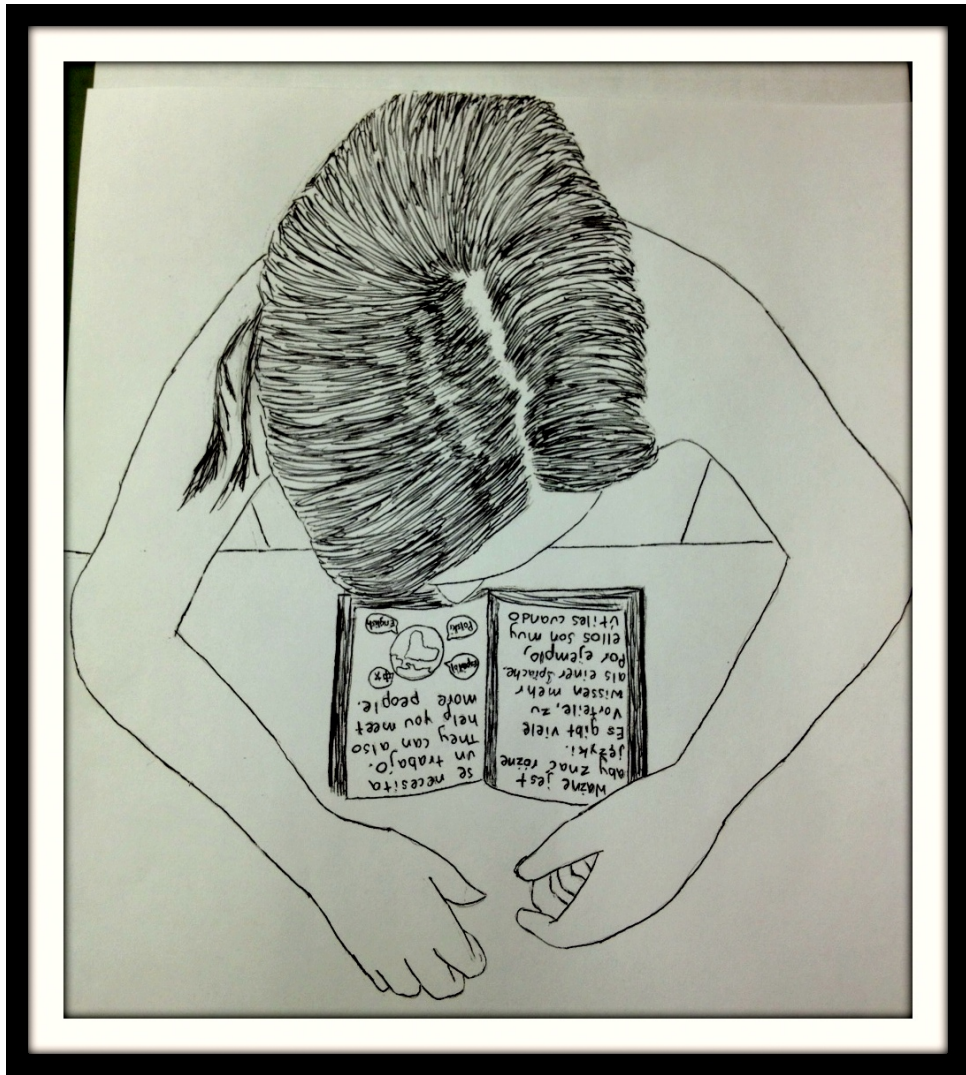


# TRANSLANGUAGING: A CUNY-NYSIEB GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



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CUNY-NYS INITIATIVE ON  
EMERGENT BILINGUALS

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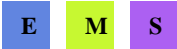
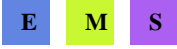


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- *How can we create a classroom and school environment that celebrates students' home languages and cultures?*
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- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

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# THEORIZING TRANSLANGUAGING FOR EDUCATORS\*

Ofelia García

This guide offers you practical assistance on how to use translanguaging to help facilitate more effective learning of content and language by bilingual students. But you might not have heard of translanguaging before, or you might not understand what it means, and how it differs from other pedagogical approaches for teaching bilingual students. This introduction to translanguaging will help you see that:

1. Translanguaging challenges monolingual assumptions that permeate current language education policy and instead treats bilingual discourse as the norm.
2. Translanguaging refers to pedagogical practices that use bilingualism as resource, rather than ignore it or perceive it as a problem.
3. Translanguaging goes beyond traditional notions of bilingualism and second language teaching and learning.
4. Translanguaging describes the practices of all students and educators who use bilingualism as a resource.

The introduction ends by giving you other sources to expand your theoretical understanding of translanguaging.

## 1. TRANSLANGUAGING AS NORMAL BILINGUAL DISCOURSE

### What is translanguaging?

Translanguaging refers to the *language practices* of bilingual people. If you've ever been present in the home of a bilingual family, you will notice that many language practices are used. Sometimes the children are speaking one language, and the parents another, even to each other! Often both languages are used to include friends and family members who may not speak one language or the other, and to engage all. If a question is asked, and someone gets up to consult Google for the answer, family members write in the search box items in one or another language, and often in both, to compare answers from different sites. In an English-Spanish bilingual home the television might be tuned into an English-language channel, while the radio may be blasting a Spanish-language show. But if you listen closely to the radio program, you will notice that the call-ins are not always in Spanish. Sometimes they're in English only, with the radio announcer negotiating the English for the Spanish-speaking audience. But many times, the radio announcer also reflects the language practices of a bilingual speaker, with features of Spanish and English fluidly used to narrate an event, explain a process, inform listeners, or sell a product. Indeed what is taking place in this bilingual family, their flexible use of their linguistic resources to make meaning of their lives and their complex worlds, is what we call translanguaging.

### But isn't translanguaging what others call "code-switching"?

Absolutely not! Notice that translanguaging is not simply going from one language code to another. The notion of code-switching assumes that the two languages of bilinguals are two separate monolingual codes that could be used without reference to each other. Instead, translanguaging posits that bilinguals have *one linguistic repertoire* from which they select features *strategically* to communicate effectively. That is, translanguaging takes as its starting point the *language practices of bilingual people as the norm*, and not the language of monolinguals, as described by traditional usage books and grammars.

### What is the relationship of translanguaging to language?

Translanguaging takes the position that language is *action* and *practice*, and not a simple system of structures and discreet sets of skills. That's why translanguaging uses an -ing form, emphasizing the action and practice of languaging bilingually.

## **Isn't translanguaging a temporary discourse practice out of which people transition when they're fully bilingual?**

Absolutely not. There are no balanced bilinguals that use their languages in exactly the same ways. Rather bilinguals adapt their language practices to the particular communicative situation in which they find themselves in order to optimize communication and understanding. As with the family at the beginning of this Question/Answer section, translanguaging is the norm in bilingual families. And bilingual families do not stop translanguaging.

## **Is translanguaging a valid discursive practice?**

Indeed. The most important language practice of bilinguals now and especially in the future is their ability to use language fluidly, to translanguage in order to make meaning beyond one or two languages. Translanguaging builds the flexibility in language practices that would make students want to try out other language practices, increasing the possibilities of becoming multilingual.

Translanguaging is not something that those who do not know do. It does not connote ignorance, or alien status, or foreignness. On the contrary, translanguaging is a language practice of the many bilingual American students in our classrooms.

## **2. TRANSLANGUAGING AS PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES THAT USE BILINGUALISM AS RESOURCE**

### **But if translanguaging refers to the discourse practices of bilinguals, how is it that this guide uses translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy?**

This guide both leverages translanguaging as the discourse practices of bilinguals, as well as develops translanguaging pedagogical strategies that use the entire linguistic repertoire of bilingual students flexibly in order to teach both rigorous content and language for academic use.

### **How does translanguaging help students develop language for academic purposes?**

All teaching uses language to communicate concepts and to develop academic uses of language. Usually the language of instruction is similar to that of the students' home, and although differences exist, there is some continuity. But in the case of bilingual students, the language used in either monolingual or bilingual programs *breaks abruptly* with their range of language practices. For bilingual students to develop the language practices used in academic contexts they must practice those uses, regardless of whether they can use the form required in school. Translanguaging affords the opportunity to use home language practices, different as they may be from those of school, to practice the language of school, and thus to eventually also use the appropriate form of language.

Just as a Major League baseball pitcher develops his expert pitching form through practice, language users must develop their forms through practice. Translanguaging strategies enable bilinguals to incorporate the language practices of school into their own linguistic repertoire. If students cannot appropriate the language practices of academic work as their own, they cannot possibly develop fitting language for this work.

### **In what ways does translanguaging offer teachers ways to teach rigorous content to bilingual students?**

All learners must "take up" the concepts taught, as well as the language used in school. If students do not understand the language in which they're taught, they cannot possibly understand the content and learn. Translanguaging provides a way to make rigorous content instruction comprehensible. Translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy offers more direct ways to teach rigorous content, at the same time that academic uses of language are developed.

By using collaborative group work and multilingual partners, translanguaging extends and deepens the thinking of students. The expansion of available multilingual resources for teaching opens up worlds, experiences, and possibilities. And the ability to read and write multilingual texts enables students to gain different perspectives. Translanguaging simply has the potential to expand thinking and understanding.



## **Isn't it better to teach any language solely through that language? Shouldn't English only be used to teach English? Shouldn't Spanish only be used when teaching Spanish?**

For many years this was the assumption. And this assumption has been the basis of many bilingual education and English as a second language programs. But in the last two decades, international research has conclusively established that new language practices only emerge in interrelationship with old language practices. Thus, bilingual education programs, as well as English as a second language programs, are creating opportunities for students to use their entire linguistic repertoire and not just part of it to develop bilingualism and/or develop language practices that conform to the academic uses of language in school, as well as to learn rigorous content.

## **How does translanguaging as a pedagogical tool affirm the identities of bilingual students?**

A bilingual person is not two monolinguals in one, with each language linked to a separate culture. Instead a bilingual person is one person with complex language and cultural practices that are fluid and changing depending on the particular situation and the local practice. Translanguaging supports the ability of bilingual students to have multiple identities that are not exactly like those constructed in monolingual contexts or in other contexts. It actually buttresses the multiple and fluid identities of bilingual students.

## **Why is translanguaging particularly effective with bilingual students?**

Bilingual students' language practices, in English or their home languages, are often stigmatized. For example, many US Latino students are told that they speak "Spanglish," connoting poor command of the language, when the features that US Latinos display may have more to do with normal contact with English. Translanguaging permits students' and teachers' to acknowledge and use the full range of linguistic practices of bilinguals, and to use these practices for improved teaching and learning.

## **How does translanguaging help students develop metalinguistic awareness?**

Putting language practices alongside each other makes possible for students to explicitly notice language features, an awareness needed to develop linguistic abilities.

## **Is translanguaging as a pedagogical practice a simple scaffold that should be removed once students become bilingual?**

Absolutely not. As the many strategies shown in this guide, translanguaging is a pedagogical strategy that should be used to build on bilingual students' strengths, to help them use language and literacy in more academic ways, to pose challenging material, to notice differences in language, and to develop bilingual voices.

## **How can translanguaging alleviate some of the inequities that bilingual students face in monolingual education systems and even in some bilingual education programs?**

In most bilingual situations, one language group is more powerful than the other. Keeping the two languages separate at all times creates a linguistic hierarchy with one language considered the powerful majority language, and the other minoritized. But by making use of flexible language practices, translanguaging releases ways of speaking that are often very much controlled and silenced. When new voices are released, histories of subjugation are brought forth, building a future of equity and social justice.

## **How does translanguaging fit with the Common Core State Standards?**

Translanguaging provides a way of ensuring that emergent bilingual students receive the rigorous education that will allow them to meet Common Core State Standards, even when their English language is not fully developed. In fact, this guide indexes the Common Core State Standards that go with each strategy in the side-bar. In addition, the theory of translanguaging fits well with the theory of language as action that is contained in the Common Core State Standards. Translanguaging offers bilingual students the possibility of being able to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize and

report on information and ideas using text-based evidence; engage with complex texts, not only literary but informational; and write to persuade, explain and convey real or imaginary experience, even as their English is developing.

### **3. TRANSLANGUAGING BEYOND TRADITIONAL BILINGUALISM AND SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING**

#### **How is translanguaging different from additive bilingualism?**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, bilingualism was seen as “additive,” as the simple sum of two languages. But additive bilingualism doesn’t capture the complexity of a bilingual’s linguistic repertoire. As we said before, a bilingual’s language repertoire is not made up of two distinct and separate languages that are linearly and separately acquired and used. Bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one, and bilingualism is not simply the sum of one language and the other. Ofelia García speaks of *dynamic bilingualism* in describing the complex language practices of bilinguals, shedding the notion of additive bilingualism, and recognizing translanguaging as a bilingual discursive norm.

#### **How does dynamic bilingualism relate to translanguaging?**

In the 1980s Jim Cummins posited that there was an interdependence, a Common Underlying Proficiency, among the languages of bilinguals. Cummins and other scholars view bilingual competence from a cognitive perspective. But the concept of dynamic bilingualism refers to a bilingual competence that is not based on cognitive differences, but on the different practices of bilinguals. Dynamic bilingualism refers to the repertoire of bilingual language practices that can only emerge and expand in interrelationship with each other and through practice and socialization. Dynamic bilingualism is enacted precisely through translanguaging.

Dynamic bilingualism values the complexity of the language practices of bilinguals, as it recognizes the ability of bilinguals to adapt to the communicative situation of the particular moment. Translanguaging is the enactment of this dynamic bilingualism.

#### **How can translanguaging help in sustaining a minoritized language?**

Translanguaging recognizes and values the language diversity and multilingualism of the community, while enabling students to practice their home languages and literacies. Actually translanguaging, more than any other practice or pedagogy, *sustains* home language practices. Notice that we’re here speaking of sustainability of language practices, and not of simple language maintenance. Because we view language as practice, we believe that minoritized languages in bilingual communities must be practiced in interaction with their plural social, economic and political contexts. It is not enough to maintain the static languages of the past. It is important to bring these practices into a bilingual future.

#### **How does translanguaging disrupt the idea of second languages and first or native languages?**

The academic literature often refers to second language teaching, second language learning, second language learners, second language acquisition. These students are told they have “first languages” and “native languages.” Translanguaging disrupts all these concepts. First, by insisting that there is one linguistic repertoire, students are seen as being positioned in different points of a bilingual continuum and not as possessors of a “native” or “first” language, acquiring a “second” one. Second, by focusing on the linguistic continuum to which bilinguals have access, translanguaging goes beyond categories of language, whether English, French or others, and first or second. Third, by insisting that the bilingual practices of translanguaging are what bilinguals do with language, translanguaging disrupts the hierarchy that place “native” English speakers as having English, and thus superior to those who are acquiring English as a “second” language. Translanguaging permits bilinguals to appropriate all language practices as their very own, including those in English, and those for academic purposes.

#### **How does translanguaging disrupt the idea of “heritage” languages?**

By placing dynamic bilingualism at the center of language use, translanguaging disrupts the idea that the minoritized language is only a “heritage” language that is static in form, as used in the past. As part of a bilingual repertoire, speakers

select features that are socially assigned to one language or the other, bringing all language practices into a bilingual future. Translanguaging permits speakers to appropriate all language practices as their very own, and use them in bilingual contexts, including the language other than English that now becomes part of a bilingual repertoire and is not simply assigned to the category of “heritage,” taught only in heritage language classes. Instead, these practices in the language other than English are used in interaction with English throughout the child’s education.

#### **4. STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS AND TRANSLANGUAGING AS RESOURCE**

##### **Which students would benefit from translanguaging as a pedagogical strategy?**

All students would benefit from the translanguaging instructional contexts and strategies offered in this guide. For students who speak but one language at home, these translanguaging strategies would “awaken” them to language diversity, and would build the linguistic tolerance the world needs, and the linguistic flexibility that would enable them to learn additional languages throughout their lives. For students who speak languages other than English, besides English, at home, these translanguaging strategies would validate their home language practices, even when there is no instruction in their home languages. For those who are developing an additional language like English, those we call emergent bilinguals, these translanguaging strategies may be the only way to teach rigorous academic content, as well as developing language.

##### **What is the difference between referring to students who are developing English as emergent bilinguals, rather than English language learners?**

Our conceptualization of language as practice and of translanguaging as languaging bilingually makes us understand that it is impossible to simply be a learner of any language, without incorporating features of the new language into one linguistic repertoire. Thus, language learners are not simply “adding” a “second” language. Instead, new language practices are emerging as students become bilingual. Speaking about emergent bilinguals reminds us that by developing the new language features that make up English, students who are learning English are indeed becoming bilingual. Understanding this simple fact would mean that all educators, and not just bilingual ones, would need to understand bilingualism and leverage translanguaging in instruction.

##### **When do students stop being emergent bilinguals?**

According to our view of language as action, a speaker never “has” a language, never stops learning how to use it, especially as life experiences change. That is why college students take English as a subject since their use of English becomes more complex. A speaker only uses or performs a language according to the opportunities or affordances he or she is given. Thus, we’re all emergent bilinguals in certain situations, at certain times.

##### **Why is translanguaging particularly important in the education of emergent bilinguals?**

Emergent bilinguals are at the initial points of the continuum of bilingualism. Thus, they are unable to understand instruction in another language. Translanguaging facilitates comprehension and allows emergent bilinguals to tackle challenging academic tasks in a language they are yet developing.

##### **Which types of educators are able to enact translanguaging?**

Just as translanguaging strategies would be beneficial for all students, translanguaging strategies can be carried out by all educators, although their use might differ as strategies are adapted to the types of students they teach and their own strengths. Both bilingual and monolingual teachers can carry out translanguaging strategies if they consider the bilingualism of their students a resource for teaching and learning. All that is needed is a bit of good will, a willingness to let go of total teacher control, and the taking up of the position of learner, rather than of teacher. The beauty of translanguaging strategies is that they can be carried out by different teachers in many different classroom contexts — monolingual general education classrooms, bilingual classrooms, English as a second language classrooms, even foreign language classrooms!

## MORE ABOUT TRANSLANGUAGING

### Where can I read more about translanguaging?

The term translanguaging was first used in Welsh by Cen Williams to refer to a pedagogical practice where students alternate languages for the purposes of reading and writing or for receptive or productive use. Ofelia García used the term and expanded it in her book, *Bilingual Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: A global perspective* (2009). Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley/Blackwell. The theoretical underpinnings of translanguaging are further developed in her other work that can be found in [www.ofeliagarcia.org](http://www.ofeliagarcia.org). Many authors are now using translanguaging as a conceptual tool to better understand the language practices of bilinguals and the teaching strategies that must accompany those practices. In particular, we refer the reader to the work of Adrian Blackledge, Suresh Canagarajah, Angela Creese, Jim Cummins, Nancy Hornberger, Li Wei and Peter Sayer. Following are some of the essential readings to expand on your understandings of translanguaging from a more theoretical perspective.

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# HOW TO USE THIS TRANSLANGUAGING GUIDE: THE COLLABORATIVE DESCRIPTIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

Ofelia García  
and  
Laura Ascenzi-Moreno

## How do I use this guide?

This guide is meant to be read neither in isolation nor from beginning to end in linear fashion. Just as translanguaging itself goes beyond linear conceptualizations of additive bilingualism of individuals, this guide is meant to be used in socially dynamic ways. What do we mean by that? We mean that it is intended to be used *with others* and for the *unique needs and purposes you identify in your schools*. The first step in using this guide is to decide, in collaboration with your other colleagues, school leaders, and parents, what your students and teachers' needs are and which translanguaging strategies would best help move your school towards meeting those goals. The second step is to select some strategies from this guide to use either during your common prep time or other consistent professional development time established throughout the year for a process of teacher inquiry we call *collaborative descriptive inquiry*.

## What is collaborative descriptive inquiry and how can it support school change?

Collaborative descriptive inquiry is a disciplined process of inquiry derived from the work of Patricia Carini in the Prospect Center for Education and Research in the 1980s (also known as Prospect Descriptive Process) and continued to this day by many educators, most notably by Cecilia Traugh. The core of the process of collaborative descriptive inquiry is the valuing of human capacity to teach and to learn. Through disciplined description of the process of teaching and learning, a group can collaboratively make the complexity of the classroom reality more visible, and enlarge understandings that can generate ideas for collective action.

Collaborative descriptive inquiry supports school change in two major ways. One is that through this process a supportive and collegial environment is established and maintained. This type of environment is crucial to making school changes that are long-lasting and consistent throughout the school. Secondly, collaborative descriptive inquiry provides you with a forum to try out these translanguaging strategies, to improve them, and to reflect on how they support the learning of your bilingual students. By putting the students' learning at the center, a collaborative descriptive inquiry process combines the teaching strategies which are delineated in this guide with the learning of the bilingual child.

## What is description? Why is it important to the collaborative descriptive inquiry process?

Description is at the heart of the collaborative inquiry. Description allows us to examine teacher practices, student work, students, etc. from a perspective steeped in openness and curiosity. As teachers we are often asked to evaluate. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between description and evaluation. Statements which are embedded with judgmental words and/or not specific can be considered evaluative, rather than descriptive. For example, consider the following evaluative sentences and their descriptive alternatives:

*Evaluative:*

- Maria is always willing to spend time with new teachers (Use of always is not specific).

*Descriptive:*

- Maria stays afterschool until 5 once a week with Janet, a new teacher.

*Evaluative:*

- Henry is a very aggressive boy (Aggressive is evaluative, not descriptive).

*Descriptive:*

- When told to put the blocks away, Henry knocked down everyone's work.

Being descriptive of things, events, and people is very hard work. The work of the each and every member of the collaborative descriptive team is to strive towards description, so that member can consider a particular piece of teacher practice, work, or child, with an open mind and consider a range of possibilities in addressing the teaching and learning of students.

The sections that follow delineate the steps you must take to build and sustain a collaborative teacher inquiry group. They give you step-by-step guidelines of how to launch your collaborative descriptive inquiry at your school.

### **How do I form the groups and design meeting times?**

- *Select the members of a group*  
The constitution of the inquiry group should be done strategically according to your needs. In some cases, the group would be constituted only of teachers who specialize in the education of emergent bilinguals; that is, bilingual and ESL teachers. In other cases, the group would be constituted of different types of teachers at the same grade level or grade band. In yet others, the group would consist of teachers of the same subject. And in yet others, the group would also include administrators, staff and parents.
- *Establish the size of the group and the parameters of the meeting design*  
The group should not consist of more than 8 participants and should not last less than forty-five minutes. It is also possible to have more participants in the collaborative descriptive inquiry group if you extend the time. If the group is larger than 14, then it is easier to have a "fish-bowl" setting, with a rotating inner circle of active participants, and an outer circle of active listeners.
- *Select a facilitator*  
Each group needs a facilitator. The facilitator could rotate on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly schedule (for more information see the section entitled, "What is the role of the facilitator?")
- *Define the frequency of meetings*  
The inquiry group should meet on a weekly or bi-monthly basis throughout the entire academic year.
- *Decide on types of group needed at your school and members' participation*  
It is possible to have many collaborative descriptive inquiry groups for different functions in one school. When schools constitute groups according to different criteria, it is possible for group members to alternate attendance to one or the other group.

### **What is the role of the facilitator?**

The facilitator should rotate among members in a group. Like a conductor, the facilitator's role is not to play an instrument, but to direct, by paying close attention without interrupting. The facilitator's role is to:

- Remind the group to describe carefully, and others to listen attentively and take notes for clarifying questions.
- State the focusing question at the beginning.
- Listen attentively and take summarizing notes.
- Pull the threads at the end of the description, and mid-way if it is a large group.
- Remind participants gently, if needed, that the task is to describe translanguaging strategies for teaching and learning.
- Direct the clarification questions and answers, and the recommendations.
- Thank the participants at the end.
- The facilitator also writes and disseminates the notes of the inquiry sessions so as to provide a historical record of the movement in the group and of the body of knowledge they have developed over time. Because of the burden of this task, this could be a simple log as the one that appears below with the date of the inquiry

session, the strategy described, the person doing the description & the focusing question, a list of the recommendations generated, and any insight about children, teaching and learning that emerges from the session.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Strategy described</i>	<i>Person describing &amp; focusing question</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Insights</i>

## What are the steps of the collaborative descriptive inquiry process?

The collaborative descriptive inquiry process consists of three main parts: description, clarifying questions, and planning for the next meeting. These parts are described in detail below.

### **I. Description**

- Educators would have tried out one agreed-upon strategy for at least a week (for more information, see the section entitled, “How do I select a strategy to use during collaborative descriptive inquiry?”)
- At the time of the meeting, educators sit in a circle.
- The facilitator begins the meeting by stating the focus question.
- Each week *one* of the educator-participants is asked to do a full description of the strategy that they selected the prior week. The description should be geared to answering the focusing question. Although the focusing question could change according to the group’s needs, the basic question for the inquiry is:  
*Describe in detail how you used this particular translanguaging strategy this week. Be specific. Select work from two children in your class with different characteristics done through the translanguaging strategy. Bring the students’ artifacts (oral, written or text) produced through translanguaging strategies and describe them fully. Describe what you and the children grappled with in translanguaging.*
- There are no interruptions or questions while the description is taking place. The other participants listen carefully and take notes so that they can ask questions when all individuals in the group have taken a turn.  
 (This part should take approximately **1/3 of the inquiry time**)

### **II. Clarifying questions, the threads, and recommendations**

- Each participant has a turn asking a clarifying question. The turns are taken in the order in which the group members sit. There is no “skipping around.” It is possible for a group member to simply “Pass.”
- The educator doing the description listens carefully to the clarifying questions and responds to them at the end of the round. This process of posing questions, having a person answering them, and hearing collective responses enlarges all the educators’ own individual understandings.
- The facilitator who has been listening attentively and taking notes now summarizes the threads that have come up during the description.
- Each participant now has a turn making recommendations to the presenter, based on what they have heard, and what they themselves have done in their classrooms. Again, the turns are taken in the order in which the group members sit; there is no skipping around; and it is possible for a group member to “Pass.”  
 (This part should take **almost 2/3 of the inquiry time**, minus 5

minutes).

### **III. Selecting the next strategy**

- Members of the group then agree on the strategy that they will try out with their students during the upcoming week, as well as agree on the facilitator and the person who will do the description and answer the focusing question.  
 (This part should take **5 minutes of the inquiry time**).

## How do I select a strategy to use during collaborative descriptive inquiry?

In order to select a strategy, it is important to choose the type of strategy that the group has interest in pursuing. For this purpose the guide is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: The Translanguaging Classroom
- Part 2: Content and Literacy Development
- Part 3: Language Development

- To start, select a strategy from Part 1, another one from Part 2, and another one from Part 3, according to your needs. This would help you familiarize yourself with the contents of the guide.
- Then select the strategy for your first collaborative descriptive inquiry group. Please begin with choosing a strategy from Part 1.
- Communicate to group members the strategy selected.

## **What meanings emerge from collaborative descriptive inquiry?**

Collaborative descriptive inquiry is a disciplined process that seems mechanistic at simple glance, but has deep meanings. A collaborative descriptive inquiry process helps a school community take an inquiry stance to their work. Its core is composed of collaboration, description, and inquiry.

### ***I. Collaboration***

Because collaborative descriptive inquiry is a *collaborative* process, it calls into question all expert knowledge, ensuring that teachers, school leaders including the principal, parents and other staff members participate as equals. All voices are included and put alongside each other, ensuring that everyone has a “safe space” from which to speak, without being questioned or interrupted. Through disciplined collaboration, collaborative descriptive inquiry enlarges individual understandings, and generates questions and ideas for collaborative action.

### ***II. Description***

In addition, collaborative descriptive inquiry uses language *descriptively*. Description, as we said before, means that there is no judgmental or evaluative language used. Instead, the participant describes from her experience, her vantage point, being respectful being respectful of the children whose work they describe as makers of their work. Description also allows participants to be respectful of each other as educators, makers of their own teaching work.

Being descriptive creates a generous space that enables the group to more easily trust. Being descriptive also helps participants focus on what is important — the integrity and richness of the work of the teacher who is doing the description, as well as that of the student whose work is being described. Looking at work descriptively helps us ask the crucial questions:

- How can educators of bilingual students use translanguaging in order to produce what they are so capable of?
- How can bilingual students use translanguaging in order to produce what they are so capable of?

### ***III. Inquiry***

Finally the *inquiry* itself points to a process of grappling with the rough edges of work that characterizes all human work. Rather than “show and tell,” this process allows educators to raise questions, to show doubt. In addition, collaborative descriptive inquiry values long-looking and listening, as well as being patient, important traits in all inquiry and research.



# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

## The scope of this resource: Parts 1, 2, and 3

This guide is divided into three parts. **Part 1** sets the stage and the context for translanguaging work — the development of a multilingual ecology in the school, the design of instruction and of collaborative work, and the use of multilingual resources. **Part 2** focuses on using translanguaging strategies for the learning of rigorous academic content and the development of advanced literacy practices. Finally **Part 3** gives attention to how translanguaging can assist with specific aspects of language development.

We urge users of this guide to use Part 3 alongside Part 2. Although we have included a section on language development to reflect the language strand of the Common Core State Standards (Part 3), for us language is more than a system of structures. Language is action and practice, and its development depends on the relationship of students with other people and texts, as well as their relationship with the learning ecology in the classroom. Educators must provide all students, including emergent bilinguals, with the opportunities and affordances to construct new knowledge and understandings, and so co-develop the complex language practices which students must perform in school. The power of translanguaging strategies lies precisely in its ability to provide students with these opportunities to grapple with challenging academic content. At the same time translanguaging can play an important role in helping students notice their language practices and develop their bilingual identities.

## Overall Structure

Each strategy is set up as follows:

- The “**What is it?**” section gives an overview of the strategy itself—what does this strategy help students to do/understand? In what context is it used? What research supports the use of this strategy? This section also outlines how you could add the strategy to your existing teaching.
- The “**Translanguaging How-to**” section explains the step-by-step process of putting this strategy into practice. It includes questions to consider, templates and examples of the strategy, and resources you will need to use this strategy in your classroom.
- The “**Ideas for Implementation**” section is broken down into **Elementary** and **Middle/Secondary** grades. Here we include examples of how real teachers have used this strategy in their classes. We indicate both the specific grade level and the program (bilingual, ESL, NLA, or general education) to provide a context for how this strategy was implemented.

### **Color Coding:**

When viewing the online version of the Guide, you will see colored boxes that say Elementary, Middle, and Secondary at the top of each strategy. When you see those boxes, it means that the strategy you are about to read can be applied to those grade levels. Most strategies have all three levels, but several (“Multilingual Listening Center,” “Translanguaging with Interactive Writing,” “Vocabulary Inquiry across Language”) are either Elementary/Middle or Middle/Secondary. That said, we encourage you to read the strategies that interest you—we’ve found that some strategies that are traditionally seen at one grade level can be used in other grade levels with modification.

When reading the printed version of the Guide, these boxes are printed in grayscale. Please refer to the denoted grade level at the top of each strategy, and under “Ideas for Implementation,” to better direct your reading of the Guide.

### **Essential questions:**

Each of the three parts of the Guide has two to three “essential questions.” These are the broad questions that can guide and help frame your thinking as you read the various sections of the Guide. These questions could be used as you and

your colleagues begin the collaborative descriptive inquiry process (see “How to use this translanguaging guide” for more on this process). We hope that the strategies within each section, as well as your work in your own classrooms, will help you “answer” the essential questions we’ve posed.

### **The Sidebar:**

Each individual strategy has a sidebar. Within the sidebar you’ll find:

- The Common Core State Standards:

Because of the growing emphasis on the CCSS in schools, we have aligned each strategy to a number of specific English Language Arts standards. In red and underlined, you will find the strand (reading, writing, speaking and listening, or language), the broad category within the strand (i.e.: “Key Ideas and Details” under the Reading strand), and the more specific anchor standard, denoted by its number. For example:

**Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 1**

Underneath, we provide the general CCSS description of the anchor standard. You can look at the standard for the grade level(s) you teach for more specific information about what students are expected to know and do from grades K-12. In *italics*, we provide further explanation of the standard itself and/or how it connects to the specific translanguaging strategy.

- Resources:

Most strategies have a “Resources” sidebar that provides additional information about how you can access materials you may need to successfully implement this strategy.

- Emergent Bilinguals:

Many of the strategies in this Guide can be applied to *all* bilingual students. However, there are some strategies or modifications to strategies that are more relevant to students who have low literacy in both English and their home languages. This includes both SIFE and LTEL students. The modifications in this sidebar section can be applied to any learners who struggle with literacy across their languages.

- Other relevant information related to the strategy:

In addition to “Resources” and “Emergent Bilinguals,” you will find sections of the sidebar that contain information relevant to that particular translanguaging strategy. These sections outline any information that is related, but not necessarily essential, to that strategy.

### **Acronyms**

The following acronyms are referred to within the guide:

- **EBL(s)** – Emergent bilingual learner(s)
- **ESL** – English as a Second Language
- **CCSS** – Common Core State Standards
- **LTEL** – Long-term English Learner
- **NLA** – Native Language Arts
- **SIFE** – Students with Interrupted Formal Education

## A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment

### Essential Questions

- *How can we create a classroom and school environment that celebrates students' home languages and cultures?*
- *How can we raise ALL students' awareness of the different languages and scripts in their communities?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Research shows that when you have students read culturally relevant texts, their reading proficiency is greater. With this stronger comprehension, bilingual students are positioned to develop the reading skills outlined in the anchor [Reading standards](#) in all three areas:

- [Key Ideas and Details](#)
- [Craft and Structure](#)
- [Integration of Knowledge and Ideas](#)

In the content areas, including multiple cultural perspectives for a topic gives all students a deeper understanding of the content. This is an important way to help EBLs meet the [standards](#) in [social studies](#), [science](#), and [math](#).

### What is it?

“Culturally relevant teaching” is a phrase coined by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) to describe “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” This means that teachers use students’ own backgrounds and knowledge to build bridges to content understandings. To do this, we must create a learning environment where emergent bilinguals feel represented and valued, bringing their cultures into the classroom in a meaningful way. Creating a “culturally relevant” learning environment isn’t just a benefit for emergent bilinguals. Many students come from diverse cultural backgrounds, and *all* students benefit from understanding how their learning relates to different cultures. This means doing more than just celebrating a few multicultural holidays throughout the year! Instead, this strategy shares four powerful ways you can make your classroom and instruction more culturally relevant to students. These strategies can also allow for exploration into social justice issues that are relevant to students from diverse backgrounds.

- **Expand the content-area curriculum to include other cultures**
  - **Social Studies**  
The social studies curriculum is full of opportunities to make connections to the geography, history, traditions, and governments of other cultures. You can take any learning objective in the social studies curriculum, and expand it to include connections to other cultures.
  - **Science and Math**  
Science and math are more universal subjects across cultures. However, for the science or math concepts you are teaching, you can try to give a real-world application that is culturally relevant to your bilingual students. The most powerful way to do this is to connect the math concepts to a multicultural social studies or science unit you are teaching at the same time. You can also explore social justice issues related to science and math. For example, [www.radicalmath.org](http://www.radicalmath.org) has examples of math used for social justice issues relevant to students with diverse backgrounds.
- **Choose culturally relevant texts**  
Research shows that when bilingual students read texts they can connect to – texts that are *culturally relevant* to them – their **reading proficiency is greater** and they are **more engaged** (Ebe, 2010; 2011; 2012). Culturally relevant texts are ones that connect directly to students’ particular backgrounds and experiences.

Incorporating culturally relevant texts in your teaching helps your bilingual students draw upon their background knowledge, or schema, to comprehend what they are reading. These texts are also a powerful way to validate and celebrate the cultural experiences of the students in your class, while improving their literacy skills.

You can use a “cultural relevance rubric” (Figures 3 and 4) to determine which books your bilingual students identify with the most. Keep in mind that the more relevant the books are, the greater your bilingual students’ reading comprehension and engagement will be.

- **Write identity texts**  
This pedagogical strategy, described in detail by Cummins, has bilingual students

### **Integrated Instruction**

Many elementary teachers feel they don't have enough time to teach social studies and science, given the large focus now on literacy and Math with the state tests. Look at the strategy *Integrated Instruction* for how to combine content-area instruction with literacy instruction to develop deep content-area knowledge with your students. This will help you implement the multicultural content-area curriculum discussed here.

create a bilingual text in English *and* their home language as a way to share their cultural and linguistic identities and experiences. As Cummins explains: "Students invest their identities in the creation of these texts which can be written, spoken, visual, musical, dramatic, or combinations in multimodal form. The identity text then holds a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected back in a positive light. When students share identity texts with multiple audiences (peers, teachers, parents, grandparents, sister classes, the media, etc.) they are likely to receive positive feedback and affirmation of self in interaction with these audiences" (Cummins, 2005).

To create bilingual identity texts, students begin by creating initial drafts in whichever language they choose, typically the language in which they have a stronger writing ability. This allows them to more freely express their ideas and their identities. Then, they work with a peer or an adult to create a translation of the text into the other language. Examples of identity texts in different languages and at different grade levels can be found at: [thornwood.peelschools.org/Dual/](http://thornwood.peelschools.org/Dual/). You can even have students create *digital* identity texts by using digital audio recorders and cameras. For more on creating digital identity texts, see <http://www.nwemahub.net/course/view.php?id=26>.

- **Include multiculturalism in classroom or school displays**

- When you create a display, think about how you can visually represent the multicultural lens students have been using to learn about a content-area topic.
- You can also create a display that shows the multiculturalism present in your classroom. This can be done at a school-wide level as well.

## **Translanguaging How-To**

1. **Look at your curriculum through a multicultural lens**

Consider:

- Is there a way to connect this content-area topic to my students' cultures?
- Will I need to include different texts or resources to represent this multicultural perspective?
- What cultural "funds of knowledge" are present in the community that I can draw upon? Could I have a bilingual student's family member come in to talk with the class?

### **Social Studies Examples**

- When studying a period of time in American History, make connections to how this is similar or different to what other cultures have experienced. Or, highlight how other cultures were involved in that part of American history. For example, when students study Native American groups from the New York area in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, you can compare and contrast these groups with other indigenous groups around the world. When students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade study the causes and effects of American Revolution, help them compare this to revolutions other countries have experienced.
- When students study communities in the primary grades, you can emphasize the different cultures that make up our New York City communities. Look on a world map – where do these cultures originally come from?
- When students study families in the primary grades, include a deeper focus on how families are similar and different across cultures, drawing from

### **Bilingual Students as Experts**

Draw upon the knowledge your bilingual students have about their culture when teaching your content-area units from a multicultural perspective, and when reading multicultural literature. This positions them as members of the classroom community who possess expert knowledge, instead of viewing them as students who have a deficit because they do not have as much English proficiency.

### **Getting Families Involved**

When you plan ways to make multicultural connections with your content-area curriculum, talk with your EBLs' families to see if they would like to come in and talk with students about their culture's perspective or their home country's experiences.

Many families are hesitant to do this, but you can set it up in a non-threatening way. Try having students ask questions instead of expecting the family member to give a "lecture." Or, have a few photographs or images ready that the family member can share with students to talk about their culture. If students have read a text about the topic already, they can simply talk with the family member about what they've learned to have a new audience.

your own students' experiences.

- 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global History provides many opportunities for cultural relevance. For example, when students study various belief systems, they can explain the role of certain religions in their home countries and current communities. When studying ancient civilizations, there is already a focus on different areas of the world. Depending on your students' backgrounds, you can supplement the curriculum with readings, media, and artifacts that are relevant to students' cultures.

### **Science Examples**

- When students study ecosystems, have them compare and contrast a local ecosystem with one found in your EBLs' home countries.
- In studying Chemistry, discuss how scientists from different countries have conducted experiments to make advances in the field.
- When learning about human impact on the environment, compare the issues facing different countries.

### **Math Examples**

- During a 4<sup>th</sup> grade place value unit, the teacher was also teaching a unit on Native Americans. She had students examine the place value of the numbers of people who belong to modern-day indigenous groups in the countries her students were from. As students practiced reading, writing, and ordering large numbers, they were also able to discuss these diverse indigenous populations and why some groups are larger than others.
- In a 10<sup>th</sup> grade math class, the teacher brought in examples of real people from her students' lives using the current mathematics they were learning. She talked to and got relevant examples from community members and students' family members so that students could see the math they were learning "in action." Some examples were construction workers using geometry, restaurant owners using budgeting and percentages, and families using measurements in cooking meals.
- During a 1<sup>st</sup> grade unit on addition and subtraction, the teacher was also teaching a unit on Families. She posed addition and subtraction story problems that involved counting objects related to the things her students encountered at home and in their communities.

## **2. Choose culturally relevant texts for your different units of study**

You can use the English and Spanish versions of the cultural relevance rubric (Figures 2 and 3) with your bilingual students to see if the texts you currently use in your units of study are ones that your students can identify with. If you find that the cultural relevance is minimal with certain texts, you can look for ones your EBLs would be able to connect with that target the same genre, topic, or theme.

## **3. Find places in your curriculum for writing "identity texts"**

When you have students create a piece of writing as part of the curriculum, determine if it would be possible for them to create a *bilingual version* of that writing. Have them begin by writing this bilingual "identity text" in the language they are most comfortable with, and then translate it to the other language. This translation can be done independently, or with the help of another person.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- A 4<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish/English bilingual teacher included a “getting to know you” activity on the first day of school that was designed to get students talking about their cultural backgrounds. She displayed a world map, and had students indicate where they were born, and where their families were originally from. The teacher labeled the map with students’ names and photographs. Many of her bilingual students were actually born in the United States, but their families were from Mexico. Other students were born in another country, and later moved to the United States. This activity was a way to involve *all* students in talking about their backgrounds and how they identify with different cultures. As new EBLs arrived throughout the year, the teacher added their names and photos to the display.
- During a unit of study on explorers, the state curriculum indicated that students were to learn about explorers who came to what is now the New York area. However, since most of the students in the class were from Mexico, Central America and South America, the teacher broadened the focus to compare the experiences of explorers going to the New York area with explorers going to Latin America and Canada during that same general time period. The teacher created a display with students to show this multicultural focus (Figure 1). They mapped out which European countries sent explorers to which parts of the “New World.” Students later wrote historical fiction pieces from the perspective of one of the explorers or from one of the indigenous groups.

Figure 1



### Getting Families Involved – Cultural Differences with Math

Even though math is considered a “universal subject,” there are some cultural differences. For example, different countries use different procedures to calculate operations like subtraction and division. Also, some cultures switch the use of decimal points and commas to mark place value.

You can occasionally invite family members to come in and teach students the way they learned how to do certain math operations in their home countries. Many students even find these ways easier to understand!

Figure 2

**The “Culture of Power”**

Part of creating a culturally relevant learning environment is introducing your students to cultural norms within the US. Delpit (1995) coined the term “culture of power,” which she defines as “codes or rules for participating in power” (25). Adelman Reyes and Kleyn (2010) discuss how critical it is for bilingual students and EBLs to learn these codes and rules, which are often those that refer to white, middle-class cultural norms. Explicitly teaching them how to recognize and “play by” these rules helps to “arm students with the dominant cultural knowledge that they will need in the future—where they may be judged for either having or lacking such attributes” (29). Students can then *question* and *challenge* the culture of power, thinking about who created these codes and rules and why. Encouraging students to examine norms in the United States and compare them to norms in their home countries and cultures creates a truly critical, multicultural learning environment.

<b>Cultural Relevance Rubric</b>			
<b>1. Are the characters in the story like you and your family?</b>			
Not at all like us..... Just like us			
1	2	3	4
<b>2. Have you ever lived in or visited places like those in the story?</b>			
No..... Yes			
1	2	3	4
<b>3. Could this story take place this year?</b>			
No..... Yes			
1	2	3	4
<b>4. How close do you think the main characters are to you in age?</b>			
Not close at all .....Very close			
1	2	3	4
<b>5. Does the story have main characters who are boys (for boy readers)? Girls (for girl readers)?</b>			
No..... Yes			
1	2	3	4
<b>6. Do the characters talk like you and your family?</b>			
No..... Yes			
1	2	3	4
<b>7. How often do you read stories like this one?</b>			
Never .....Often			
1	2	3	4
<b>8. Have you ever had an experience like one described in this story?</b>			
No..... Yes			
1	2	3	4

Adapted from: Ebe, A. (2010). Culturally relevant texts and reading assessment for English language learners. *Reading Horizons* 50 (3), 193-210.



**A Sampling of Culturally Relevant Texts**

(Ebe, 2011)

Ackerman, K. (1999). *By the dawn's early light*. New York: Simon & Shuster Children's Publishing.

Choi, Y. (2001). *The name jar*. New York, NY: Knopf Books for Young Readers.

Cisneros, S. (1991). *The house on Mango Street*. New York, NY: Vintage.

Contreras, K. (2009). *Braids/ Trencitas*. Lyndhurst, NJ: Lectorum Publications.

Dorros, A. (1997). *Abuela*. New York, NY: Puffin Books.

Dumas Lachtman, O. (1995). *Pepita talks twice*. Houston, TX: Pinata Books.

Elya, S. M. (2002). *Home at last*. New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

Figueredo, D. H. (1999). *When this world was new*. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books.

Gershator, D., & Gershator, P. (1998). *Bread is for eating*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co.

A new (2012) Scholastic chapter book series, *Bordertown*, for older students:

[www.malinalegria.com](http://www.malinalegria.com)

Figure 3

<b>Evaluación Cultural de Textos</b>			
<b>1. ¿Se parecen los personajes del cuento a tí y a tu familia?</b>			
Son exactamente como nosotros ..... Ni un poco			
4	3	2	1
<b>2. ¿Has visitado o vivido en lugares como los que se relatan en el cuento?</b>			
Sí ..... No			
4	3	2	1
<b>3. ¿Crees que podría suceder este cuento en este año?</b>			
Sí ..... No			
4	3	2	1
<b>4. ¿Qué tan cerca a tu edad crees que el personaje principal está?</b>			
Muy cercano ..... Nada cercano			
4	3	2	1
<b>5. ¿Hay personajes en el cuento que son:</b>			
<b>niños (para niños ) o niñas (para niñas)?</b>			
Sí ..... No			
4	3	2	1
<b>6. ¿Crees que los personajes en este cuento hablan como tú y tu familia?</b>			
Sí ..... No			
4	3	2	1
<b>7. ¿Con qué frecuencia lees cuentos como éste?</b>			
Con mucha frecuencia ..... Nunca			
4	3	2	1
<b>8. ¿Alguna vez has tenido una experiencia como la que se cuenta en este libro?</b>			
Sí ..... No			
4	3	2	1

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## Middle/Secondary Grades

- A 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher planned a semester in which students would explore the common topic of coming of age through literature. Instead of sticking to classics like *Catcher in the Rye*, she included texts that helped students to see the important role of culture in individuals' coming of age experiences. When planning, the teacher took note of all the various cultures represented in her classroom. Most students were Dominican, but others were from Mexico, Central America, the West Indies, and Pakistan. Some students were recent immigrants while others' families had been in the United States for generations. The teacher found texts that told coming of age stories through the lens of each of her students' cultures, as well as others—from poetry to music to full-length novels. Throughout the unit, students read about, discussed, debated, compared and contrasted the influence of culture on the coming of age experience. The semester culminated with students writing papers and giving presentations to the class about their own culture's influence on their adolescence and coming of age process.

### Some texts used in the Multicultural Coming of Age Unit:



Novel: *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind* – Suzanne Fisher Staples (Pakistan)

Poem: “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid (Caribbean; Antigua)

Novel: *The Secret Life of Sonia Rodriguez* – Alan Lawrence Sitomer (United States; Mexico)

Anthology: *Coming of Age Around the World: A Multicultural Anthology* – ed. Faith Adiele and Mary Frosch (various countries)

Short Stories: *Drown* – Junot Diaz (United States; Dominican Republic)

## A Multilingual Learning Environment

### Essential Questions

- *How can we create a classroom and school environment that celebrates students' home languages and cultures?*
- *How can we raise ALL students' awareness of the different languages and scripts in their communities?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

#### **Language: Knowledge of Language: Standard 3**

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

*When you create a classroom or school landscape that reflects students' diverse linguistic backgrounds, you can discuss how languages function in different contexts.*

### What is it?

It's important to create classroom and school environments that represent, respect, and value all of your students – including your bilingual students. Setting up your learning environment to include students' home languages side-by-side with English recognizes the linguistic diversity they bring to school, and helps *all* students become more aware of what languages and scripts co-exist with English in their communities.

### Translanguaging How-To

#### 1. **Think: What parts of my classroom environment could I make multilingual?**

Consider how you can make your bilingual students' languages visible in the classroom, in a way that is manageable for you. You might think about:

- **Oral English:** When do I use English orally for community building, or for the nuts and bolts of running the classroom? Would it be possible to use home language signals, transitions, songs, or greetings in addition to or instead of English?
- **Written English:** Where do I have English written in the classroom? Of those places, where would it make sense to create multilingual labels or displays?

#### **Some ways to make the classroom environment multilingual:**

- **Greetings**  
Have bilingual students teach their classmates a greeting in their home language, practicing over several days until the class is able to use these multilingual greetings when entering the classroom.
- **Songs**  
If you use music during instruction (to transition from one activity to another, during a morning routine, to connect to a content topic, at the end of the day, etc.) you can incorporate songs that have multilingual versions. You can also substitute some of your English songs with home language songs that aren't translated in English. Have your bilingual students help the class learn the home language version of whatever songs you choose.
- **Transitions**  
Think about the signals you use with students to transition between activities. Do you use some sort of verbal signal? If so, talk with your bilingual students to see if they can help you say something similar in their home language, or use Google Translate (see sidebar).
- **Table names**  
Many classrooms give names to each table or group. These names can be multilingual, and bilingual students can be a part of the process of teaching their classmates how to say the table name in their home language. This is a good community building activity at the beginning of the year.
- **Rules and Routines charts**  
Many teachers display charts outlining class rules, or explaining step-by-step

routines. You can easily translate these by typing the text into Google Translate, and copying the translation into a document. Enlarge the text, print it out, and you can post the home language translation along with the English.

- **Labels**

You can label things in the classroom in English as well as your students' home languages. Write each language in a different color to help distinguish them. If your bilingual students are literate in their home language, they can help write the translation on the labels. You can create multilingual labels for:

- Classroom library book baskets
- Common things in the classroom (elementary grades)
- Supplies
- Math manipulatives

**2. Start a school-wide initiative to have the school environment represent students' languages**

Start a conversation with teachers and administrators about how the school landscape can make bilingual students' languages visible to the school community, and build all students' awareness of the languages their classmates speak.

**Some ways to make the school environment multilingual:**

- **Display signs translated into all students' languages**

Bilingual members of the school community can help with this, or you can use a website like Google Translate. You can also enlist the help of EBLs literate in their home languages to create these multilingual signs.

- **Morning Announcements**

You can include morning announcement greetings in different languages, highlighting certain ones each day on a rotating basis. Also, think about what important topic you share with the school during the announcements. You can have bilingual students come down to the office to share over the intercom how to say that topic in their home language.

- **School staff using multilingual greetings**

Have the principal, assistant principal, and other staff learn greetings in the different languages represented at the school, and use them to greet *any* student (explaining which language it is).

**Resources**

**Google Translate**

You can use Google Translate to help create a multilingual environment. If you need to *hear* what the translation sounds like (to help you say those words as part of a class greeting, as part of a song, or as a transition signal), you can click on the sound icon below the translation box. The quality of the audio translation is very good, and you can listen as many times as you need to.

You can also use the App **Jibbig**, which is a speech-to-speech voice translator between English and 9 other languages. When you say something in English, it says aloud the translation in the other language. You can make it interactive by having students say something in response in the home language, and hear it translated into English.

**Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

**Elementary Grades**

- As part of a morning routine, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher used interactive writing to have her students help her write different labels for important things in the classroom. Each day they created several new labels for the classroom. For each word, the teacher orally asked her Spanish-speaking and Arabic-speaking EBLs if they knew what the word was in their home language. Often they were able to provide a translation. Some things they didn't know how to express, so the teacher looked those words up on Google Translate. Using the translations she saw on the website, she wrote the words in Spanish. For Arabic, she printed out the script, since she didn't feel comfortable replicating that herself. Seeing the words side-by-side on the labels, the teacher was able to help students see similarities and differences between the languages. With Spanish, students were able to see that many sounds are represented with the same letters in English and Spanish. With Arabic, students were able to see how the script reads from right to left. This raised awareness for all students about how different languages work.

### **Getting Families to Help**

**Songs:** If you're not sure where to start, reach out to your EBLs' families to ask them what songs in their home language would be appropriate for your students' age group. They can give you song titles, or may have CDs of children's music in their home language. You can invite them into the classroom to help teach students a particular song as well. In teaching the home language song, you can help students make connections to what those words mean in English, if you translate the song lyrics ahead of time using a website like Google Translate.

**Labeling:** In elementary classrooms, you can invite an EBL's family member to come in to help students label the classroom. As the class labels different things in the room in English, the family member can teach students what those words are in their home language, and write them on labels. If there are multiple home languages in your classroom, try to get a family member to represent each language. This is a wonderful beginning of the year activity, and helps build home-school connections.

### **Bilingual Students as Experts**

To help the class practice the new multilingual aspect of the routine, enlist the expert knowledge of your bilingual students. They can be the ones to teach their language to the class, and help the class practice saying (and possibly reading) the words. For languages that use other scripts, like Arabic or Korean, this is a fantastic opportunity for other students to see how those scripts work (Arabic reads right to left; Korean has characters that represent ideas, etc.).

- In a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team, all of the teachers labeled the students' tables with the names of the continents, since this was the focus of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade social studies curriculum. One French/English bilingual teacher decided to make those table names multilingual, writing the continent name in English as well as French. To refer to the table names, the teacher often said them in either language.
- At a K-5 elementary school with a bilingual program and an ESL program, the principal decided to learn several different ways to greet his Spanish-speaking students and their families, since they were a large presence in the school. He made an effort to greet families and students at drop-off time each morning, and he always did it in Spanish. Families appreciated this effort, and he asked the students to teach him more phrases to use. Teaching the principal their own language put students in the important position of being the expert.

### **Middle/Secondary Grades**

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade Living Environment teacher realized that her labs would be easier for EBLs if the lab itself were more multilingual. She took her students into the lab, where she had already labeled the important equipment, tools, and areas. Students then traveled around the room, noting which words they knew the home language translations for and which they did not. For those words that students knew, the teacher had them add their translations beneath the English word on the label. For the words that students did not know, the class looked up translations on Google Translate and either copied them onto the label or, if the word was in a different script, printed it out and taped it to the existing label.
- A grade level team of teachers who taught 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade EBLs decided to learn new ways of complimenting their French and Fulani-speaking students on their work. The math teacher started this learning by asking students to brainstorm various ways of giving academic compliments in their home languages (i.e.: Good job, Nice work, Well done, etc.). After recording these phrases in the home languages, and learning how to say each one, the math teacher shared the phrases with the other teachers on the team. Each teacher created a display that showed the various ways (both written and phonetically) that both teachers and students could use to compliment one another on a job well done. The teachers used these new phrases orally in class, and also when commenting on students' work.
- A middle school administration decided to re-work their Parent-Teacher Conferences to make them more inviting for parents and students. One way they decided to do so was to decorate the school with displays that illustrated student learning in different languages. The administration asked teachers and students to design hallway bulletin boards that were multilingual and illustrated work within different content areas. With the help of students, bilingual staff members, and Google Translate, teachers and administrators were able to invite parents into the academic conversation by showing them what their children were doing in their classes in their home languages.

## Language Portfolio

### Essential Questions

- *How can we create a classroom and school environment that celebrates students' home languages and cultures?*
- *How can we raise ALL students' awareness of the different languages and scripts in their communities?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

A language portfolio is a way for students to demonstrate their ability to use different languages to meet the [standards in ELA, math, science, and social studies](#).

### What is it?

A language portfolio is a way for students to record and celebrate their language learning and cultural experiences over time. It has been developed in Europe over the past ten years, with each country creating its own versions, accredited by the Council of Europe. The language portfolio includes several different sections, and is something that students keep with them as they progress through the grades. There are also adult versions that graduating students can use as a way to officially demonstrate their competency in different languages as well as their multicultural awareness. The three components of the language portfolio are a:

#### ○ Language Biography

This is a place for students to describe their **experiences in different languages** and **with different cultures**. ANY student could create a language biography – even if they currently only know one language – because it is a place where they can record their **language learning goals** as well as their current language abilities. It is also a place where all students can record their intercultural understandings. See “Ideas for Implementation” for examples of what the language biography can look like at different grade levels.

#### ○ Language Passport

This includes different types of rubrics and charts for students to record and describe their competencies in different languages: what they know and can do in each language. See “Ideas for Implementation” for examples of what the language passport can look like at different grade levels.

#### ○ Language Dossier

This is a place for students to compile examples of their work in different languages, celebrating their linguistic accomplishments. While this is most powerful for emergent bilinguals to showcase their multilingual abilities, students who only speak one language can also include examples of their work in that language. They can set future goals for what language(s) they would like to begin learning. See “Ideas for Implementation” for examples of what the Dossier can look like at different grade levels.

Different European countries have developed their own Language Portfolio templates for teachers to download and use with students. Below are two examples from English-speaking countries that you can refer to: one for elementary grades from the United Kingdom, and one for middle & secondary grades from Ireland. You may want to use some of the pages “as is” from these portfolios, or you can use them as a basis for developing your own language portfolio. This is an excellent school-wide initiative, so that all students in the school use the same language portfolio, which can travel with them from grade to grade. Each year, they can record how their proficiency in each language is developing, how their cultural understandings are developing, and add new examples of their work in each language.

- **Example of an Elementary Grade Language Portfolio from the United Kingdom:**

[http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/resources/assessment\\_and\\_recording/european\\_language\\_portfolio.aspx](http://www.primarylanguages.org.uk/resources/assessment_and_recording/european_language_portfolio.aspx)

- **Example of a Middle & Secondary Level Language Portfolio from Ireland**  
[http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Curriculum/inclusion/Pp\\_ELP.pdf](http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Curriculum/inclusion/Pp_ELP.pdf)

## Translanguaging How-To

### 1. Decide which programs could incorporate a language portfolio

- **Elementary Grades**

Since *all* students benefit from creating a language portfolio, even if they currently only speak one language, you can consider incorporating a language portfolio in all general education, bilingual, and ESL classrooms. A language portfolio fits in naturally with literacy instruction as students record their developing ability to read, write, speak, and listen in each of their languages. The components where students record new cultural understandings could be a part of literacy or social studies instruction.

- **Middle/Secondary Grades**

Since *all* students benefit from creating a language portfolio, even if they currently only speak one language, you can consider incorporating a language portfolio in all ELA, NLA, and ESL classes. Having students across programs use the same portfolio sends a powerful message about the importance of developing proficiency in multiple languages and developing an understanding of other cultures.

### 2. Identify times when students will fill in the language portfolio

We often begin the school year with grand plans for what we will implement, and as the months go by we begin to let go of things due to time constraints. To make a language portfolio manageable, and to ensure its success from September to June, identify when students will update each component of the portfolio. You could introduce the language portfolio during the first days of school as an excellent “getting to know you” activity, and to build your class community. This gives you a September baseline for the language portfolio. Then, you could have students update the portfolio at each marking period. If you teach in trimesters, then students would update the portfolio in November, March, and June. If you have six marking periods divided between two semesters, you may want to have students update the portfolio at the conclusion of each semester.

Another option is to add to it when a major piece of writing or a major content-area project is completed. Students could include some of their work from that unit as examples for their language portfolio. If you already have portfolios where you keep student work and reflections, the language portfolio could be one component of your existing portfolio.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- **Language Biography – Sample Pages**

**Figure 1** shows a page where students write down their current language use, and future goals for language learning and traveling.

### Bilingual Students

Keep in mind that there are many students in general education classes who speak other languages at home. Their bilingualism (or multilingualism) is rarely acknowledged or celebrated. Having all students in general education classes keep a language portfolio recognizes these bilingual students’ linguistic repertoire, and positions it as a strength to the rest of the class.



**Figure 1**



**Learning a Foreign Language**

As students reach middle school and secondary school grades, many of them begin to learn a foreign language. English speakers may not realize that this makes them bilingual (even if they are in the early stages of learning another language). Keeping a language portfolio helps these students become more aware of their bilingualism, and helps them keep track of their progress in the new language.

**I can understand and speak in several languages – I am plurilingual.  
The languages are**

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**I watch TV programmes, films or see magazines or books in the  
language/s**

sometimes  often

**I have made these contacts, e.g. penfriend, e-mail or visited these countries**

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**I have friends or family who come from these countries and speak these  
languages**

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**In the future I would like to go to**

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**and I would like to learn these languages**

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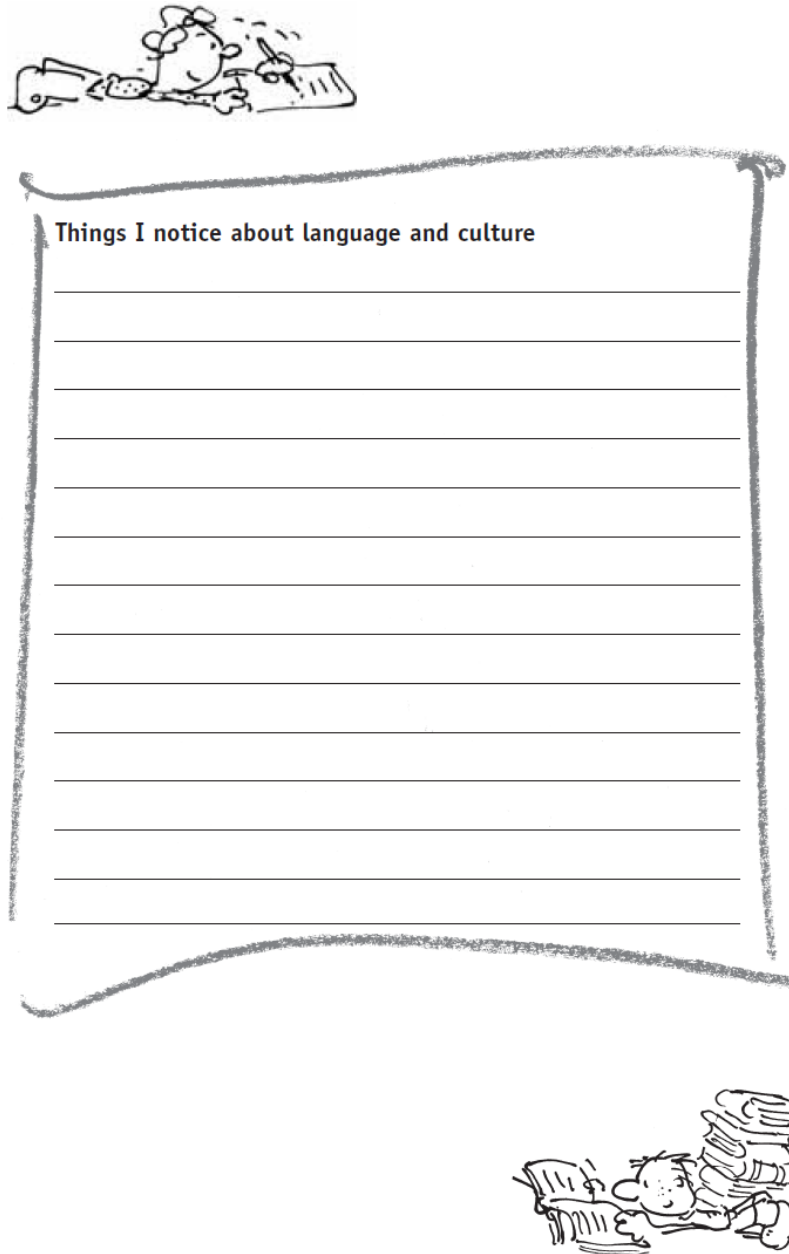
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**Figure 2** is a page where students reflect on what they have noticed about language and culture. This is a great way for ALL students – bilingual students and students who only speak English – to think about their experiences with language and culture in their communities and other places they have visited.

Figure 2

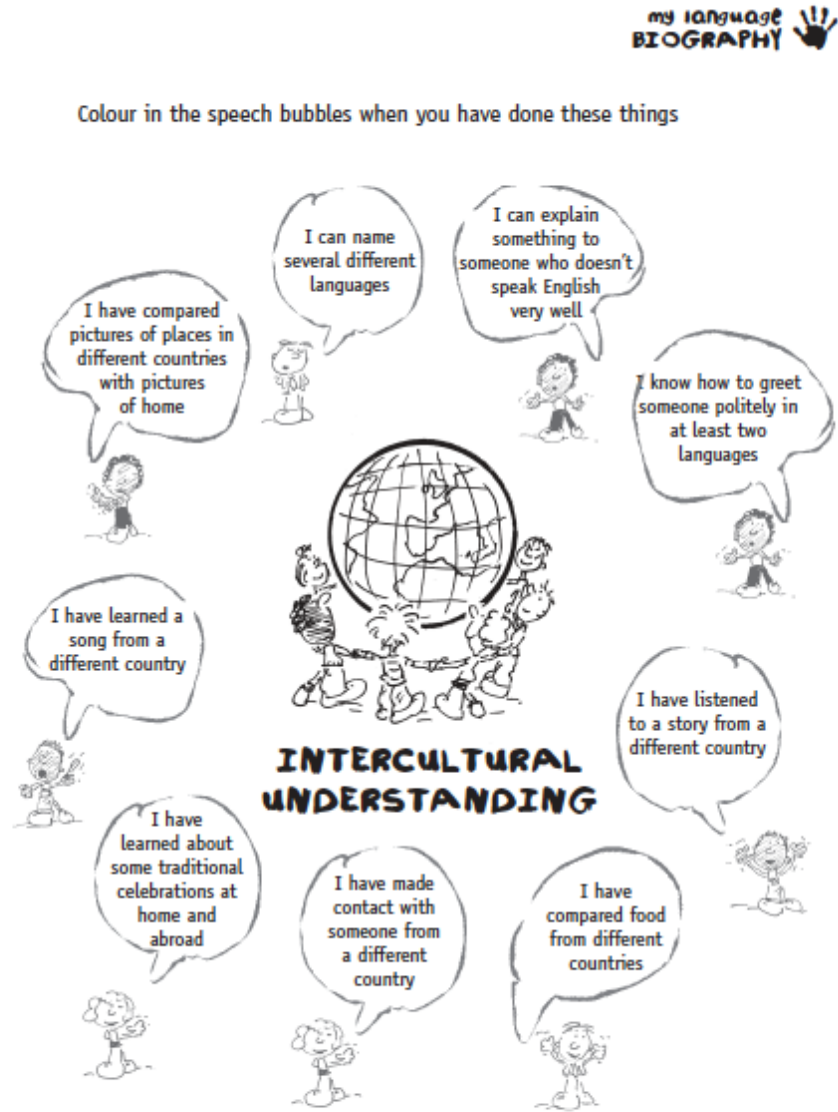


The form consists of a large rectangular box with a decorative, hand-drawn border. At the top left of the box is the heading "Things I notice about language and culture". Below the heading are ten horizontal lines for writing. Above the box is a cartoon illustration of a student with glasses writing on a notepad. Below the box is a cartoon illustration of a student reading a book.



**Figure 3** has bubbles for students to color in when they have attained certain intercultural understandings. For example, some of the bubbles state, “I can name several different languages,” and, “I have listened to a story from a different country.”

Figure 3



### Making the portfolio culturally relevant

If you decide to implement this strategy in your classroom or as a whole school, you will inevitably hear comments like, “but I don’t speak another language!” or “I only speak English!” For students who only speak English, it might be difficult to see the point of this kind of language portfolio. However, since this portfolio is meant to help *all* students be more linguistically and culturally aware, you need to inform these students that they are, in fact, speakers of many different *Englishes*!

Students are not used to thinking about language as a nuanced, multi-modal, and ever-changing thing. We can show students that what they think of as “speaking English” is actually speaking different forms of a language. For many students, especially those in rural or urban areas, learning “school English” (or Standard English) is very much like learning a new language—it looks, sounds, and works differently than other Englishes they speak. Making these differences transparent, and honoring students’ various Englishes (informed by their cultural and regional backgrounds, their family history, etc.) is crucial if we are to foster a truly multicultural and multilingual environment. You can have your students fill out language portfolios for the many different Englishes they speak, focusing on when, where, and why they use each one and how using different forms of English makes them more culturally and linguistically aware.

For more on multiple Englishes, you can look at the work of:

- Lisa Delpit
- Braj Kachru
- Shondel Nero
- John Rickford
- Geneva Smitherman
- Water Wolfram

### Language Passport – Sample Pages

**Figure 4** is the first page of the language passport from this example from the United Kingdom. Students record the language(s) they are learning at school and the language(s) they speak at home. ANY student can create a language passport, even if they currently only speak one language.

Portfolio Complet des Langues: modèle accrédité N° 10.2006  
European Language Portfolio: accredited model No. 10.2006  
Accrédité & homologué par CCLT, the National Centre for Languages

my language  
PASSPORT

# MY LANGUAGE PASSPORT

This document is a record of:

- 1 My progress in learning languages
- 2 My intercultural experiences and contacts

*When I move to a new class or school, I can use my Language Passport to show what I have done and the levels I have reached.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

My languages


At school I am learning \_\_\_\_\_

At home I speak \_\_\_\_\_

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**Figure 5** is a checklist where students can monitor their progress in each language in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There is also a space for the teacher to make comments.

Figure 5

my language  
PASSPORT 

## BETTER AND BETTER!

**My progress: Summary chart**

Start at the bottom of the Ladder and tick the boxes when you reach the levels (refer to descriptions on the following pages).


Language	Listening	Speaking and talking to someone	Reading	Writing	Teacher's comments
	<input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 <input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 START HERE	<input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 <input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 START HERE	<input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 <input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 START HERE	<input type="checkbox"/> B1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 <input type="checkbox"/> A2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 <input type="checkbox"/> A1 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1 START HERE	


**Figure 6** shows an example of the type of assessment rubrics included in this particular Language Passport, based on the language proficiency levels developed by the Council of Europe. You can alter the rubrics to reflect the language proficiency levels and standards used in your school.

Figure 6

## READING

Tick when you can do these things.

Breakthrough		
<b>A1</b>	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Grade 1</b>	I can recognise and read out a few familiar words and phrases e.g. from stories and rhymes, labels on familiar objects, the date, the weather ...	
<b>Grade 2</b>	I can understand familiar written phrases e.g. simple phrases, weather phrases, simple description of objects, someone writing about their pet ...	
<b>Grade 3</b>	I can understand the main point(s) from a short written passage in clear printed script e.g. very simple messages on a postcard or in an e-mail ...	

Preliminary		
<b>A2</b>	I can read very short, simple texts and find information I need in longer texts such as simple messages, stories or Internet texts	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Grade 4</b>	I can understand the main points and some of the detail from a short written passage e.g. three to four sentences of information about my e-pal; a description of someone's school day ...	
<b>Grade 5</b>	I can understand the main points and simple opinions (e.g. likes and dislikes) of a longer written passage e.g. a postcard or letter from a penpal; a written account of school life, a poem or part of a story ...	
<b>Grade 6</b>	I can understand longer passages and distinguish present and past or future events e.g. a short story; a description of someone's day; a letter in which someone describes a person or place, an excursion	

**Figure 7** is a three-column chart where students record and describe different contacts or experiences they've had with other cultures. While this chart is designed for experiences with other countries, you could create the same chart for intercultural contacts and experiences students have in their *own communities*. This is a great way for students to explore the cultural richness of their own area, as well as experiences they've had in other places. For more on this idea, see *Environment: Community Study*.

Figure 7

## MY CONTACTS AND INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCES



List the main experiences and contacts you've had with people or places abroad, e.g. e-mails, postcards, letters, meeting with people, excursions, video exchanges, holidays.

Contact or experience	Details	When?

- **Language Dossier – Sample Page**

**Figure 8** shows a cover page for the Language Dossier. It details what type of work students can include as a way to demonstrate their abilities with language and their understanding of other cultures. Any student can create a language dossier -- they simply include work for whatever language(s) they speak, and what experiences they have had with other cultures.

Figure 8



The dossier is your own personal property

- Choose what goes into your dossier.
- Put pieces of work into your dossier to show what you can do in languages.
- Show examples of your contacts and experiences of other languages and cultures.
- Put in things which you'd like to show to others.
- Replace things whenever you like.

## Middle/Secondary Grades

- **Language Biography – Sample Pages**

**Figure 9** is a page where students reflect on their different experiences with language and culture. This example is set up for students to reflect on experiences they've had with other countries, but it could easily be adapted to include linguistic and cultural experiences students have had within their own community. This is a great way for ALL students – emergent bilinguals and students who only speak English – to reflect on cultural similarities and differences in their communities and in other places they've been.

Figure 9

**My language and intercultural experiences**  
The new and interesting things I noticed when travelling or staying in other countries.

Country:	Date From:	Staying with friends or family (✓)	Travel (✓)	Study (✓)
Language:	To:			
Cultural differences I noticed:				
Cultural similarities with my own country:				
















Country:	Date From:	Staying with friends or family (✓)	Travel (✓)	Study (✓)
Language:	To:			
Cultural differences I noticed:				
Cultural similarities with my own country:				

Country:	Date From:	Staying with friends or family (✓)	Travel (✓)	Study (✓)
Language:	To:			
Cultural differences I noticed:				
Cultural similarities with my own country:				

**Figure 10** shows an example of the type of chart included in the language biography for each subject area; this one is for mathematics. The charts give students a place to reflect on their experiences with languages in each subject area.

Figure 10

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>					
<i>Level</i>	<i>Skill</i>		<i>*</i>	<i>**</i>	<i>***</i>
			<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>A1</b>		I can understand numbers and important mathematical words			
		I can recognise numbers and symbols in simple problems in my textbook			
		I can use numbers and some key words			
		I can say important mathematical words and numbers			
		I can use numbers and symbols to do simple examples in my textbook			
<b>A2</b>		I can understand explanations of simple mathematical problems			
		I can follow simple problems in my textbook			
		I can work with my friends to solve simple problems and ask for help if I don't understand			
		I can use the mathematical words I know to explain a simple problem			
		I can work through some short problems in my textbook and write down important new words			
<b>B1</b>		I can understand most explanations in maths class			
		I can read and understand most problems in my textbook			
		I can discuss mathematical problems and processes.			
		I can give a clear explanation of a mathematical problem			
		I can write a clear explanation of a mathematical process and note useful words and expressions			























- **Language Passport – Sample Pages**

**Figure 11** is a chart where students self-assess their linguistic abilities in each of their languages.

Figure 11

**My proficiency in languages other than English**

		Self-assessment of proficiency						
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	
Language:	Listening 							
	Reading 							
	Date:	Spoken interaction 						
		Spoken production 						
		Writing 						
Language:	Listening 							
	Reading 							
	Date:	Spoken interaction 						
		Spoken production 						
		Writing 						
Language:	Listening 							
	Reading 							
	Date:	Spoken interaction 						
		Spoken production 						
		Writing 						
Language:	Listening 							
	Reading 							
	Date:	Spoken interaction 						
		Spoken production 						
		Writing 						

They use the rubric in **Figure 12** to determine what level of proficiency they have in each area. This rubric is based on the language proficiency levels developed by the Council of Europe. You can alter this rubric to reflect the language proficiency levels and standards used in your school.

Figure 12

		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
<b>U N D E R S T A N D I N G</b>	<b>Listening</b>	I can understand familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of other standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	<b>Reading</b>	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or professional language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.	I can read articles and reports connected with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, recognizing distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
<b>S P E A K I N G</b>	<b>Spoken Interaction</b>	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in areas where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussions on familiar subjects, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and make my contribution to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can formulate and structure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	<b>Spoken Production</b>	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or describe the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-points, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smooth-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
<b>W R I T I N G</b>	<b>Writing</b>	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, pointing out information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view on some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, understanding what is considered to be the salient issues. I can select a style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smooth-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

Self-assessment grid of the Common European Framework of Reference © Council of Europe

**Figure 13** shows a chart where students record qualifications or certificates they have attained in different languages. This is particularly important for college and career readiness. All students benefit from recording their achievements in other languages, whether they are EBLs learning English, bilingual students attaining high levels of literacy and proficiency in their home language through NLA coursework, or English speakers who attain a certain level of proficiency in a foreign language, such as through AP coursework.

Figure 13

**Learning languages**  
My list of qualifications and certificates

Where possible, the levels of qualifications should be indicated in relation to the levels A1 – C2 of the global scale of the Council of Europe (Common European Framework). See also self-assessment grid p. 6

Language	Name of qualification or certificate with awarding body	Date	Level

- **Language Dossier – Sample Pages**

In addition to examples of coursework, this dossier asks students to include word lists for different subjects (**Figure 14**). These word lists could be in English and students' other languages.

Figure 14

## Dossier

This dossier contains:

- Examples of my work,
- Word lists for different subjects
- Notes to remind me about language use
- 
- 
- 
- 

### Organising the Dossier

It is important to organise the Dossier so that different parts can be accessed for support in class, for revision and so on. It is a good idea to put dividers between the sections.

The Dossier may be organised by topic, school subject (English, History etc.) or category (vocabulary, examples of text etc.).

**Figure 15** provides students with examples of graphic organizers they can use to create word lists for each subject area.

Figure 15

### Ways of recording vocabulary and information

Example 1: A vocabulary tree



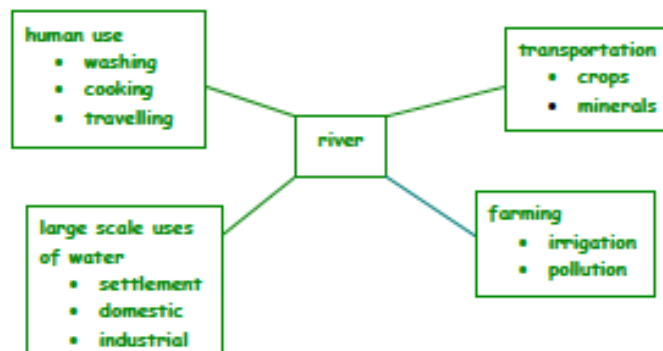
Example 2: An information grid

Topic	Main points	Important vocabulary	Page(s) in text book
Rivers	3 stages etc.	valley ox-bow meander etc.	15-20

Example 3: Definitions and examples

<i>meander</i>	<i>to meander: A river meanders when it is old</i> <i>a meander: a bend in a road or river</i>
----------------	---

Example 4: Categorising information and vocabulary



## Community Study

### Essential Questions

- *How can we create a classroom and school environment that celebrates students' home languages and cultures?*
- *How can we raise ALL students' awareness of the different languages and scripts in their communities?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

#### Language: Knowledge of Language: Standard 3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

*Doing a Community Study helps bilingual students and English speakers analyze the function of different languages in different community contexts.*

### What is it?

A community study is a way for *all* students – bilingual and English speakers – to investigate what languages and scripts are visible in their community. Students can do this in a number of ways. They can:

- Take pictures of signs in languages other than English
- Collect newspapers in languages other than English
- Listen for people speaking in languages other than English
- See how languages other than English are used in community institutions, such as libraries or schools

When students share their findings with the class, you can use this as a springboard to start a grade-appropriate discussion of multilingualism in the community. You can then create a display in the classroom or school of the photographs or realia (newspapers, books, flyers, etc.) students bring in that show multilingualism in their neighborhood. The display should indicate what languages are shown in each image or object.

### Translanguaging How-To

1. Decide how to include a community study in your curriculum
  - Can you do this at the **beginning of the school year** as part of your “community building” activities?
  - Can you incorporate this into your **literacy instruction**? For example, by examining the languages and cultures present in literary or informational texts students are reading, and comparing it with a study of the languages and cultures in students’ community.
  - Can you incorporate this into your **social studies curriculum**?
    - As part of K, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade units on Neighborhood and Communities
    - As part of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade units on World Communities
      - How are those world communities a part of our NYC community?
    - As part of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade units on United States and Western Hemisphere history
      - How did explorers, colonists, and immigrants bring their languages and cultures to North and South America?
      - How can we see this now in our community? How have the languages and cultures in our community changed?
      - Are indigenous languages and cultures still a part of our local community?
    - As a part of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade units on The Changing Nature of the American People from WWII to the Present
    - As part of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global History units focused on:
      - Global Connections & Interactions
      - Migration
      - Cultural Diffusion
    - As part of 11<sup>th</sup> grade American History units focused on:
      - Immigration & Migration

- Citizenship & Civic Values
- Human Systems & Society (i.e.: population trends)

**2. Collect pictures of multilingual signs in your community**

Have students bring in photographs of signs that show languages other than English. Have a grade-level discussion, talking with students about:

- What languages are present?
- What is the message of the different signs?
- Why are those particular signs written in those languages?
- For different scripts, what do these languages look like, and how are they written (directionality)?

Students can look for multilingualism in different types of signs, including:

- Governmental institutions
- Commercial (chains and privately-owned)
- Religious institutions
- Private signs/announcements

**3. Collect multilingual newspapers in your community**

Have students look for newspapers written in other languages, and bring them into class. Facilitate a discussion about:

- What languages are the newspapers in?
- Where are they sold?
- Where are the newspapers printed?
- Why do people read home language newspapers in the United States?

**4. Listen to languages in your community**

Challenge students to pay close attention to what they hear as they go to different places in the community, and share their findings with the class around questions like:

- Are there languages other than English (LOTEs) being used?
- What languages are they?
- Where did you hear each language?

You can also have students interview people speaking LOTEs. Where do they come from? When and with whom do they use their home language?

**5. Look at community institutions**

Have students investigate different institutions in the neighborhood to see if languages other than English (LOTEs) are visible. For example:

- The library
  - Are there books in LOTEs?
  - What kind of books, and in what languages?
- The school
  - Are there programs to learn or use LOTEs?
  - Which languages, and at what levels?
  - Are there signs in LOTEs?
  - Do you hear people speaking LOTEs?

**6. Invite parents or community members as teachers of language and culture**

As part of this community study, you can have parents or other community members come into the classroom to teach students something about their language and/or culture. This empowers emergent bilinguals by validating the importance of

**Resources**

You can use **Google Translate** to help determine the meaning of the signs or newspapers students find in the community.

For listening to languages in the community, you can have students use the App **Jibbigo**, which is a speech-to-speech voice translator for 9 languages. Students can record a community member speaking in their home language, and use the App to hear (and see) a translation of what the person said. If students want to interview that person, they can also have the App translate what they say into the person's home language. This allows for back-and-forth conversations!

their home language, creates a strong home-school connection with EBLs' families, and helps all students develop their awareness and understanding of other languages and cultures.



### Learning How to Use Different Scripts

Depending on the languages present in your community, students may find examples of languages that use other scripts, such as Chinese or Russian. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to learn how those scripts work. You can help students interact with these scripts by discussing:

- What directionality do the scripts use?
- How is the language written?
- What do the characters represent, and how is that different from alphabetic languages?

You can have students practice writing something basic in the different scripts. This helps students experience what it's like to write using different symbols (characters; a different type of alphabet) or a different directionality (right to left; vertically).

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- At an elementary school in France, there were several students who spoke Arabic. The teacher invited the mother of one of these students to come to school and teach the class a few words in Arabic. The mother prepared how she would teach these Arabic words, and all of the students were excited by the challenge. The student whose mother came expressed how proud she was to see her classmates learning her language, and that her mother was the one teaching them. The mother expressed how fulfilling it was to be a part of the learning taking place at her daughter's school, even though she herself didn't have a high level of formal education. By teaching Arabic, she realized she had expert knowledge she could share with others.

This cultural and linguistic awareness project was documented in the French film "Tell Me How You Talk," with subtitles in English. To request the film: email: [christine.helot@alsace.iufm.fr](mailto:christine.helot@alsace.iufm.fr) or [andrea.young@alsace.iufm.fr](mailto:andrea.young@alsace.iufm.fr).

### Middle/Secondary Grades

- An 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher was teaching students about the voting system within a democracy. He timed the teaching of this unit to coincide with a local election going on in the community. Students were assigned a Community Study of how their own community puts democracy into action by voting. The teacher had students go out into the neighborhood on the day of the election and find the following:
  - Signs about voting in LOTEs
  - Flyers or informational pamphlets about the election in LOTEs
  - At least one person who spoke a LOTE that planned on voting in the election

Students took pictures of the signs and collected the pamphlets to bring back to the classroom. They also came up with several questions for the person who spoke a LOTE that they asked in either English or that person's LOTE (if the students spoke



**Bilingual Students as Experts**

To help the class determine the meaning of different signs and newspapers they found in the community, enlist the expert knowledge of your bilingual students. They can be the ones to teach their language to the class, and help the class practice saying (and possibly reading) the words.

it). Some of the questions they asked were:

- What languages do you speak?
- Where is your family from? Were you born here?
- When do you speak your LOTE? When do you speak English?
- Why are you voting today?

When students reported back to the class about their interviews, the teacher facilitated a discussion about how different people from different cultures all vote in a democracy, even if they vote for different reasons. This study was an eye-opener for students, as they saw both the democratic process in action and met multilingual people who participated in this democracy in their own communities.

## Multilingual Language Objectives

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design instruction that promotes translanguaging?*
- *How can we make space for students to utilize their multiple languages to negotiate academic content?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Language objectives help emergent bilinguals and English speakers develop the language they need to be successful with *all* of the [ELA and content-area standards](#).

Identifying language objectives *also* helps emergent bilinguals and English speakers meet the following anchor Language standards. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

*Each grade level has a list of specific grammatical features students should master. You can incorporate these as sentence-level and paragraph-level language objectives when students need to use those grammatical features in their speaking and writing.*

#### Language: Knowledge of Language: Standard 3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

*Beginning in Grade 2, the*

### What is it?

When you teach a unit of study, you plan your lessons around learning objectives. These learning objectives are subject-specific (reading objectives, writing objectives, math objectives, etc.) and they state what learning you expect your students to demonstrate.

When you teach bilingual students, it's imperative to also consider what *language* they will need to understand and use to be successful with those learning objectives. Often we're not even aware of the language demands of the curriculum because we're so proficient with the language ourselves. To focus more on language, you might ask yourself the following questions:

- Will students need to learn certain vocabulary words?
- Will students need to use a particular aspect of grammar, such as forming questions or using the past tense?
- Will students need to use certain signal words in their writing to transition from one paragraph to the next?
- What type of language will students need to learn to read or write in a particular genre?
- Is the Roman script new to these students?

For each of your learning objectives, you can include **Language Objectives** to specify exactly what language your students will need to understand and use (Freeman and Freeman, 2009; Celic, 2009). This language is authentically tied to the content you're teaching, and necessary for students to be successful with the learning activities. For example:

- You can't teach about human impact on the environment without teaching cause and effect signal words and the science vocabulary related to the topic.
- You can't teach a writing unit on persuasive essays without introducing the language and structure of the genre, teaching modal verbs like *should*, *could*, *must*, and teaching signal words to transition from one paragraph to the next (*one reason*, *another reason*, *additionally*, *as you can see*).
- You can't teach a math unit on comparing and ordering numbers without teaching comparative and superlative adjectives (*\_\_ is greater than \_\_; \_\_ is less than \_\_; \_\_ is the largest number/smallest number.*)
- You can't teach a reading unit on character analysis without teaching students a range of adjectives to describe character traits, and help them correctly use those adjectives within sentences.

Language objectives are necessary for bilingual students in every grade – what changes is the complexity of the language that students at each grade level will need to learn.

Language objectives also help English-proficient students develop language for academic use, so they are beneficial for all students.

Language objectives can be at different levels, as described by Freeman and Freeman (2009):

- **Text-level**  
To help EBLs understand the language and structure of a particular genre you expect them to read or write.

*expectations of this standard differ from grade to grade. Some of the expectations have to do with word-level language objectives, such as choosing words or phrases for effect. Others have to do with grammatical features at the sentence or paragraph level such as altering sentences from informal discourse to formal English, or varying syntax for effect.*

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 4**

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

*You can create word-level language objectives in both ELA and the content-areas to help students meet this standard.*

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 5**

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

*You can create word-level language objectives in both ELA and the content-areas to help students meet this standard.*

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6**

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

*You can create word-level language objectives in both ELA and the content-areas to help students meet this*

- **Paragraph-level**

To help EBLs create cohesion from one sentence to the next, or from one paragraph to the next when speaking and writing.

- **Sentence –level**

To help EBLs create grammatically correct and increasingly complex sentences when speaking and writing.

- **Word-level**

To help EBLs understand and use academic vocabulary.

Once you have identified your language objectives, you can weave language development into your regular learning activities. The Part 2 *Language Development* section of this guide has practical strategies you can incorporate into your current teaching.

**In a Bilingual Program:**

Since you teach in two languages, you should identify language objectives for both English and the other language. But, instead of having different language objectives for each language of instruction, you can create **parallel language objectives** in English and the other language. In other words, the aspects of language students develop in English can also be developed in the additional language. This helps students compare and contrast how the two languages use vocabulary, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and text structure. For example, if you identify certain vocabulary words for students to develop in English, they should also learn those words in the other language. If you are helping students use certain signal words in their writing, they should learn how to express those transitions in both languages. This helps EBLs develop deep levels of academic language in both English and the home language.

**In a General Education or ESL Program:**

Since you teach the curriculum in English, your language objectives will be in English. However, you can help your EBLs better understand and use the English language they're developing by making connections between English and their home languages. Many of the strategies in this guide will help you make those connections. For example, you can help EBLs translate English vocabulary to their home languages, identify cognates, and compare vocabulary use between the two languages. See *Vocabulary* strategies. With grammar, you can help EBLs compare and contrast English sentence, paragraph, and text structures with their home language. See *Syntax* strategies.

Taking the time to identify language objectives has a significant impact on the quality of instruction for bilingual students:

- **You help bilingual students meet learning objectives in each subject area**  
We often wonder why bilingual students aren't successful with the curriculum, and one of the main reasons has to do with language. We simply aren't aware of the language demands of our learning activities, so we don't make a space in our teaching to support the necessary language development. Once we recognize the different types of language our bilingual students will need to understand and use to be successful with a particular learning objective, then we can plan how to support them in learning that language.
- **You increase bilingual students' language development**  
All students need to develop language to read, write, and learn at grade-level. Helping bilingual students learn the language associated with each learning objective means they are learning language for academic purposes. This is beneficial for all students – not just for bilingual learners.

## Translanguaging How-To

### 1. Identify your learning objectives

What learning do you expect students to demonstrate? These learning objectives should align with the Common Core State Standards for literacy and math, and with State Standards for the other subject areas. Many schools have curricular maps that outline the learning objectives for teachers.

### 2. Think about what the language demands are

Take a close look at what you expect students to do to meet the learning objective to see what kind of language they will need to understand and use.

- **Text-level:** Will they need to read or write in a new genre? If so, you will need to familiarize your EBLs with the type of language that is used in that genre, and the way it is typically structured.
- **Paragraph-level:** Will your students be writing in paragraphs? If so, you may want to help them write more cohesive paragraphs, using certain types of signal words (transition words), or helping them elaborate on one sentence so that each sentence in the paragraph is connected.
- **Sentence-level:** Any time students speak or write they use a wide range of grammatical components to put together their sentences. But, for the type of work your students will be doing, are there certain key grammatical features they will need to understand or use? For example, they may need to use adjectives, form questions in the past tense, write a report in the present tense, etc.
- **Word-level:** This is more common for us to think about as teachers. What vocabulary will your students need to understand and use for this learning objective? Are any of these words cognates between English and EBLs' home languages?

### 3. Identify your language objectives

Once you have thought through these language demands of the curriculum, decide which types of language you plan to focus on with your EBLs. Keep in mind that you can't help them develop every aspect of language in one unit of study. Instead, choose the aspects you feel are most critical to their success with the curriculum.

### 4. Plan how you will target the language objectives in your instruction

One of the main benefits of identifying language objectives is that it gives you a focus for what language to develop with your EBLs during class time. Often we feel that there is *so much* they need to learn about the language that we try to tackle it all with them – all at once! By taking the time to identify language objectives, you give yourself a clear focus for what you want to work on with your EBLs. Then you can weave that language development into your instruction – either during whole-group activities, small-group, or one-on-one, depending on the needs of your students. See the Part 2 *Language Development* section for a sampling of strategies you can use to target your language objectives.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Level

### Elementary Grades

- This integrated unit of study from a 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL classroom is described in detail in the strategy *Integrated Instruction*. For the writing portion of this unit, the teacher identified two main language objectives:

### Differentiating Language Objectives

You may find that some bilingual students will need support with certain language objectives, while others will need help developing other language objectives you identified. That is fine! Every student is at a different place along the continua of bilingualism, with different proficiencies in each of their languages.

To determine each of your bilingual student's language needs in English, you can refer to resources that indicate what aspects of the language tend to develop at each stage of English proficiency (see below). This is a way to assess what language your students are currently using in their speaking and writing, and what they would be developmentally ready to work on.

#### Refer to:

Celic, Christina. 2009. *English Language Learners Day by Day, K-6: A Complete Guide to Literacy, Content-area, and Literacy Instruction*.

Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH

- Use the “**Language Structures Checklist**” to track whole-class use of different aspects of the English language.
- Use the “**What to Expect at Each Proficiency Level**” chart to track individual EBLs’ development of vocabulary, grammar, and overall writing and speaking ability.

- Understand and use vocabulary words related to the solar system.
- Use comparative (*bigger than, smaller than, closer than, etc.*) and superlative adjectives (*the biggest, the smallest, the closest, etc.*)

She knew that in order to understand the nonfiction science texts her students were reading, they would need to develop science vocabulary related to the topic. They would also need to use this science vocabulary when writing their feature articles. Then, the teacher looked more closely at the kind of language that was used in the science nonfiction texts, and that was used in different science features articles found in magazines like *National Geographic for Kids*, and *Time for Kids*. She noticed that the science texts used a lot of comparative and superlative adjectives to describe the science concepts. For example, planets were described as “bigger than...” or “the biggest.”

**To make these language objectives multilingual:** The teacher used Google Translate to help her EBLs see and hear the vocabulary words in Bengali and Spanish. She also used Google Translate to translate some sentences with comparative and superlative adjectives, and put those sentences side by side with the English to help her EBLs see how each language expresses that grammatical feature.

Below are the two examples of emergent bilinguals’ feature articles, shown also in the strategy *Integrated Instruction*. You can see how both emergent bilinguals used science vocabulary in their feature articles related to their solar system topic. They also both incorporated comparative or superlative adjectives. This was something the teacher worked on with all of her emergent bilinguals to help them include this language in their writing. Figure 1 is a boy from Bangladesh who had arrived two months prior with an early intermediate proficiency in English. Figure 2 is a girl from Colombia who had arrived six months prior as a complete newcomer with no English proficiency.

Figure 1

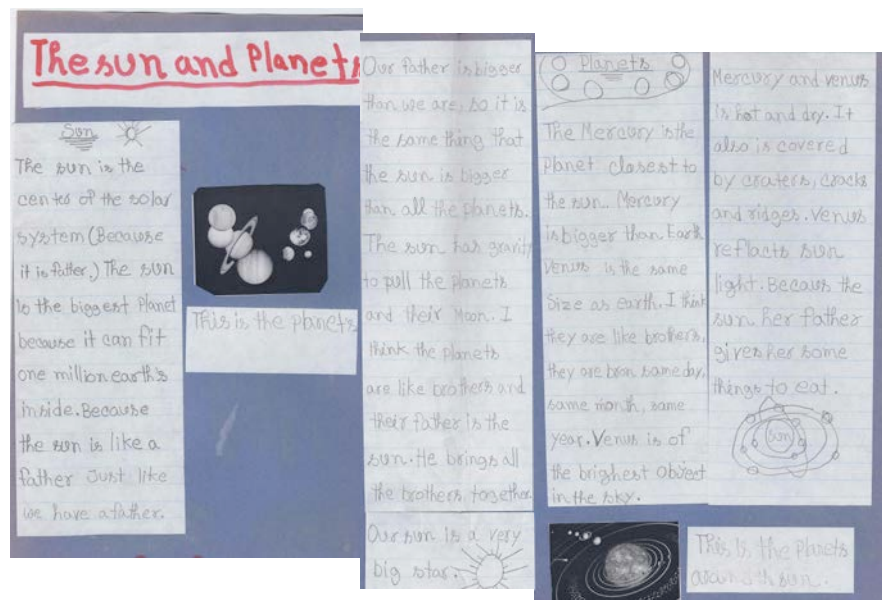




Figure 1 Text (as the student wrote it):

## The Sun and Planets

### Sun

The sun is the center of the solar system (Because it is father.) The sun is the biggest planet because it can fit one million earth's inside. Because the sun is like a father just like we have a father. Our father is bigger than we are, so it is the same thing that the sun is bigger than all the planets. The sun has gravity to pull the planets and their moon. I think the planets are like brother's and their father is the sun. He brings all the brothers together. Our sun is a very big star.

### Planets

The Mercury is the planet closest to the sun. Mercury is bigger than Earth. Venus is the same size as earth. I think they are like brothers, they are born same day, same month, same year. Venus is of the brightest object in the sky. Mercury and Venus is hot and dry. It also is covered by craters, cracks and ridges. Venus reflects sun light. Because the sun her father gives her some things to eat.

Captions:

This is the planet's.

This is the planets around the sun.

Figure 2

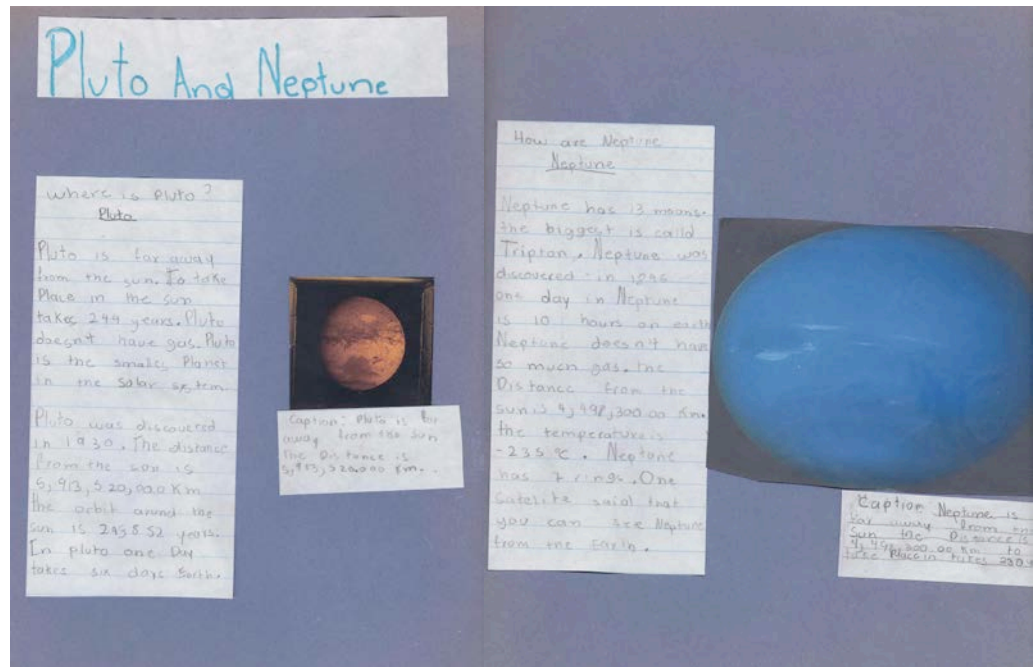


Figure 2 Text (as the student wrote it):

## Pluto and Neptune

### Where is Pluto?

#### Pluto

Pluto is far away from the sun. To take place in the sun takes 244 years. Pluto doesn't have gas. Pluto is the smallest planet in the solar system.

Pluto was discovered in 1930. The distance from the sun is 5,913,520,000 km. the orbit

### Resources

For more information on how to develop language objectives, and how to target them in your instruction, see:

- Freeman, Yvonne and David Freeman. 2009. *Academic Language for Struggling Readers and English Language Learners*. Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.
- Celic, Christina. 2009. *English Language*

*Learners Day by Day, K-6: A Complete Guide to Literacy, Content-Area, and Literacy Instruction.*  
Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.

around the sun is 24,852 years. In Pluto one day takes six days Earth.

### How are Neptune?

#### Neptune

Neptune has 13 moons. the biggest is calld Tripton. Neptune was discovered in 1896. one day in Neptune is 10 hours on earth. Neptune doesn't have so much gas. the distance from the sun is 4,498,300,000 km. the temperature is -235 C. Neptune has 7 rings. One satellite said that you can see Neptune from Earth.

#### Captions:

Pluto is far away from the sun. The distance is 5,913,520,000 km.

Neptune is far away from the sun. The distance is 4,498,300,000 km. To take place in takes 230 years.

### **Middle/Secondary Grades**

- An 11<sup>th</sup> grade Native Language Arts (NLA) class of Chinese speakers was reading a series of traditional Chinese landscape poetry. Though all students spoke Chinese at home, reading poetry in their home language was a new and challenging experience. The teacher knew that her students used poetic terms in their ELA class, so she talked with the 11<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher about how students discussed poetry in English. The NLA teacher aligned her target vocabulary with that of the ELA class, making sure they were appropriate to Chinese. Because students had already analyzed poetry in English, the analytical thinking was already in place. The teacher merely taught students the specific vocabulary of analysis in Chinese, enabling them to discuss the poems using their home language.
- Like the Elementary grade example above, this 9<sup>th</sup> grade integrated unit of study is described in detail in the strategy “Integrated Instruction.” Because this piece of writing was done in students’ English and Global Studies classes, both teachers identified language objectives that would cross their content areas. In order to identify the most important language objectives, the teachers looked at the literature they would read (fiction and non-fiction) as well as the final product they wanted students to produce (a formal report on how war affects people in different societies). The teachers noticed that similar vocabulary was used across the fiction and non-fiction texts about war. They also looked at the rubrics for both the ELA Regents and the Global Studies Regents and realized that organization was an important factor in students’ ability to earn higher grades on the essays in *both* subjects. They decided that understanding and using new vocabulary related to war and using transitions to aid in organization would help students build literacy in both English and in Global Studies, as well as help them prepare for high-stakes exams. Their language objectives became:
  - Understand and use **key vocabulary words** related to war
  - Use **transitions** to aid in organization in writing

Because the teachers taught in the same classroom, they used a shared Word Wall for war vocabulary that appeared in both English and Global texts. They had students create word cards that had the word in English and their home language, and also included a context-rich sentence illustrating the word’s meaning. The teachers taught similar strategies for understanding the meaning of new vocabulary (i.e.: using cognates, using context clues) in both of their classes to aid in transfer.

The teachers also relied on multilingual partnerships to aid in teaching organization and transition words in writing (See *Collaborative Work: Multilingual Reading*

*Partners & Multilingual Writing Partners*). In addition to the teachers modeling texts that successfully utilized transitions and explicitly teaching transition words in both Spanish and English, writing partners helped one another to edit their work for organization. Though the final report was written in English, students drafted, edited, discussed, and negotiated in Spanish. Some students even wrote an entire draft in Spanish and then translated it into English with the help of their partners. The resulting reports were much more focused and included a higher level of critical thinking.



## Integrated Instruction

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design instruction that promotes translanguaging?*
- *How can we make space for students to utilize their multiple languages to negotiate academic content?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Integrated instruction is a powerful way to organize your teaching because it helps students meet the following anchor standards in Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Language. It also helps students meet content-area standards in social studies, science, or math, depending on what areas you integrate in your unit of study. Refer to these standards to see specific grade-level expectations.

#### Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

*When you combine content-area studies with reading instruction, students are exposed to the content in multiple ways: by reading different texts on the topic, and by listening to or watching different forms of media.*

#### Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

*Through integrated instruction,*

### What is it?

Teaching tends to be a very segmented practice, with each subject area relegated to a separate instructional period. For emergent bilinguals, this disconnected structure can make it difficult to develop high levels of proficiency in content knowledge, language for academic purposes, and literacy abilities. Integrated instruction involves finding a meaningful way to develop language and literacy abilities and content learning over an extended period of time.

Integrated instruction has profound, research-based benefits for emergent bilinguals, especially when combined with translanguaging:

- **Deeper content-area knowledge**  
Learning about a topic through English *as well as the home language* over an extended period of time helps emergent bilinguals develop a deeper understanding of content. Depth of knowledge is strongly emphasized in the Common Core State Standards.
- **Increased development of language for academic purposes**  
Since learning is centered on a specific topic, there are multiple opportunities for emergent bilinguals to hear, read, speak, and write vocabulary within a meaningful context (Gibbons, 2002). If you provide ways for students to do some of this speaking, reading, and writing *in their home languages* as well as in English, they can better understand and use the new academic language in *all* of their languages.
- **Improved reading comprehension**  
By reading texts about a content-area topic *in the home language*, emergent bilinguals have more background knowledge to draw upon when reading other texts about that same topic in English. As emergent bilinguals gain more background knowledge, they can read and comprehend increasingly complex texts about the topic in English (Goldenberg, 2008). This scaffolds their English development and also develops home language literacy.
- **Improved writing ability**  
Through integrated instruction, emergent bilinguals have the language and content knowledge they need to be able to produce writing about the topic in English or the home language (Samway, 2006). The quality and quantity of their writing increases.

#### Bilingual Classrooms

Have the *same* integrated unit build from one day to the next during the English *and* the other language portions of the bilingual program. This allows translanguaging to occur at high levels – your emergent bilinguals will be able to transfer their content learning and language development from one language to the other, improving their understanding of the topic and their reading and writing ability in both languages.

#### General Education & ESL Classrooms

When you develop an integrated unit, think about ways you could provide for translanguaging.

- Could emergent bilinguals discuss the topic in their home language as well as English? (See *Collaborative Work* strategies)

students are naturally expected to read multiple texts about a theme or content-area topic, helping them meet this standard.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 7**

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

*Through integrated instruction, students are inquiring into a particular topic. If you set up essential questions for your integrated unit of study, then students can do either short-term or sustained research those questions.*

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 8**

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

*Since students are reading multiple texts about a topic and learning information from other media sources, integrated instruction naturally lends itself to having students combine this information when writing.*

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 2**

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6**

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

- Could emergent bilinguals read or listen to some texts about the topic in their home language to develop more background knowledge? (See *Resources* strategies)
- Could emergent bilinguals do some of their reading and writing work in the home language as well as English? (See *Content and Literacy Development* strategies)

**Translanguaging How-To**

1. **Examine your Standards-based Curricular Maps**

• **Elementary**

For each unit of study, consider how you could weave together a social studies, science, and/or math topic with your reading and writing work. Each month you can alternate the focus between social studies and science. In some cases, the social studies and science concepts are related (such as Native Americans and Ecosystems) so you can combine both content-areas with literacy instruction. You can make word study instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary) meaningful for emergent bilinguals by basing it on words students are learning through the unit.

For example, in October of the following 1<sup>st</sup> grade curricular calendar (Figure 1), a team of 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers decided to integrate the social studies unit on Families with reading and writing.

Figure 1

	Reading	Writing	Social Studies	Science	Math
Sept	Launch independent reading—readers build good habits	Launch independent writing—narratives	Families are important	Changes in weather and seasons (ongoing throughout the year)	Establishing routines: counting, number line, tallies, calendar, using a thermometer
Oct	Using print strategies to support conventional reading	Small moments: writing personal narratives	↓	Properties of matter: solids, liquids, and gases	Everyday use of numbers: number grids, clocks, money (pennies and nickels), number stories

For the reading unit of study, the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers had students read narratives related to families, and through these texts worked with students on the objective of using print strategies. In writing, they decided to have students write personal narratives about their families. In this way, students were developing understandings and vocabulary about families during a significant portion of the day for the month of October.

• **Middle/Secondary Grades**

Instruction at the middle and secondary levels can be highly integrated (planning a joint project, bringing readings from different content areas into the classroom) or less formally integrated (sharing common vocabulary words; referencing relevant information across content areas).

Because of the sometimes disconnected nature of middle and secondary education, teachers can begin the planning process by looking for ways to bring aspects of other content areas into their own classrooms. This aids in students’ ability to transfer information and language across their various content-area classes, enabling them to understand both language and content more fully.

*During an integrated unit of study, emergent bilinguals and English speakers have multiple opportunities to hear, speak, read, and write vocabulary words related to the topic. This develops both general academic and domain-specific vocabulary.*

### **Integrated Math, Science, and Language Units of Study: K-3**

Paso Partners has created integrated units of study combining math, science, and language for grade K-3 students – available for free on their website. These integrated units are specifically designed for emergent bilinguals, and the vocabulary developed through the units is presented in both English and Spanish.

[www.sedl.org/scimath/pasopartners/intro.html](http://www.sedl.org/scimath/pasopartners/intro.html)

#### **2. Determine a culminating product**

How will students demonstrate what they have learned from this integrated unit? Often this involves a published writing piece and/or an oral presentation, and connects with the writing unit of study. Decide how you want students to use English and their home language with this writing or oral presentation. (See *Instructional Foundations: Designing Units around Multilingual Culminating Products.*)

#### **3. Determine what texts students will read**

What will students read to develop knowledge and vocabulary around this content-area topic? This can connect with the reading unit of study you are working on. Decide how students can read in English and their home language to develop content knowledge and vocabulary. (See *Resources: Using Multilingual Texts.*)

#### **4. Identify language objectives**

Decide what language you want students to develop through this integrated unit. This can include vocabulary, grammar, and phonics/phonemic awareness. The language you expect students to develop will be your language objectives. (See *Instructional Foundations: Multilingual Language Objectives.*)

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

- A 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL teacher combined a science unit on the solar system with a reading unit of study on Nonfiction Texts and a writing unit of study on Feature Articles. The language objectives for this integrated unit were:
  - Understand and use vocabulary words related to the solar system.
  - Use comparative (*bigger than, smaller than, closer than, etc.*) and superlative adjectives (*the biggest, the smallest, the closest, etc.*)

During the integrated unit, students read a wide range of nonfiction texts about the solar system through read alouds, shared readings, guided reading, and independent reading. Some of these texts were in their home languages, and others were in English. Students also chose books on other nonfiction topics of interest for their independent reading. Emergent bilinguals discussed what they were learning in the texts with “turn and talk” partners and book clubs, using a combination of their home languages and English (*see Collaborative Work strategies*).

As a culminating product, students each wrote a feature article about what they were learning about the science topic. Their feature articles were mainly written in English, and shared with the school community. Emergent bilinguals used translanguaging when reading texts and discussing their learning to develop content knowledge and to understand new science vocabulary. They then used this knowledge and language to write in English. Below are two examples of emergent bilinguals’ feature articles. Figure 2 is a boy from Bangladesh who had arrived two months prior with an early intermediate proficiency in English. Figure 3 is a girl from Colombia who had arrived six months prior as a complete newcomer with no English proficiency.

Figure 2

**Planning Tip**

Not every unit you teach has to fully integrate literacy and language instruction with content instruction. But, the more integration you can create, the more your emergent bilinguals will benefit academically and linguistically. You may find that some units of study allow for full integration, while others have only some integration.

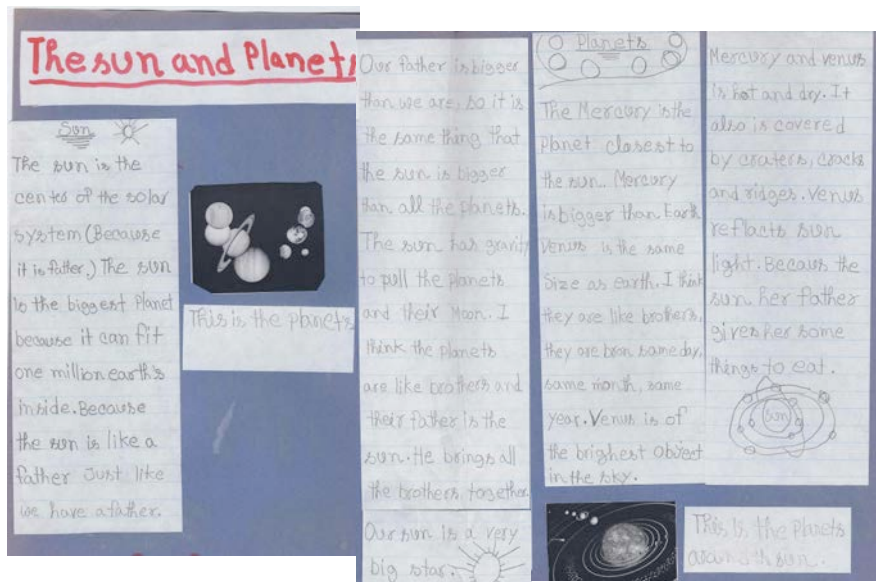


Figure 2 Text (as the student wrote it):

**The Sun and Planets**

Sun

The sun is the center of the solar system (Because it is father.) The sun is the biggest planet because it can fit one million earth's inside. Because the sun is like a father just like we have a father. Our father is bigger than we are, so it is the same thing that the sun is bigger than all the planets. The sun has gravity to pull the planets and their moon. I think the planets are like brother's and their father is the sun. He brings all the brothers together. Our sun is a very big star.

Planets

The Mercury is the planet closest to the sun. Mercury is bigger than Earth. Venus is the same size as earth. I think they are like brothers, they are bron same day, same month, same year. Venus is of the brightest object in the sky. Mercury and Venus is hot and dry. It also is covered by craters, cracks and ridges. Venus reflects sun light. Because the sun her father gives her some things to eat.

Captions:

This is the planet's.

This is the planets around the sun.



Figure 3

### Planning Tip

If your school doesn't have a curricular map for each grade, you can create your own year-long overview using a chart template similar to Figure 1. Map out what units you teach based on the curricula your school follows for each subject area.

If this isn't in place at your school, you may want to map out expectations with a grade-level team or department. This can also become the focus of a school-wide initiative to make sure that rigorous expectations are set for each grade level, aligned with the Common Core State Standards and New York State Standards.

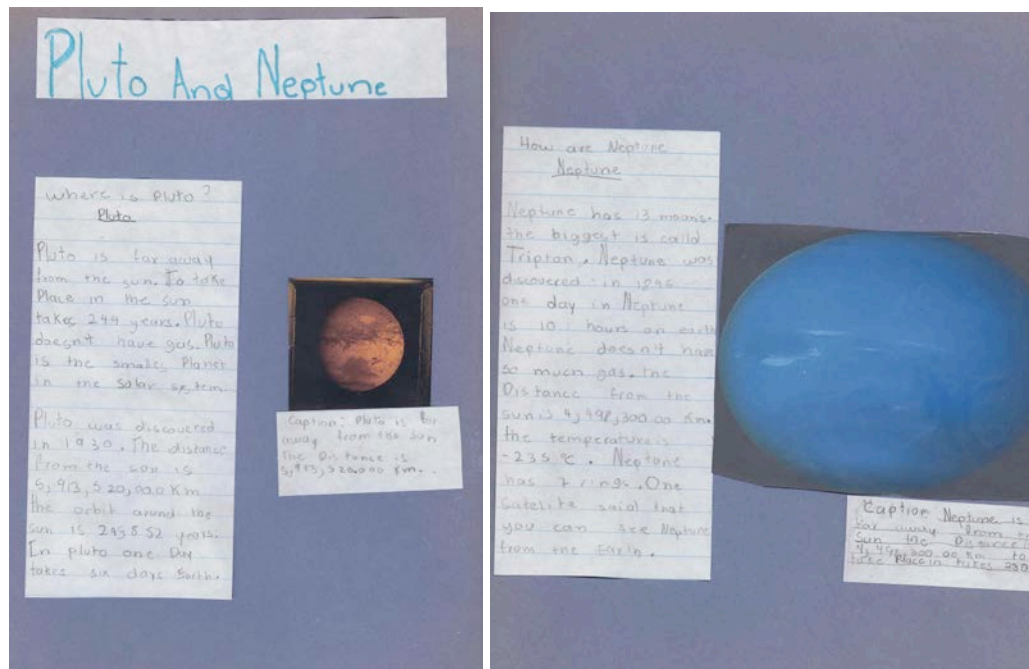


Figure 3 text (as the student wrote it):

### Pluto and Neptune

#### Where is Pluto?

##### Pluto

Pluto is far away from the sun. To take place in the sun takes 244 years. Pluto doesn't have gas. Pluto is the smallest planet in the solar system.

Pluto was discovered in 1930. The distance from the sun is 5,913,520,000 km. the orbit around the sun is 24,852 years. In Pluto one day takes six days Earth.

#### How are Neptune?

##### Neptune

Neptune has 13 moons. the biggest is called Triton. Neptune was discovered in 1846. one day in Neptune is 10 hours on earth. Neptune doesn't have so much gas. the distance from the sun is 4,498,300,000 km. the temperature is -235 C. Neptune has 7 rings. One satellite said that you can see Neptune from Earth.

#### Captions:

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### Middle/Secondary Grades

- A 7<sup>th</sup> grade Native Language Arts teacher was teaching a unit on contributions of Spanish speakers to various fields of academic study. Since most students were from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, the teacher mostly profiled contributors from those countries. Early on in the unit, she assigned her students a project that required them to research a Spanish speaker who has made a

contribution to an academic field of their choice. Throughout the unit, the teacher brought in articles from various Spanish-language newspapers and magazines, watched videos and listened to audio in both languages, and read interviews with and profiles of Spanish speakers who had made contributions to fields like the social sciences, biology, politics, and literature. Because the people profiled were from various fields of academics, students read texts about different content areas in their home language. This helped them build language across content areas in their home languages, and empowered them by learning about people from their own culture making major contributions to academic fields. The culminating products required students to choose a Spanish speaker they had read about in class and do further research about that person's field and contributions to that field. Reports were written and presented in Spanish. In the ESL class, students created and displayed posters about their chosen person and his/her field *in English*, so that the rest of the school community could understand and learn from students' research.

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade general education English teacher and a Global Studies teacher combined a content-area unit on wars with a study of war literature. The two teachers organized a series of texts that students would read throughout the unit, and created a set of shared essential questions that students would explore. The history teacher covered the historical and primary source readings in her class and the English teacher read pieces of war literature in hers. The teachers also shared graphic organizers and decided on several they would use to teach the same skills in both classrooms. The texts students read were in English and in students' home languages. In both classes, students were encouraged to use their home languages to discuss the work and the concepts within the unit.

The end product of the unit was a report on how war affects individuals across different societies. Though the report was written and presented in English, students were encouraged to use their home languages to discuss all readings and class work. Students were also encouraged to use visuals and multimedia to support their understanding of war's effects on individuals. Students used translanguaging when reading multilingual texts, discussing their learning in their home languages, and incorporating new vocabulary into their writing.

## Designing Units around Multilingual Culminating Products

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design instruction that promotes translanguaging?*
- *How can we make space for students to utilize their multiple languages to negotiate academic content?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

The products you have students create at the end of a unit can help students meet standards in reading, writing, and speaking. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

*When you create culminating products that require students to draw from multiple sources, you are helping them to combine the information from these sources into one strong “thesis” on the topic.*

#### Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

*Giving students a focused question to research, and then teaching them how to research it, will help them successfully meet this standard.*

#### Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 8

### What is it?

In most aspects of our lives, we know what we are working *toward*—be it a presentation in the workplace or cooking a meal at home. Because we know what we are working toward, our actions are strategically planned and the big picture is always in our minds. When both teachers and students have a purpose in mind from the beginning of a unit, the learning is more focused, the unit is clearer, and the teaching more targeted. Students need this same purpose as they learn academic content and develop their language and literacy abilities. Without an end goal, both teaching and learning can feel aimless, disorganized, and lacking in authenticity.

Designing a unit of study so it culminates in some sort of a multilingual product gives bilingual students an authentic purpose and motivation for learning. Multilingual products can take many different forms, but they *all* have bilingual students demonstrate their understandings and abilities through their different languages. A multilingual culminating product could have students:

- Create one product in English, and a different – but related - product in their home language for a specific purpose
- Translate a product from the home language to English, or vice versa, for a specific purpose
- Create a product that uses both English and the home language together for a specific purpose

There are numerous benefits to planning a unit around a product that **encourages translanguaging**. Multilingual culminating assessments can:

- Scaffold EBLs’ development of academic content, language, and literacy abilities in English.
- Help EBLs better understand the content by utilizing their home language as a vehicle for learning.
- Help EBLs develop academic language and literacy abilities in their home languages.
- Provide an opportunity for EBLs to best demonstrate what they know and can do.
- Help teachers more accurately assess EBLs’ knowledge and understanding of both language and content.
- Help EBLs think critically and at a higher level by asking them to create something in multiple languages and for multiple purposes and/or audiences.
- Help EBLs engage with the knowledge they bring from home.
- Help EBLs affirm and build their multilingual identities by encouraging them to

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

*As stated above, teaching students how to research is a valuable skill, especially when you focus on assessing credibility and accuracy of sources. Teaching research skills as a part of your students' culminating products will help them meet this standard.*

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 2**

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

*Making speaking a part of your culminating products will help all students, particularly EBLs, to practice a much-needed strand of English. As they present their products (and listen to one another present) they are building their ability to speak and listen in English.*

use their home language practices in school.

## Translanguaging How-To

### 1. Plan using Backwards Design

Think first of the final product you'd like students to create before you begin planning the learning activities for each lesson.

### 2. Plan a culminating product that requires students to utilize their multiple languages authentically.

The end product of any unit should help you assess what students know and what they can do with that knowledge. Here are some things you can keep in mind as you create multilingual culminating products:

- **Is my culminating product authentic?**

All products should have a basis in the real world of how people use language. Students are more apt to engage in the work if they are using language that is authentic to the way they would do so outside of school. Doing work that matters, as well as having opportunities to present work outside of the classroom, helps students to stay engaged with the unit and to do their best work.

- **Does my culminating product encourage translanguaging?**

Thinking about aspects of a final product such as audience and purpose can help you to include students' multiple languages in assessments. If the audience is multilingual, then the product itself must include aspects of both English and additional languages. If teachers plan for the purpose of the product to address the needs of a multilingual community, students necessarily have to use their multiple languages to do the work successfully.

- **Does my culminating product include non-written forms of assessment?**

EBLs have a vast amount of knowledge, but are often hindered by their developing English, especially in writing. Teachers should try to make space for students to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways. Culminating products can include formal writing, but can also include the following, which can be done in both English and the home language:

- Oral presentations
- Multimedia presentations (PowerPoint, video, other visual representations of information)
- Debates
- Hands-on activities

Designing culminating products that encourage students to illustrate their knowledge in multiple ways doesn't just benefit your EBLs-- the Common Core has placed emphasis on both print and **non-print texts** so that *all* students are better prepared for college and the workplace.

### 3. Introduce the culminating product early in the unit and plan scaffolding that will help students to best create the product by the end of the unit.

If the culminating product you design is engaging and authentic, introducing it early (or even first!) will help students to buy-in to the work. They will understand what they are working towards and, as a result, will feel more involved with the work itself. After you have introduced the culminating product, all subsequent class work should support the successful creation of that product. This helps students to see the purpose of the work. Keep in mind that students might need scaffolding for both language and content (*see Language Objectives*).



### **Emergent Bilinguals**

Making sure that assessments are not always formal and written is especially helpful for early EBLs, **SIFE students and LTELs**. It is important to keep in mind that these students have knowledge to share, but are held back by language and literacy barriers. Including culminating products that are visual or include multimedia, as well as creating products that are created in groups rather than independently, can help all students be successful.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

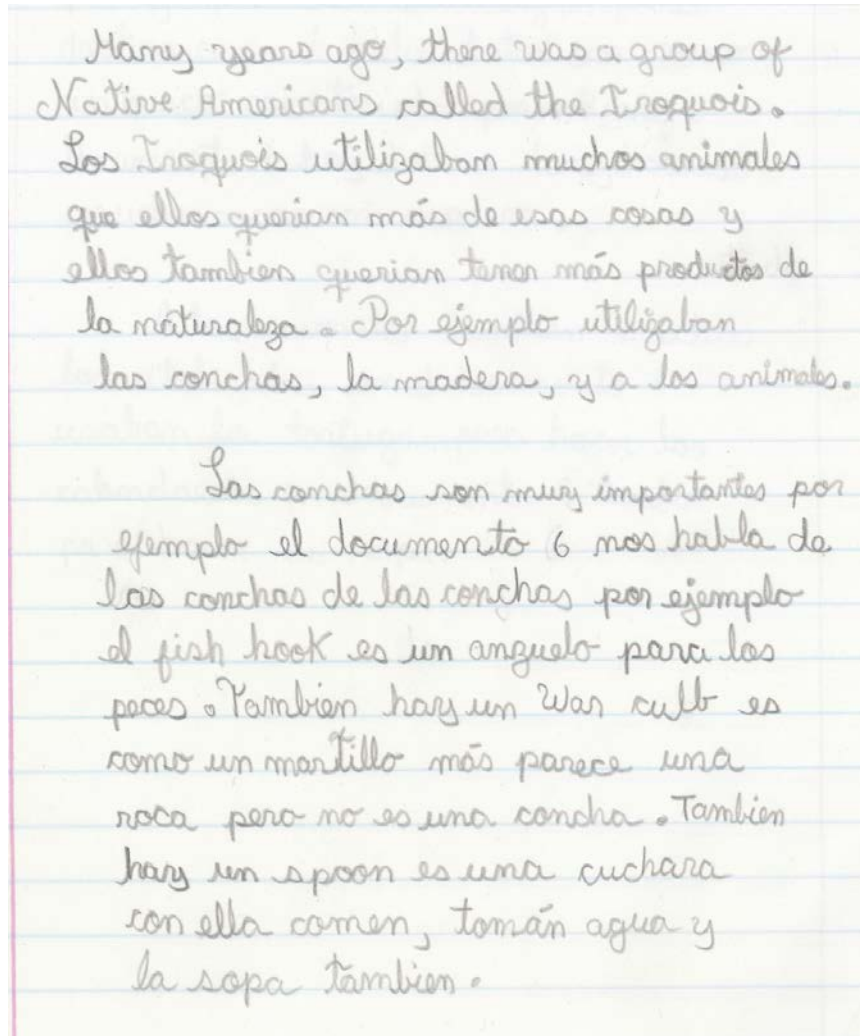
#### **Create one product in English, and a different - but related - product in the home language:**

- During a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade persuasive writing unit, EBLs in a general education class wrote persuasive reviews about local restaurants. Students wrote one review in English, and another review in their home language to target different audiences who go to these restaurants.
- During a 5<sup>th</sup> grade integrated unit on the American Revolution, students in a bilingual class read multilingual texts about the topic, and watched video clips about revolutions in different parts of the world. As a culminating product, students wrote about the causes and effects of the American Revolution in English. They also created a short audio recording of themselves in the home language explaining how the American Revolution compares to a revolution that took place in their home countries. Students shared these home language recordings with their families.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in both general education and bilingual classrooms researched a country of their choice as part of the social studies curriculum, and used the reading and writing workshops to read about the country (in English and in their home language), take notes (in English and their home language), and write an informational report in English. Students created a visual display to accompany their report. At a grade-wide celebration, students shared their reports and displays with the school community in English as well as the other languages, depending on the families' languages.

#### **Translate a product from the home language to English, or vice versa:**

- 4<sup>th</sup> grade EBLs translated a memoir they had written to share moments from their lives with both school and home. They referred to bilingual books in the classroom library to see how authors format a bilingual text. Many wrote it first in the home language, and then translated it into English. EBLs who were not literate in their home languages created an audio recording where they talked about the memoir in their home language, and then worked with writing partners to express those ideas in English.
- **Create a product that uses English and the home language together**  
Beginning EBLs in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL class wrote in their home languages, and included words, phrases, or sentences in English that they had learned. This provided a way for EBLs to more fully express their content knowledge, develop their writing ability, and incorporate the language they had been learning in English. For example, during a social studies unit on Native Americans, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade beginning EBL from Colombia wrote an informational text in Spanish to respond to a Document-Based Question (DBQ). She included a sentence in English based on what the whole class had brainstormed. She also included key vocabulary words in English from the historical documents students were asked to reference (Figure 1).

Figure 1



- In a 1<sup>st</sup> grade general education class, students created an alphabet book in English, and made some or all of the pages bilingual by adding words from their home language that began with each letter. This connected what EBLs knew about sounds in their home language with what they were learning in English. The teacher had some word and picture cards from a Spanish phonics program available for students to paste into their alphabet books. Other students added their own pictures of words they knew started with a particular letter.

### Middle/Secondary Grades

Here are some ideas for creating multilingual products (Witt 2012):

#### **Create one product in English, and a different - but related - product in the home language:**

- As a part of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies unit on voting, students in an ESL class had to create one election campaign advertisement for their community in their home language, and a different one in English.
- **Translate a product from the home language to English , or vice versa:**  
After 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in a bilingual US History class read the United Nations

Declaration of Human Rights in both English and Spanish, they designed a bilingual brochure educating people about human rights abuses happening in the U.S. and another country of their choice. In these bilingual brochures, students compared and contrasted the ways in which human rights were protected or violated in both countries.

**Create a product that uses English and the home language together**

- As a final product for a unit on Identity, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in a self-contained ESL class created a playlist of songs, in any language, that represented their lives. For each song they chose, students explained, in English, how particular aspects of that song (e.g. words, imagery, melody) represented something that happened to them or an emotion they have experienced.
- After an ELA unit on poetry, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students chose a poem written in a language other than English that they speak, and created a PowerPoint presentation to teach their classmates about imagery. Students spoke about and explained the imagery of the poem in English so that students of all language backgrounds could understand. As part of this project, students also conducted an analysis of some of the grammatical and phonetic differences between English and the other language.
- In a general education science class, 10<sup>th</sup> grade students were paired by a shared home language to complete a chemistry experiment. Students were able to discuss the experiment, read the directions, and record their findings in that home language. When it was time to discuss their findings with the class and write up their formal lab report, students did so in English.

## Multilingual Collaborative Work: Content Areas

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design collaborative work that encourages students to use both their home languages and English to make meaning?*
- *How can multilingual collaborative work help students to build their speaking and listening skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Having bilingual students use translanguaging in their collaborative group work can help them meet your [content-area standards for math, science, and social studies](#).

It also develops their speaking and listening abilities, which can target any the following anchor standards for Speaking and Listening, depending on the focus of your group work. Refer to these standards to see specific grade-level expectations.

#### **Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### **Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 3**

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

#### **Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 4**

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such

### What is it?

We know that providing time for collaborative learning is an important component of a student-centered classroom. Typically this work takes place in one language – English. In a bilingual program the collaborative work also typically takes place in one language – either English OR the other language, depending on the language used during that part of the day.

We're not used to thinking more flexibly about how both English AND the home language could strategically be used during collaborative work in the content areas to support our bilingual students. When we say *strategic*, we mean that there is a specific reason for using each language. Here are some ways you can take collaborative structures you already use and *purposefully* incorporate both languages in the partner work or group work. The suggested use of each language is for general education classrooms, ESL classrooms, and the English portion of bilingual classrooms. During the home language portion of bilingual classrooms, you would simply switch the language allocations indicated here.

Translanguaging in a bilingual program plays an important role because it allows students to develop *US bilingual identities*, drawing on their complete linguistic repertoire to express their ideas and knowledge during collaborative activities.

Depending on the collaborative task you set up for students in math, science, or social studies, you may decide to have students work with a partner or with a group. The translanguaging strategies described here are applicable to either partner or group work. See the sidebar for how to set up effective partners and groups with bilingual learners.

### For a Collaborative Task in the Content Areas:

- **Discuss/Reflect/Negotiate content in any language & Share out in English**
  1. **Discuss/Reflect/Negotiate content:** When partners or groups are working together, let them know they can speak in English and/or their home language during the task you've given them. You can also use this strategy during "Turn and Talk" or "Think/Pair/Share" discussions.
  2. **Share out:** If you want the partners or groups to share out with the class in a specific language, such as English, then they can collaboratively discuss how they would express in English the ideas they shared in the home language.
- **Brainstorm in any language & Write in English**
  1. **Brainstorm:** When you give partners or groups a task that involves creating a written product, encourage them to speak in English and/or the home language to brainstorm ideas. If you have created a collaborative group with some students who don't speak the home language, then when an EBL shares something in the home language, a partner with greater English proficiency can translate for the group.
  2. **Write:** Students then take those ideas and collaboratively discuss how they would express in English the ideas they shared in the home language. They collaboratively produce a written product in English for the task.
- **Preview in home language & then Collaborate in any language**
  1. **Preview in the home language:** Before you introduce any content-area topic, you can have EBLs preview the topic in their home language. This builds their

that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**A “Curriculum of Talk”**

Swinney and Velasco (2011) discuss a “curriculum of talk,” or teaching with a focus on developing speaking and listening skills. This focus is extremely relevant to any collaborative work—students must know how to express their ideas and listen to the ideas of others as the work together collaboratively. In order for students to do this successfully—in both English and their home languages—you have to teach them what it means to have “literate conversation” (31). “Literate conversation” includes skills as simple as listening until the speaker has finished to those more complex, like restating someone’s idea and adding on with your own. Teaching bilingual students to have these kinds of academic conversations in collaborative groups using *all* of their languages enables them to reframe their use of language in an academic context. This way, English is not the only language of value in academic conversation—to build on Swinney and Velasco’s term, students are learning to have *biliterate* conversations.

background knowledge, or schema, about the subject matter. If you are previewing a text, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts* for ways to find or create translations of content-area readings. If you have students preview a topic by listening to a text, listening to an audio explanation, or watching media, see *Resources: Listening Center* for ways to implement this. The strategy *Building Background with Preview/View/Review* has more information on how to use the home language to preview a topic or text.

2. **Collaborate in any language:** Then have bilingual students work in groups, collaborating in any language. They will now have a mental framework to better comprehend the work or topic, and will be better able to participate in group discussions and activities.

- **Listen in English & Discuss in any language**

1. **Listen:** You can begin by having students listen to a content-area lesson, text, or media in English. They could be listening to you talk about a topic, listening to someone read a text, or watching media about the topic. You may want to have students individually take notes in class as they listen to the text or media. You can indicate which language students should use for the note-taking, or leave it up to them, depending on the activity. See *Resources: Listening Center* for more on this.
2. **Discuss:** You can then provide time for collaborative groups to discuss what they just listened to. This discussion can take place in English and/or the home language – whatever language will help students negotiate the meaning of what they heard. If students took notes while listening, they can compare what they wrote, decide what additional notes they should write down, or decide what they should change.

**For a Collaborative Presentation:**

- **Research/Plan in any language & Present in English**

1. **Research/Plan:** Partners or groups can first research the topic they will be presenting by reading texts in English and/or the home language, depending on their proficiency. Students plan their collaborative presentations by discussing their ideas in either language, and deciding how they can express those ideas in English.
2. **Present:** The partners or groups do their presentations in English.

- **Present in one language & Analyze in another**

1. **Present:** Partners or groups can create the written portion of their presentation, such as a Power Point, in one language.
2. **Analyze:** During the oral presentation they can analyze, discuss, and elaborate on this written portion using the other language.

If we design collaborative work to strategically use both English and students’ home languages, it will:

- **Engage bilingual students in higher-order thinking skills**

Our ability to express thoughts is limited to the language we have to represent those ideas. When we confine bilingual students to expressing themselves solely in English during collaborative work, the level of language and level of thinking skills they utilize are lower than their true cognitive abilities. When bilingual students can take advantage of their proficiency in the home language, they switch from a



### Strategically grouping bilingual students

This kind of group work may seem impossible in a general education classroom where students with different home languages are grouped with students who only speak English. It may also seem difficult in ESL classes where EBLs may speak a variety of languages. To allow for translanguaging in these settings, you need to be strategic about how you form groups.

When grouping students, try to pair each of your bilingual students with a student who speaks the same home language, whenever possible. That way they can use their home language as well as English during the collaborative group work. These home language partners within a group should ideally have somewhat different English language proficiencies, such as a newcomer paired with an intermediate EBL, or an intermediate speaker paired with a bilingual student labeled as “proficient” in English.

This sets the stage for 2 types of group work:

- An EBL can share something with the group in the home language, and have the home language partner translate for the rest of the group.
- While the group is engaged in working on a task, the home language partners can confer together in the home language to more deeply discuss their ideas. They can later share back with the rest of the group in English, if what they discussed is important for the whole group to know.

more passive to a more active role in the collaborative work, engaged in rigorous cognitive and academic development. They also develop their metalinguistic awareness,

- **Build bilingual students’ content knowledge**  
What better way for bilingual students to *deeply* understand new content than to use their language of strength as a vehicle for discussing, analyzing, and reflecting on the concepts they’re learning?
- **Scaffold bilingual students’ literacy skills in English**  
When we encourage bilingual students to use multiple languages to make sense of a text they’ve read or heard in English, their comprehension improves. And, when we encourage bilingual students to use their home languages to discuss *how* they can create a written product in English, the English writing they jointly produce is of a higher quality. This space for making connections between languages is an essential component of developing proficiency in a new language.
- **Develop bilingual students’ home language abilities**  
By using their home language to think critically about a topic and discuss it with peers, they are deepening their ability to use the home language for academic purposes. This develops students’ academic proficiency in the home language.

### Translanguaging How-To

1. **Think about what kind of collaborative task you want students to do**  
Does the task involve discussion? Reading a text? Creating a written product? Giving a presentation?
2. **Incorporate a translanguaging strategy**  
Once you know what kind of work the collaborative task involves, then you can see which of the translanguaging strategies described here would help your bilingual students participate more fully in the partner or group work and develop their bilingualism for academic purposes.
3. **Teach EBLs how to utilize their multiple languages in collaborative work**  
Many teachers express that they don’t “discourage” EBLs from using the home language – but they often don’t **encourage** it either. Once you decide you want students to take advantage of their multiple languages during collaborative work, then you need to actively encourage EBLs to do this each time they work together. This will take time to develop. You will need to explain to EBLs how they can specifically use both of their languages, and why it will help their learning.

### Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

#### Elementary Grades

- **Discuss/Reflect/Negotiate content in any language & Share out in English**  
In a 5<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL classroom, groups of students used both English and their home languages to determine a rule for calculating the volume of rectangular prisms. Each group had 4 hollow rectangular prisms and counting cubes. The following transcript shows how one group of Spanish speakers used a combination of English and Spanish to think through the problem (Celic, 2009).

Vicente: Oh, I have an idea! I think that to measure all of them we need to put three cubes here (pointing to the length inside the prism) and then multiply the ones that are here (pointing to the width inside the prism) times the ones that are here (pointing to the height inside the prism).

### **Strategically partnering bilingual students**

Partners should ideally have somewhat different English language proficiencies, such as a newcomer paired with an intermediate EBL, or an intermediate speaker paired with an advanced EBL. This provides EBLs with more linguistic support in English.

If you have an **EBL who speaks a different home language**, and also has a beginning English proficiency level, it's best not to put them with just one partner. That partner will get frustrated with the inability to communicate fully in English, and won't benefit from the interactions that come from collaborative work. Instead, create a group of three: your EBL and two other students with higher English proficiencies. This provides more linguistic support for your EBL, and a way for the other two students to communicate fully.

James: Yeah, you should multiply the length by the width, and you should get the area of the inside.

Fernando: So put... (indicating that Student 1 should fill the base with cubes)

James: So put a lot on the bottom, like to cover the bottom, and then put like up, up, and up (indicating that he should stack enough cubes to reach the top).

Vicente: (begins to fill the base with cubes)

James: How many are you putting?

Vicente: Wait... (seeing that there are 3 cubes in the length of the base and 3 cubes in the width of the base) So 3 times 3 equals 9.

Fernando: Póngalo así para que cubra todo (*put it like this so it covers everything*)... Let me see (looking at the base of the rectangular prism)

Vicente: Tiene que caber 9. Sí, está bien. Yo ahora voy a ponerlo así hasta arriba. (*It has to fit 9. Yes, that's good. Now I'm going to put it like this all the way to the top.*)

*[The group continues to stack cubes to find the height, and then correctly multiplies the three dimensions to get the volume.]*

Groups with mixed home languages used English to negotiate the problem solving when talking as a whole group, and used their home language to talk with a partner within the group.

- **Brainstorm in any language & Write in a specified language**

In a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade self-contained ESL classroom, students took part in a science experiment about magnets. At the end of the experiment, the teacher had students work in groups to brainstorm what they had discovered about magnets. Students knew they could use a combination of their languages for this important discussion. Then, the groups decided how to combine their ideas in English and write down what they learned about magnets on the handout they had been using throughout the science experiment. They shared their writing with the class, and the teacher used the groups' ideas to help them formulate a short written conclusion about the science concept.

- **Preview in home language & then Collaborate in any language**

In a 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education classroom, the teacher asked a parent volunteer to translate to Spanish an important text the class would be reading about the human body. Since many of her Urdu-speaking students were not literate in the home language, she also had the parent volunteer record the text so these students could listen and follow along with the text. The teacher did the same for two other languages present in the class: Uzbek and Russian. The next day the teacher introduced the English version of the text to the class. Her EBLs were more engaged and participated more during the lesson and the rest of the unit of study because they already had some understanding of the topic.

- **Listen in English & Discuss in any language**

In a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade French/English bilingual class, the teacher gave students an outline form, partially filled in with headings and subheadings. As they watched a video clip about the African savannah in English, students took notes in the outline with some of the information they heard. The teacher paused the video clip in key places to give students time to do this note-taking. Afterwards, students met with a partner to discuss and compare their notes. They changed or added to their notes based on the information their peers had written down. This discussion took place in English as well as French. In particular, French-speaking partners within the groups consulted with each other when they were trying to add something new to their notes, or make changes to what they had written. This gave the students a chance to negotiate the meaning of the information they had heard in English.

### **Trouble-shooting**

In some cases you may only have **one EBL who speaks a particular language**.

Unfortunately they won't be able to utilize their home language for discussion during partner or group work.

However, if they are literate in their home language you can still utilize some translanguaging strategies. For example, if your task involves having students read a particular text about the content-area topic, you can provide this EBL with a translated version of the text in the home language. This will build your EBL's understanding of the content. Then, when partners or groups share their thinking about the text in English, your EBL will have more to contribute.

If your EBL's oral proficiency in English isn't strong enough to discuss the topic with the group or with the partner in English, they could also use the App **Jibbigo**, which is a speech-to-speech voice translator between English and 9 other languages. Students can speak into the App in either English or the home language, and that speech is automatically translated and *spoken aloud* in the other language. So, EBLs can speak in their home language, and English speakers can hear as well as see the English translation. Then, English speakers can do the same thing – speak into the App in English so EBLs can hear and see the translation in their home language.

A less instantaneous alternative is having EBLs use a website like Google Translate to type in their comments, reflections, or questions about the text, and have it translated into English. If they do this before meeting with their group or partner they can take this translation with them to make their voice heard in the collaborative work.

- **Research/Prepare in any language & Present in English**

During an integrated Science, Reading, and Writing unit in a bilingual 1<sup>st</sup> grade class, partners researched an animal of their choice. To learn about their animal, they read different trade books together during the Reading Workshop. Some of the trade books were in English, and others in Spanish. At the end of each Reading Workshop, the teacher gave partners a signal to stop their partner reading, and plan what they were going to orally share with the class about their learning that day. Depending on the language allocation for that day, sometimes the sharing students did in front of the class was in English and other days it was in Spanish, even if the trade books they had been reading were in the other language.

- **Present in one language & Analyze in another**

In a 4<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual class, students filled in a Venn Diagram comparing two biographies. They worked together to complete the Venn Diagram in English, using language they found in the biographies. When they presented their work to the class, the teacher projected their English writing onto a screen for the whole class to see. To discuss the similarities and differences more in-depth with the class, students used Spanish. This developed their language and literacy in both languages.

### **Middle/Secondary Grades**

- **Discuss/Reflect/Negotiate content in any language & Share out in English**

In a middle school science class, the teacher provided students with a K-W-L chart about pollution before a unit on water contamination. Since there were several pairs of students who spoke different West African languages (Wolof, Mandingo, Soninke and Fula), the teacher created home language pairs. These partners brainstormed everything they knew about pollution, questions they had, and what they wanted to learn about given their questions. Students were able to discuss and negotiate in their home languages, but when they reported their ideas back to the class, they reported in English. The teacher then recorded their ideas on a centralized class chart that brought together everyone's information. For the students less proficient in English, they translated one idea from each column of the chart and were able to present that to the class. For those students who were more proficient, they were able to say anything from their group's chart in English (Witt, 2012).

- **Brainstorm in any language & Write in a specified language**

As a pre-reading activity for *Romeo and Juliet*, a 9<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher paired students to create a semantic map that illustrated the ways in which love can get you into trouble. Students were paired according to shared home language (Korean and Arabic) and were encouraged to do this brainstorm in that home language. When the class shared their ideas, they did so in English, translating their own responses for the class. After the teacher compiled different students' responses onto a larger semantic map, students wrote a paragraph answering the question, "How can love get you into trouble?" Using information from the paired work and whole-class brainstorm, students wrote this response in English.

- **Preview in home language & then Collaborate in any language**

Before doing a lab, a middle school bilingual science teacher showed a short video in students' home language: Chinese. The video provided some general background information on the topic of the day's lab and helped students to see the importance of the experiment to their understanding of the overall science topic. After watching the video, students went to the lab and, in small groups, successfully completed the day's experiment. Answers to the lab questions and the culminating



lab report were written in English, but the home language video (as well as group conversations in Chinese while completing the lab) helped students to better communicate what they learned about the science topic.

- **Listen in English & Discuss in any language**

After reading a textbook chapter about the Holocaust, a 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global History class watched a short video in English of a survivor's account of the concentration camps. The teacher played the video with subtitles in Spanish, helping students to comprehend what they heard. The teacher told students to take notes on similarities they saw between the reading and the video, using the Spanish subtitles as a scaffold. After taking notes, students did a "Turn and Talk" with a partner. In order to make deeper connections and discuss the similarities and connections in detail, the partners used both Spanish and English in their discussions.

- **Present in one language & Analyze in another**

In an 8<sup>th</sup> grade math class, students created a PowerPoint written in English about the rules they had learned about exponents. When sharing this information in front of the class, students presented their PowerPoint in English, and then discussed the exponent concepts more in-depth using Spanish. This can also be done where students present in *English* and do the PowerPoint in a *home language*.

- **Research/Prepare in any language & Present in English**

A general education science teacher facilitated a debate about whether parents should be allowed to determine the sex of their children. The teacher included translanguaging in this collaborative work in the following ways:

- As a small group of students prepared the "con" side of the debate, the teacher encouraged them to read pro and con arguments about the topic in their home languages, French and Arabic, which the teacher got translated by school staff.
- Home language partners worked together to plan their arguments first in their home language. They then jointly constructed the oral debate in English, using their home language writing as a base.
- Groups whose only common language was English planned collaboratively in English about who would make which argument, provided feedback on the strength of the arguments, and anticipated rebuttals from their opponents. However, because some students in the group shared a home language, some of the thinking and research was done in the home language.

Ultimately, as the debate was in front of the whole class, the arguments were presented in English (Witt, 2012).

## Multilingual Collaborative Work: Reading Groups

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design collaborative work that encourages students to use both their home languages and English to make meaning?*
- *How can multilingual collaborative work help students to build their speaking and listening skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Having bilingual students use translanguaging when working collaboratively in reading groups is an effective way to help them meet the anchor standards in reading in all three areas:

- [Key Ideas and Details](#)
- [Craft and Structure](#)
- [Integration of Knowledge and Ideas](#)

It also develops students' speaking and listening abilities, which can target any the following anchor standards for Speaking and Listening, depending on the focus of your reading group work. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

### [Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### [Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 3](#)

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

### What is it?

Reading groups can take different forms – guided reading groups, book clubs, literature circles – but they all involve having students collaboratively discuss and respond to a text they've read with their peers. Typically this work takes place in one language – English. In a bilingual program the group work also typically takes place in one language – either English OR the home language, depending on the language allocated to that part of the day.

We're not used to thinking more flexibly about how both English AND the home language could be used strategically during these reading groups to support our bilingual students. When we say *strategic*, we mean that there is a specific reason for using each language. Here are some ways you can *purposefully* incorporate both languages in guided reading groups, book clubs, or literature circles.

- **Preview in home language & then Read the same text in English**
  1. Preview in the home language: Before taking part in a guided reading group, book club, or literature circle, you can have bilingual students preview the text in their home language. This builds their background knowledge, or schema, about the text. See *Building Background with Preview/View/Review* for more information on how to do a home language preview.
  2. Read the same text in English: You can then have bilingual students read the *same text* in English for the group work. They will now have a mental framework to better comprehend the English text, and will be better able to participate in discussions about the text.
- **Read in English & Discuss in any language**
  1. Read in English: You can have a literature circle, book club, or guided reading group read a particular text in English.
  2. Discuss: Their discussion about the text can be in English and/or the home language. Using both languages helps bilingual student better negotiate the meaning of the English text and express a higher level of critical thinking skills when talking about the text.
    - **Guided Reading Group**: Encourage bilingual students to discuss the text in their home language both *before* reading (when you give an introduction to the text) and *after* reading.
    - **Book Clubs & Literature Circles**: Whenever students meet to discuss the portion of the text they've read, encourage bilingual students to share in the home language.
- **Read in multiple languages & Discuss in any language**
  1. Read in multiple languages: For a book club or literature circle, you can have some group members read a text in English, and have other group members read the same text translated in the home language. Many chapter books and trade books are published in multiple languages to allow for this kind of translanguaging (see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*). Later on, you can share the English version of the text with EBLs and help them read portions of it to make connections with what they've read in the home language.

**Speaking and Listening:**  
**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 4**

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Speaking and Listening:**  
**Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

You may also have book clubs or literature circles where students read *different texts* that are all connected by topic or theme. In this case, you can have your EBLs read a home language text about that topic or theme. To continue developing their literacy in the home language, have them first read some texts about the topic in the home language, and then begin to read texts about the topic in English.

2. **Discuss:** When the book club or literature circle meets to discuss the texts, they can use English and/or the home language to talk about what they read, and to compare and contrast what they read in the English text and the home language text.

When you design reading group work in these strategic ways, it will:

- **Engage bilingual students in higher-order thinking skills**  
Our ability to express thoughts is limited to the words we have to represent those ideas. When we confine bilingual students to expressing themselves solely in English when discussing texts they've read, the level of language and level of thinking skills they utilize are lower than their true cognitive abilities. When bilingual students can take advantage of their oral proficiency in the home language, they switch from a more passive role in the group to a more academic one, engaged in rigorous cognitive and academic development.
- **Scaffold EBLs' reading comprehension in English**  
Having EBLs read a text in their home language *before* reading the same text (or a similar text) in English for a guided reading group, book club, or literature circle, builds the background knowledge they need to make sense of the English text. Also, when you provide a space for EBLs to use both English and the home language to discuss what they've read with their reading group, they are better able to negotiate the meaning of the text and analyze it. These strategies improve EBLs' reading comprehension.
- **Develop bilingual students' home language literacy**  
Continuing to read texts in the home language helps bilingual students develop higher levels of literacy in *all* of their languages.
- **Affirm students' US bilingual identities**  
This type of reading group work helps bilingual students see the value in what they bring with them to school: their growing ability to think and communicate in multiple languages. Using translanguaging helps students develop a positive sense of self as a bilingual individual because they see their bilingualism as a resource.

## **Translanguaging How-To**

### **1. Create reading groups that allow for translanguaging**

- **Guided reading groups:** In bilingual classrooms you can fully take advantage of doing a home language preview before reading an English text, and discussing it afterwards in English and/or the home language.  
In general education and ESL classrooms, when you group students based on their reading level the group could have students from different language backgrounds. If there happen to be students in the guided reading group who speak the same language, then you can incorporate the strategy of having students discuss the text in any language. If there is no common home language, you can still use the strategy of having EBLs preview the same text in the home language before reading the English version.

### Emergent Bilinguals

Having EBLs read a **home language version** of a text gives them a way to participate in Book Clubs or Literature Circles that are reading higher-level English texts. In this way, EBLs are not always placed in the groups that are reading lower-level English texts.

### Strategies for Encouraging Home Language Use in Group Work

As a starting point, it's essential to build a classroom culture where EBLs' multilingualism is seen as a strength. Have whole-class discussions about the value of multilingualism. Why is it such a powerful and positive skill to have?

Then, lead the discussion more specifically to the work students are doing with their reading groups. Why would it be beneficial for EBLs to read texts in both English and the home language? Why would it be beneficial for them to

- **Book Clubs / Literature Circles:** Depending on the way you structure these reading groups, they may include students who are all reading at the same level, or mixed levels. If the levels are mixed, then you can intentionally group together students who speak the same home language. This allows for some discussion of the text in the home language. If your groups are organized by reading level, then there may or may not be a common home language in the group. If there isn't, you can still have EBLs preview the text in the home language ahead of time. For groups with mixed languages, you can also have each student in the group read a different text about the same topic or theme, in English or their home language, and then meet to discuss what they've each read.

#### 2. Get multilingual texts

See *Resources: Multilingual Texts* for ways to find or create texts in your EBLs' home languages.

#### 3. Teach EBLs how to utilize their multiple languages in reading groups

Many teachers express that they don't "discourage" EBLs from using the home language – but they often don't **encourage** it either. Once you decide you want students to take advantage of their multiple languages during reading group work, then you need to actively encourage EBLs to do this each time they work together. This will take time to develop. You will need to explain to EBLs how they can specifically use both of their languages, and why it will help their learning.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

#### • **Preview in the home language & then Read the same text in English**

A 3<sup>rd</sup> grade ESL teacher created a guided reading group for her students who read at a Level L – below the grade level expectations. Four of the students in the group were EBLs who spoke Spanish or French, and two only spoke English. The teacher used a Level M text from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com) for this guided reading group. She printed an English version of the text for all six students, and a Spanish or French version for her four EBLs. She gave her EBLs the home language version *before* meeting with the group. When the group met to read the English version, her EBLs were better able to understand the text and participate in discussions.

#### • **Read or Listen in English & Discuss in any language**

A 1<sup>st</sup> grade Spanish/English bilingual teacher chose an English text for one of her guided reading groups. All of the students had a similar reading level in English. Before having the group read the text on their own, the teacher introduced the book to them. She had her EBLs use Spanish with each other to negotiate the meaning of the title, and what they were seeing during the picture walk. This scaffolded the EBLs' understanding of what the text would be about, and improved their comprehension of the text when they read it on their own. After the group had finished reading independently, the teacher regrouped them and talked with them about the text. She again had her EBLs share in either English or Spanish to discuss the meaning of certain words or parts of the text.

- After a shared reading in a general education Kindergarten classroom, the teacher had her students work in small groups to sequence pictures of the animals they had heard about in the text. The Kindergarteners were encouraged to use English as well as their home languages to discuss with their groups how to sequence the animals.

discuss the texts in both English and the home language?

Here are some specific questions you can use to guide this conversation:

- If bilingual students read a text in the home language as well as in English, how does that impact what they can share with the reading group? Possible discussion points:
  - By reading the text twice, in different languages, they may have a deeper understanding of the text, or deeper insights about it
  - They may have a better understanding of certain vocabulary words by seeing them in two languages.
- When a group is reading different texts about the same topic and bilingual students read a text in the home language about that topic, how does that impact what they can share with the group? Possible discussion points:
  - They bring a different perspective about the topic to the reading group discussion.
  - They are able to share the text with the group, helping students who don't speak that home language understand a text they wouldn't be able to read themselves.

- **Read in multiple languages & Discuss in any language**

In a 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL classroom, the teacher created Book Clubs around different science topics. Students chose which Book Club they wanted to be in based on their science interests. The teacher found texts related to each of those science topics in English as well as her EBLs' home languages. The English texts were at a range of reading levels. Each day, students chose a new text to read from their Book Club bin. Some days they chose English texts, and other days they chose home language texts. When they met with their Book Club at the end of each reading period, they discussed what they had learned about the topic from their text. This discussion often took place in English, but sometimes included the home language. In this way, students pooled the knowledge they gained about the topic from reading in multiple languages.

### Middle/Secondary Grades

- **Preview in the home language & then Read the same text in English**

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade general education ELA class read *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros in book groups. Because the EBLs in the class were all Spanish-speaking, the teacher was able to get copies of the book in Spanish (*La Casa en Mango Street*). EBLs were assigned the sections of the book in Spanish that the book groups would read the next day in English *the day before* groups met. This preview prepared EBLs to discuss the book on a higher cognitive level with their English-speaking peers.

- **Read or Listen in English & Discuss in any language**

10<sup>th</sup> grade ESL students read a series of poems in guiding reading groups. The short poems were in English and students would take turns reading them aloud to the group. After reading the poems aloud, students discussed the content, theme, and language of the poems in Russian, Bengali, and Arabic. Because the class was made up of speakers of multiple languages, the teacher tried to have at least two speakers of each language in each group. This way, some conversations about the poems were held in English, but the home language was accessed when students' were not able to express their thoughts and opinions in English. The students who shared the home language would then try to translate their ideas into English for the rest of the group.

- **Read in multiple languages & Discuss in any language**

7<sup>th</sup> graders were organized into literature circles around the topic of identity. Each group was assigned a different book, which was thematically linked to the other books being read in the classroom. The teacher organized the literature circles so that students who shared a home language were together. When choosing books, the teacher was able to find several books about identity in English, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. The students read the book in their home languages and discussed what they read in English and their home language. When the teacher conducted whole-class discussions about overarching themes present in all of the books, all students contributed their ideas in English.



## Multilingual Writing Partners

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design collaborative work that encourages students to use both their home languages and English to make meaning?*
- *How can multilingual collaborative work build students' listening and speaking skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Having emergent bilinguals and English speakers work together in writing partnerships is an effective way to help them meet the anchor standards in writing in all four areas:

- [Text Types & Purposes](#)
- [Production & Distribution of Writing](#)
- [Research to Build & Present Knowledge](#)
- [Range of Writing](#)

As students write together in partnerships, they also build their speaking and listening skills. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

### [Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### [Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 3](#)

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

### [Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge](#)

### What is it?

EBLs need support to move from spoken language to reading and writing in that language. They also need explicit instruction in order to successfully use **language in academic ways**. You can pair students strategically so they can help one another grow as writers in both English and their home languages. As they have multilingual conversations about texts they're writing, EBLs practice using academic language, hone their listening skills, and talk about text and language in a way that is authentic.

### Writing partners:

Here are some ways you can take the partnered writing you already use and *purposefully* incorporate both languages in the partner work or group work. The suggested use of each language is intended for mainstream classrooms, ESL classrooms, and the English portion of bilingual classrooms. During the home language portion of bilingual classrooms, you would simply switch the language allocations indicated here. Writing partners can:

- **Brainstorm in any language & Write in English**  
If students are preparing for a written assignment, they can brainstorm ideas about that assignment with partners. This brainstorming conversation can happen in English and/or the home language. Using both languages helps EBLs share their prior knowledge about the topic and more fully brainstorm their ideas for writing.
- **Jointly construct a piece of writing in English, with discussion and negotiation in any language**  
Having students write together encourages authentic discussions about the ways they use language in their writing. EBLs can produce a piece of writing together in English, but use their home languages to give suggestions, add ideas, and work through confusion. The resulting product is a piece of writing in English, informed and improved by students' negotiations in their home languages.
- **Read a partner's writing in English & Discuss revisions and edits in any language**  
Having EBLs edit their work with partners should have a strong focus on both the language and the content of the writing. Depending on your objectives for a particular piece of writing, you can have students read one another's writing for grammar, word use and vocabulary, fluency, and content. The commenting and editing can be done in either English or a home language, even if the writing is in English.
- **Work together to translate one another's writing (from the home language to English). This enables students to examine and inquire into one another's writing and language use.**  
Having students work together to translate pieces of their own writing is a wonderful opportunity for authentic conversations about language. Students first write in a home language and then draw on their knowledge of English (as well as resources like bilingual dictionaries, picture dictionaries, or Google Translate) to translate it. The result is the same piece of writing in two languages, which can be a great starting point for language comparison and analysis. Cummins refers to this as creating "identity texts" (2005). See *Resources: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment* for more on creating identity texts.

#### **and Ideas: Standard 4**

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### **Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## **Translanguaging How-To**

### **1. Plan opportunities for students to write with partners using the home language as well as English.**

As you plan writing experiences in your classroom, consider the following:

- Have I provided time in the pre-writing stages for students to brainstorm in their home languages?
- Are most of my writing activities independent? Can I work in activities that require students to use their home languages to jointly construct a piece of writing in English?
- Am I encouraging students to edit and revise one another's writing in both English and their home languages?
- Can I include activities that require students to translate their own or a partner's writing? Can I include strategies for comparing and discussing language specifically?

### **2. Create strategic student partnerships.**

When pairing students it is important, as always, to consider your purpose.

Keeping in mind the English proficiency levels of your students, partners can:

- Write together in English, using their home language to edit, revise, and negotiate.
- Edit one another's independent writing in English, using their home language to discuss revisions and edits.
- Build background information about a piece of writing by first discussing the topic in a home language.
- Work together to translate a piece of writing from the home language into English, focusing on strategies like shared cognates.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

#### **• Brainstorm in any language and write in English**

In a 1<sup>st</sup> grade general education classroom, the teacher set up a routine where students turned and talked with their rug partners about what they were going to write that day. For narratives, the teacher showed students how to tell the story “across their fingers.” For informational texts, the teacher had them explain the information to their partner as if they were the teacher. The teacher encouraged her EBLs to do this “oral rehearsing” in their home language or English. When students went back to their tables for independent writing, everyone wrote in English. The EBLs had a clearer idea for their writing after orally rehearsing in the home language than when they had previously done this same type of brainstorming in English only.

#### **• Jointly construct a piece of writing in English, with discussion and negotiation in any language**

During independent writing time, the teacher paired up two EBLs who both had between an early intermediate and an intermediate proficiency level in English. They worked together to write a text in English, combining their knowledge of vocabulary and sentence structure to express their ideas. During this process they used English and the home language to negotiate the way they would write each sentence. The end result was a piece of writing in English that was more complex than what either student could have produced on their own at that particular point.

### **Emergent Bilinguals**

For students who struggle with literacy in both English and a home language (including **SIFE** and **LTEL** students), writing partnerships are an important scaffold.

You can use these partnerships to scaffold writing by having the student dictate his/her ideas to the writing partner, who will scribe (for more on this kind of strategy, see *Content-area & Writing Instruction: Translanguaging with “Language Experience Approach”*). Use that scribed story as a text to help the student see connections between spoken and written language.

- **Read a partner’s writing in English and discuss revisions and edits in any language**  
During the revision and editing stages of a writing unit of study, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in a bilingual program met on a daily basis with a writing partner. Regardless of the language they had written in (sometimes English, sometimes Spanish), students knew they could use either language to discuss what revisions or edits they thought their partner should make. This helped EBLs use both of their language to analyze their partner’s writing.
- **Work together to translate one another’s writing (from the home language to English). This enables students to examine and inquire into one another’s writing and language use.**  
During the final writing unit of study in a dual language bilingual program, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders wrote an informational essay in the home language. After they went through the writing process and published this piece, they worked with their writing partners to create a translated English version of that informational essay. The goal for this work was for students to think critically about how sentence structure changes between the two languages, and how some vocabulary words are cognates while others are completely different. This activity was a challenge for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, but the end product was an impressive translation, given that this was their first attempt at this type of work. The teachers in the bilingual program all felt that this type of learning activity would be beneficial to begin at a much earlier age, starting by translating short texts (individual words and sentences), and slowly building up to longer texts.

### **Middle/Secondary Grades**

- **Brainstorm in any language and write in English**  
In preparation for writing a thematic essay on belief systems, 10<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual Global Studies students read the prompt, taken from a practice Regents Exam, and brainstormed their ideas in their home language. Students were paired by their level of English proficiency and their shared home language, and had to fill out a semantic map, organizing their ideas about belief systems. After sharing out in their home language, the teacher helped students to translate any words or ideas that they couldn’t express in English. The students then began drafting the thematic essay in English.
- **Jointly construct a piece of writing in English, with discussion and negotiation in any language**  
A 7<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual math class took a field trip to the Museum of Mathematics in New York City. Afterwards, the teacher wanted students to write about their experiences in English and to connect their work in class with the math they saw at the museum. The class had quite a few beginner EBLs, so the teacher paired them with students who had higher English proficiency. The beginner EBLs told their partners about their experience in Spanish while the partners discussed how to write it in English. Afterwards, the two students read through and discussed the scribed text in Spanish. The student with higher proficiency helped the student add more to her account by translating to English what the student had talked through and added in her home language. After the student was happy with her account, the student more proficient in English added her own ideas and experience to the text, talking through them with her partner in the home language. The result was an account of both students’ experiences, jointly constructed in English.
- **Read a partner’s writing in English and discuss revisions and edits in any**



**language**

Pairs of students in an 11<sup>th</sup> grade Chemistry class edited a formal report written on the results of an in-class lab. Though the reports were written in English, the two students discuss their ideas for revision in their shared languages, Arabic and French. The students discuss both linguistic and content-related revisions, helping one another to improve the overall quality of the report. The final report, though written in English, was greatly improved due to students' negotiations and revisions in Arabic and French.

- **Work together to translate one another's writing (from the home language to English). This enables students to examine and inquire into one another's writing and language use.**

8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA students read the book *Seedfolks* (see reading example with the novel in "Reading Partners"). In order to compare different perspectives on the migrant experience, students worked in pairs to create Two-Voice Poems. This genre requires students to write poems that contain two voices or points of view on a topic or story. Because many of the migrant workers in the book speak Spanish, and the students in the class spoke Spanish, the teacher first had students create a version of their poem in Spanish. They wrote back and forth, with each student adding lines in the perspective of different characters from *Seedfolks*. After they had written the poem in Spanish, the teacher had students work together to **translate** their poems into English. Negotiating in both Spanish and English, students created side-by-side translations of their own poetry. The students shared their poems with the class, reading aloud both the English and the Spanish versions.

## Multilingual Reading Partners

### Essential Questions

- *How can we design collaborative work that encourages students to use both their home languages and English to make meaning?*
- *How can multilingual collaborative work build students' listening and speaking skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Having emergent bilinguals and English speakers work together in reading partnerships is an effective way to help them meet the anchor standards in reading in all three areas:

- [Key Ideas and Details](#)
- [Craft and Structure](#)
- [Integration of Knowledge and Ideas](#)

It also develops students' speaking and listening abilities, which can target any the following anchor standards for Speaking and Listening, depending on the focus of your partnered reading work. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

### [Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1](#)

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

### [Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 3](#)

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

### [Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 4](#)

### What is it?

EBLs need support to move from spoken language to reading and writing in that language. They also need explicit instruction in order to successfully use **language for academic purposes**. You can pair students strategically so they can help one another grow as readers in both English and their home languages. As they have multilingual conversations about texts they're reading, EBLs practice using language for academic texts, hone their listening abilities, and talk about text and language in a way that is authentic.

### **Reading partners:**

Here are some ways you can take the partnered reading you already use and *purposefully* incorporate both languages in the partner work or group work. The suggested use of each language is intended for mainstream classrooms, ESL classrooms, and the English portion of bilingual classrooms. During the home language portion of bilingual classrooms, you would simply switch the language allocations indicated here.

- **Read or listen to a text together in English & Discuss/negotiate meaning in any language**  
Here, students sit next to one another and read (alternating lines, reading chorally, etc.) or sit in a listening center together and listen to a text. As they read or listen, they can stop and discuss what they're reading in their home languages, with either teacher-led prompts or student-led conversations.
- **Read independently & Discuss/negotiate meaning in any language**  
Here, the reading is done independently, but the discussion of the reading is done in pairs using the home language. Partners can read chunks of text independently, stopping throughout to have home language discussions about what they read. They can also read an English text independently and then summarize or re-tell what they read to one another in the home language.
- **Read a text in one language & Read a similar or translated version in another.**  
Here, students read an English text and also read a side-by-side translation of that text (English on one side, home language on the other) or a translation of a text with similar content to the English text. After reading both, partners discuss the content of both texts in their home languages. This also provides students with the opportunity to compare their own languages with English (i.e.: cognates, scripts, word use, etc.).
- **Read in one language & Respond via a graphic organizer in English or the home language**  
Here, students could read a text in English—either independently or together—and respond to what they read with the help of a graphic organizer. This could be anything from a Venn Diagram to a double-entry journal to a semantic map. They can work together to record their thinking on these graphic organizers in either English or in a home language.

### Translanguaging How-To

1. **Plan opportunities for students to read with partners using the home language as well as English.**  
As you plan reading and writing experiences in your classroom, consider the following:

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

- When students read independently, have I provided time for them to discuss and negotiate what they read in a home language with a partner?
- If I'm reading a text in English, do I have a similar or translated version that partners can read together?
- Have I built in ways that students can use their home languages to work together and respond to a text in writing or with a graphic organizer?

**2. Create strategic student partnerships.**

When pairing students it is important, as always, to consider your purpose.

Keeping in mind the English proficiency levels of your students, partners can:

- Read a text together in English that is at their reading level and discuss it in either English or their home language
- Read an English text independently and discuss it together in either English or their home language
- Build background information about a text by first discussing the topic in a home language.
- Read the same text with side-by-side translations in the LOTE (language other than English), using English or the home language afterwards to discuss what they read.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

- **Read or listen to a text together in English and discuss/negotiate meaning in any language**

In a 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL classroom, two EBLs with early-intermediate proficiencies in English read a nonfiction text together in English. They did this on a daily basis during the class' independent reading time. As they jointly read a text about spiders, they paused at the end of each page or section to discuss what they had just read. Sometimes they talked about the text in English, and other times they used their home language, Spanish. The teacher had modeled for them what this discussion could look like. They summarized in their own words what information they had learned, negotiating the meaning of the text together. They also talked about words they didn't understand, and tried to figure out the meaning of those words. This partner reading with multilingual discussion helped both students improve their reading comprehension of the English text. Other home language partners did the same, using Haitian Creole and Urdu.

- **Read independently and then discuss/negotiate meaning in any language**  
At the end of the independent reading portion of the Reading Workshop, a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher in a bilingual Korean program provided time for her students to meet with their reading partners. Each student had been reading their own texts at their different reading levels in Korean, and when they met with their partners they each read part of the book to their partner, and then talked about what they had read. Little by little the teacher had modeled what this partner talk time could look like, so students could talk together in Korean and/or English to discuss what they had read.

- **Read a text in one language and read a similar or translated version in another.**

During a unit on biographies, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher in a bilingual Spanish program

## Native Language Arts (NLA)

In NLA classes, you can partner students in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes. Like in any class, you will teach students who have varying levels of language proficiency. For example:

- If you have students at different levels of literacy in the home language, partner more proficient students with those who are at a lower proficiency levels. Have them read back and forth, negotiating and discussing what they read in the home language. This helps the students with lower proficiency in the home language to improve their reading. It helps both students to build their speaking and listening skills as they talk about academic content in their home language.
- Partner students and give one the text in **English** and the other the text in the **home language**. Have the students read independently, and then come together to compare vocabulary, sentence structure, storytelling tactics, etc. Were the ideas expressed in similar or different ways across the two languages?

had reading partners (students with similar reading levels) choose which biographies they both wanted to read. Partners were able to choose biographies with a version in English and a version in Spanish, *or* a different biography about the *same person* written in English and Spanish. Bilingual students read the biographies in both English and Spanish and, when they discussed what they had learned, they were able to compare the two texts. They compared vocabulary words – what was the word in English? What was it in the home language? When reading two different biographies about that person, they were able to also compare and contrast the content. What information did one biography include that the other didn't? This discussion took place in English as well as Spanish. This translanguaging had bilingual students develop literacy abilities in both of their languages.

- **Read in one language and then respond via a graphic organizer in English or the home language**

In a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade general education class, reading partners worked together to read a text in English about the water cycle. They then filled in a graphic organizer showing the different stages of the water cycle. The teacher encouraged EBLs with beginning to intermediate proficiency levels in English to label each stage of the water cycle in English, using the vocabulary from the text, and then write a summary of what happens at each stage in their home languages, Polish and Russian. This way they were able to more fully express what they were learning about the water cycle through their writing.

## Middle/Secondary Grades

- **Read or listen to a text together in English and discuss/negotiate meaning in any language**

An 11<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher was prepping her students for the ELA Regents exam. The teacher's EBLs struggled with the listening passage, since the vocabulary was often unknown and the reading done at a faster pace. To better prepare students for this part of the exam, the teacher paired students together to practice reading and listening to passages. He takes former Regents listening passages and chunks them before giving them to students. He gives students copies of the chunked text, but each partner only has half of the passage. Students alternate reading and listening, with the listening student taking notes as the other student reads. After each chunk of text, the listening student writes a summary of what she heard and identifies any questions or confusion. This summarizing and negotiating can be done in either English or the home language. The reading student adds details, answers questions, or corrects misinformation, again in either language (Figure 1). The students then switch roles and the listener becomes the reader and vice versa. After the whole text is read, students answer the corresponding multiple choice questions together, using both languages to talk through the rationale behind their choices. When they receive the answers, students discuss how they found the correct answers and how they can fix any incorrect answers.

### Emergent Bilinguals

For students who struggle with literacy in both English and a home language (including **SIFE** or **LTEL** students), partnerships are an important scaffold.

You can use these partnerships to scaffold reading by:

- Partnering the student with someone who speaks both English and the same home language. This will help the student to use the home language and English to understand what they read.
- Giving reading partners texts with pictures or images. The stronger reader can read the text and the other student can follow along and make connections between what they read and the images they see.

**Figure 1**

<p><b>Passage #1</b></p> <p>Yet every day, to those of us who were close to him, he demonstrated what a giant among men he was. Great as were his contributions to mankind — he patented a record 1093 inventions in his lifetime — it is not for these I remember him, but for his matchless courage, his imagination and determination, his humility and wit. At times, he was just plain mischievous. ...</p> <p><b>Summary #2</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><b>Questions? Confusion?</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>Summary #1</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><b>Questions? Confusion?</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p><b>Passage #2</b></p> <p>At home or at work, Father seemed to have a knack for motivating others. He could and often did give orders, but he preferred to inspire people by his own example. This was one of the secrets of his success. For he was not, as many believe, a scientist who worked in solitude in a laboratory. Once he had marketed his first successful invention...he began employing chemists, mathematicians, machinists, anyone whose talents he thought might help him solve a knotty problem. ...</p>
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- **Read independently and then discuss/negotiate meaning in any language**  
A 12<sup>th</sup> grade U.S. History class was studying historic Supreme Court cases. The teacher had five different cases to cover in one class period, so he gave different pairs of students one of the five case summaries. All five texts were written in English. Students first read independently, annotating/glossing their text in English and/or their home languages (Japanese; Chinese) with a focus on the outcome of the case and its effect on our lives today. After students were finished reading, the teacher told the pairs to share their thinking and write a brief summary of the background of the case, the outcome, and its lasting effects. Students wrote and presented their summaries to the class in English, but used their home languages to discuss and negotiate what they read and, later, wrote and presented in English.
- **Read a text in one language and read a similar or translated version in another.**  
A 9<sup>th</sup> grade Chinese bilingual class was studying genetics as a part of their Living Environment curriculum. The teacher strategically partnered students so that both students had slightly different English proficiency levels and had them read a chapter from the English textbook on genetics. After reading the text independently, students came together in pairs to discuss what they had read, using Chinese to make sense of the English text. After discussing the text in both English and Chinese, the teacher had students put together short oral presentations on what they read. Though much of the discussion was held in Chinese, partners worked together to create the short presentation in English.

- **Read in one language and then respond via a graphic organizer in English or the home language**

In an 8<sup>th</sup> grade ESL class, students were reading *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman. The book was written in a series of vignettes about different characters, so the teacher wanted students to make connections among the stories in order to form a general thesis about the lives of migrant workers. The teacher had chunked the text so that students could alternately read a short vignette in pairs. After they finished the vignette, they filled out a Venn diagram, comparing the story they read to one the whole class had heard in a read-aloud the day before. Though they had heard both stories in English, students filled out the Venn diagram in their home language. When the teacher created a whole-class Venn diagram on the board, partners shared out their ideas in English.

## Using Multilingual Texts

**Essential Questions**

- *How can we use resources in students' home languages for each genre/topic studied?*
- *How can we help emergent bilinguals develop background and content knowledge?*
- *How can multilingual resources build students' listening and reading skills?*

**Alignment with Common Core State Standards:**

As students read texts in any language, they are meeting a variety of reading standards. The same skills they would be building as they read in English are built as they read in multiple languages. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

**Reading: Key Ideas and Details: Standard 2**

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

*Students can hone this important reading skill as they read a text in any language. Students can also read in one language and summarize in another, depending on the skills you are teaching.*

**Reading: Craft and Structure: Standard 4:**

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

*As students read text in multiple languages, they can discuss*

**What is it?**

Traditionally, bilingual programs are the only classrooms that use texts written in students' home languages. However, EBLs in ANY classroom setting – mainstream, ESL, or bilingual – benefit from reading texts in both English and their home language. You can use multilingual texts to:

- **Build background knowledge on a topic**

Using texts in students' home languages helps EBLs build background knowledge about a text, whether it is an informational text or a piece of literature. Having this background improves EBLs' comprehension when they read the related text in English (Goldenberg, 2008). The more background knowledge EBLs have, the better their reading comprehension will be.

When EBLs read a text in their home language, and then read the same text in English (or a text in English on a similar topic), it supports their comprehension of the English text. It also helps EBLs compare language use in English with their home language. This is a powerful scaffold that all teachers can take advantage of.

- **Develop home language literacy**

Using multilingual texts helps EBLs grow their literacy in their languages while learning important academic content. This helps students to strengthen all of their languages, helping them more fully develop their bilingualism as well as their bilingual identities (García 2009).

**To achieve these goals, you can use multilingual texts in a variety of ways. You can:**

- **Provide textbook readings in multiple languages**

Many publishing companies publish their textbooks and workbooks other languages. If you can get a home language version for your EBLs, then there are a number of ways you can support their learning of the content. Your EBLs can preview a certain part of the textbook in the home language before you read it with the class in English. They can do this on their own if they are literate in the home language. If not, they can do the preview or listen to the text with a partner, a bilingual paraprofessional, or at home with their families. After learning about a new concept in class, EBLs can then take the home language version of the textbook home to review and discuss with their families what they learned. This provides a way for families to be more involved in their child's education.

- **Use an English text, but conduct a class in a home language to discuss and analyze the content of the text.**

There will be some texts that are only available in English, from textbooks to works of literature. This does not mean that you can't teach these English texts in a multilingual context! If you speak students' home languages, you can have students read the text in English, but conduct the rest of the class in the home language. For example, an AP Biology teacher had textbooks that were written only in English—she did not have translations available to her, and the content was too complex for her to translate for students. Knowing this, she conducted the class in Spanish, meaning that the lesson itself, the discussion, and the analysis of what they read in English were done in students' home language. This allowed students to read the text in one language, but fully negotiate and discuss it in their home



how word choices across languages shape the meaning and tone of a text. They can also use their knowledge of the home language to help them interpret words and phrases in English.

**Reading: Craft and Structure: Standard 6:**

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

*You can add an even more in-depth discussion of point of view and purpose by helping students analyze how the use of different languages affects both of these ideas.*

**Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9**

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

*Students can meet this standard by reading two or more texts in multiple languages. This will help them understand common themes or topics as they build their literacy in both English and the home language.*

**Emergent Bilinguals**

Some EBLs may not be able to read content in either English or their home language (this includes **SIFE students**). In these cases, you can get creative and draw upon different resources and strategies to teach content. You can try using the following to support these students:

**Read-Alouds** –students can listen to a text being read in a home language, and then compare what they heard with a low-level written text in English OR discuss what they heard in English.

**Multimedia** – students can listen to recordings and/or watch video clips in any language, as well as look at pictures to supplement the readings they do with a class.

language, Spanish.

- **Choose texts that have multilingual versions, or create translations of an English text**

For any text you will be using during instruction – a read aloud, shared reading, guided reading text, a content-area reading – see if you can choose texts that already have a multilingual version in your EBLs’ home languages. If you can have your EBLs read a text in the home language before reading it English, they build critical background knowledge about the content of the text. Then, when they read the same text in English, their reading comprehension is much stronger because they’re able to make connections to what they read in the home language. This also supports EBLs’ understanding of new vocabulary in English.

If you can’t find a multilingual version of a text you plan to use, you can have volunteers create a translation of texts that are the most critical to your instruction (see “How-to”).

- **Supplement English readings with additional readings in students’ home languages about the same topic or theme**

The home language text EBLs read doesn’t have to be a translation of an English text. They could read a *different* home language text that’s about the *same topic*. This still provides a way for them to build important background knowledge about the topic before reading a text in English. This also deepens and expands the academic conversation when students collaboratively discuss the different texts they’ve read about the topic. Different students have read different texts, so they are able to bring multiple points of view and aspects of the topic into collaborative conversations (see *Content-area & Reading Instruction: Comparing Multilingual Texts on the Same Content-area Topic*).

- **Include multilingual texts in an independent reading library**

This gives EBLs the opportunity to develop their literacy in both English and their home languages. You can use a multilingual class library to help students move across the literacy spectrum, aiding them in picking books (in both languages) that best fit their level of literacy.

## Translanguaging How-To

1. **Plan what multilingual texts you could use with your units of study**

As you plan each unit of study, consider:

- For a new topic: What could my EBLs read in their home language to build background knowledge about this topic?
- For a new text: Is there a multilingual version of this text, or will I need to get it translated? Could I use a different text that I know has a multilingual version?

Consider this for different type of texts you will be reading to your EBLs, or reading with your EBLs:

- Read alouds
- Shared reading texts
- Guided reading texts
- Content-area texts

2. **Find texts in your EBLs’ home languages**

There are numerous publishing companies, vendors, and websites that have texts in

This will help to reinforce content and create bridges to literacy in both languages.

### Resources

There are many wonderful books, websites, and publishers that can help you to design and supplement your units with EBLs in mind. Here are a few:

For lists of multilingual or multicultural texts, try:

- **ALA's Pura Belpré Award**

This award is presented annually to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth.

- **Américas Award**

This award is given in recognition of U.S. works of fiction, poetry, folklore, or selected non-fiction in English or Spanish that authentically and engagingly portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States.

- **Colorín Colorado**

This website has many resources for students, parents, and educators and includes a section "For Librarians" that lists many books in both Spanish and English.

For examples of **specific authors** that utilize translanguaging in their books, visit the websites of:

- Pat Mora
- Carmen Tafolla
- Yuyi Morales
- Samantha Vamos
- Alma Flor Ada
- Pam Muñoz Ryan
- Margarita Engle

English as well as another language. For languages that aren't commonly targeted in the United States, you will need to rely on families or school community members who speak that home language to help you translate an English (See #3 below). Some resources to try:

- **www.hexagramm.com - Hexagramm** is a New York City-based book vendor specialized in home language texts for grades K-12 in **Spanish, French, Arabic, Mandarin, and English**. They have a wide range of resources, including informational texts, literature, content-area trade books, leveled texts, and guided reading texts. A sampling of their multilingual resources are shown on the website; call the company directly and they will meet with you in person to discuss your particular needs, and seek out specific resources that fit those needs (grade level, reading level, languages, content-area topics, themes).
- The following publishers sell **bilingual/multilingual texts**:
  - **Lee and Low Publishers** – This publisher sells bilingual books (Spanish/English, Chinese/English), as well as multicultural literature.
  - **Children's Book Press** – An imprint of Lee and Low, this publisher sells bilingual children's books as well as books in English that celebrate bilingualism.
- The following publishers sell **Spanish-language texts**:
  - **Cinco Puntos Press**
  - **Piñata Books**
  - **Rayo Books**
  - **Mondo**
  - **Scholastic en Español**
- **www.readinga-z.com - Reading A-Z** website has leveled texts from A-Z (both informational texts and literature) that work very well for guided reading groups. All of their texts are in English, Spanish, and French. You print out the books and staple them together.

### 3. Create a home language translation of an English text

You can enlist the help of family members from your class community to create a home language version of an English text. This is a great way to get families involved. You can also reach out to other members of the school community who speak the home language, or older students who are proficient in both the home language and English. Make sure you have these volunteers translate the texts that are most central to your units of study. You only need one or two volunteers to be able to create the translated resources you need! Possible ways volunteers can help:

- If volunteers can read English, you can provide them with a short text in English that you would like them to translate into their home language. They can write or type this translation on paper and physically adhere it to each page of the text, so the English and the home language are side-by-side in the text.
- If you provide the volunteer with a recording device, they can also record themselves reading aloud the translation in their home language. This will help *any* EBL follow along with the translated text, even if they're not literate in their home language (for more on this, see *Resources: Multilingual Listening Center*).

### Assessment

To determine Spanish-speaking students' instructional and independent reading levels, Fountas and Pinnell now have a Spanish benchmark assessment program to parallel their English assessments: <http://www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/sel/overview.aspx>

### Using Multilingual Texts in General Education Classrooms:

- Have EBLs read the same content as mainstream students, but in their home language. They can then read the English text to compare, and students can then discuss the content in English.
- Provide EBLs with side-by-side translations of English content in their own languages. Reading responses can be produced in English.
- Preview English texts with strategies like KWL charts or Anticipation Guides, but allow students to complete them in their home languages.
- Have EBLs **annotate an English text** by writing home language translations of words they're learning above or next to the English words. This helps them remember the meaning of the English text.

### 4. Include home language texts in an independent reading library

All elementary classrooms have independent reading libraries that could become multilingual. In middle and secondary schools, many teachers believe that the ELA or NLA classroom is the only place for an independent reading library. However, content area teachers can also create an independent reading library to encourage students' inquiry into the content. You can set up a successful multilingual library in your classroom by:

- Creating **separate home language** baskets of books, grouped by topic, level, genre, etc.
- Creating book baskets around different topics where the home language books are **mixed in** with the English books.
- Plan opportunities for students to choose books in **both** English and their home language from the independent reading library in a clear and purposeful way.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

#### • Independent Reading Library – Bilingual Program

Elementary teachers in a Spanish-English and a French-English bilingual program created separate leveled libraries for each language, making sure the levels represented the current reading levels of their students. They also created separate Spanish and English or French and English book baskets for each of the content-area topics they were studying, as well as other genres and authors. The teachers felt it was very important for the libraries in each language to be **comparable in size**. They noticed that most of the bilingual classrooms had more English texts than Spanish or French, so they allocated funds towards purchasing more Spanish or French books.

#### • Independent Reading Library – ESL Program

Elementary teachers in a self-contained ESL program had an independent reading library in English. When they decided to implement some translanguaging strategies, they decided to include home language texts in their libraries. Some of the ESL teachers created separate home language book baskets with texts related to the content-area topics and genres the class was studying. Other teachers decided to group the home language and English texts together in the book baskets. Regardless of how the home language texts were organized, all of the teachers helped their EBLs find those texts as they started a new content-area topic or genre, providing ways for their EBLs to read the home language texts to build background knowledge and improve their comprehension of English texts.

#### • Creating translations of a content-area text

A 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher always used a particular trade book to help her students learn about rock formation. Since this text was fundamental to her science unit of study, she asked two different volunteers to translate it into her EBLs' home languages (Spanish and Mandarin). One volunteer was a parent, and the other a paraprofessional at the school. The teacher had her EBLs read the home language version *before* she used the English text in class. This built her EBLs' background knowledge, and improved their understanding of the English text, including the science vocabulary. It also helped her EBLs feel more confident participating in the science discussions.

#### • Multilingual guided reading texts

An ESL teacher in 4<sup>th</sup> grade used leveled texts from [www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com) for some

### Creating a Multilingual Library

Short on funds? Here are two organizations you can explore to help you create a library for free:

#### Project Cicero

[www.projectcicero.org](http://www.projectcicero.org)

This non-profit book drive helps teachers create or supplement classroom libraries. The organization receives donations of new or lightly used books for every grade level and for many different topics. Each March, teachers are invited to come and take books that meet their needs—for free!

#### Donors Choose

[www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org)

This online charity is a place for teachers to post classroom project requests and get matched up with donors who will help them obtain resources. If your school does not have the funds to provide you with an independent reading library, you could request one through Donors Choose!

### Middle/Secondary

If you're new to independent reading libraries, here are some general tips for setting one up!

1) Determine what topics you will be teaching throughout the year.

2) Locate texts that relate to the topics you plan on teaching, focusing on reading and interest level.

3) Create a reading and library system that is easy for students to navigate and easy for you to incorporate into your teaching. This means thinking about:

- How will you organize the books in your library?
- When will you have students read and for

of her guided reading groups. She printed the text she planned to use with a group in English as well as Spanish. Before meeting with the group, she had her Spanish-speaking EBLs read the Spanish version of the text. Some of her EBLs had higher literacy levels in Spanish than others. When possible, she gave the text to her EBLs with lower literacy levels the day before, and had them take it home to read with someone in their family or community. The following day when she pulled the guided reading group to read the text in English, her EBLs had background knowledge about the text and were able to comprehend the text in English. For English vocabulary words students didn't understand, the teacher referred to the Spanish version to help clarify the meaning.

### Middle/Secondary Grades

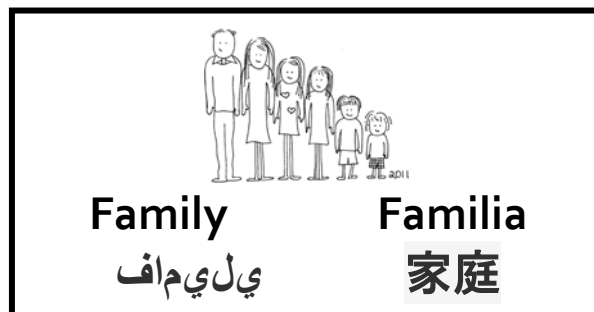
- **Supplement English readings with additional readings in students' home languages about the same topic or theme – NLA Program**

A 9<sup>th</sup> grade NLA teacher knew that her students were reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton in their ELA class. Because the book focused on issues of gangs and social class, the NLA teacher found several readings about the same topics in students' home language, Spanish. In the NLA class, students read several newspaper and magazine articles, written in Spanish, about the separation of the rich and poor and its connection to gang violence in places like Mexican border towns. Students were able to draw from both the English-language book and the home-language readings to write essays about the connection between social class and gangs in our society.

- **Independent Reading Library – ESL Program**

In a 7<sup>th</sup> grade ESL class, the teacher gave a survey at the beginning of the year that asked students about their reading habits, interests, and comfort with reading in different languages. She used the information she obtained from the surveys to create a library, using students' interests to organize the books. She labeled bins with the titles of the sections, making sure to translate the title into the languages represented in her classroom, and put relevant books in each section (Figure 1). She did not separate books by language or reading level, instead including books from all languages and on all levels on that one topic. Books about “family” were in one section, no matter in what language or on what level it was written. This provided students with the opportunity to pick books based on their interests, reading levels, and languages. It also set up a natural scaffold, using students' interests to move them across a spectrum of both language and literacy.

Figure 1



- **Choose texts that have multilingual versions, or create translations of an English text – General Education Program**

A 10<sup>th</sup> grade Global History teacher and push-in ESL teacher planned their units to include texts in multiple languages. Often the teachers would jigsaw readings on a

what purpose?

topic with readings in multiple languages. Groups of students read texts on a variety of levels, in either Spanish or English, and then reported back to the whole class in English. Any supplemental readings were provided with side-by-side translation from English into Spanish. One way in which the teachers consistently used multilingual texts was by providing the daily notes in both English and students' home language of Spanish (Figure 2). Students were encouraged to copy the notes in either (or even both) of the two languages.

Figure 2





## Multilingual Listening Center

### Essential Questions

- *How can we use resources in students' home languages for each genre/topic studied?*
- *How can we help emergent bilinguals develop background and content knowledge?*
- *How can multilingual resources build students' listening and reading skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

For reading, when you have EBLs listen to texts in the home language or in English while reading along it supports their comprehension of that text.

With this stronger comprehension, EBLs are positioned to develop the reading skills outlined in the anchor [Reading standards](#) in all three areas:

- [Key Ideas and Details](#)
- [Craft and Structure](#)
- [Integration of Knowledge and Ideas](#)

For the content areas, When you have EBLs watch and listen to diverse media in the home language and English it develops their understanding of content-area topics. This is an important way to help EBLs meet the [standards in social studies, science, and math](#).

Finally, when EBLs listen to texts and read along, it develops their listening and speaking abilities and their language skills. This helps EBLs meet the following anchor standards for Speaking and Listening, and Language. Refer to these standard for specific grade-level expectations.

### [Speaking and Listening:](#)

### What is it?

A Listening Center is a way for emergent bilinguals to listen to texts in both English and their home languages. Listening Center activities can take on different forms depending on what support you want to give your emergent bilinguals:

#### To build EBLs' background knowledge about a topic:

- Have EBLs listen to texts or media in their home language. Since this is the language EBLs understand fully, it's a perfect way for them to learn about a new topic – building the crucial background knowledge they need to continue learning about the topic in English. You can have EBLs listen to something in their home language as you begin a new unit of study, or as you begin reading a new text in class.
- EBLs can listen to:
  - **Recorded versions of home language texts** (on tape, CD, media files)
  - **Recorded translations of English texts**
  - **Online video clips** in students' home languages
  - **A DVD** in the home language
  - **Educational podcasts** in the home language

#### To scaffold EBLs' understanding of an English text:

- Translate an English text and get it recorded in your students' home language. There are a number of ways to create these translated recordings (see sidebar on next page). Then, when your EBLs read or hear the English version of that text it will make more sense to them. This is an excellent way to improve EBLs' reading comprehension in English.
- EBLs can listen to any English text that you get translated and recorded:
  - **A textbook passage** that you will soon talk about with the class in English
  - **Part of a read aloud** that you will soon read aloud to the class in English
  - **A content-area text** that you will soon read and discuss with the class in English
  - **A shared reading text** that you will soon read with the class in English
  - **A guided reading text** that you will soon have a group of students read in English

#### To help EBLs develop their reading fluency and oral language in English:

- Once EBLs are familiar with a text in their home language, they can **listen multiple times to the English version** while following along with the text. These repeated readings with audio support are a fantastic way for EBLs to connect the oral language they hear in the recorded text with the written language they see in the actual text. Listening to the text repeatedly, and reading along softly as they get more familiar with the language, improves

**Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 2**

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**Language: Knowledge of Language: Standard 3**

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

EBLs' reading fluency and their oral language development in English.

## Translanguaging How-To

### 1. Plan listening resources for your units of study

As you plan each unit of study, consider:

- **For a new topic:** What could my EBLs listen to in their home language to build background knowledge about this topic?
- **For a new text:** Is there a bilingual version of this text, or will I need to get it translated? Can I get this text recorded in my EBLs' home languages AND recorded in English?

### 2. Find resources EBLs can listen to in the home language

You can purchase professionally recorded versions of different trade books, chapter books, picture books, and textbooks in different languages. However, there is a wealth of listening resources available online. Some resources to try:

#### Oral Website Translator

- **[www.awesomelibrary.org/Awesome\\_Talking\\_Library.html#loadversion2](http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Awesome_Talking_Library.html#loadversion2)** The “Awesome Talkster” is a free download that reads aloud online text. You can use it to have students hear what is written on any website in English or the home language and read along, including books posted online. **It is available in English and nine other languages.**

#### Videos

- **[www.teachertube.com](http://www.teachertube.com)** - TeacherTube is a school-friendly version of YouTube, with a wealth of educational videos at all levels, in different alphabetic languages. To do a search, first translate the key word to the home language using a website like Google Translate (Ex: plants → plantas), then put the home language translation into the Teacher Tube search field. You can narrow the search to only look for videos.
- **[www.watchknowlearn.com](http://www.watchknowlearn.com)** - Watch Know Learn compiles educational videos from different websites for elementary, middle, and high school grades. If you put a particular language in the “search” box, you will get the videos that are in that language, or about that language. They can be further categorized into subject area.
- **[www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com)** – Brain Pop has videos about content-area topics in English, Spanish, and French.

#### Audio Books

- **[en.childrenslibrary.org](http://en.childrenslibrary.org)** The International Children’s Digital Library has online books students can listen to in 61 different languages. Click on “Read books” and then choose a language from the drop down menu.
- **[www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com)** has over 8,000 audio book titles available for kids on all kinds of topics. You can download the books to your iPod or iPad. They also have audio books in multiple languages. Many are in Spanish, but there are some in other languages as well.

### 3. Create home language recordings of texts



### What should my Listening Center look like?

#### Elementary / Middle

You can designate a certain area of the classroom as the "Listening Center." Center it around the computers students will be using to listen to texts and media, or around a tape player students will use to listen to recorded text. It can also simply be the place in the classroom where you store recorded materials.

If you invest in individual tape players, CD players, or iPads, you can have EBLs take the materials from the center and listen to them anywhere in the classroom. You can even have EBLs take these recorded materials home as part of their homework – an excellent support in particular for **middle school students** who have limited class time with each teacher.

You can enlist the help of family members from your class community to create a home language version of an English text. This is a great way to get families involved. You can also reach out to other members of the school community who speak the home language, or older students who are proficient in both the home language and English. Make sure you have these volunteers record the texts that are most central to your units of study. You only need one or two volunteers to be able to create the recorded resources you need! Possible ways volunteers can help:

- **Translate an English Text to the home language (a written version & a recorded version)**

If volunteers can read English, you can provide them with a short text in English that you would like them to translate into their home language. They can write this translation on paper and physically adhere it to each page of the text, so the English and the home language are side-by-side in the text. Provide the volunteer with a recording device they can use to record themselves reading aloud the translation in their home language. This will help any EBL follow along with the translated text, even if they're not literate in their home language.

- **Translate an English Text to the home language (just a recorded version)**

A variation of the above strategy is to skip the written translation, and simply have volunteers record the translation in the home language, so EBLs can listen to the content of the text first in their home language, and then read it in English.

- **Record a home language text**

If you want your EBLs to listen to a recorded version of a text that's *already written in their home language*, you can ask a volunteer to do this recording. This develops EBLs' literacy skills in their home language, and develops their knowledge about the topic of the text. This is particularly helpful for **SIFE students** and **primary grade students**.

#### 4. Set up a routine for listening to texts in English

It's important for EBLs to have a set procedure they follow when listening to a text in English so they can more effectively develop their reading skills and oral language skills in English. Danling Fu (2003: 45) describes a simple routine she set up with middle school EBLs in New York City's Chinatown. This routine also works well for upper grade elementary students, and can be altered to make it appropriate for primary grade students:

##### Listening Center routine

- Listen to the text quietly 2 times.
- Listen and repeat with the reading 3 times.
- Turn off the recording and practice reading by yourself or with a peer 2 times.
- Listen to the text again 2 times.

Fu (2003: 43) also describes a routine she put in place **as homework** for middle school EBLs to practice listening and reading texts. Again, this can be adjusted for elementary EBLs. Each EBL had an inexpensive tape recorder with a blank tape inside, for their personal use at home. When teachers first read aloud a new text in class, they had students place their tape recorders near the teacher. That way, teachers were able to create the recording of the text *during class time* for all of

### **SIFE Students**

Having a listening center is a crucial support for SIFE students, since they struggle to read grade-level texts in *any* language.

1. First have students *listen* to home language texts or media to build background knowledge.
2. Then, help students *read* the text in their home language or in English (depending on your program). As you help them decode the text, they will be better prepared to make meaning from the words by making connections to what they heard earlier.
3. Have students take home texts recorded in English and the home language so they can listen repeatedly and follow along with the reading (see “How-to”). This will develop their decoding ability, sight word recognition, and reading fluency.

their EBLs. At home, EBLs followed this routine:

### **Homework Routine**

- Listen to the text.
- Look up words you don’t understand that seem important to the text.
- Listen to the text again as many times as you want, reading along until you are happy with how fluently you can read the text.
- Tape record yourself reading the text.
- You can delete and re-tape yourself as many times as you want until you are pleased.
- Turn in your recording the next day.

Middle school teachers working with Fu said they only needed to listen to part of the EBLs’ recordings to get a sense for how much they had practiced. Or, they simply listened to their EBLs read in class, and from that they knew which students had taken the homework seriously.

Whatever routine you choose to implement, have the steps written down for EBLs (with visuals, or translated into the home language).

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

- A 1<sup>st</sup> grade bilingual teacher launched a unit of study on plants, showing her students different seeds and grown plants. She had her students listen and watch a video clip online in Spanish about how plants grow. This video clip visually illustrated the process for young students, and explained it in Spanish. During the unit of study, the teacher read different English books to and with the class about plants. Her bilingual students were better able to participate in the discussions about the books after watching the Spanish video clip. They also made connections to the video as the class went through the process of planting their own seeds and watching them grow.
- A 4<sup>th</sup> grade ESL teacher had several students from Bangladesh in her classroom one year, but had no texts or other resources in Bengali. She was able to enlist one of the student’s family members to record some key English texts the class was using for social studies and science units into Bengali. While the family member wasn’t as comfortable with spoken English, she was able to read English quite well. She took home the texts each month, and created a recording in Bengali that explained what the text was about. For some texts, she wrote down the translation on post-it notes, and adhered them to each page, putting the Bengali translation side-by-side with the English text.
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> grade general education teacher had a number of beginning and early intermediate EBLs in her classroom. During English guided reading group sessions with these students, the teacher recorded herself reading aloud the text. In the following days, the teacher had her EBLs continue listening to the text, and practice reading along softly. The routine they followed was to listen to the text as many times as they needed to feel comfortable reading the text by themselves. Students then used a tape recorder to record themselves reading aloud the text. They listened to themselves, and decided whether or not they wanted to try the recording again. As the weeks passed, students were able to compare earlier recordings with later ones to see their progress with their reading fluency and oral language proficiency.

**Resources:****Encouraging Families to Volunteer**

Many families want to be a part of their child's school community, but don't know how they can help, especially if they aren't fluent in English.

Reach out to families and explain specific ways they can help, as described in Step 3 of "Translanguaging How-to."

For example, family members who are literate in their home language can create a recording of one of those texts. Some family members might be able to read enough English to understand what a text is saying, and would be able to create a home language translation of that text (written and/or recorded).

**Websites with Recorded Texts in English**

- [www.raz-kids.com](http://www.raz-kids.com)  
**Raz Kids** - Interactive leveled e-books designed for grades K-6 (but works for EBLs at *any* grade level).
- [www.booksshouldbefree.com/genre/Children](http://www.booksshouldbefree.com/genre/Children)  
**Books Should Be Free** - This website has free audio books for many childrens' chapter books. They provide the audio for students to listen to, but you need to provide the book to EBLs so they can connect the oral language with the written language in the text.

- A 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher had a **SIFE student** who was reading in Spanish at about a 1<sup>st</sup> grade level, and had an early intermediate English proficiency. She had him take home recordings of bilingual texts that were just above his reading level. He was able to listen to the same text first in Spanish and then in English. He listened to the texts repeatedly, reading along when he felt comfortable. The following day as part of a reading conference, the teacher would check in with him and have him read the text aloud. They also discussed the text to keep an emphasis on *meaning*.

**Middle Grades**

- One of the middle school teachers Danling Fu worked with in Chinatown posted the following directions for her EBLs to use when working at the Listening Center (2003: 46):

After we go over this piece together as a class, you will listen to it on tape. At the listening center:

- Listen to it twice.
- Stop the tape and read aloud to yourself and underline the words you have difficulty reading.
- Listen to it on tape again and repeat after it, paying special attention to the words that are hard for you. Do this 3 times.
- Turn off the tape recorder and practice reading in pairs.

When it is your turn to come to the teacher, the teacher will:

- Check your reading
- Have you tell her what you have learned from reading this piece

## Bilingual Dictionaries & Picture Dictionaries

### Essential Questions

- *How can we use resources in students' home languages for each genre/topic studied?*
- *How can we help emergent bilinguals develop background and content knowledge?*
- *How can multilingual resources build students' listening and reading skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

#### Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

*Bilingual dictionaries and picture dictionaries are both reference materials that EBLs can use to meet this anchor Language standard.*

#### Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

*Having EBLs use bilingual dictionaries to understand nuances in word meanings is an excellent way to make use of this reference material.*

#### Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6

Acquire and use accurately a

### What is it?

#### Bilingual Dictionaries

Using bilingual dictionaries is one way for emergent bilinguals to develop their vocabulary in English. Bilingual dictionaries can be a great resource, but they can also be overused if they are the *only* strategy we use with emergent bilinguals to support their vocabulary development and comprehension. The following are two effective ways to have bilingual students use these dictionaries:

- **Develop “Anchor Concepts”**

Using bilingual dictionaries can help EBLs develop their understanding of “anchor concepts” – the key words they need to learn to understand critical concepts. To use bilingual dictionaries in this more focused way, have EBLs *only* look up words related to “anchor concepts.” These are the words that are most critical to understanding the concepts they are learning.

- **Annotate a Text**

You can also have EBLs use bilingual dictionaries to annotate a text as they are reading independently or collaboratively. To do this, students look up words that are critical to their comprehension of the text, and write the home language translation next to the English word in the text. This annotated version of the text uses EBLs' home languages to help them remember the meaning of new words, increasing their comprehension of the text.

EBLs can use print or digital bilingual dictionaries, such as ones available on iPads. Make sure the dictionaries you provide translate from English to the home language, and *also* from the home language to English. That way, EBLs can either look up an unfamiliar English word, OR they can look up a word in their home language to know how to say it in English.

#### Bilingual Picture Dictionaries

Bilingual picture dictionaries are a fantastic resource for EBLs in grades K-12, since the vocabulary they present ranges from very simplistic to highly complex. Preview a few pages to make sure the topics covered and the amount of words presented match with your students' grade level and reading ability.

- **Everyday Vocabulary**

Many bilingual picture dictionaries help EBLs develop vocabulary around everyday topics, such as *school, home, the park, body parts, animals*, etc. These are great to have EBLs use during **independent writing time**. Depending on what topic they want to write about, you can help EBLs reference that page of the picture dictionary to add more English vocabulary to their writing.

- **Content-Area Vocabulary**

There are also **content-area bilingual picture dictionaries** that present vocabulary related to specific math, science, and social studies concepts. These are ideal for supporting EBLs at all grade levels, since you can have them reference the specific pages that present vocabulary related to the content-area topic they are currently studying. This also helps EBLs build background.

range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

*Bilingual dictionaries help EBLs develop their vocabulary base for general academic and domain-specific words. Many bilingual picture dictionaries have content-area versions to build EBLs' vocabulary in math, science, and social studies.*

#### **Other Vocab Strategies**

Using a bilingual dictionary is one way to understand meaning of new words, but certainly not the ONLY way. It's unrealistic for EBLs to look up every unfamiliar word, and a poor use of time. If you teach your EBLs other strategies for determining word meaning then you reduce their reliance on bilingual dictionaries:

- Use context clues
- Use picture clues
- Look for cognates

#### **Anticipate unfamiliar words**

Before you begin a new unit of study, look up the translations to key vocabulary words (using a website such as Google Translate). Create and display multilingual word cards with the word written in English and students' home languages. (See *Vocabulary: Multilingual Word Walls*) This reduces the number of key words EBLs have to spend time looking up in the bilingual dictionaries.

## **Translanguaging How-To**

### **1. Get bilingual dictionaries & bilingual picture dictionaries**

Make sure your classroom has traditional bilingual dictionaries and/or bilingual picture dictionaries, depending on your grade level (see sidebar on following page). The dictionaries should represent **all** of your students' home languages.

### **2. Teach EBLs how to use bilingual dictionaries to look up “anchor concepts” or to annotate key words in a text.**

- **Teacher Guided:** Support EBLs in this process by indicating which words in a text or lesson are essential to their comprehension, and which words are not. Without this guidance, EBLs won't know which unfamiliar words they really need to look up, and which can be skipped.
- **Develop Student Independence:** You will also need to teach your EBLs how to figure out which words they should look up when reading on their own. Model and practice strategies such as:
  - If there is a word that repeats multiple times in a text, it's an indication that the word is important.
  - Continue reading, and if the meaning of the text is still unclear, then look up the unknown word.
  - In informational texts, know that key words are often found in headings, and at the beginning or end of paragraphs (where the main idea is often expressed). There could also be text clues, such as bold words, underlined words, or italicized words. If there is an unfamiliar word in one of these places, it could be a key word to look up.
  - If there is an unfamiliar word that gets in the way of understanding a whole paragraph (or section of text), then it's an indicator that the word is important.

### **3. Teach EBLs how to use bilingual picture dictionaries to add vocabulary to their writing**

#### **Labeling:**

- During independent writing, have EBLs refer to a particular topic in the bilingual picture dictionaries to label something they've drawn, or to label an image.
- Model for EBLs how they can add more labels by including more details in their illustrations. Many of the labels will be nouns, but you can also help EBLs label adjectives (such as color or size words) and verbs (the actions that are taking place in the drawing). Labeling is an excellent way for EBLs to expand the English vocabulary they use in their writing.
- EBLs can then elaborate on the writing topic in their home language if they can't fully express themselves in English, or record themselves talking about the writing topic in their home language.

#### **Sentence Frames:**

- During independent writing, model for EBLs a sentence frame they can use for the particular type of writing they are doing. Providing a sentence frame and a source for vocabulary such as the bilingual picture dictionary gives EBLs the support they need to create more writing in English.
- Show students how they can refer to a particular page spread in the picture dictionary to fill in the sentence frame with different words. For example, if 4<sup>th</sup> graders are writing an informational text about Native Americans, they could use sentence frames such as: They ate \_\_\_\_\_. or They



## Resources

A quick search on a website like [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) will help you find bilingual dictionaries for any of your students' home languages.

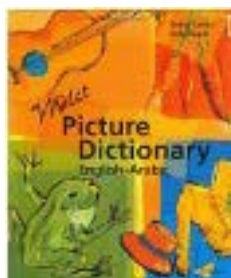
Search:

“dictionary English ([home language](#))”

OR

“picture dictionary English ([home language](#))”

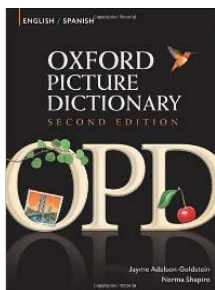
## Examples of Picture Dictionaries with Everyday Vocabulary:



Milet Picture Dictionary English-Arabic (*primary grades*)



The New Oxford Picture Dictionary English-Japanese (*elementary/middle*)



Oxford Picture Dictionary English-Spanish (*high school – includes some content-area vocabulary*)

used \_\_\_\_\_.

- EBLs can then elaborate on the writing topic in their home language if they can't fully express themselves in English, or record themselves talking about the writing topic in their home language.

## 4. Make them easily available

You don't want to waste precious instructional time having students get the dictionaries. Anticipate when students will need them.

- **Elementary**

Anticipate when your EBLs will need to reference the bilingual picture dictionaries or regular dictionaries. Have students get into the routine of picking up the dictionaries as you transition to that activity.

- **Middle / Secondary**

You may feel that your students will reference them for an anchor concept at least once during each class. If this is the case, have EBLs get in the routine of picking up a bilingual dictionary when they enter the classroom so they have it ready. If you have tables, you can permanently keep the bilingual dictionaries on the tables.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

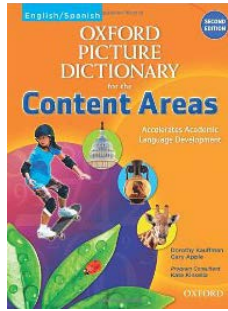
- **Bilingual Dictionaries**

3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in a French/English dual language bilingual program researched a country of their choice from one of the continents they had studied during the school year. During their research time, as students read texts in both English and French to gather information, they encountered many unfamiliar vocabulary words in both languages. The teacher worked with students to think critically about which of these words would be the most important for them to look up in their bilingual dictionaries. Throughout the unit she supported students with this developing skill since everything seems “important” to most 3<sup>rd</sup> graders! The teacher also taught mini-lessons on other ways students could determine a word's meaning, including the use of glossaries, context clues, and French-English cognates.

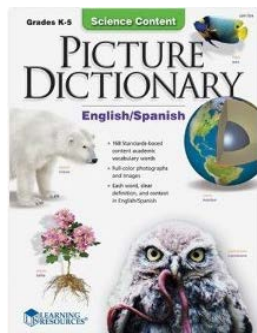
- **Bilingual Picture Dictionaries**

In a self-contained ESL program, 5<sup>th</sup> graders EBLs with beginning and intermediate English proficiencies used Spanish-English picture dictionaries on a daily basis during independent writing time. Based on the topic of their writing, the teacher helped these students find thematic pages in the bilingual picture dictionary that had vocabulary they could add to their writing. The teacher had modeled for her EBLs how to label illustrations (or other visuals they included with their writing) with as many words from the picture dictionary as possible. The teacher also gave her EBLs different sentence frames they could use to write form sentences in English, adding different vocabulary words from the picture dictionaries to each form sentence. This helped build students' vocabulary base in English and develop increasingly more complex sentence structures with the different sentence frames the teacher introduced to students. The teacher *always* had her EBLs add home language writing to this more basic English writing, so her students could fully express themselves and improve their writing abilities.

**Examples of Picture Dictionaries with Content-Area Vocabulary:**

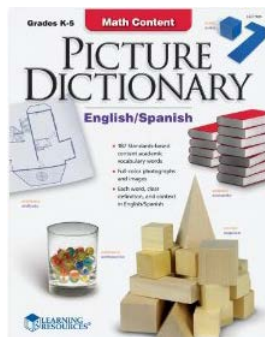


Oxford Picture Dictionary Content Areas English-Spanish (elementary, middle, some high school)



Science Content: Picture Dictionary English-Spanish (K-5)

Sample page:



Math Content: Picture Dictionary English-Spanish (K-5)

**Middle / Secondary Grades**

- **Bilingual Dictionaries**

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA class was studying the genre of memoir. The unit culminated with students writing their own short memoirs about important moments in their lives. Most students wrote first drafts of their memoirs in Spanish, with some students using both Spanish and English in their writing. Once students had a draft of their writing, the teacher had them use bilingual dictionaries to translate their own work. The teacher had students focus on keywords, anchor concepts, and cognates, rather than translating every word. The result of this activity was a memoir written in multiple languages. This allowed students to see their languages side-by-side, encouraging translanguaging. These short memoirs, in both Spanish and English, were published in a class book and put in the library for students to read.

- **Bilingual Picture Dictionaries**

A 9<sup>th</sup> grade Living Environment class used bilingual picture dictionaries during a unit on ecology and biomes. The teacher had groups of students create stories about each biome, helping students to interact with and retain important content vocabulary. The first draft of the story was in either English or students' home languages. However, a second draft of the story was required in English. Because some students in the class were beginner EBLs, the teacher had them use bilingual picture dictionaries in Japanese and Spanish to help translate and add relevant vocabulary their stories. For example, students working on a story about tundras looked at thematic pages in the bilingual picture dictionary (for relevant weather vocabulary, animal and plant vocabulary, etc.). In addition to content vocabulary words like *arctic* and *thaw*, they were able to add related words like *frozen*, *cold*, *snow*, etc. Writing the stories with the use of the bilingual picture dictionaries enabled EBLs to add context to the content vocabulary they were learning in English. It also helped them to see connections between their home languages and English.



## Internet as a Multilingual Resource

### Essential Questions:

- *How can we use resources in students' home languages for each genre/topic studied?*
- *How can we help emergent bilinguals develop background and content knowledge?*
- *How can multilingual resources build students' listening and reading skills?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

When you use the Internet as a multilingual resource, you are enabling students to meet the following standards in reading, writing, and speaking/listening. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### **Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7**

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

#### **Writing: Distribution and Production of Writing: Standard 6**

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

#### **Writing: Distribution and Production of Writing: Standard 8**

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

### What is it?

We use the Internet in a number of ways to support our EBLs. We have them research different topics in English, read digital text, and listen to YouTube videos and podcasts in English. However, how often do we look at Internet as a multilingual resource? In order to use Internet effectively with EBLs, we need to approach it with multilingual goals in mind. You can use Internet to:

- **Learn content and conduct research using the home language**  
Have your EBLs access websites in the home language *as well as* in English to learn important content and conduct research. This gives EBLs an authentic reason to draw on all of their languages to make meaning and best understand content. It also provides rigorous cognitive engagement for EBLs by having them utilize their multiple languages to synthesize the information they've gathered. You can have EBLs:
  - **Gather information by researching a topic using websites in both their home language and English.**  
Students can take notes in both languages, depending on what they read. When students get to the drafting stage, they can write everything in English. The final research paper can be a piece of formal English writing informed by multilingual research. Or, in a bilingual program, the final writing can be in English and/or the other language.
  - **Use online resource guides.**  
Students can use the online version of World Book (which has English, Spanish, and French versions) to read about a content-area topic in multiple languages. This resource is also ideal for conducting multilingual research.
  - **Use student-friendly websites written in the home language to have students learn about a content-area topic.**  
Many of these websites are interactive, and include visuals and media. This can be especially helpful if the topics being discussed are relevant to students' home languages. For example, if a Social Studies class is reading about immigration, a Spanish-language news site might provide new and interesting perspectives on the topic. If English speakers read English articles and Spanish speakers read Spanish articles, the conversation about the topic of immigration might be more authentic and more interesting. For students who need an additional scaffold, you can use the "Awesome Talkster" ([www.awesomelibrary.org/Awesome\\_Talking\\_Library.html#loadversion2](http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Awesome_Talking_Library.html#loadversion2)), a free download that reads aloud online text. You can use it to have students hear what is written on a website and read along, including books posted online. It is available in English and nine other languages.
  - **Watch media such as video clips or videocasts in both English and the home language to support and scaffold difficult content.**  
This use of multimedia enhances EBLs' content and language learning.
  - **Use websites with audio in the home language and English.**

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 2**

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 5**

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

For example, utilize websites that let students listen to texts, or listen to podcasts related to the content-area topic students are learning about (See *Resources: Listening Center* for specific resources).

- **Support language instruction**

Have EBLs use websites to further their understanding of both English and their home languages. You can have EBLs use:

- Websites that translate from English to the home language, or from the home language to English. The translation can be individual words, sentences, or longer texts. Some, like Google Translate, also provide an audio version of the translated text so EBLs can hear what it sounds like.
- Websites that provide visual support, like Google Images, to clarify the meaning of vocabulary EBLs are learning in English and the home language.

## **Translanguaging How-To**

### **1. Search for websites where EBLs can learn content and conduct research in the home language**

- It can be daunting to look for home language websites that are appropriate for your EBLs to learn about a content-area topic or to conduct research, especially if you don't speak the home languages. Here are some ideas for what to do when you first sit down at your computer:
  - Identify the topic you want your students to learn about.
  - Use Google Translate to translate the keyword for your topic from English to the home language.
  - Type the translated keyword into a search engine to find related websites. Instead of using the English version of a search engine like Google or Yahoo, you can use a country-specific version. For example, instead of doing a search for Spanish websites with google.com, you can go to the Dominican Republic version: **www.google.com.do**.
  - If you don't have a word in mind that you'd like to search for, searching the following words results in useful websites and resources:
    - **Bilingual reading**
    - **Bilingual school resources**

- One website with links for Spanish-speaking students is:

**<http://www.eduplace.com/bil/>**

It lists websites students can access for different topics of study. The explanations of the websites are in English as well as Spanish, but most of the websites themselves are in Spanish.

### **2. Use English websites that have multilingual versions**

- **World Book Online - [www.worldbookonline.com](http://www.worldbookonline.com)**  
This program can serve as an online companion to the World Book textbook series. There are different sites for different content areas and there are versions of the books in both Spanish and French. The sites are also separated into "beginners" and "advanced," so you can pick the site that best fits the levels of your students. The site has sections like "How to do Research" and "Resource Guides" that can be very helpful in teaching students explicit research skills.

### Emergent Bilinguals

The Internet can be a great resource for those students who struggle with literacy in both English and their home language. Teachers can use the Internet to help these students see connections between new language and content by:

Having students use [Google Images](#) to search key content words and create word cards or word collages that illustrate the many meanings and representations of the new word/concept.

Finding [videos](#) or other multimedia that illustrate the concepts “in action,” in either English or a home language.

Using [audio](#) translations of words (on sites like Google Translate or other dictionary websites) so that students can make connections between the sound of the word and its written form.

- **BrainPOP - [www.brainpop.com](http://www.brainpop.com)**

This website provides over 1000 short videos on topics in all academic subjects. BrainPOP provides content for students in grades 3 and up, but also has a different website, BrainPOP Junior, for students in grades K-3 ([www.brainpopjr.com](http://www.brainpopjr.com)). The website has ESL resources ([www.brainpopesl.com](http://www.brainpopesl.com)) as well as separate sites for videos in both Spanish ([www.esp.brainpop.com](http://www.esp.brainpop.com)) and French ([www.brainpop.fr](http://www.brainpop.fr)).

### 3. Use websites that support language instruction

- **Google Translate - [www.translate.google.com](http://www.translate.google.com)**

This is a reliable website for both students and teachers. You and your students can translate words or whole documents from English into over 60 different languages. The website can be used for simple word-to-word translations or can be used for vocabulary inquiry (*see Language Development: Vocabulary Inquiry across Languages*).

- **Google Images - [www.google.com/imghp](http://www.google.com/imghp)**

This website allows you to search the Internet for images. You can type in any word and find images that represent that word. There are over 10 billion images in the index, so any topic you search will result in relevant visuals. This can help students to combine a visual with a new vocabulary word, aiding in acquisition. It can also help students to see a word in multiple contexts. For example, a search of the word “slope” results in pictures of graphs of mathematical slope, ski slopes, mountains, and water slides.

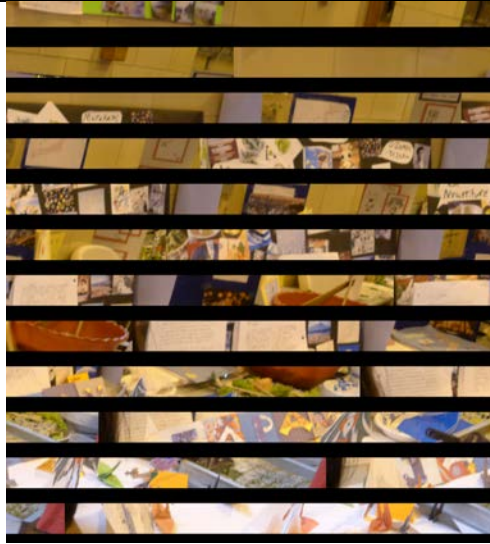
- **Omniglot - [www.omniglot.com](http://www.omniglot.com)**

This is the website for the Online Encyclopedia of Writing Systems and Languages. It is easy to navigate and has many words, phrases, and texts in multiple languages. It also has a YouTube channel, an online forum, and a bookstore with popular books translated into multiple languages. There are even articles on language, which could help your students to inquire into their own languages in an academic way.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary

- A 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English-French dual language bilingual class researched a country of their choice as part of an integrated unit combining Social Studies (world communities), Reading (nonfiction), and Writing (informational essays). Students researched their country using information from websites written in French as well as English. They took notes in both languages, depending on what they were reading. They also used Google Translate to help them understand new vocabulary they were encountering in either English or French. When they began drafting their informational essays, they wrote them in French and then translated them into English to have a bilingual end product. For most writing units students created separate English and French pieces of writing, but in this case the teachers wanted students to think critically about how sentences are structured in each language to change the text from French to English. This was a powerful language learning experience for students. To culminate the integrated unit, students in this dual language program shared their bilingual essays and a visual display they had created at a grade-wide Multicultural celebration.



### Middle/Secondary

- In a bilingual Living Environment class, the teacher wanted students to further their understanding of the content, practice their use of science vocabulary, and also use basic compare/contrast vocabulary that appears in all content areas. The teacher supplemented her basic textbook readings on the topic by having students use the Internet to research how different countries address Biodiversity and Conservation. Because most of her students were from the Dominican Republic, students researched conservation efforts in the United States as well as in the Dominican Republic.
  - For the project, the teacher gave students a list of websites to visit that addressed the topic of Biodiversity and Conservation in both the United States and the Dominican Republic. The websites were in both English and Spanish and contained text, images, and audio/video. Students had to choose at least 2 websites to use in their research.
  - Throughout the unit, in addition to teaching students important content, the teacher taught students basic skills like citing information from websites, taking notes, and organizing information. She also provided readings that compared different species and conservation efforts, focusing on both the content and the language of comparison.
  - The final written response compared the United States' efforts to conserve and maintain biodiversity with that of the Dominican Republic's. Though students did their research in both English and Spanish, the response was written and presented to the class in Spanish. Students were assessed on the content of their response, as well as their use of unit vocabulary and comparison vocabulary.
- A teacher of a beginner ESL classroom of Haitian Creole speakers knew that her students were most literate in French. To help these students build background about a new text, she used Google Translate to summarize that day's reading into French. Since the teacher herself did not speak French, the translation website was a crucial part of her instruction. Students read the translated version of the text *before* they read the English version of the same text. All students had a higher level of English comprehension because of this preview in French.

**Build Background with Preview-View-Review**

**Essential Questions**

- *How can we build students’ reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students’ content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

**Alignment with Common Core State Standards:**

Using multiple languages to build background on a topic deepens EBLs’ and bilingual students’ understanding of the concepts and information, helping them meet the related content-area standards.

Building background using multiple languages also helps EBLs and bilingual students prepare for reading, writing, and speaking about different topics and themes. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

**Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7**

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

**Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9**

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

*Standards 7 and 9 can be met by using multiple forms of*

**What is it?**

As all good builders know, constructing something on an unstable base is likely to result in a collapse—the same is true for constructing meaning. If students do not have a strong foundation, or background on a topic, then all subsequent meaning they try to construct, and all knowledge we try to build in our students, will be shaky.

For EBLs to build a strong foundation, they must do so in the language they feel most comfortable using. For many of them, that is the home language. Building background with home language support simply means using students’ languages to help prepare them for success in both content and language learning in English.

Freeman and Freeman (2009) discuss the strategy Preview-View-Review, which is a useful strategy for including both English and students’ home languages when building background and reading texts/introducing new topics. The strategy has students:

- **Preview** the topic/text in their *home language*  
This includes brainstorming, making connections, and sharing prior knowledge on the topic/text you are about to cover.
- **View** the topic/text in *English*  
Here, students are presented with the lesson/content topic in English. The presentation of content can include a traditional mini-lesson, a hands-on activity, watching a video clip or listening to audio, or reading a text either independently, in partnerships/groups, or aloud as a whole class.

- **Review** the topic/text in *English*  
This includes reviewing the content in English, so

<b>K</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>L</b>
Students brainstorm what they already know in their home languages and/or English.	Students ask questions and write down what they’d like to know about the topic in their home languages and/or English.	After they “view” the new topic, students write down what they learned about it in their home languages and/or English.

**Translanguaging**

1. **Think about the most important background information students will need in order to understand new content.**

It is crucial to think about what background knowledge students must have in order to understand and retain new information. You can then think about what “bridges” you can create between students’ own background knowledge and the new content. You might consider:

- What do students already know about this topic? How can I get them to tap into this knowledge?
- What is the “big picture” of this unit/topic? How can I help students to see this “big picture” early in the learning process?
- How does what I’m teaching connect to my students’ lives? What kinds of activities, readings, or media would help me make those connections?

2. **Preview the text/topic in students’ home languages.**

Here are some ways you can use students’ home languages to build background around a new text/topic:



media (home language audio/video, texts, and discussions) to help students preview the ideas they will encounter within the unit. This will help them to better understand the topic/theme they will be learning about in class.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present**

**Knowledge: Standard 9**  
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

*When students preview a topic by reading a text, they can refer back to that text to analyze what they learn within the unit of study.*

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

*When students preview a topic using their home languages, they are communicating purposefully about academic content. This helps them express their ideas in the home language, as well as in English.*

- **Home-language conversations and brainstorms**
  - **With peers:** Students can share their own background knowledge on a topic by discussing it with their peers in their home languages. If you teach in a bilingual program, you can also do whole-class brainstorms in a home language.
  - **With a staff member:** You can also draw upon staff members in the building who speak a particular home language, and ask them to talk briefly with your EBLs about an upcoming key topic.
  - **With family members:** Another way you can encourage students to preview new texts or topics in a home language is to involve students' families. You can send out an email or newsletter to parents and families *before* starting a new unit of study, asking them to talk with their children about a particular topic in the home language. This will help students to develop some schema for what they will be learning in class. Some topics are easier to do this for than others – complex topics that families have never studied or US-centric topics like US history might be difficult or impossible for families to discuss at home. However, if you include links to online media in the home language, or send home articles/texts in the home language that relate the upcoming unit of study, families can watch, listen and/or read, and then discuss together.
- **K-W-L charts and Anticipation Guides**

These strategies are familiar territory for many teachers, but using them with students' home languages might not be as common.

  - ***K-W-L Charts***

This graphic organizer helps students to organize what they know and what they want to know (and later what they've learned) about a topic. For bilingual students, having them use their home languages to brainstorm their existing background knowledge, as well as formulate "wonderings" about a topic, will better prepare them to encounter new information. You can set up your K-W-L chart like this:
  - ***Anticipation Guides***

These guides help students to preview important ideas, topics, or themes they will encounter in a unit. EBLs can fill out Anticipation Guides in their home languages, formulating their own opinions and building background about the "big picture" ideas within a new unit of study. For example:

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Why?
A debatable statement about the topic students will learn about in the unit/lesson	Students check the box that represents their opinion on the statement.		Students explain why that is their opinion in the home language and/or English.

**Multilingual & Multicultural Resources that Build Background**

Within this guide, there are many different multilingual and multicultural resources you can use to build students' background knowledge. For example:

- EBLs can read about a new content-area topic in the home language before learning/reading about it about it in English. For more information about obtaining home language texts, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*.

- EBLs can use the Internet to access background information in their home language (including media) about an upcoming topic/text. For more information about multilingual Internet resources, see *Resources: Internet as Multilingual Resource*.

- EBLs can listen to audio and music that prepares them for a new topic/text. For more information about home language audio, see *Resources: Listening Centers*.

- You can tap into what EBLs already know about a topic by making multicultural connections. For more ideas for making your classroom multicultural, see *Environment: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment*.

- Reading texts in students' home languages about topics they will encounter in English  
Giving EBLs readings in their home languages can better prepare them for the content they will learn in English. In future lessons, they can draw on what they read in the home language, making it easier for them to contribute to class conversations and retain new content and language. For more on including multilingual texts in your classroom, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*.
  - Using media like audio and video in students' home languages  
Using media to build background can be especially helpful for EBLs because these methods are not text-based. Listening to a podcast about a new topic or watching a short video about ideas within a new unit can help prepare students to encounter new information conceptually, even if they struggle with literacy. For more on utilizing the Internet and Listening Centers, see *Resources: Internet as Multilingual Resource* and *Resources: Listening Centers*.
3. **View in English, making connections to the preview in the home language**  
As you teach the new content, be sure to reference the background information that students built through the use of their home languages. This will be an important way for you to explicitly connect the background knowledge they developed *before* learning with the new content itself. There are many easy ways to systematically connect students' background information to new content while still using home languages as support. You can:
- Refer to past home language conversations and brainstorms as you teach new content. Keeping visuals of whole-class brainstorms in your classroom is a great way to keep that background knowledge fresh in students' minds. Making explicit connections between what students discussed in their home language and new content they are learning in English is key to helping EBLs understand and retain new information.
  - Keep a whole-class K-W-L chart up on chart paper in your classroom. Refer to the "K" when tapping in to students' background knowledge and to the "W" when you encounter new information that helps to answer students' questions. You and your students can update the "L" portion of the chart as questions are answered and new content is learned. If the "K" and the "W" are done in students' home languages, doing the "L" in English will help them to see connections between both their background knowledge and new content and between their multiple languages.
  - Revisit home language texts, audio, and/or video as you encounter relevant content. Because you've already used texts, audio, and/or video to build background about new content, revisiting these resources as you come across those topics in more detail can help students tap back into their background knowledge. Unless you teach in a bilingual program, the new content you're teaching will be in English. Reminding students of the background they built in



their home languages as they learn new content in English will aid in comprehension and retention. It will also help EBLs to better contribute to class conversations in English.

4. **Review back in students' home languages.**

Here, you have students review in their home languages the new topic or text that they just learned or read about in English. You can have students use their home language with a partner, a staff member who shares the students' home languages, or family members to:

- Discuss and negotiate what they learned/read
- Synthesize and summarize what they learned/read
- Clarify and question what they learned/read

**Emergent Bilinguals**

Too often, the students who most lack background knowledge needed to understand a new text/content-area topic are also those that lack literacy in both English and a home language (i.e. **SIFE students**). For these students it is essential to first activate what they know (even if it is a loose connection to the new topic), so they are able to connect new information to existing knowledge.

Because of low literacy in both English and a home language, non-text sources are most beneficial for building background. For example, you can:

- Have students listen to or watch **media** (i.e.: video, audio) that relates to the new content-area topic.

- Have students listen to a text read to them in a **Listening Center**. You could also read to the student yourself OR have a partner or staff member **read aloud** to the student.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

- Approximately once a month, a 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL teacher sent an email to students' families (and send home a hard-copy version) explaining what new units of study the class was about to start in each subject area. She translated these important communications into Spanish herself, and had someone in the school help with the languages of her other students: Haitian Creole and Korean. In the emails, she explained how she would like the families to prepare their children for the upcoming topics of study by previewing the topics in the home language. At the beginning of the year, the teacher had explained to families that this was a critical way for them to support their child's education, and as the school year progressed, family participation increased greatly with these home language preview activities.

Sometimes she asked them to talk with their child in the home language about a particular topic to help build background knowledge; other times she included links to websites where they could watch something together as a family and then talk about it in the home language. For one of the math units of study on fractions, she included in the email some examples the families could talk about with their children to help them understand the concepts. Since the teacher knew that a number of parents were unfamiliar with the fraction concepts themselves, she shared a link to a video illustrating how to add and subtract fractions:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52ZIXsFJULI>

The video is narrated in English, but the math concepts are clearly demonstrated in a visual way. She asked families to watch the video with their children, and talk in the home language about what the person in the video did to add the fractions. When the teacher began the math lessons on adding and subtracting fractions, she showed the class this same video, and asked them what they had talked about with their families. This connected the English lesson to the home language preview that most families had done. As students learned more about adding and subtracting fractions, part of their homework was to "teach" their families what they had learned. This provided a way for students to review the concepts in the home language.

- In December, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade general education teacher launched a science unit of study, Weather and Seasons, with a focus on winter. She planned to read aloud a number of Big Books, trade books, and children's literature related to winter to deepen

students' understanding of the New York science standards for this unit. The teacher had several EBLs who spoke Spanish, so she looked for winter books that had bilingual versions. She decided to use one of these books to start the unit:



She had a mother of one of her EBLs create an audio recording of a Spanish-version book. As the class started this unit of study, the teacher had her EBLs listen to the Spanish text at the listening center several times, and encouraged them to talk about the book together in Spanish. Later, she gathered the whole class on the rug to read aloud the English version of the same text. Her EBLs were very engaged during the read aloud because they were familiar with the text, and were anticipating what was going to come next. They were also more willing to share their ideas orally in English, since they had a better understanding of the book.

### Middle / Secondary Grades

- A 10<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL class started each day with a quote. The teacher knew that students would have to analyze quotes as a part of the English Regents they would take the following year. Exposing students to many different quotes would give them the background and skills needed for the exam. The quote was always in English, but the teacher had students negotiate and discuss the quote with partners who spoke the same home language. The teacher set up the daily activity as follows:
  - 1) Students read the quote aloud 2-3 times. The teacher helped with the pronunciation of any unknown words.
  - 2) In pairs, students discussed the following questions in their home language:
    - What does the quote mean, in your own words?
    - Translate the quote into your home language. Can it be translated easily? Why or why not?
    - Make a connection to the quote. Does it relate to your life? Something we've read as a class? A movie or TV show you've seen? Something you've seen in the news or in society?
  - 3) The pairs would share out their thoughts and ideas in English. If students struggled to communicate their ideas in English, the teacher and more proficient students would help them clear up confusion and/or translate.
  
- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade Living Environment teacher wanted to prepare his EBLs for a unit on evolution. He used Google Translate to put together an Anticipation Guide in both Spanish and English for students to do in their groups. Some of the statements were:
  - Los humanos y algunos monos son 99% genéticamente idénticos. (*Humans and some monkeys are 99% genetically identical.*)
  - Todavía hay unos pocos dinosaurios que viven en el mundo. (*There are still some dinosaurs living in the world.*)
  - Las aves y los dinosaurios son de la misma familia. (*Birds and dinosaurs are in the same family.*)

Students read the statements in their groups and discussed whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, recording their opinions on the Anticipation Guide in either Spanish or English. After working in groups, all students shared out their opinions on the statements in English.

- A 6<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher used video to build students' background for a unit on geometry. The teacher showed a BrainPOP video in French that illustrated how different geometric shapes exist in the real world ([www.brainpop.fr](http://www.brainpop.fr)). After watching the French video, the teacher gave students a brief introduction to different shapes they would be exploring in the unit. Then students talked with their partners in French and brainstormed different places they'd seen each shape in their own neighborhoods. At the end of the class, students shared out their ideas in English. The teacher recorded all answers on chart paper, which she hung in the classroom and referenced throughout the unit.
- In preparation for reading *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, a 9<sup>th</sup> grade general education ELA teacher had students think about the effect of the supernatural on individuals. After explaining what she meant by supernatural, the teacher asked students to turn and talk to a partner about any stories they knew that involved the supernatural. EBLs sat with partners who shared their home language, so conversations began right away—the students all had stories to tell! After having a few pairs share out their stories in English, the teacher gave students a short reading on Santeria, a Caribbean religion many of her students knew. The reading was in English with a side-by-side translation into both Spanish and Haitian Creole. The teacher had students read the text together, pausing from time to time to discuss and negotiate what they read in either Spanish, Haitian Creole or English. The lesson culminated with students previewing lines from the play, which the class began reading later that week.
- Before presenting a lesson on the DREAM Act as a part of a unit on modern immigration, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade US History teacher wanted students to inquire into their current understandings of the topic, as well as any questions they wanted to have answered. The teacher started by showing a short video from the Spanish TV channel Univision about the DREAM Act. Using some information from the clip, students filled out the first two columns of the K-W-L Chart in Spanish. After filling out the chart, the teacher presented students with a short mini-lesson about the DREAM Act and a newspaper article in English that outlined the opposing sides of the debate. After the lesson and the reading, students went back to their charts and filled out the last column in Spanish, including their opinions on the DREAM Act and its connection to their own lives.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>K</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What do I already KNOW about this topic?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>W</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What do I WANT to know about this topic?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>L</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What have I LEARNED about this topic?</i></p>
<p>Una ley que daría derechos a los hijos de inmigrantes ilegales <i>(A law that would give rights to the kids of illegal immigrants)</i></p> <p>Si los jovenes van a la universidad, pueden quedarse en los Estados Unidos por seis años <i>(If the kids go to college, they can stay in the US for six years)</i></p>	<p>¿Por qué estos jovenes tienen que entrar en el ejército para quedarse aquí? <i>(Why do these kids have to go in to the military to stay here?)</i></p>	<p>Creo que el gobierno debería aprobar el DREAM Act, porque no es justo que los niños tengan que pagar por las decisiones de sus padres <i>(I think the government should pass the DREAM Act because it's not fair that kids have to pay for their parents' decisions.)</i></p>

## Multilingual Research

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Using multiple languages to research a topic deepens bilingual students' understanding of the concepts and information, helping them meet the related [content-area standards](#).

Multilingual research also allows bilingual students to take advantage of their full linguistic repertoire to meet the following anchor standards in Reading and Writing. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### **Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7**

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

#### **Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 8**

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

#### **Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9**

### What is it?

One of the advantages of knowing multiple languages is that you can use all of them to acquire information. When you have bilingual students research a topic using their *entire* linguistic repertoire, you help them see the real-life value of being multilingual in our globalized world. Students as young as Kindergartners can do multilingual research – the level of complexity simply increases as students progress through the grades. Through multilingual research, bilingual students can develop their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in both languages.

### Conducting multilingual research can mean:

- Reading texts in English and/or the home language, such as books, magazines, newspapers, and online texts (See *Resources: Multilingual Texts*)
- Listening to texts in English and/or the home language (See *Resources: Listening Center*)
- Watching media in English and/or the home language (See: *Resources: Internet as a Multilingual Resource*)
- Interviewing speakers of the home language and speakers of English
- Taking notes in English and/or the home language
- Presenting the research orally or in writing in a particular language, or a combination of languages, depending on the audience.

Emergent bilinguals who aren't literate in their home language can still conduct multilingual research by listening to home language texts, watching media in the home language, and conducting oral interviews in the home language. Emergent bilinguals who have some reading ability in their home language can read some home language texts to complement their research in English.

### Translanguaging How-To

#### 1. Create opportunities for bilingual students to conduct multilingual research

- **Provide bilingual students with multilingual resources**  
To make this kind of research work, your EBLs need access to multilingual resources. See the *Resources* section for ways to find multilingual texts, websites in the home language, and resources for listening to home language texts or media.
- **Create opportunities for bilingual students to conduct interviews in the home language as well as in English**  
Whenever possible, find ways for your students to learn about a topic by interviewing people who have “expert knowledge.” Bilingual students can take advantage of their developing bilingualism to interview people who speak their home language as well as people who speak English. This provides an authentic way for your bilingual students to use both of their languages as a vehicle for research. It also builds their listening skills in both languages, a

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 7**

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 8**

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

**Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 9**

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

critical skill identified in the Common Core State Standards.

2. **Decide what language(s) bilingual students should use to take notes**  
**Bilingual classrooms**

There are two options for note-taking:

- **Notes in only one language:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, but take all of their notes in just one language. This is an option if you have allocated one particular language to writing instruction during this unit of study.
- **Notes in English & home language:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, and take notes in the language of the source, or the language other than the source-language. This is a good way for EBLs in a bilingual program to see the practical function of having proficiency in multiple languages, and helps bilingual students continue to develop their writing ability in *both* languages.

**General Education and ESL classrooms**

There are two options for note-taking:

- **Notes in English:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, but take all of their notes in English. This is necessary for students who are not literate in the home language, since they are only able to write in English.
- **Notes in English & home language:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, and take notes in the language of the source, or the language other than the source-language. This is a good option for bilingual students who have some level of literacy in both English and the home language because it gives them an authentic purpose for writing in both languages. This provides a way for your students to develop their writing ability in *both* languages.

3. **Decide what language(s) bilingual students should use to create a written product**

**Bilingual classrooms**

The written product your bilingual students create can be in just one language (the home language or English), or a purposeful combination of both languages:

- **Writing in just one language:** This is an option if you have allocated one particular language to writing instruction during this unit of study.
- **Writing in both languages:** Have your students think about the audience that will be reading what they write. Is that audience bilingual? If so, they can write certain parts of their research in the home language, and other parts in English. There are many ways each language can play a role in their writing. For example, you can ask them to write an informational essay in English, accompanied by a visual display with labels and explanations in the home language. Or, you can have students write a bilingual informational book along with a bilingual glossary of key words.

**General Education and ESL Classrooms**

The written product your EBLs create can be in English or in a combination of English and the home language:

- **Writing in English:** You may want your students to take their multilingual notes and use them to write a text in English. This means



### Getting Families & Communities Involved

Think about what knowledge your bilingual students' families might have about a topic your class is going to research. Have your bilingual students interview a family member using the home language as part of their research. This validates the importance of the home language and the different types of knowledge and experiences families have, regardless of their level of formal education.

Depending on the research topic, English-speakers can interview their families in English, or they can partner up with a bilingual student to collaboratively interview the bilingual student's family member.

You can also consider who students could interview in their communities using the home language or English.

students would translate the ideas from the home language notes into English. Bilingual students are used to flexibly moving from one language to another, so translating ideas from home language notes continues to build this mental dexterity and helps them think critically about how to express the same idea in different languages. This is a cognitively demanding task that will help students compare and contrast the structure of English with the structure of the home language. Younger students or those in the early stages of language proficiency will need your help to translate certain vocabulary words. You can type words from their home language notes into a translation website like Google Translate to see what the words are in English. Older students or those with more advanced proficiency can do this translation work on their own using bilingual dictionaries or translation websites.

- **Writing in a combination of English & home language:** Another option is to have your EBLs create part of their research project in the home language, and another part in English. For example, they could write a report in the home language and create a visual display with summaries and labels in English. Or, they could write an informational book in the home language and label photographs, diagrams, or illustrations in English. This is particularly helpful for EBLs with lower English proficiency levels because they can more fully express what they've learned by writing in the home language, while creating another written product in English that matches their English proficiency level.

#### 4. **Decide what language(s) bilingual students should use to share their research** Bilingual Classrooms:

- Depending on the language allocation for your program, you may want your students to use a particular language for their sharing.
- If some of your EBLs have a beginning English proficiency level, you can use the strategies suggested below for general education and ESL classrooms.

#### General Education and ESL Classrooms:

- EBLs with beginning proficiency levels in English should use the home language to orally share what they learned from their research. When sharing, they can also include some English vocabulary words they have learned. When possible, have another student translate into English what the student has shared, or do it yourself if you speak that language.
- Bilingual students with higher English proficiency levels can share what they learned in English. They can also teach the class how to say certain key vocabulary words in their home language, based on what they learned from their multilingual research.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- A 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English-French dual language bilingual class researched a country of their choice as part of an integrated unit combining Social Studies (world communities), Reading (nonfiction), and Writing (informational essays). Students researched their country using information from websites written in French as well as English. They also read trade books about the country. Some of these texts were in English, and others were in French, depending on



the country they chose and the books the teacher was able to find.

Students took notes in both languages, depending on what they were reading. They also used Google Translate to help them understand new vocabulary they were encountering in either English or French.

When they began drafting their informational essays, they wrote them in French and then translated them into English to have a bilingual end product. For most writing units students created separate English and French pieces of writing, but in this case there was a specific purpose for creating a bilingual essay: the culminating event was a grade-wide multicultural celebration where both English-speaking and French-speaking families would be attending. Having a bilingual informational essay meant that *all* families could read the students' writing in whichever language they preferred. Students also created a visual display to accompany their essays (Figure 1).

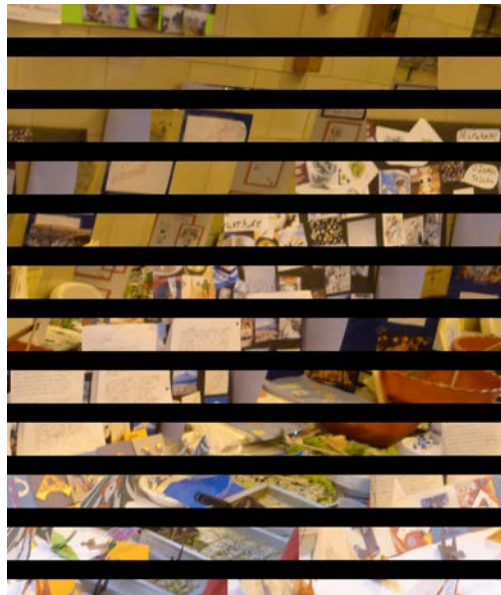
Another reason to have students create a bilingual text was to provide an opportunity for them to think critically about how sentences are structured in each language. Students had to compare and contrast English and French syntax. This was a powerful language learning experience for students.

### Pairing up Bilingual students with English-speakers

Multilingual research doesn't need to be something bilingual students do in isolation. If they are partnered or grouped with English-speakers, they can still conduct research using both languages, and then share back with their partner or group what they have learned from the home language sources.

This positions students' bilingualism as an asset, since they are the ones who possess the ability to make sense of the information in a home language source. The knowledge bilingual students share from the home language sources can be compiled with the other information gathered in English.

Figure 1



### Middle/Secondary Grades

- A 7<sup>th</sup> grade ESL teacher created an interview project as a part of a unit on Neighborhoods and Communities. Students had to interview two different people in their neighborhood to inquire into the resources and knowledge available in their own communities. Students developed interview questions in their home languages, but translated them into English for those community members who did not speak that language. Students were then given tape recorders and recorded the interviews they conducted. Students took notes in either English or their home languages, depending on the language spoken by the interviewee. Students also transcribed (and, when needed, translated) parts of the interview from their recordings, honing their listening skills as they synthesized the most important aspects of each interview.

The final product was an informative report about how students could use members of their communities as funds of knowledge. Students presented written reports of their findings in English, as well as posters featuring bilingual versions of their interview questions, interview transcriptions, and pictures with bilingual captions. The community members interviewed, as well as students' families, were invited to the school for the presentation. The bilingual nature of the project made it possible for all audience members to feel involved and engaged in the presentations.

- A 10<sup>th</sup> grade general education English teacher and Global History teacher combined a content-area unit on wars with a study of war literature. Because the teachers had many EBLs in their classes, they decided to make the research multilingual. The two teachers organized a series of multilingual resources that students would read throughout the unit. The history teacher covered the historical and primary source readings in her class and the English teacher read pieces of war literature in hers. Both teachers drew from multiple sources—written text, first person accounts, music, and video—to give a well-rounded, multilingual picture of how war affects different individuals.

Each day, students were presented with several research sources they could choose from. Students could pick sources in English or in their home languages. As students recorded their research, they took notes in English, using Google Translate as well as bilingual dictionaries when needed. This enabled all students to share their research notes and helped EBLs practice synthesizing texts in multiple languages into English.

The end product of the unit, a report on how war affects individuals across different societies, was written and presented to the class in English. In addition, students created visuals and multimedia in their home languages to supplement their reports and further support the class's understanding of war's effects on individuals.

## Comparing Multilingual Texts on the Same Content-Area Topic

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

When students compare more than one text on the same topic, it helps them to understand and analyze that topic. It also helps them meet a variety of reading standards. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### **Reading: Key Ideas and Details: Standard 2**

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

*If you have students determine common central ideas and themes across multiple texts, their understanding of those ideas and themes might be deeper*

#### **Reading: Craft and Structure: Standard 6**

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

#### **Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9**

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### What is it?

Having students compare texts in both English and a home language on one content-area topic has many benefits. First, it gives bilingual students multiple entry points into the content. By drawing on all of their languages, bilingual students can fully understand the complexity of a topic. Second, it helps these students make comparisons between their languages, cultivating both their linguistic awareness and their ability to fully use all of their languages. Comparison can be done in discussion and/or in writing, depending on your purposes. Comparing in discussion provides opportunities for students to hone listening and speaking skills, serving as a scaffold or starting place for writing.

Students can compare texts in two different ways:

- Compare a text English and the **same text** translated into a home language
- Compare two **different texts about the same topic or theme**, one in English and one in a home language

When students compare multilingual texts around one content-area topic, the goal is for them to compare both language **and** content. By having students compare multilingual texts, you are teaching them how different languages can provide different insights into one topic. You can set up opportunities for students to compare multilingual texts around one topic in several ways:

- **Jigsaw readings that encourage comparison**  
You can group students by language and have them read different multilingual texts around one topic. Students can start by reading a text in their home language with their groups. The groups can discuss and negotiate the reading around guiding questions or prompts in their home language. You can then jigsaw the groups so that all members of the new groups have read different multilingual texts, but have discussed the same questions or prompts. Students can share out their thinking with their group in English, encouraging all students to compare both the content and the language of what they read.
- **Use multilingual texts that emphasize different perspectives**  
All content areas encourage students to look at problems or concepts from different perspectives. By reading about a content-area topic in different languages, students are encouraged to add a linguistic and cultural perspective to their analysis of that topic. When learning about a topic that can be seen from different perspectives, you can provide readings that emphasize how speakers of different languages (and members of different cultures) might understand and view a content-area topic differently. For example, if students in a Social Studies class are studying the immigration debate, you could ask them to compare how the NY Times, The Daily News, and El Diario report on immigration. You could facilitate a discussion about how each news source characterizes and uses language to discuss and analyze the issue of immigration. Here, comparing multilingual texts helps students to think deeply about issues of **social justice** that affect their lives. By focusing on how *language* can reveal these differences in perspective, students get a clear picture of how language is more than just something people speak—it is tied to larger political and social issues in the United States and around the world.

### Emergent Bilinguals

Students who struggle to read texts in English and in a home language (including SIFE and LTEL students) can compare non-print texts around one content-area topic. They can compare:

- **Two listening passages**, one in English one in a home language
- A **listening passage** in English and a **video clip/song** in a home language
- **Two video clips**, one in English and one in a home language
- **Two songs**, one in English and one in a home language

If you want these students to write their comparisons, pair them with students who speak the same home language and have them dictate their answers to their partners.

- **Use different multilingual texts to analyze one topic**

Reading multilingual texts around one topic can foster critical thinking. For example, Kleyn and Adelman Reyes (2010) use the example of a common unit taught in social studies classes in upper elementary and secondary Social Studies classes – the Vietnam War. One of the activities they recommend is supplementing a traditional, textbook-driven unit includes bringing in alternate sources of information that express views other than those found in the textbook. When reading these sources, they suggest that teachers encourage students to “note discrepancies in the various sources of information” and “pose problems through both writing and discussion...produce a classroom-made book on the Vietnam War as seen from multiple perspectives” (50).

By encouraging students to read multiple texts around one topic, we are encouraging them to see a historical event from multiple perspectives. You can encourage **translanguaging** here by including *multilingual* texts into this inquiry. How might an account from a Vietnamese person *written in Vietnamese* help students pose problems and note discrepancies across different sources of information? How might a member of a different linguistic group living in the US have viewed the war? Having students read multilingual versions of historical accounts would help them to write about and discuss how the language plays a role in perspective and critical thinking about US history.

- **Use multilingual student writing to compare language and content knowledge**

You can use your own students’ writing to help them compare and analyze content-area topics. If students are able to write in multiple languages, you automatically have multilingual texts to compare! Give students a prompt or a topic to write about, encourage them to write in both English and their home languages, and then facilitate a comparison of both the language and content of the writing. You can do this by partnering students who have written in different languages about the same topic or by presenting two pieces of multilingual student writing for a whole-class discussion and comparison. This can help students to become more aware of the various languages in their classroom. It can also illustrate how one topic can be written about and discussed in a variety of ways.

### Translanguaging How-To:

1. **Create opportunities for students to compare multilingual texts around content-area topics**

When examining your curriculum, think about the topics that lend themselves to comparison.

- What different **points of view** are present within this topic? How can I use multilingual texts to help me highlight these points of view?
- What different **arguments** are present within this topic? How can I use multilingual texts to help me present these arguments?

Once you have thought about the scope of the topic, you can start looking for or creating multilingual texts that help students understand the various perspectives and arguments present within the topic (see *Resources: Multilingual Texts* for more on how to find/create multilingual texts). You can use multilingual translations of one text, various multilingual readings around one topic, or even students’ own multilingual writing to make these comparisons.

2. **Strategically plan comparisons within your units and lessons.**

Look at your content and language goals to strategically plan the kinds of comparisons you want students to make.

- If you want students to use multilingual texts to compare content, they can:
  - Analyze different points of view present in one content-area topic
  - Compare different arguments within one topic
  - Synthesize multiple texts into one argument, thesis, or summary about a topic
- If you want students to use multilingual texts to compare language, they can:
  - Find and compare vocabulary, including cognates
  - Analyze and discuss word choices and word meanings
  - Translate a text from one language into another (home language to English or vice versa)

### 3. Teach students strategies for comparing multilingual texts

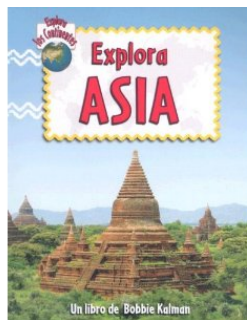
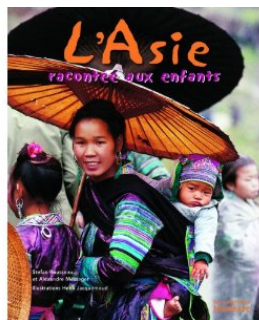
Although your students speak multiple languages, they may not know how to compare multilingual texts around one content topic. Because languages are so often separated in schools, students need explicit instruction and strategies for comparing and discussing texts in their multiple languages. Here are some possible strategies:

- If you jigsaw your multilingual readings, try having students analyze the texts around the **same discussion questions or prompts**. This aligns students' discussions of the different texts, helping them to compare these texts more easily when they come together in mixed groups. The questions and discussions can be in either English or the home language, no matter what languages the texts are written in.
- If you are using multilingual texts to help students compare different perspectives, include **point of view writing** in your teaching of this topic. Having students **re-present** the text in their own words, while maintaining the points of views present in the text, helps scaffold their ability to compare the different arguments and perspectives present in the topic.
- Help students compare multilingual texts and make connections by using **graphic organizers**. You can use Venn diagrams, Compare/Contrast matrices, and other organizers that encourage students to think about how multiple texts can inform one thesis/opinion about a topic.
- If you compare students' multilingual writing around one content-area topic, **model** comparisons of both the language and the content of the writing. You can make transparencies of the two pieces of writing you are comparing and project them in the classroom. If you have a Smartboard, you can scan students' pieces of writing and project them that way. Working with either a projector or a Smartboard, **think aloud, model questions, and annotate/gloss the texts** to illustrate how students should compare writing in different languages.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- **Jigsaw readings that encourage comparison**  
To begin a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade social studies unit on Asia, and ESL teacher found texts about the continent in her BILINGUALS' home languages, Spanish and French, to supplement the English texts she already had.



To launch the unit of study, during a Reading Workshop the teacher grouped students by home language (French, Spanish, or English), and gave each group an informational text about Asia in that language. She asked students to read their text independently (or with a partner, in the cases where students did not have strong literacy skills in the home language *or* in English). While reading, students took notes in a T-chart to record details they were learning about:

Geography of Asia	Asian Culture

At the end of the Reading Workshop, the teacher did a jigsaw share where each group had representatives from each home language. In English, students took turns sharing with their group what they had learned from their respective texts about geography and culture in Asia.

### Middle / Secondary Grades

- Use multilingual student writing to compare language and content**  
 A 6<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish NLA teacher wanted to teach students a lesson on using descriptive language as a part of a unit on memoir. Because she was working closely with the ELA teacher, both teachers had students write briefly on the prompt, “What is your happiest memory?” After students had written their responses, both teachers collected their students’ writing. For a lesson the next day, the NLA teacher chose a student’s writing in Spanish from the NLA class and a students’ writing in English from the ELA class. She put two documents side by side on her Smartboard. The class read both documents, discussing how both students used descriptive language to describe their happiest memories. The teacher then asked students to compare the placement of adjectives in Spanish vs. English. She had students circle nouns and adjectives in different colors on the Smartboard, illustrating the differences in placement. The teacher then returned students’ writing from the day before and had them revise based on the day’s lesson.
- Jigsaw readings that encourage comparison**  
 A 9<sup>th</sup> grade ESL teacher taught a unit on identity, using multilingual texts to help students form a thesis about what factors influence individuals’ sense of self. Because her students spoke a variety of languages, she decided she would jigsaw



home language readings around the topic of the environment's effects on individuals' identities. She created groups of students who shared a home language (Russian, Polish) and gave each group a reading in that language around the topic. Students in all groups had to answer the same three discussion questions. As students read their text together, they had conversations in both English and their home language around those questions: They recorded their answers in either English or their home language. Next, the groups were split up so that one "expert" from each home language group formed a new, heterogeneous group. Students shared their answers to the three discussion questions in English. This share-out enabled students to see multiple ways in which different environments influenced individuals' identity.

In a subsequent lesson, the teacher took excerpts from two of the jigsawed home language readings and put them side by side on the Smartboard, with an English translation underneath each one. The teacher had a student who spoke each home language read the excerpt aloud, encouraging students to listen for words that sounded similar to English or to their own home language. The teacher then had students pick out written words that resembled or started with the same letters as those in English or their own home language. After discussing some of the linguistic similarities and differences, the teacher had the students compare and contrast the environment's effects on the individuals in each reading.

- **Use multilingual texts that emphasize different perspectives**

A 10<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual Spanish Global History teacher taught a unit on the Age of Exploration. Though the curriculum included a discussion of the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Central America, the teacher wanted students to see the complex perspectives present in the topic more clearly. First, the teacher had all students read a short introduction to the Spanish conquest of the Yucatán peninsula, which was written side-by-side in both English and Spanish. Students were introduced to both the Spanish conquistadores and the Mayan people who lived in the Yucatán at the time of the conquest. After reading about the story of the conquest, students wrote diary entries in the point of view of either a conquistador or a Maya in **Spanish**. They also had to summarize and present the story of the conquest in **English** from a "neutral" perspective. When students read their writing, they were able to analyze the different perspectives and motivations of the two groups, as well as discuss the ways in which each group used language to communicate their feelings about the conquest. This led into a larger discussion about the connection between language and power, and how many indigenous languages are eliminated and replaced by the language of the colonizer (i.e.: in the Yucatán, Maya was replaced with Spanish).

- **Use different multilingual texts to analyze one topic**

A 9<sup>th</sup> grade Living Environment class was learning about environmental conservation. The teacher grouped students by home language (Spanish, French, and Arabic) and gave each group a reading about how different countries have enacted policies that help their citizens to conserve and live "greener" lives. These readings, about four different countries represented in the classroom, were written in students' home languages. After reading, the students filled out the Compare/Contrast Matrix for the country featured in their text (Figure 1). Next, the teacher had groups share out their work in English, which she recorded on a larger version of the Matrix she created on chart paper. As each group shared, the other groups listened and took notes on the country being discussed. After the whole Matrix was filled out, students wrote paragraphs answering the question, "In what ways can individuals help to conserve the environment?"

Figure 1

	<b>Dominican Republic</b>	<b>Senegal</b>	<b>Yemen</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>Environmental Problem</b>				
<b>Conservation Efforts</b>				
<b>Effects of Efforts on the Problem</b>				

## Multilingual Reading and Responses

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Having students read and respond to multilingual texts helps them to build their overall literacy. When they read and respond to what they read (in either writing or discussion), they are meeting standards across many different strands of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

### Reading:

Reading any text helps students meet the following anchor standards. Depending on the text and your purposes, refer to individual standards within the anchor standards:

- [Key Ideas and Details](#)
- [Craft and Structure](#)
- [Integration of Knowledge and Ideas](#)

### Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standards 1, 2, and 3

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write informative or explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and

### What is it?

Getting students to respond to what they read—in discussion, in writing, on exams—is often a challenge. For EBLs, this can be an even greater challenge if students do not comprehend what they read. Because EBLs are often given readings solely in English, they are only able to respond at lower cognitive levels. They might be able to recall information or understand the basic idea of the text, but they cannot interact with the text in a way that matches their cognitive ability.

When we think more flexibly about how EBLs can respond to what they read, we can begin to see what these students truly understand. When the pressure of getting the language “right” is alleviated, and when EBLs utilize their entire linguistic repertoire, they will be able to illustrate their understanding of what they read more successfully.

### Translanguaging How-To

#### 1. Provide multilingual texts for students to read.

In order to successfully respond to what they read, students should be exposed to multilingual texts around one topic. For information about finding/creating multilingual texts, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*.

#### 2. Create opportunities for students to use translanguaging when responding to what they read.

To encourage students to use all of their languages when responding to what they read, you can try the following strategies:

#### Respond in Writing:

##### • Respond to reading in English *and* the home language

Depending on the purpose, students can respond to prompts, summarize what they read, and “converse” about what they read with you or their classmates in both English and their home languages. Here are a few specific ways that EBLs can use both English and their home languages. They can:

- Write a sentence in English that summarizes the idea they want to express, followed by a more elaborate written response in the home language.
- Copy a portion of the text in English that they are referring to (the text evidence), and write their thoughts about that text in the home language. If possible, they can include a short summary in English.
- Include sketches as part of their responses to illustrate what happened in the text, and label it in English. If they are literate in the home language, they can write more about it in the home language. Though this strategy may be more appropriate for primary grade students, it can also be used with SIFE students or other students who struggle with literacy in both English and a home language.

##### • Read in English and annotate in the home language

information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

*You can help students meet these standards by varying the kind of writing students use to respond to what they read. You can have students prepare arguments (Standard 1), write explanatory responses (Standard 2) or create narratives (Standard 3) to respond to what they read in a range of text types.*

**Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1**

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

*When students respond to what they read in discussion, they build their academic language and have authentic conversations about texts.*

As students read a text in English, they can annotate and mark up the text in a home language. Students can ask questions, summarize, and respond to what they read in English by annotating in the home language. The result is a perfect example of translanguaging – students using all of their linguistic tools to make meaning as they read.

- **Read in English and respond in the home language *only***  
There may be times when it makes the most sense for students to read in English and respond *fully* in the home language. That means that students write a response (a summary, a traditional essay, a piece of genre writing, etc.) to the English text in the home language *only*. This builds students ability to write academically about what they read in their home language.
- **Respond using multilingual graphic organizers**  
There are many graphic organizers that students can use to respond to their reading in different ways. To encourage translanguaging here, you can have students read in English and respond via graphic organizers in either English or the home language (for examples of translanguaging with graphic organizers, see *Reading and Content: Build Background with Preview-View-Review*).

**Respond in Discussion:**

Discussion is a powerful way for students to respond to what they read, even if they are not yet able to do so in writing. It also helps students to hone their **speaking** and **listening** skills in both English and their home languages.

- **Use sentence prompts in either English or a home language**  
Getting students to talk about what they read can be difficult, especially if they don't feel comfortable speaking English. With sentence prompts in English or in a home language, students can have conversations about what they read in a more structured way. You can hang a poster with multilingual sentence prompts in your classroom and/or give students a list of prompts to keep and refer to as they have class discussions about what they read.
- **Work with partners or groups to respond to what they read**  
See *Collaborative Work: Reading & Writing Partners and Multilingual Reading Groups* for more information about this idea.
- **Read in English and discuss in the home language *only***  
After students have read a text in English, they can discuss what they read *fully* in the home language. This home language discussion can occur in reading partnerships or groups where all students speak the same home language, or as a whole class if you speak students' home languages. Having students discuss, analyze, and negotiate the English text using the home language encourages them to have academic conversations in that home language.

**Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**  
**Elementary Grades**

- **Respond to reading in both English and the home language**  
A 2<sup>nd</sup> grade self-contained ESL teacher wanted her EBLs to create the same type of reading responses as students with high levels of English proficiency. She showed them how they could respond in English to the fullest extent possible, and then add on to that response in the home language. She modeled these possibilities whenever she introduced a new type of reading response. For example, she

### Emergent Bilinguals

For EBLs who struggle with literacy in both English and their home language (including SIFE students and LTELs), it may be difficult for them to read and/or respond to what they read. However, these students often have a great deal to offer to a conversation about a text. To include these students in both reading and responding to texts, you can:

### Use Read-Alouds

Though we usually think about read-alouds in an elementary grade context, it is very useful for students at all levels. Students who struggle to read independently can listen to a text read aloud in either English or the home language (by you or by another student), following along with the written text. Students can then respond to what they hear in discussion. You can use their contributions in discussion as a scaffold for responding in writing.

### Use Audio Recordings of Text

Have students sit in the listening center and follow along with the text as they hear it read to them. This is especially powerful if you have them listening to the same text that the rest of the class is reading independently. You can even give these students the text and the recording to do *before* a class discussion or activity takes place. This way those students can contribute to the reading conversation or activity in a meaningful way.

encouraged her EBLs with beginning English proficiency levels to sketch something to illustrate their response, label it with basic words they knew in English (or words from the text in English), and then write about the sketch in the home language.

- **Respond using multilingual graphic organizers**  
When a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class was working on identifying the main idea and details in an informational text, the teacher wanted her EBLs to see how they could use a combination of English and the home language to fill in a “Boxes and Bullets” graphic organizer:

#### Main Idea

(Often written in English by copying key words from a text. EBLs can also write the main idea in the home language.)

- **Detail**  
(Often written in English, either by copying a key word, phrase, or sentence from the English text, or by paraphrasing the key information in their own words. EBLs can then elaborate on each detail by writing in the home language, and by including a sketch to illustrate.)
- **Detail**
- **Detail**

The teacher modeled how they could find clues about the main idea of an informational text by looking at the headings, the first sentence of a section, or the last sentence of a section. As students learned how to identify the main idea, the teacher modeled how they could take English words from the text to write the main idea in English.

## Middle / Secondary Grades

- **Respond using multilingual graphic organizers**  
A 10<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual chemistry teacher had his students respond to textbook readings using a series of graphic organizers. The textbooks they read were in both English and Spanish, and the teacher always encouraged students to respond in either or both languages. For example, the teacher had students respond to a reading on conductivity using a **Framer Model** (for more on these graphic organizers, see *Vocabulary: Four Box & Framer Model*). They did this in both English and Spanish so that they could better understand the concept (Figure 1).
- **Use sentence prompts in either English or a home language**  
An 8<sup>th</sup> grade ESL math teacher wanted her students to illustrate their understandings in group and whole-class discussions. Her students, who spoke Spanish, often had conversations about the work, but the teacher wanted to make these conversations more “academic.” She also wanted students to use more academic language to share their thinking in English. She created a classroom poster that listed the prompts and gave students copies of the list to keep in their binders (Figure 2). The prompts were in English with side-by-side translations in students’ home languages. In groups, students could use the home language prompts to discuss their work. When time came to share out their work with the

whole class, however, students used the English prompts. This structure helped students develop their academic language in both English and their home languages.

- **Respond to reading in both English and/or their home languages**

A 9<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher had her students use the double-entry journal format to respond to what they read. Because she wanted her students to work on both developing their reading skills in English and developing their ability to think about and interact with what they read, she had them respond in both English and their home languages (Figure 3). On one side of the double entry journal, students cited text evidence that they wanted to respond to. On the other side, students wrote a short summary of what they read in English, and then elaborated on their summary with more in-depth responses in their home language. This helped the teacher to evaluate several things: students’ reading comprehension in English, their ability to summarize in English, their ability to communicate ideas in their home language, and the depth of their interactions with and analysis of what they read.

Figure 1

<b>Book Definition</b> Transferring energy from one substance to another	<b>Facts/Characteristics</b> Qué tan bien una corriente puede viajar a través de una sustancia (How well a current can travel through a substance)
<b>Examples</b> Cobre (Copper)	<b>Non-Examples</b> Agua (Water) Vidrio (Glass)

Figure 2

I still don't get...	Todavía no sé...
Can you show how you...?	¿Puede demostrar cómo...?
I figured out...	Me di cuenta que...

Figure 3

Text	Response
<b>Text Evidence #1</b> (English)	<b>Summary #1</b> (English)  <b>Response #1</b> (Home Language):
<b>Text Evidence #2</b>	<b>Summary #2</b>  <b>Response #2</b>
<b>Text Evidence #3</b>	<b>Summary #3</b>  <b>Response #3</b>



## Translanguaging with Interactive Writing

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Using translanguaging strategies with interactive writing helps EBLs develop their ability to correctly use Standard English grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. This addresses the following anchor standards for Language.

Translanguaging with interactive writing also helps EBLs learn how to write different types of texts in English. This addresses the following anchor standards for Writing.

Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

### What is it?

Interactive writing was originally created as a strategy to use with primary grade students to support them as they learned *how* to write. However, it can easily be adapted for use with EBLs in grades K-8 who are leaning *how to write in English*.

With interactive writing, you jointly write a short text WITH your EBLs, word by word. Generally the content of the text comes from what the students say. The written text could be as short as a few words (i.e., labeling something) or as long as a few sentences. You take the responsibility for writing the words that are too difficult for your EBLs to spell on their own, and you call on EBLs to write the words (or parts of words) that they know how to spell in English. In this way you and your students interactively create a text that is more complex than their current writing ability in English.

To keep this activity fast-paced, it's important to balance how much you have EBLs write, versus how much you write. Based on your EBLs' ages and English proficiency levels, their contribution to the written text could be:

- Writing certain **letters** for a word, based on the sounds they hear. You write the rest of the word.
- Writing the **high frequency words** they know how to spell. You write the other high frequency words your EBLs haven't learned yet.
- Writing the **vocabulary words** they know how to spell. You write the vocabulary words that are too complex for your EBLs to write.
- Adding appropriate **punctuation** that they are familiar with. You add new types of punctuation.

The higher a student's proficiency level and writing ability in English, the more complex words/letters they will be able to contribute to the text.

Interactive writing is a powerful strategy to use with EBLs because it helps develop:

- **Phonics skills:** EBLs are able to apply the phonics skills they've learned to spell certain words, and they learn new phonics skills as you model how to spell new words.
- **Sentence structure:** As your EBLs share what sentence(s) they want to write, you can help them use correct sentence structure. You can also model ways to make the sentence more complex.
- **Conventions:** EBLs learn the conventions of English or the other language as you help them add punctuation to the text you're writing together.

### Translanguaging How-To

#### 1. Form a group for the interactive writing

You can do interactive writing with the whole class, a small group of EBLs, or one-on-one with an EBL (see sidebar). It depends on which students you feel would benefit from this kind of writing support. In primary grade classrooms where *all* students are learning how to write, this can be very effective for the

### **Standard 6**

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

### **Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

### **Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### **Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### **Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

### **Resources**

For more information on interactive writing:

McCarrier, Andrea, Gay Su Pinnell, and Irene Fountas. 1999. *Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together, K-2*. Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH

Celic, Christina. 2009. *English Language Learners Day by Day, K-6: A Complete Guide to*

whole group. Upper elementary and middle school teachers may want to do interactive writing with a small group of EBLs, or individually with an EBL, while the rest of the class is working on a writing task.

### **2. Orally share ideas for the text using the home language and/or English**

Have EBLs use their home language and/or English to share their ideas for the content of the writing. This works well if you can have another student translate, or if you have some understanding of the home language. If translation is not an option, you can ask your EBLs to act out or draw their ideas while explaining them in the home language, and then you provide the words in English for what it seems they are trying to express.

The interactive writing text should mirror the kind of writing the rest of the class is working on. Whatever the class is writing, you use interactive writing to help certain EBLs create a short text in that genre, or about that topic. For example, if the task is for students to summarize what they learned from a science experiment, then you would use interactive writing to create a short summary with your EBLs. If the task is to fill in a cause-effect graphic organizer, you could use interactive writing to help your EBLs add one or two causes and effects to the chart.

### **3. Write the text word by word**

You will want to write some of the words, and have your EBLs write other words (or parts of words) that they already know how to spell. This is a great opportunity to differentiate instruction.

- **Beginning EBLs:** You can call on EBLs with more beginning English proficiency levels to contribute the spelling of basic high frequency words, basic vocabulary words, or word parts (beginning sounds, ending sounds) they have learned.
- **Intermediate and Advanced EBLs:** You can call on EBLs with increasingly more advanced English proficiency levels to contribute the spelling of more complex high frequency words, vocabulary words, and word parts (prefixes, suffixes, etc.).

For example, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher had students summarize what they learned from a science experiment about water displacement. Based on students' oral input and the teacher's guidance, the short summary they decided to write was:

**We used water displacement to find the volume of an object.**

The text is highlighted to show which parts the teacher decided to have different EBLs contribute: yellow for beginning EBLs, and blue for intermediate to advanced EBLs. This sentence had a range of high frequency words and vocabulary words, so different EBLs were able to help write different parts. The teacher can write others, just to keep the activity moving along. Of course, there is no right or wrong way to decide which parts you call on students to spell, and which parts you write yourself, as long as it is developmentally appropriate for their English proficiency level and writing ability.

### **4. Refer to home language and English phonics charts**

If your EBLs have some familiarity with phonics in the home language, you can help them make connections to English phonics. To do this, have an alphabet

Literacy, Content-area, and Language Instruction.  
Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH

**Resources: Home language phonics charts**

To find alphabet charts in your EBLs' home languages, you can do a Google search: **"image: alphabet chart (name of language)"**

Examples of Arabic alphabet charts

The Arabic alphabet			حروف الهجاء العربية		
Arabic	Translit	Name	Arabic	Translit	Name
ا	ā	Alif	د	d	Dād
ب	b	Bā	ط	t	Tā
ت	t	Tā	ظ	ḍ	Ḍā
ث	th	Thā	ع	ʿ	'Ayn
ج	j	Jīm	غ	gh	Ghaym
ح	h	Hā	ف	f	Fā
خ	kh	Khā	ق	k	Kāf
د	d	Dāl	ك	k	Kāf
ذ	dh	Ḍāl	ل	l	Lām
ر	r	Rā	م	m	Mīm
ز	z	Zāy	ن	n	Nūn
س	s	Sīn	ه	h	Hā
ش	sh	Shīn	و	w(u)	Wāw
ص	ṣ	Sād	ي	y(i)	Yā



Example of a Spanish alphabet chart



Example of a Japanese alphabet chart

Hiragana				Katakana			
あ	い	う	え	お	ア	イ	ウ
か	き	く	け	こ	カ	キ	ク
さ	し	す	せ	そ	サ	シ	ス
た	ち	つ	て	と	タ	チ	ツ
な	に	ぬ	ね	の	ナ	ニ	ヌ
は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ	ハ	ヒ	フ
ま	み	む	め	も	マ	ミ	ム
や	ゆ	よ			ヤ	ユ	ヨ
ら	り	る	れ	ろ	ラ	リ	ル
わ					ワ		
ん					ン		

Example of a French alphabet chart

chart and/or phonics charts in English as well as in your EBLs' home language (see sidebar). Whenever you ask your EBLs to contribute a word (or part of a word) to the text, you can ask them what letters make the sounds they hear in that word. Point out those letters on the English alphabet or phonics chart, and then point to the home language charts to see if the same letter(s) or characters represent that sound. Students may see that different letters are used in the home language, or that the sound isn't used in their home language. This helps EBLs see which phonics skills transfer between the two languages, and which ones are different.

If you don't speak your EBLs' home language, it's helpful to find an alphabet chart that indicates what phonetic sound each letter or character makes. This is particularly helpful for languages that use scripts other than the Roman alphabet. For example, the Arabic alphabet chart and the Japanese chart in the sidebar indicate the corresponding sound. So, you can see which are similar sounds to certain English letters, and point out these similarities to your emergent bilinguals. Making these connections when developing English writing skills develops students' metalinguistic awareness, and can lead to language inquiry in intermediate and middle school grades.

Also, if you have your EBLs orally share the spelling for words they are going to write, you can also have them say the names of the letters in their home language. Then you can point to those letters on the English alphabet chart and teach them how to say the names of those letters in English.

**Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**  
**Elementary / Middle Grades**

- In a 4<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL classroom, the teacher had a group of six beginning EBLs at the start of the school year. The first writing unit was on Personal Narratives. During independent writing time each day, the teacher would first meet for about 5-7 minutes with this small group of beginning EBLs, two of whom were **SIFE students** who spoke Spanish. As a group, they constructed a short narrative about similar experiences they had on the first day of school in New York City. The students shared in their home language, Spanish, which the teacher understood. The teacher then translated their ideas into short English sentences. On the first day, the text they came up with was:

**My mother woke me up. I was happy because it was the first day of school.**

None of the students in the group had any knowledge of English. To have her EBLs help her write this text, she had them contribute the spelling of some of the beginning and ending sounds that were the same in both English and Spanish. This helped them begin to see how some phonics skills transferred across languages. She also had an alphabet chart in English and another in Spanish, so she pointed to both as students tried to identify the letters that corresponded with sounds they heard. This was particularly important for her two students whose writing ability in Spanish was significantly below grade level. The highlighted portions of the text show what beginning and ending letters different EBLs in this group contributed:

**My mother woke me up. I was happy because it was the**



**Who should I do interactive writing with?**

**Whole Group**

Bilingual and ESL: Since all of your students are emergent bilinguals, this can be an effective strategy to use with the whole class.

General Education: You can use this strategy with your whole class if you teach young students who are all learning how to write, or if you have a large number of emergent bilinguals in your classroom. Older students who are proficient in English still benefit from interactive writing if you incorporate some words with complex spelling, prefixes, suffixes, etc.

**Small Group**

Bilingual and ESL: Even though all of your students are EBLs, they all have different needs with writing. You may want to pull a small group of **SIFE students** who need more intensive support to learn sound-symbol correspondence. You can also pull small groups of EBLs who are at earlier stages of English language acquisition while the rest of the class is writing independently.

General Education: If you work with older students who already know how to write, and you have a small group of EBLs in your class, you can just use interactive writing with your EBLs.

**One-on-One**

Bilingual and ESL: As students are writing independently (during a Writing Workshop or during a content-area activity) you can briefly use interactive writing with individual EBLs to help them put down on paper the

**first day of school.**

The teacher had students orally share the spelling of these parts of the sentence, and she wrote down what they said. She wrote the other parts. During the activity, students copied the text on their own papers. This kept the 4<sup>th</sup> graders engaged and made it a more cognitively challenging activity than simply watching others write the text on chart paper.

Figure 2 shows how one of the EBLs in this group copied the interactive writing text on his own paper. Figure 3 shows a personal narrative he drafted in Spanish during this same unit of study. In both writing samples there is irregular spacing between words, a sign that he is still developing beginning concepts with word separation. This was something the teacher worked on with him through interactive writing over the course of the year.

Figure 2

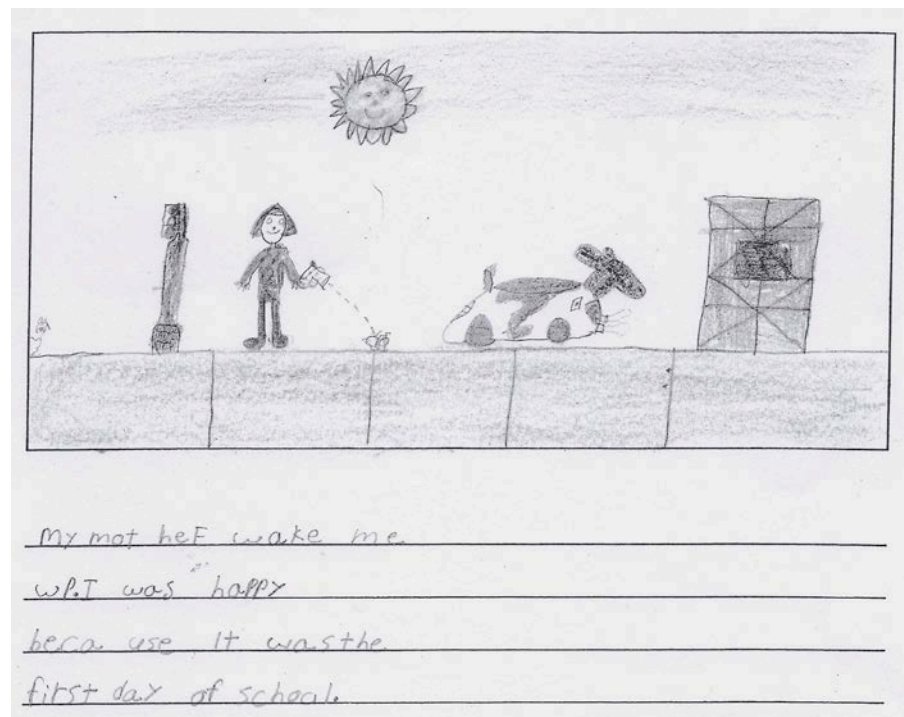


Figure 3



idea they want to express.

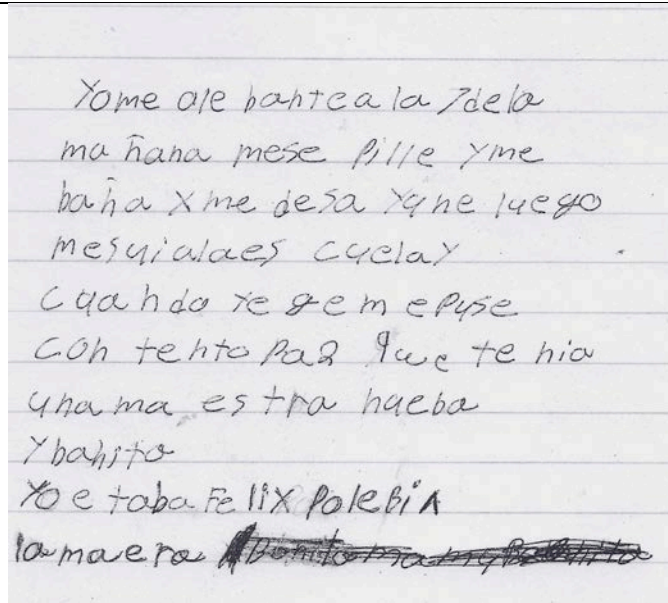
**General Education:** If you have just one EBL in your classroom, this can be a wonderful strategy to use during a writing conference to support their writing development, instead of following a traditional conference structure.

### Logistics for Grades K-1 vs. Grades 2- 8

In Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, students physically come up to the board or chart paper to write portions of the text with the guidance of the teacher, while the rest of the class watches. This is a way for students to learn how to turn oral language into written language.

In subsequent grades, once students understand *how* to write, they are simply learning *how to write in English*. At this point, you can **have each student write the text on their own paper** as you write it in a place they can all see.

To do this, when you have students share how to spell certain words, they can just share the spelling orally instead of physically coming up to the chart paper to write the word. Once the student shares orally, you can write it on your enlarged version, and have each individual student write it on their own paper. This keeps each student engaged in an age-appropriate way.



Text:

Yo me levantaba a las 7 de la mañana. Me cepillé y me bañé, y me desayuné. Luego me fui a la escuela y cuando llegué me puse contento porque tenía una maestra nueva y bonita.

Yo estaba feliz porque vi a la maestra.

Translation:

I got up at 7 in the morning. I brushed my teeth, I took a bath, and I had breakfast. Then I went to school and when I got there I was happy because I had a new, pretty teacher. I was happy because I saw my teacher.

## Translanguaging with “Language Experience Approach”

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students’ writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students’ content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards

Using translanguaging strategies with the Language Experience Approach helps EBLs develop their ability to correctly use standard English grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. This addresses the following anchor standards for Language.

Translanguaging with the Language Experience Approach also helps EBLs learn how to write different types of texts in English. This addresses the following anchor standards for Writing.

Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard

1  
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard

2  
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6

### What is it?

Many teachers use the Language Experience Approach with emerging writers.

Traditionally, this strategy is set up in the following way:

1. Students have some kind of shared experience—a class trip, a universal experience, a class project, a text they’ve all read or listened to, etc. The experiences shared by students can be informational, persuasive/opinion-based, or narrative.
2. Either in small groups or as a whole class, the teacher elicits a group of students’ or an individual student’s account of this experience.
3. The individual student or the group of students dictates the experience to the teacher, who scribes word for word. The teacher makes no corrections or edits to the experience, acting solely as scribe.
4. The teacher reads the experience back to the student(s), who can then make changes/additions.
5. The teacher uses the student(s)’ experience as a text through which he/she can teach both language and content (i.e.: if the experience lacks descriptive language, the teacher might elect to use that text as a model and have students add descriptive language).

You can easily add **translanguaging** to the Language Experience Approach by expanding your use of the strategy.

You can add translanguaging to the **dictating/scribing stage** by:

- Having students use all of their languages to recount an experience. This means that students can draw on their home languages, as well as English, to tell you about the experiences.
- Having students partner and take on the roles of both speakers and scribes, enabling them to hone their reading, writing, and listening skills as well as gain a higher level of linguistic awareness. You can partner students who share the same home language or those who do not, depending on your teaching goal.

You can add translanguaging to what you do **with** students’ experiences by:

- Explicitly teaching the similarities and differences between English and students’ home languages.
- Translating or have students translate their experiences from one language into another.
- Using students’ experiences as a linguistic scaffold for a piece of independent writing.

### Translanguaging How-To

1. **Set up opportunities for students to draw on their home languages, as well as English, to tell you their experiences.**

When you add translanguaging to the Language Experience Approach, you must



Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

**Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 4**

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

think flexibly about how students will use their languages to talk about their experiences. To truly encourage translanguaging, you must allow students to draw from the full range of their linguistic repertoire. This could mean:

- **Encouraging students use their entire linguistic repertoire**
  - As students dictate their experiences to you, encourage them to use their languages fluidly, drawing on their home languages when speaking in English (or vice versa). If you do not speak your students' home languages, you can use Google Translate or other Internet resources as you scribe (see *Resources: Internet as Multilingual Resource*).
- **Using your multilingual students as experts.**
  - If you do not speak your students' home languages, you can use your students' own linguistic knowledge to help you scribe their experiences. For example, if a student is telling you about an experience in English but switches into a home language to talk about a specific part of the experience and can't translate it, ask other students who share that home language for help.

**2. Strategically partner students so that they can use the Language Experience Approach together.**

Having students partner and take on the roles of both storytellers and scribes helps them to hone their reading, writing, and listening skills in both English and their home languages (for more on this idea, see *Collaborative Work: Multilingual Writing Partners*). You can pair students in different ways, depending on your own teaching goals. For example:

- Pairing students who **share a home language** can enable both students to develop their writing skills in both English and their home language.
- Pairing students with **different proficiencies** can scaffold the less proficient writer's ability to write independently and see connections between the spoken and written word in either language.

**3. Strategically use students' stories as translanguaging tools.**

The stories students tell through the Language Experience Approach can be used to many different ends. Teachers use the strategy to teach skills like grammar, word choice, and transitions. As teachers of EBLs, you can use this strategy to help students develop their writing in both English and their home languages. You can do this by:

- **Explicitly teaching the similarities and differences between English and students' home languages.**

You can teach linguistic awareness by drawing students' attention to similarities and differences between English and their home languages. You can focus on:

  - Word use and vocabulary (*See Vocabulary: Cognate Charts and Vocabulary: Vocabulary Inquiry Across Languages*)
  - Scripts
  - Syntax and word order (*See Syntax: Sentence-building*)
- **Translating or have students translate their experiences from one language into another.**

If you teach bilingually, you can have students dictate their experiences

### **Social Justice with the Language Experience Approach**

EBLs bring a myriad of experiences and stories with them into the classroom. When using the LEA, you can tap into these experiences, making your classroom oriented towards social justice. Especially in the middle and secondary grades, the LEA can be used to explore complex and even controversial topics that are relevant to EBLs' lives, such as:

- Immigration
- Discrimination (racism, linguisticism)
- English-only policies vs. Bilingual education

### **Cultural Relevance with the Language Experience Approach**

You can also tie the LEA to culturally relevant practices like:

- Community Studies
- Neighborhood Walks
- Writing Identity Texts

For more on these ideas, see *Resources: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment* and *Resources: Community Study*.

### **Emergent Bilinguals**

The Language Experience Approach can be one of the most useful strategies to use with some EBLs, and particularly with **SIFE** students. Because SIFE students struggle with writing in both English *and* their home languages, using their spoken language is a great way to help them see connections between the spoken and the written word.

- If you are not able to work one-on-one with these students, you can partner them with other students who share their home language. These students can scribe their experiences and you can sit with them later to discuss connections between their dictated experience and its written version.

- You can utilize Listening Centers as a way of "reversing" the Language Experience

to you in their home languages. You can then use those accounts as texts that you and your students can translate into English (or vice versa). When translating, you can draw students' attention to similarities and differences between English and their home languages (see above).

If you do not speak your students' home languages, you can partner students together who speak the same language and have them work together to translate their own experiences. The result will be side-by-side translations of their accounts in English and their home languages. You can then have students use these texts to report on similarities and differences between English and the home language.

- **Using students' stories as a scaffold for a piece of independent writing.**

All EBLs have stories to tell, but may not be able to put these stories in writing, especially in English. You can use the Language Experience Approach to help scaffold the writing process for your students. If students dictate their stories to you or to another student, drawing on all of their languages, you can use that scribed experience as a first draft of a piece of independent writing in English. Students can edit, revise, and further develop their experience, using the scribed version as a base. Getting EBLs' stories on paper first, while helping them to see connections between spoken and written English, can help them to successfully create a piece of independent writing.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

- **Student partners take on the roles of both speakers and scribes.**

In a 2nd grade ESL classroom, students took a trip to the Brooklyn Bridge as part of their study of New York City in social studies. After they returned, the teacher had home language partners collaboratively come up with a description of what they had seen and learned. The partners discussed what they wanted to write in both English and the home language, moving fluidly between the two depending on what they wanted to express. The partners decided sentence by sentence what they wanted to write. If they came up with an idea in the home language, they talked together to decide how to best write that idea in English. The student with the stronger English proficiency level acted as the scribe for this activity. The teacher then brought the whole class together and had partners share their writing with the class. The teacher used students' ideas to create a whole-class shared writing piece that summarized their learning about New York City.

- **Teach the similarities and differences between English and students' home languages.**

A Kindergarten teacher asked students to tell her what they had learned about the parts of a plant, during their science unit of study on Trees through the Seasons. The teacher recorded their ideas using a patterned sentence: Plants have \_\_\_\_\_. She also added a picture after each sentence the students came up with. After she wrote the first sentence "Plants have leaves," the teacher asked students if the word *plants* sounded like a word in their home language. Some of the EBLs who spoke Spanish and Portuguese recognized the cognate. The teacher had students share what the word was in their home languages, and pointed out that all of the words start with the same sound, and the same letter: *p*.

Approach. Have EBLs sit in a Listening Center and listen to a short, simple story in either English or their home language. Have them write down the words and parts of the story they recognize and then, later, help them to write down the words they may have missed (see *Resources: Listening Centers*).

- You can record the shared writing text so that students can listen to it while following along with the text, helping them read what they dictated orally. You can have students do this repeatedly, so that they can clearly see connections between their oral dictation and the written text.

### LEA at Different Grade Levels

Traditionally, the Language Experience Approach is used with emerging writers at the elementary level. However, there are many benefits to incorporating this strategy at the middle and secondary level. The LEA can also be used outside of the ELA classroom at these levels. You can easily use this strategy to help students develop their writing across all content areas. Using this strategy in the content areas helps students develop the many different kinds of writing they are expected to do at the higher grade levels. For some ideas, see [Middle & Secondary Ideas for Implementation](#).

## Middle / Secondary Grades

- **Translate students' stories from one language into another.**  
An 11<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual ELA teacher was preparing her students for the Regents exam. The class was working on the Critical Lens essay. Here, students had to analyze a quote and use it as a “lens” for analyzing two pieces of literature. The teacher used the Language Experience Approach to help students see connections between their home language and English. After a whole-class discussion of a practice quote, she had students in class use their home language, Spanish, to talk through their ideas about how the quote could connect to literature they read that year. As students spoke, she scribed their connections onto chart paper. After students edited the scribed account, the teacher facilitated a whole-class translation of their connections. The resulting translation was placed next to the Spanish version so that students could see the languages side by side. For homework, students wrote their own Critical Lens essay in English using the same quote used in class.
- **Student partners take on the roles of both speakers and scribes.**  
A 9<sup>th</sup> grade ESL class took a trip to Ellis Island as a part of a unit on immigration. To get students to write about their experiences on the trip, the teacher partnered students according to their home languages. Students dictated/scribed one another's accounts in English, with the storyteller switching back to the home language if needed. Together the partners would work through any difficulties, translating the home language into English. After students dictated their accounts of the trip, the partners would read the written experience together, using their home languages to edit and revise. Students later read their responses aloud to the class in English.
- **Using students' experiences as a linguistic scaffold for a piece of independent writing**  
A 7<sup>th</sup> grade general education science teacher wanted to incorporate students' cultures into a unit on the human body. To begin a lesson on modern antibiotics, the teacher asked students to turn and talk about traditional cures for illnesses in their cultures. Students conversed in either English or the home language (French, Polish, Urdu), depending on who they were next to (students were not necessarily seated next to someone who spoke the same home language). After students shared with one another, the teacher asked one student to talk with the class about a cure from his country, Senegal. The student, who had been in the United States for two years, shared how healers in Senegal used medicinal plants to cure things like burns and sores. The student also talked about gri-gris, traditional pouches worn around the neck that were supposed to ward against sickness and bad luck. Several other students from West African countries jumped in and told the teacher that they knew about gri-gris too. As he shared, he moved between English and his home language, French, which other French-speaking students helped to translate for the teacher and the rest of the class. Once the student had talked about a few traditional cures in Senegal, the teacher gave him the following sentence prompt and had him formulate a summary about traditional cures in his home country:

In \_\_\_\_\_, they use \_\_\_\_\_ to cure \_\_\_\_\_.  
They use this because...

The student dictated his summary in English, but asked other students to help

him in French when he got stuck. The teacher scribed his summary and had the student read it back to him. The teacher then had students write their own summaries about a traditional cure in their cultures or families, using the same sentence prompt. Students shared out their summaries with one another and with the whole class. Afterwards, the teacher had students read a short text about how antibiotics are used to treat certain illnesses. At the end of class, students wrote 1-paragraph summaries of the lesson in English, using the sentence prompt they started with, but focusing on the cures they read about in the lesson. For example, one summary began:

In the United States, they use penicillin to cure certain bacterial infections. They use this because it stops bacteria from growing by interacting with it. That makes the bacteria change, which makes it die or stop attacking the human body.

## Translanguaging with Independent Writing

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

When EBLs write using both their home language and English, they can more fully express their ideas and their understanding of how to write different types of texts. It also further develops their home language literacy. This addresses the following anchor standards for Writing.

EBLs can also use both their home language and English to create an oral product, combined with media or a visual display. This targets the following speaking and listening standard.

Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### **Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1**

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

#### **Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### What is it?

Writing is a part of students' work across all subject areas, especially with the new emphasis the Common Core State Standards place on writing. When bilingual students create written products, you can have them strategically draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire. There are multiple reasons to do this: it scaffolds your bilingual students' ability to write in English, it strengthens their writing abilities in the home language, and it provides a way for them to more fully express their ideas and their identities.

- **Translanguaging with a written product**

If your bilingual students have some writing ability in the home language, you can have them use both languages in their writing, instead of "forcing" them to write something only in English (or only in the home language, for bilingual programs). This translanguaging can happen whenever students write independently – in a Writing Workshop, a Reading Workshop, Math, Science, or Social Studies.

- **Create an accompanying oral product**

The Common Core State Standards standards also emphasize having students use language to express their knowledge and ideas orally. You can have bilingual students create an oral product to accompany their writing, such as oral presentations with a visual or media display, audio recordings, media recordings, or a performance. Creating an oral product is particularly helpful for students who are not literate in their home language because they can write in English to the best of their ability, and then create an oral product in the home language to accompany it that more fully expresses their knowledge and ideas.

There are different ways bilingual students can create written products in both English and the home language:

- **Create one product in the home language, and a separate product in English**

#### All Programs:

You can have bilingual students create a *bilingual text*, translated from one language to the next. Students begin by writing in their stronger language, and then work with a peer or adult to translate it into the other language. Cummins refers to this as an "identity text" (2005), and has documented how powerful it is with bilingual students. See *Environment: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment* for details about identity texts.

#### Bilingual Classrooms:

Translanguaging is a great option for students in bilingual programs because it enables them to develop their writing ability in both languages, and use both languages in a meaningful way. This works particularly well for a Writing Workshop unit, where there is time for your bilingual students to create a writing piece in each language. For a shorter content-area task, you may want to have bilingual students primarily create a written product in the language you are using for instruction.

#### General Education & ESL Classrooms:



**Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 6**

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

**Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 5**

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

When writing, you can first have your EBLs complete the writing task in their home language, which lets them fully express their ideas and learning. Then, you can help your EBLs respond to the same writing task in English. The end result is that EBLs have something written in the home language, as well as something written in English. The home language writing has provided them with an opportunity to more fully respond to the writing task, to continue developing their literacy skills in the home language, and to be engaged in a rigorous cognitive task. These skills transfer to English as their proficiency in the language develops. The English writing has provided students with an opportunity to continue developing their proficiency and writing ability with the language. You can also have your EBLs create a written product in English, and then accompany it with an oral product in the home language to expand upon the writing. This is particularly helpful for students with lower English proficiency levels. You can also have EBLs do the reverse: write in the home language, and present it orally in English. This works well for students who are literate in their home language.

- **Incorporate English and the home language into *one* written product**  
For EBLs with lower English proficiency levels, you can have them respond to the writing or speaking task in the home language, and have them use English to add in words, phrases, or sentences they've learned. Bilingual students with higher English proficiency levels can do the opposite: write in English, and use the home language for any words they don't know.

The end result is *one* written piece that is *multilingual* – the two languages are combined together. Bilingual students are able to use their home language to produce grade-appropriate writing and speaking, and at the same time they are using the English they have learned.

This is particularly helpful for content-area writing tasks where students have a fairly limited amount of time to write or develop an oral presentation. It can also be used as a strategy during a Writing Workshop, giving bilingual students time to focus on developing just *one* writing piece, instead of two.

In bilingual programs, it is very powerful to have students create a product that uses both languages, since the audience is bilingual. Students can creatively use both of their languages so that one part is in English, and another part is in the other language.

Another option is to have bilingual students use both languages in a writing piece for *stylistic reasons*. Many bilingual authors include words, phrases, or sentences in another language at different points as a way to express their voice, to add authenticity, to express an idea that is better communicated in a particular language, or for other specific purposes. You can show students mentor texts where the author combines English and another language in this way, and discuss with students *why* they think the author decided to write those particular words, phrases, or sentences in the other language.

## **Translanguaging How-To**

### **1. Think about your writing task with a focus on translanguaging**

- Do I want my bilingual students to create one product in English, and something separate in the home language to more fully express themselves?
- Do I want my bilingual students to create just one product, and use both of



### Native Language Writing:

When we require bilingual students to write only in English, we are silencing a part of their voices that is already present in their minds, but cannot be expressed in written English. Many EBLs and bilingual students are fantastic writers in their home languages. However, when forced to write in English, their writing does not match their cognitive ability. Fu (2009) gives the example of a narrative written by a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Chinese student during his first year in an American school. When writing in Chinese, the student was a fluent, expressive writer, as shown in this translated excerpt from a narrative he wrote in Chinese about arriving in the United States (29):

I saw the magnificent view of America, but I realized my life in this land had nothing to do with those magnificent lights...I went through all kinds of feelings and thoughts in one day, but I could never forget the American lights.

This can be contrasted with a text he wrote in English:

This morning I mom said go to the uncle home eat lunch. I am very happy.

Fu maintains that if this student were required to write in English only, his writing ability might actually *decline*. His writing simply would not match his cognitive ability. If you allow your EBLs and bilingual students to write in the language they feel most proficient and comfortable, their writing in English will improve and their true writing voices will emerge. You will also get a more complete picture of who your students are as writers—what they can do with written language and what skills they need to improve.

their languages? This is a great option when:

- The audience is bilingual
- Using both languages will help certain students communicate their ideas more fully
- You want students to create a bilingual product, such as an identity text

## 2. Support your EBLs with lower English proficiency levels as they create a written product in English.

When your EBLs create an oral or written product in English to accompany an oral or written product in the home language, you can provide the following supports:

- **Labeling:** Have them label a visual or media presentation with English vocabulary words, using a bilingual picture dictionary or a word wall for support. The visual could be something they drew related to the writing task, or it could be a photograph, a diagram, a digital presentation, or other form of media.
- **Using sentence frames:** Help them use a sentence frame that relates to the topic, and matches their level of English proficiency. For example, to explain what landforms and bodies of water are in New York, students could use the sentence frame: “New York has \_\_\_\_\_.” Students with slightly higher proficiency levels could add adjectives to this frame to describe the landforms and bodies of water: “New York has \_\_\_\_\_.”
- **Referring to model texts:** Help EBLs reference texts in the classroom to add some of that language to their own writing. This could be a text they have read, a model text you have displayed of your own writing, or a shared writing text the class created.

Make sure your EBLs have time to write in the home language when they’ve finished with this more basic writing in English. This will ensure both a growing proficiency with English, and rigorous cognitive engagement with the home language writing.

## 3. Model for your bilingual students how to move fluidly between their languages when creating a written product.

You can show bilingual students different ways to do this translanguaging when creating *one* piece of writing. Some of these methods include:

- **Labeling:** Have EBLs write in the home language and label any accompanying visuals or media displays in a combination of the home language and English. They can use a bilingual picture dictionary or a word wall as a resource for this labeling.
- **Inserting English words, phrases, or sentences:** For EBLs with beginning English proficiency levels, you can show them how to write or speak in the home language, and translanguaging by using English for any words, phrases, or sentences they have learned. Then, they can move fluidly back to the home language to continue writing or speaking. Bilingual students may also want to insert English words for stylistic purposes.
- **Inserting home language words, phrases, or sentences:** Bilingual students with higher English proficiency levels are able to express

themselves more fully in English. Have them *start* writing or speaking in English, and have them switch to the home language whenever they get stuck on a word or idea. Then, they can use English to continue writing. This is a good strategy to help students when they get stuck, and eliminates the “down time” they spend worrying about unknown words in English. Bilingual students may also want to insert home language words for stylistic purposes.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

A 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher created an integrated unit combining Social Studies (Native Americans), Reading (Informational Texts), and Writing (Informational Essays). After comparing and contrasting different Native American groups and indigenous groups in Latin America, students chose one group and wrote an informational essay about how they used natural resources for their survival.

EBLs with lower English proficiency levels wrote their essays in the home language and added in English vocabulary words they had learned throughout the unit. They also added in key sentences from texts they had read about the topic in English. EBLs with higher English proficiency levels wrote their essays in English, and added in words in the home language that they didn’t know how to express in English. During the editing stage, the teacher helped those students translate the home language words to English.

Students wrote each paragraph of their informational essays on a separate page, with space for illustrations. Figure 1 shows one page of the writing created by a beginning EBL from Ecuador. He had been in the United States for only one month at this point. He wrote his essay in Spanish, and included one key sentence in English from a text he read. The English sentence fit in perfectly with the ideas he expressed in Spanish, and it is clear he understood what that sentence meant because he then continued the sentence in Spanish to add on more information. See the translation below Figure 1, with the original English sentence in bold. His informational essay also showed evidence of him applying what was taught in the series of mini-lessons about essay structure.

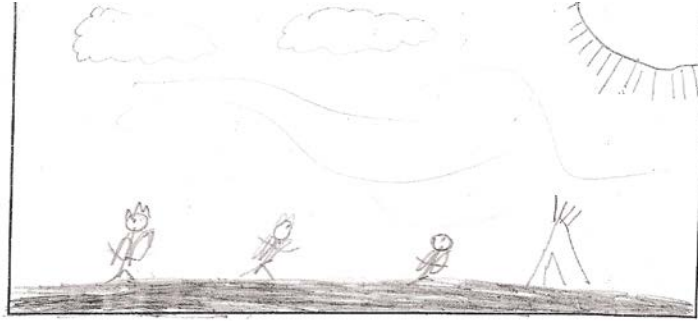
### Assessing Home Language Writing

Many general education and ESL teachers hesitate to have their EBLs write in the home language because they can't read their students' writing. Keep in mind that you are still having your EBLs create the English writing you would expect from them for a particular writing task; the only alteration is that you are providing an opportunity for your EBLs to *also* write something in the home language to more fully express their ideas and their learning.

If you can't read a particular language, see if another student or another person in the school community can tell you what the student has written. Remember that you will still have their English writing, like always, to see what they have produced.

If you have an adult look at the home language writing, you can also ask how the writing compares to what is expected of a student that age. Sometimes it is obvious even to a non-speaker of the language. You may notice that the writing lacks the organization, length, or writing conventions that you would expect of your grade. Or, you may be pleased to see that these features are present. Either way, it gives you an idea of what writing abilities your EBLs bring with them, and what you will need to continue developing with them.

Figure 1



Quando los hombre mataron los venados ellos  
los llevaron con gando a su casa, despues las  
mujeres agarraron la piel del venado y des-  
pues ellos hicieron para se piel del venado  
for shoes they wore moccasins made out  
of deerskin para abrigarse por el frio que  
era cuando se le van sus cosas a casa  
mas venados para la familia que se a unije

### Translation:

When the men killed the deer they carried them home. Afterwards, the women skinned the deer and then they made clothes from the deerskin. **For shoes they wore moccasins made out of deerskin** to keep themselves warm when they went out of their homes to hunt the deer to keep their families warm.

Figure 2 shows the writing this same student was able to produce in English just five months later. During those five months he had been using the translanguaging strategies described in this strategy.

Figure 2

## The Day that I Moved

One day in the morning when I was at home I heard my mom call "Bryan, come?" I went to my mom. She said, "What good news?" She said, we are going to New York. I was happy but I was going to leave all my family in Ecuador, but they told me that they were going to be fine.

The next day me and my mom were packing up. It was time to go to sleep. I was thinking how it will be like in New York city. Then it was time for me and my mom went to the airport. And I was scared because in my life I never got to a airport and then

I saw one person has a  
Divine child. Then we got  
in and then in the airport  
they were giving food to  
all the people.

finally I got to New York  
and day after I got used  
to being in New York. Then  
my mom said I should go  
to school to learn English.  
And now I could talk English  
and write like story.



#### EBLs with low levels of home language literacy

Some of your EBLs may not be able to write proficiently in their home language, depending on their age and their previous schooling experiences.

In a bilingual program, you will be developing their literacy skills in both languages. In a general education or ESL classroom, you can take advantage of their **oral language abilities** in the home language as a means to help them write in English. See *Writing & the Content Areas: Interactive Writing* as a strategy that provides excellent support for these EBLs as they learn how to write in English.

- In a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Self-contained ESL classroom, the September writing unit was on Personal Narratives. There were several beginning EBLs in the class, and the teacher asked them to write a personal narrative in their home languages (Spanish, Chinese). They did this based on what they gleaned from the writing mini-lessons in English, and from what the teacher was able to explain in Spanish or have peers explain in the home language. During independent writing, the teacher met with her beginning EBLs as a small group for a portion of the time. She helped them use a basic sentence frame to create a “personal narrative” about what they saw in the moment when they first arrived at their new school in New York.

Figure 3 shows one girl’s English writing from the unit, where she uses the sentence frame “I see a \_\_\_\_\_.” to create a series of patterned sentences. She used a bilingual Spanish-English picture dictionary to help her fill in the sentence frame. You can see from her writing that the next step is to teach her to use the article “a” for singular nouns, but not



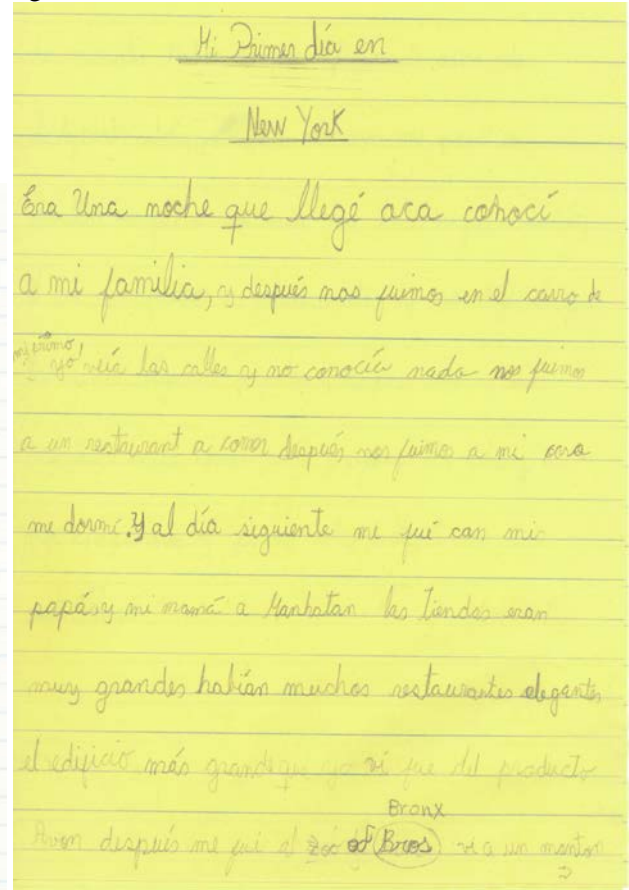
for plural nouns. The sentence frame is in the present tense since that develops first in English before the past tense.

Figure 4 is the draft of the personal narrative she wrote in Spanish during this unit. It is titled: “Mi Primer día en New York.” (“My First day in New York.”)

Figure 3



Figure 4



**Figure 3 Text:** I see a teacher. I see a student. I see a clock. I see a picture. I see a markers. I see a pencil. I see a crayons. I see a scissors.

Figure 5 shows a piece of writing the same girl created in the spring of that school year, after having the support of the translanguaging writing strategies described in this section.



Figure 5

"Good morning mom," "Hi Ghilary" said my cousin, "Hi Mishelle," she is my cousin, she is pregnant. In the afternoon I listen one the voice, I walk to bedroom of my cousin, when I got closer and closer the voices wasn't voices but screams from my cousin who was pregnant, I said to my mom, "Mom, Mom, Mishelle is going to have the baby!", my mom ran, ran and she called the ambulance.

"Mom the ambulance is here," I said, my mom said "OK", Mishelle my mom and my got in the ambulance my cousin shouted and shouted, "OK Mishelle here is the hospital. Mishelle entered in the maternity room.

10 minutes passed, 20 minutes, 1 hours, 2 hours, Finally the doctor said, "The baby was born and it's a boy", my mom called the father of the baby, my aunt the grandmother of the baby and everybody, my aunt said, "The baby is so quiet and beautiful",

**Figure 5 Text:**

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10 minutes passed, 20 minutes, 1 hours, 2 hours, Finally the doctor said, "The baby was born and it's a boy," my mom called the father of the baby, my aunt the grandmother of the baby and everybody, my aunt said, "The baby is so quiet and beautiful."

## Middle/Secondary Grades

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher was concerned when she saw a significant difference in her EBLs' homework turn-in rate vs. the turn-in rate of her other students. The class was working on writing well-developed paragraphs, and each night students had to practice this writing for homework. The next day in class, the teacher picked one students' paragraph to anonymously edit and revise as a whole class. She knew that her EBLs would benefit more from the in-class editing if they did the writing themselves for homework. She spoke to her EBLs and learned that many of them were not comfortable responding to the English prompts in written English. It was apparent that students had a lot to *say* about the topics, but could not express their ideas in writing.

The teacher decided to modify the homework assignments for her EBLs. Instead of requiring them to respond to each prompt in English, she encouraged them to use both o their languages. She told them to write in English until they encountered a word or phrase they did not know how to express. At that point, they could use their home languages and then come back to English when possible. The next day in class, the EBLs would be able to share their own paragraphs, opening up opportunities for the class to help translate, as well as see connections between English and other languages present in the classroom.

The teacher quickly saw an increase in the amount of homework her EBLs were turning in. They were more engaged in the classwork and were more invested in improving their writing. In addition, all members of the class became more linguistically aware, which encouraged authentic conversations about and inquiry into how people use language to communicate in writing.

## Translanguaging with Multi-genre Writing

### Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Writing in different genres helps students to meet a variety of writing standards. Not only do students get a change to practice writing different text types, but they hone their ability to write with point of view and perspective in mind. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

#### Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

#### Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

#### Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 4

### What is it?

According to Pauline Gibbons (2009), a genre is a piece of writing that has specific characteristics that set it apart from other genres. For example,

- It has a social purpose (i.e.: it is used to “do something” with language)
- It has a specific overall structure or organization
- It has language features typical of that genre

Multi-genre writing means having students write about content topics or themes in more than one of these genres. For example, instead of simply writing an essay at the end of a unit, students can write an essay *as well as* one or more non-traditional genres that illustrate their understanding of multiple perspectives and ideas within a topic. For EBLs, and for many students who struggle with literacy, formal, more “traditional” responses may not fully illustrate their understanding of a topic. By writing in multiple genres, students can write about their knowledge in different ways, helping you get a better idea of what they know and can do. When you make these multiple genres **multilingual**, you are allowing students to write about their knowledge in the language they feel most comfortable and competent using, as well as encouraging them to explore how language affects point of view and understanding.

Because EBLs, like all students, are at different stages on the literacy spectrum, you might have many different levels of literacy in one classroom. Some students will have a higher level of literacy in English. Others will have strong literacy in their home language, but are in the early stages of developing English literacy. Still others will struggle with literacy in *both* languages. For this reason it is imperative that you think flexibly about how students write about their understanding of content. By allowing EBLs to represent their knowledge in multiple, multilingual genres, you can get a better picture of what they know, as well as scaffold their ability to write more formally in both English and their home languages.

### Translanguaging How-To

#### 1. Choose the genres you want students to write to represent their content knowledge.

Multi-genre writing is most successful when the genres authentically fit the content you are teaching. For example, if you are teaching the American Revolution, having students write personal letters, dialogues, and journal entries in the points of view of historical figures is relevant to both the time period and the content. It is important to look closely at your content to see where there are authentic opportunities for using multiple genres. You might ask yourself:

- What genres are relevant to my content-area topics?
- What points of view or perspectives can be represented in these topics?
- What genres do “real people” use to represent their ideas and findings about these topics?
- Of these genres, which ones do I want my students to write for this unit of study/topic? Think about your students – how many genres per unit are appropriate? How much time will you allot to teaching each one?

#### 2. Specifically teach and model each genre.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 5**

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

**Emergent Bilinguals**

If your EBLs struggle to write in both English and their home languages (i.e.: **SIFE** and **LTEL** students), you can modify the multi-genre writing to include:

**- Partner Writing**

(see *Collaborative Work: Multilingual Writing Partners*)

**- The Language Experience Approach**

(see *Content-Area & Writing Instruction: Translanguaging with the Language Experience Approach*)

**- Interactive Writing**

(see *Content-Area & Writing Instruction: Translanguaging with Interactive Writing*)

Because every genre has its own set of rules, students need explicit lessons on how to successfully write each one. Gibbons (2009) describes her **Teaching and Learning Cycle** for scaffolding genre writing:

**Stage 1: Building the Field**

Help students develop background information about the topic they will write about (see *Reading & Content: Building Background with Home Language Support*).

**Stage 2: Modeling the Genre**

Show students the various characteristics of the genre itself—purpose, form, language, etc.

**Stage 3: Joint Construction**

You and your students collaboratively construct a piece of writing in that genre. As you do this, you talk explicitly about both the language and the content of the writing.

**Stage 4: Independent Writing**

Students write in that genre on their own.

In addition to using the Teaching and Learning Cycle, you might consider the following questions as you plan:

- **What specific features will students need to write successfully in this genre?**

Letters have salutations and closings. Dialogues and interviews have dialogue tags so the reader knows who's speaking. Poems use figurative language and rhyme. Each genre has specific structural and linguistic features that set it apart from other genres. Students need to know these features in order to write in that genre successfully.

- **How “formal” is this genre?**

Different genres have different levels of formality. Teaching students this spectrum of formality (as well as how to vary formality in their own writing) is an important skill. This is especially important for EBLs, some of whom are learning the “rules” of a new society, in addition to the rules of a new language.

- **Who is the audience for this genre?**

Like an explicit discussion of formality, a discussion of audience helps students to think deeply about the language they use in each genre. Students can think authentically about language when they have a real audience in mind—to stick with the American Revolution example, John Adams would write to his wife Abigail in a different way than he would write to members of the Constitutional Convention. Helping students to see these differences will deepen their understanding of both the language and the content topic itself.

3. **Encourage students to use translanguaging as they write in multiple genres.**

Student can easily use translanguaging when writing in multiple genres:

- **Write in English but edit/revise in the home language (or vice versa)**

Depending on your classroom and program goals, students can write in multiple genres in one language. However, you can encourage translanguaging by having students pre-write, edit, and negotiate revisions in their home languages.

- **Use English and the home language in one genre**

### Teacher Literature:

If you want to learn more about using genre/multi-genre writing in your classroom, try these professional books:

*English Learners, Academic Literacy, and Thinking* (Pauline Gibbons) – referenced in this strategy

*A Teacher's Guide to the Multigenre Research Project: Everything You Need to Get Started* (Melinda Putz)

*Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers* (Tom Romano)

*The Multigenre Research Paper: Voice, Passion, and Discovery in Grades 4-6* (Camille Allen)

### Multi-genre Literature

Looking for some good models? The following books can be used in the classroom as examples of authentic multi-genre writing:

#### Elementary

##### Concept Books with Facts at the End:

*What do you do with a Tail Like This?* (Jenkins & Page)

This concept book is written in a question and answer style, and at the end there is detailed information about each animal.

##### Poetry and Informational Text

*Sea Squares* (Hulme)

This book is a math-related poem about squaring numbers, using examples of creatures found in the sea. The poem is followed by informational text about each sea animal.

##### Fiction and Informational Text

*The Scrambled States of America* (Keller)

This fictional text tells the story of what happens when different states want to change places with each other, and they learn the reality of what it's like to live in a different climate and place. The story is followed by a reference text with facts about each of the 50 states.

Because multi-genre writing encourages authenticity, it is important to keep in mind that people use their languages fluidly in certain genres. When it is relevant to the genre, students can write in both English and their home languages to illustrate their understanding of the content. The following genres could lend themselves to this kind of translanguaging:

- Interview and Dialogue (where the speakers are multilingual)
- Letters, Postcards, or Emails (where the writer and/or the recipient is multilingual)
- Diary entries or monologues (when the writer thinks/writes multilingually)
- Newspaper articles (for a multilingual news source or audience)
- Poems, songs, or raps (which often purposefully mix voices/languages)

As students write in these and other genres, you can facilitate discussions about **how** and **why** people use their languages across different genres and for different purposes. This can encourage a higher level of discussion and critical thinking than usually occurs around writing in school.

- **Translate one genre from the home language to English**

For students who have literacy in their home languages, they can create a piece of genre writing in that language, using the same Teaching & Learning Cycle and keeping in mind the same ideas about each genre. Once they have a draft of that genre, you can work with those students to translate their own writing into English (with the use of Google Translate, bilingual dictionaries/picture dictionaries, partnered work, etc.). It is important that students do not translate the entire piece of writing from one language to the other, word for word. Strategic translation (of certain words, sentences, ideas, etc.) can help students to see connections between their languages, while still developing important genre and general writing knowledge. If you teach in a bilingual program, you can also reverse this process and have students translate genre writing in English into a home language.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- In a 1<sup>st</sup> grade bilingual classroom, the teacher set up multi-genre writing experiences during an integrated unit on Communities. Each week, the teacher lined up different Spanish-speaking guests to visit the classroom so students could interview them about the type of job they had in the community. For each visitor, students wrote a few questions in Spanish that they wanted to ask. After the visitor left, they wrote the answers they had learned, also in Spanish, and created an illustration to represent what they had learned about that type of job. The teacher compiled these question and answer texts each week, turning them into a class book about that particular community job. At the end of the unit they had five of these books as part of the classroom library. In addition to this Spanish writing, students also created an All About Book during the Writing Workshop in English, which they ultimately shared with the entire 1<sup>st</sup> grade (including students who only speak English). For their All About Book, they chose one type of job they were most interested in, read different books about that job (in Spanish and English), and then wrote their own All About Book in English to share what they learned



*The 5,000 Year Old Puzzle: Solving A Mystery* (Logan)  
This is a fictional account of a historical 1924 archeological expedition to discover a secret tomb in Egypt. The story is told through multiple genres: journal entries, facts, maps, and postcards.

*Postcards from Pluto: A Tour of the Solar System* (Leedy)  
This story about a group of children who take a field trip to outer space is told through the postcards they write about their experiences. Facts about outer space are included in the postcards. There is also a sidebar with dialogue between the characters, which also includes outer space facts.

#### **Informational Texts with Multiple Levels of Information**

*The Life and Times of the Ant* (Micucci)

This “All-About” book delves into the topic of ants using multiple genres: expository text, how-to explanations, timelines, charts, graphs, etc. This text can be a model for students to see how they can convey information about a topic in multiple ways.

#### **Middle/Secondary**

*Nothing but the Truth*

(Avi)

The story of a school prank turned political is told through memo, newspaper articles, diary entries, dialogue, and more.

*Tears of a Tiger* (Sharon M. Draper)

This is the story of a Andy, whose friend is killed in a drunk driving accident in which Andy was the driver. The story uses many different genres to tell this difficult story.

*Monster* (Walter Dean Myers)

A mix of diary entries and screenplay tells the story of teen Steve Harmon’s murder trial.

*Breathing Under Water* (Alex Flinn)

Alternating between 1<sup>st</sup> person diary entries and 3<sup>rd</sup> person prose, this book tells the story of an abusive relationship through the eyes of the abuser as he goes

about the job. By using multi-genre writing in the Communities unit, the teacher provided two different ways for students to share their new content-area knowledge. And, there was a purpose for using Spanish and English for each type of writing.

- In a 5<sup>th</sup> grade general education classroom, the teacher combined a Reading unit on Historical Fiction with a social studies unit on Slavery in the Americas. Students read different pieces of historical fiction centered on this time period. To express their learning, the teacher had students write in two different genres. They wrote journal entries from the point of view of someone from that time period. They also wrote an informational report during the Writing Workshop explaining the causes and effects of slavery in the Americas. Emergent bilinguals had the option to write some of their journal entries in the home language. Some students chose to write from the point of view of Spanish-speaking colonists or slaves brought to Spanish-speaking colonies. In these cases, students wrote the journal entries in Spanish, and translated some of them to English. The teacher supported emergent bilinguals throughout the writing process for the informational report to help them include as much English as possible. For some students, this meant including key words, phrases, or sentences in English from texts they had read about the topic. Other students were able to write the entire report in English.

#### **Middle / Secondary Grades**

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual math teacher had students work in pairs to solve several multi-step math problems. After students successfully talked through and solved the problems, the teacher told students they would have to turn their math conversations into “Math Scenes.” Students worked together to re-create their conversations about solving the problem, including any negotiations, disagreements, and “a-ha!” moments they had. Because students spoke the same home language, many students moved fluidly between English and the home language as they had conversations about the math and created their scenes. The teacher encouraged students to include both languages in their Math Scenes. In addition to writing out the dialogue of the scene, the teacher modeled the use of dialogue tags, stage directions, and “at rise” descriptions (descriptions of what is happening as the scene begins). After writing out their scenes, students performed them for the class. Students enjoyed the writing/performing experience and the scenes helped to reinforce their math learning.
- A 7<sup>th</sup> grade ESL science teacher wanted to bring authentic science writing into his classroom. During a unit on different diseases, he had students keep a “Medical Journal” where they wrote diary entries about the various “cases” they saw. Each time students learned about a new disease, they would write a diary entry in the point of view of a doctor about its symptoms, causes, treatments, and other disease-specific information. Students could write these journal entries in either English or their home languages since, as the teacher told them repeatedly, multilingual doctors speak different languages with their multilingual patients! When discussing the journal entries as a whole class or in small groups, students either translated their entries for the class or spoke about their home language writing in English.



through rehabilitation.

- A 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher wanted her students to write about topics they cared about through multi-genre writing. Each student picked a topic that they found interesting or that they connected to. Students picked topics ranging from racism to baseball, from gender to music. The teacher picked five genres to teach her students. Her rationale for the genres were 1) they were authentic genres that students could use outside of school, 2) they lent themselves to many different topics, and 3) they encouraged students to use multiple languages in their writing. The genres were:
  - Newspaper Writing
  - Poetry
  - Interview
  - Letter/Email Writing
  - Personal narrative

For each genre, the teacher followed the Teaching and Learning Cycle, though the “Building the Field” stage was often done through independent research on students’ chosen topics. The class read models of each genre, collaborated to write in that genre, and then wrote in that genre for their own topics. Within the modeling/joint construction stages, the teacher was clear about encouraging students to use translanguaging in authentic ways. For example, a student writing about the topic of immigration interviewed his uncle about his experience coming to America from the Dominican Republic. Because his uncle did not speak English, the student wrote the interview questions in both English and Spanish, conducted the interview in Spanish, and then translated the interview into English.

The resulting products were multi-genre, multilingual inquiries into various topics that interested the students in the class. Students were able to represent their ideas about these topics in a variety of ways and in different languages, which allowed them to fully illustrate their knowledge and depth of thinking.

## Multilingual Word Walls

### Essential Questions

- *How can we scaffold emergent bilinguals' understanding of English vocabulary words?*
- *How can we develop emergent bilinguals' academic vocabulary in their home languages?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

#### Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

*By putting students' home languages side-by-side with English, you improve their understanding and ability to use new general academic and domain-specific vocabulary words.*

### What is it?

Many classrooms have a space dedicated to a word wall – from the primary grades through high school. These word walls typically consist of a list of words that have been introduced in the classroom. However, emergent bilinguals rely on a meaningful context to understand what words mean and how to use them.

In addition to including a visual representation of the word, you can give your EBLs even more of a meaningful context by **making your word wall multilingual**. There are several ways to do this:

- Displaying the **word card** in English *and* your EBLs' home language(s)
- Displaying a **definition** for the word in English *and* your EBLs' home language(s)
- Displaying an **example sentence** in English *and* your EBLs' home language(s)

You can vary how you set up multilingual word walls depending on the program you teach:

- **Bilingual Classrooms**

In many bilingual classrooms, word walls are only in English, or only in the other language. To make your word walls more effective, you can display a bilingual word wall like the one shown in Figure 1 – regardless of what language you're using to teach the vocabulary. Having a bilingual word wall ensures that your students develop academic vocabulary in *both* languages – not just the language they happen to use for studying that subject. It also helps EBLs remember the meaning of new words since they can refer to their home language. For EBLs who speak a Romance language, such as Spanish, a bilingual word wall helps them see that many academic vocabulary words are cognates with English – something students don't tend to notice unless the languages are placed next to each other and the similarities are explicitly pointed out. For these reasons, it is critical to reserve spaces in your bilingual classroom where *both* languages are shown together for the specific purpose of vocabulary development.

- **General Education & ESL Classrooms**

You can move away from a traditional monolingual English word wall, and instead display multilingual word cards and multilingual sentences/definitions (Figure 1). You may also decide to make *part* of your word wall multilingual, such as the word cards, while having the sentences or definitions in English (Figure 2). If there are multiple home languages in your classroom, you can include them all on the word cards, as shown in Figure 2. Use different colors to differentiate the languages.

## Resources

To translate your word wall words into your students' home languages, try: [translate.google.com](https://translate.google.com)  
The translations are quite reliable – particularly for individual words – but also for complete sentences.

## Planning Tip

At the beginning of a unit, identify your key vocabulary words and look up the translations right away, if necessary. Copy the translations into a word card template, and print out the word cards. Making this a part of your lesson planning ensures that you have the multilingual resources for your students when it comes time to teach each lesson.

## Traditional vs. Simplified Chinese

Figure 2 shows English side-by-side with two commonly spoken languages in New York State: Spanish and Chinese. The Chinese shown in this example is Traditional Chinese, which is used in Taiwan, as well as New York City's Chinatown. Mainland China uses Simplified Chinese. Both languages are available on Google Translate to help you appropriately translate your word walls.

Figure 1

continent continent		Africa is the second largest continent. L'Afrique est le deuxième plus grand continent.
equator équateur		The equator crosses Africa. L'équateur traverse l'Afrique.
desert désert		Africa has three large deserts. L'Afrique a trois grands déserts.
mountains montagnes		Africa has mountains. L'Afrique a des montagnes.
savannah savane		Africa has a savannah across the center. L'Afrique a une savane à travers le centre.

Figure 2

eyes ojos 眼睛		A frog has big eyes to hunt.
ears orejas 耳朵		A fox has large ears to hunt animals.
nose nariz 鼻子		A deer has a nose to smell animals.
tongue lengua 舌頭		A butterfly has a tongue to eat nectar.

Putting your students' home languages side-by-side with English vocabulary words is a strategic instructional move on your part. It's a powerful way to:

- Scaffold your EBLs' understanding of the English vocabulary words you've introduced
- Improve their understanding of new content, given their fuller understanding of the key vocabulary words
- Simultaneously develop your students' level of academic vocabulary in their home languages, fostering a more advanced level of bilingualism for them.

## Translanguaging How-To

### 1. Introduce the word

Introduce a new word within the context of a meaningful learning activity. Help student understand the meaning of the word using visuals and examples.

### 2. Add home language to word card

Ask students if they know what the word is in their home language(s), based on what they are beginning to understand about the word's meaning. You may find that some of your students are already familiar with the word, and can tell you what it is in their home language.

However, EBLs often aren't sure how to translate a new word to their home language, especially if it's a word related to a new content-area topic that they've never studied before. In this case, you can use a website like Google Translate ([translate.google.com](https://translate.google.com)) to find the translation.

### 3. Add home language to a definition

Providing a student-friendly definition helps students recall what the word means when they refer to the wall at a later time. In a general education/ESL classroom, you would introduce this definition in English. If you've thought of the definition ahead of time, you can translate it beforehand into your students' languages. Or, you can have bilingual students supply the home language definition.

### 4. Add home language to an example sentence

Model for students how to use the word in a sentence. In a bilingual program, you can have students help you translate that sentence into the other language, and then work with a partner to create their own sentence in the target language. In a general education/ESL classroom, you can have students talk with a partner

### Hearing the word in the home language

If you have emergent bilinguals who aren't literate in their home language, including **SIFE students**, they may not be able to read what you have written in their home language.

On Google Translate, when you translate an English word into another language, there is a little speaker icon below the translation. If you click on this, your EBLs can hear the word or sentence spoken in their home language. The accent and fluency of the audio is remarkably good, even when reading a complete sentence or paragraph.

You can also use the App **Jibbigo**, which is a speech-to-speech voice translator between English and 9 other languages. It allows you to say something in English, and then hear (and see) the translation in one of those other languages. It also works by saying something in the other language, and then hearing the translation in English.

using English and/or their home languages to try using the word in their own sentence.

#### 5. Include a visual

Whenever possible, include some sort of visual to represent the word's meaning. You may even want to have a larger visual displayed (such as a poster or mural with images of the words) and add the multilingual word cards, definitions, and/or sentences directly onto the larger visual.

#### 6. Use the multilingual word wall as a resource

Posting the words, images, definitions, and/or example sentences on the multilingual word wall is just the first step towards helping students learn these words. The real power of a word wall comes from referring to it continuously throughout a unit of study, giving students multiple opportunities to read the words, hear the words, and use the words correctly in their speaking and writing.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- In a self-contained 4<sup>th</sup> grade ESL classroom, emergent bilinguals were doing a math unit on multiplication and division. The teacher wanted her students to be able to understand and correctly use the math vocabulary words identified in the curriculum as the key words for this unit: *factor*, *product*, *square number*, *dividend*, *divisor*, and *quotient*. She used a multilingual word wall as a foundation for this vocabulary practice.

Throughout the unit, whenever students learned one of the new vocabulary words, the teacher first helped them understand the word's meaning using manipulatives, written math problems, and other concrete examples.

At the end of the lesson, to help students reflect on what they had learned that day, she wrote the new vocabulary word(s) on a word card in English and helped students identify the word in their home language – in this case, Spanish (Figure 5). The teacher had looked up the translations ahead of time, since she knew these would be her key math vocabulary words for the month.

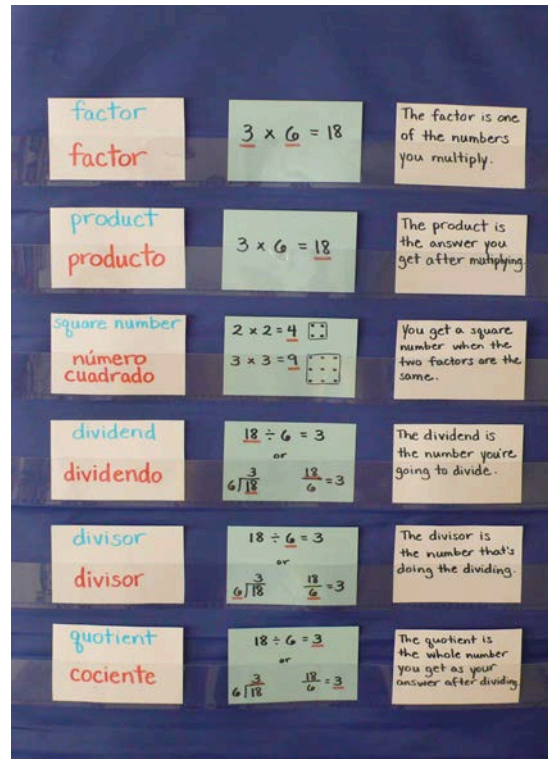
A few of her EBLs knew some of the words in Spanish, particularly some of the newcomers who had just recently been studying math in Spanish in their home countries. For the rest of the words, the teacher provided the Spanish translation. The words for this unit were all cognates, so the teacher pointed out each cognate, showing students how similarly the words were spelled, and how similarly they sounded in the two languages.

Then, the teacher helped the class come up with a student-friendly definition in English for the word. She had partners talk with each other in English and/or their home languages to paraphrase this definition, clarifying their understanding of the word. She also included a visual example of the word on a separate picture card, to help her EBLs remember the word's meaning at a glance.

In this way the math word wall grew little by little throughout the unit. Since it was displayed in a pocket chart, the teacher was able to move around the words for different review activities. Whenever she had a few extra minutes, she removed either the picture cards or the word cards, and had students match them up to show their understanding of the words' meaning. At the beginning of each math lesson, she would take off one or two of the words, and ask students to

explain what they had learned about those words. This made the multilingual word wall an active resource for helping students continuously practice the math vocabulary.

Figure 5



### Resources

For information on the 11 most spoken languages in New York State, you can refer to the following resource developed by CUNY-NYSIEB:

*The languages of New York State: The CUNY-NYSIEB guide for teachers* (2012)

### Resources

If you display the multilingual word walls in **pocket charts**, as shown in Figure 5, then you can manipulate the words. This allows you to move them around for different vocabulary games, such as matching activities, to help students practice the words throughout a unit of study.

## Middle / Secondary Grades

- In a 10<sup>th</sup> grade pull-out ESL class, students who were classified as “ELLs” were taken out of their general education English class to do targeted work with language. Though they were pulled out of their English class, the ESL and English teacher worked together to make sure the content of both classes was the same. In both classrooms, students were reading Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*.

Because of the difficult language of the play, the ESL teacher realized that his word wall would need to have 3 languages displayed—Modern English, Spanish, and Shakespeare’s English. As the group read the play, aloud and in character parts, the class would discuss words that seemed to connect with their home language, Spanish.

Once the group had identified a word in Shakespeare’s English that connected to a word in Spanish, the ESL teacher had students work together on word cards that contained:

- The word in Shakespeare’s English
- The word in modern English (either a translation or a synonym, depending on the word)
- The word in Spanish
- A sentence in both modern English and Spanish

Throughout the unit, the word wall grew and many in-class conversations took place around English/Spanish cognates, as well as how Shakespeare’s English is

both similar to and different than today's modern English. The conversation deepened, moving past cognates and vocabulary to an authentic discussion of connections among languages.

At the end of the unit, in addition to the group scene performances they did with the general education English class, EBL students created short PowerPoint presentations about connections they found among the 3 languages— Shakespeare's English, modern English, and Spanish. Because many students in the general education English class also spoke Spanish, the English and ESL teacher decided to have the EBL students present their PowerPoint shows to the general education class. The two teachers then invited the English class into the discussion of connections among languages. The word wall created in the ESL class was duplicated and hung in the English class as well.



**Cognate Charts**

**Essential Questions**

- *How can we scaffold emergent bilinguals' understanding of English vocabulary words?*
- *How can we develop emergent bilinguals' academic vocabulary in their home languages?*

**Alignment with Common Core State Standards**

Cognate Charts help students meet various language standards. It can be used in all content-area classes, as well as in ELA, NLA, and ESL. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

**Language, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Standard 5**

Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

*Seeing cognates side-by-side in multiple languages can help students to see these word relationships more clearly.*

**Language, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Standard 6**

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

*Teaching students about cognates will help them become more independent, college-ready readers. By learning about cognates, you are giving students important tools they will need to understand unknown words in the future.*

**What is it?**

**Cognates** are words that look and sound similar across different languages. For example, the word democracy in English has both a Spanish cognate (democracia) and a French cognate (démocratie).

**Cognate Charts** are lists of words in English alongside their cognates in other languages. Cognate Charts are useful tools for EBLs, as they illustrate linguistic connections across different languages.

You can use Cognate Charts for a variety of purposes, focusing on:

- **Content-area vocabulary words**  
Here, you can make a chart that contains specific content-area vocabulary words in English and their cognates in your students' languages. The math cognate chart below is organized alphabetically and by topic.

**Distance Terms**

ENGLISH	SPANISH
area	área
centimeter	centímetro
kilometer	kilómetro
meter	metro
mile	milla
millimeter	milímetro
yard	yarda

- **Cross-content vocabulary words**  
This way of organizing your Cognate Charts helps students to read, write, and communicate more effectively overall. A Cognate Chart of words that appear across content-areas, posted in all of EBLs' classrooms, can help students to recognize these words in different contexts. For example, a word like "energy" is used in almost all of students' content areas, though often with different meanings of the word. Seeing this word on a Cognate Chart in all of their classes, EBLs can begin to use this word in multiple contexts. They can also begin to see connections among their languages, as seen in the sample chart below:

ENGLISH	SPANISH	FRENCH	HAITIAN CREOLE
energy	energía	énergie	enèji

- **Word Parts**  
Teaching students the links between different languages' roots and affixes will help them in all of their content areas, as well as in future reading. By giving students the "tools" to figure out new vocabulary, you are enabling them to understand future, as well as current, vocabulary. Many languages share common word parts. For example, teaching students about the roots of words can help them to see inter- and intra-language connections. The Cognate Chart below

comes from the website Colorín Colorado and illustrates connections between English and Spanish roots:

Root	Meaning	Origin	English examples	Spanish examples
aud	hear	Latin	auditorium audition	auditorio audición
astir	star	Greek	astrology astronaut	astrología astronauta
bio	life	Greek	biography biology	biografía biología
dict	speak, tell	Latin	dictate dictator	dictar dictador
mit, mis	send	Latin	mission transmit	misión transmitir
ped	foot	Latin	pedal pedestal	pedal pedestal
phon	sound	Greek	phoneme microphone	fonema micrófono
port	carry	Latin	transport portable	transportar portátil

### Resources

Colorín Colorado has a 5-page list of common English-Spanish cognates that you can use in your classroom.

[www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/articles/cognates.pdf](http://www.colorincolorado.org/pdfs/articles/cognates.pdf)

### • False Cognates

False cognates are words that look and sound similar in multiple languages but do not have the same meaning. These words are also referred to as “false friends”—they don’t relate the way we think they do! For example, the word *decepción* in Spanish does not mean deception—it means disappointment. Students need to learn how to recognize false cognates so that they don’t get confused as they read and write. You can keep a running “False Cognate Chart” that students can add to as they encounter new false friends.

Having students utilize cognates has many advantages. By learning about and using cognates, students can:

- Increase their comprehension in English
- Make connections between their home languages and English
- Gain a higher level of overall linguistic awareness by discussing word origins and commonalities/differences among languages.

Unlike simple translation, teaching students about cognates gives them important **tools** that they can use to understand new words in English and the home language, rather than a “quick fix.” By teaching students about word origins and etymology, they can begin to make their own linguistic connections and inquiries, increasing EBLs’ accountability for their own language learning.

### Translanguaging How-To

1. **For each Cognate Chart, find cognates in your students’ different home languages, if they have a shared origin.**

To find relevant cognates, you can:

- Translate the general academic and domain-specific vocabulary you’re developing with students during the unit and see which ones are cognates. Add any cognates you find to the cognate chart.

## Application Across Programs

### Bilingual:

In these classrooms, the cognates will come from reading both a Spanish text and an English text, with students looking for cognates in the other language. Cognate charts are essential in bilingual programs so that students can see what transfers between the two languages, and what does NOT transfer (false cognates).

### General Education & ESL:

In these programs, you're teaching students to constantly draw upon what they know from their home language to better understand English. Posting a cognate chart helps clarify for EBLs what transfers from their home languages to English, and what doesn't.

You can also have students keep a personal cognate chart (in a reading folder, content-area folder, a binder, pasted into the front of a notebook, etc.). Here, students can keep track of words they are learning in English that are similar to words in their home languages.

- Ask bilingual students what certain words are in their home languages, and, if it's a cognate, add it to the chart. To start this inquiry, you could ask your bilingual students questions like, "Does this look like a word in your home language?" or "Does this sound like a word in your home language?"

## 2. **Organize and display your Cognate Chart in a way that supports your classroom/program goals.**

As stated above, there are several different ways you can use Cognate Charts in your classroom. Pick the kind of chart that makes the most sense for your unit of study, your students, and your classroom/program goals.

## 3. **Explicitly teach students how to interact with and use cognates.**

While cognates seem obvious to those who are used to analyzing language, students don't always recognize them. To help students with this metalinguistic skill, have them ask themselves the following questions:

### **When reading:**

"Does this look like a word I know (in my home language)?"

### **When listening:**

"Does this word sound like a word I know (in my home language)?"

You can start this by modeling during whole-class reading activities (read alouds, shared reading, reading a textbook passage, etc.). Ask students these questions, and help them recognize the cognates. Add examples to a chart. Over time, release this responsibility to students. When they find their own examples, encourage them to share with the class and add to the chart.

## 4. **Model and have students practice finding cognates with content-area vocabulary**

Once students learn to recognize cognates, you can model how to use cognates to increase their comprehension in English. When reading a text, have students circle or underline any English words they encounter that connect to words in their home languages. After reading, you can have a conversation about the cognates students found and add them to your chart.

You can also have EBLs read a text in English with a side-by-side translation of that text in their home languages. Instead of simply reading one side and referencing the other side when needed, have students read both texts, with attention to cognates. Have students discuss where they see similar words or phrases. Add any new cognates to an in-class chart.

## 5. **Help students identify and analyze root words and affixes.**

For this step, start by having EBLs read a text in their home language OR in English with a side-by-side translation of that text in a language they do not know. Then have students look for similar words and cognates. This is a fun way for students to look at completely new languages and find similarities between that language and their home language or English! This is a great place to begin focusing on similar word parts (i.e.: roots) across languages.

You can also have students create charts with the shared roots of words in English and their home languages. This will help students to understand the shared origins of multiple languages as well as aid them in reading comprehension. A creative way for students to make these charts is by giving

them outlines of trees with a common root at its base:



Underneath the word root, students write the definition (here it would be *to say* or *to speak*). On the branches of the tree, students write as many words as they can think of that contain the root “dict” in both English **and** their home language (i.e.: dictate, diction, dictador, diccionario, etc.). These charts can be referenced and added to as students encounter new words that share those roots.

6. **Help students to identify false cognates.**

As you help students find and use cognates to aid in their reading comprehension, you can also help them recognize false cognates. You can start a “False Friends” list in your classroom, starting with a few common examples that are relevant to your content area. As you read aloud, model the process of identifying false cognates and add any that you find to the chart. As students become more adept at recognizing these false cognates, you can have them identify and share out their findings independently. When students share false cognates that they find on their own, you can add them to your running chart.

## **Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

### **Elementary Grades**

- **Focusing on content-area vocabulary words**

During a year-long science focus on Weather and Seasons, a 1<sup>st</sup> grade Spanish-English bilingual class kept an ongoing chart of vocabulary they were learning related to the topic. On the chart, the teacher helped students highlight the ones that were cognates. They left blank the words that were completely different in each language. They also highlighted the words that had some similarities – such as beginning with the same letter. The teacher had students help her add images to the words to help students read the new vocabulary. Part of the chart looked like this:

Spanish	English
<b>El Tiempo</b>	<b>Weather</b>
otoño	fall
invierno	winter
primavera	spring
verano	summer
termómetro	thermometer
temperature	temperature
día	day
noche	night
sol	sun
luna	moon
ciclo	cycle

### Middle / Secondary Grades

- Focusing on cognates and word parts**

A 9<sup>th</sup> grade ESL teacher taught a class in which students spoke three different home languages-Spanish, Haitian Creole, and French. Though the teacher often made use of students' home languages, she did not often encourage students to inquire into **one another's** home languages. To begin this activity, students read a text in English with a side-by-side translation of that text in their own home language. Afterwards, the teacher broke the students up into home language groups and gave them a copy of that same text in another group's home language (i.e.: French speakers were given the text in Spanish, Spanish speakers were given the text in Creole, etc.). Students had to find and highlight any words and word parts that looked similar between their home language and the new language. Afterwards, the teacher facilitated a discussion in which each group shared out the words and word parts that they found. The groups discussed each cognate/root and the teacher added them to a whole-class chart. The conversation encouraged students to compare many languages, not just English/home language.
- Focusing on content-area vocabulary words**

A 10<sup>th</sup> grade ESL teacher was reading poetry with her students. Before reading the poems, she created a cognate chart with general poetry vocabulary in English and Spanish (words that students could use to **discuss** and **analyze** poetry). Some of the words she put on this chart were poetry/poesía, metaphor/metáfora, simile/símil, symbolism/simbolismo, and line/línea. Because many students did not know these words in either Spanish or English, the teacher was able to strengthen students' academic language in both languages. As students read poetry, they read with a focus on language as well as content. Whenever they encountered a word that looked similar, they discussed its meaning and added it to the Poetry Cognate Chart the teacher had started. By the end of the unit, students had a long list of English/Spanish cognates that they continued to use in other units and in other content-area reading.
- In a 7<sup>th</sup> grade general education math class, the teacher wanted to review

measurement vocabulary before starting a unit on geometry. She gave students a short reading on measurement in English, but put a translation of the reading next to it in students' home languages (French, Portuguese, and Romanian). Students first read the English side and then read the home language translation. Students had to highlight the words that looked similar in both languages. The students clearly saw how many cognates there were for measurement words and added them to their list of math-related English/home language cognates. The teacher took the words students found and added them to a whole-class Math Cognate Chart that was updated throughout the unit.



**Four-Box Graphic Organizer & Frayer Model**

**Essential Questions**

- *How can we scaffold emergent bilinguals' understanding of English vocabulary words?*
- *How can we develop emergent bilinguals' academic vocabulary in their home languages?*

**Alignment with Common Core State Standards:**

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6**

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

*By putting students' home languages side-by-side with English, you improve their understanding and ability to use new general academic and domain-specific vocabulary words.*

**Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 5**

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

*These vocabulary graphic organizers are an excellent way to help students dig deeper into the meaning of words to meet this language standard.*

**What is it?**

There are countless strategies for explicitly teaching new vocabulary words. Here we share two commonly used graphic organizers that are effective with all students – including emergent bilinguals – across subject areas and grades. In this strategy, we explain how you can **modify the way you use these graphic organizers to include translanguaging**. Incorporating your EBLs' home languages in this vocabulary development helps to scaffold your EBLs' understanding of the new English vocabulary words, and to broaden their academic vocabulary base in the home language. The translanguaging options included in this section build off the suggestions given by Marzano (2005) in *Building Academic Vocabulary: Teacher's Manual*.

• **Four-box graphic organizer**

A Four-box graphic organizer (Figure 1) should be used with the vocabulary words that are *most important* for your students to spend time fully understanding and learning how to use correctly. There are many variations of what to put in each of the four boxes, and you can mix it up based on the focus you want to use with your subject area and grade. This version has:

- The vocabulary word
- A visual representation of the word
- A student-friendly definition
- A sentence using the word

Other versions replace one or more of the boxes with a synonym, an antonym, an example, or a personal connection.

Figure 1

<p><b>natural resources</b></p> <p><b>recursos naturales</b></p> <p>自然资源</p>	
<p><b>Things people can use from nature.</b></p> <p><b>Cosas que la gente puede utilizar de la naturaleza.</b></p> <p>人类可以从大自然中利用的资源。</p>	<p><b>The Iroquois used natural resources like wood to make longhouses.</b></p> <p><b>Los iroqueses utilizaban los recursos naturales como la madera para hacer casas comunales.</b></p> <p>易洛魁人(北美印第安人的一支)使用自然资源,例如木材,来建造长屋。</p>

**Translanguaging Options:**

- **Translations:** On the Four-box model you share with the class, you can

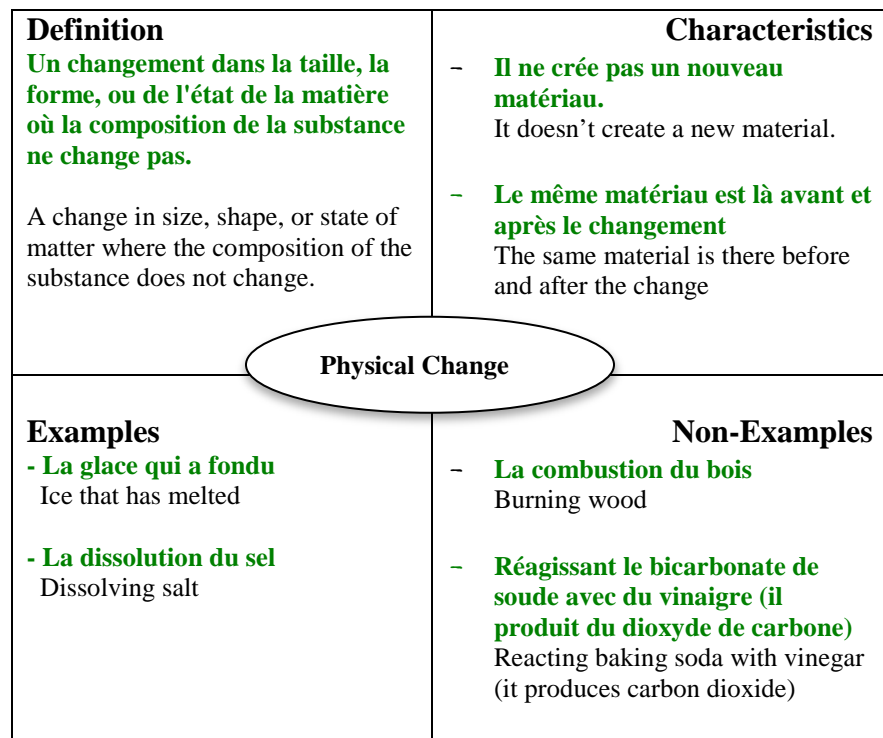
have some or all of the boxes translated into your students' home language(s). You would need to do this ahead of time using Google Translate if you don't speak those languages. Figure 1 shows a classroom example where EBLs spoke Spanish and Chinese, so the teacher included those languages alongside the English.

- **Discussion:** When you have students discuss what the word means or how to use it, home language partners can do this in English and/or the home language – whatever language will best help them negotiate the meaning of the new word.
- **Student Work:** If you have students fill in their own Four-Box graphic organizer based on your model, they can copy the word and the definition in both English and the home language. They can write their own sentences in either English or the home language, depending on the goal/purpose.

- **Framer Model**

The Frayer Model (Figure 2) works very well with more abstract terms that can best be explained by listing **examples, non-examples, and characteristics**. However, it can also be used with concrete words. As with the four-box graphic organizer, you should use the Frayer Model with the vocabulary words that are *most important* for your students to spend time fully understanding and learning how to use correctly.

Figure 2



**Translanguaging Options:** When you have students discuss what else could go in the different boxes, home language partners can do this in English and/or the home language – whatever language will best help them negotiate the meaning of the new word.

- **Translations:** On the Frayer Model you share with the class, you can have some or all of the boxes translated into your students' home language(s). You would need to do this ahead of time using Google

Translate if you don't speak those languages. Figure 2 shows a classroom example from a French-English bilingual program. The term was introduced in French, but the teacher wanted students to also learn the term in English, so she put the languages side-by-side.

- **Discussion:** When you have students discuss what else could go in the different boxes, home language partners can do this in English and/or the home language – whatever language will best help them negotiate the meaning of the new word.
- **Student Work:** If you have students fill in their own Frayer Model based on your model, they can copy the word, the definition, and the characteristics in both English and the home language. They can write their own examples and non-examples in either English or the home language, depending on the goal/purpose.

## Translanguaging How-To: Four Box

### 1. Prepare the Four-Box graphic organizer

Create an enlarged Four-Box Graphic Organizer using chart paper, a Smartboard, or a document projector. Have it on display where all students can see it. This will be your model for the class. If you decide to have the boxes filled in ahead of time, you should cover up and reveal them one at a time as you share them with the class. Preparing the boxes ahead of time is particularly helpful if you plan to **include translations** of some or all of the boxes – you can get the translations from a website like Google Translate, and then print them out, or cut and paste them into your Four-Box document. Or, you can leave the Four-Box blank and fill it in as you explain each box to the class.

### 2. **Box 1: Introduce the vocabulary word and provide a home language translation**

Introduce the new word within the meaningful context of a learning activity or text. In the Four Box graphic organizer, write the English word, and include a translation of the word in your EBLs' home language. If there are multiple home languages in your classroom, include translations for all of them, and have each word in a different color to help distinguish them. It's helpful to keep the color-coding consistent throughout the year (for example, Spanish always in blue, Mandarin always in red). See sidebar for a way to help EBLs *hear* the translation if they aren't able to read in their home language.

### 3. **Box 2: Add a visual representation**

As you orally explain the meaning of the word, sketch a picture to illustrate the meaning in Box 2. This is easier for concrete words, but you can also create sketches to represent a more abstract concept. Sometimes a photograph or clip art is more effective; you can search for these ahead of time using a source like Google Images.

### 4. **Box 3: Add a student-friendly definition in English and the home language**

Explain a definition to students using words they will understand – NOT the technical definition from a dictionary, which could confuse them further. In general education and ESL settings, you would introduce this definition in English. If you've thought ahead of time how you plan to define the word, you can translate your definition into EBLs' home languages to have it ready for this learning activity. In bilingual classrooms, you can introduce the definition in the language of instruction, but show the translation in the other language. Add the definition to the appropriate box in your model of the graphic organizer.

### 5. **Box 4: Add a sentence in English and the home language**

#### Resources

To translate some or all of the boxes into your students' home languages, try:

[translate.google.com](https://translate.google.com)

The translations are quite reliable – particularly for individual words – but also for complete sentences.

Model for students how to use the word in a sentence, and write your sentence in the last box. Then, have students talk with a partner to try using the word in their own sentence.

- In a bilingual program: You can use the Four-Box graphic organizer to develop an understanding of an English OR a home language vocabulary word. Create a model sentence in the language of the vocabulary word, and then have students help translate your sentence into the other language. Then, they can work with a partner to create their *own* sentence in the target language.
- In a general education/ESL classroom: The goal of this activity is learning how to correctly use an English vocabulary word within a sentence, so you should encourage your EBLs to create their sentences in English. However, this will likely be too difficult for EBLs with beginning and early intermediate proficiencies in English. Instead of having them not participate, encourage these particular students to create a sentence with the word using their home language.

5. **Students create their own Four-Box graphic organizer**

When age-appropriate, you can have students complete their own Four-Box graphic organizer for the vocabulary word, based on your model. If your EBLs are able to write in their home language, they should:

- Copy the vocabulary word in both English and the home language
- Copy the definition in both English and the home language
- Write their OWN sentence. Support your EBLs as needed in English, but encourage them to write in their home language as well to express their full understanding of the word.

## **Translanguaging How-To: Frayer Model**

### **1. Prepare the Frayer Model**

Create an enlarged Frayer Model using chart paper, a Smartboard, or a document projector. Have it on display where all students can see it. This will be your model for the class. If you decide have the boxes filled in ahead of time, you should cover up and reveal them one at a time as you share them with the class. Preparing the boxes ahead of time is particularly helpful if you plan to **include translations** of some or all of the boxes – you can get the translations from a website like Google Translate, and then print them out, or cut and paste them into your document. Or, you can leave your Frayer Model blank and fill it in as you explain each box to the class.

### **2. Center circle: Introduce the vocabulary word and provide a home language translation**

Introduce the new word within the meaningful context of a learning activity or text. In the center circle of the Frayer Model, write the English word, and include a translation of the word in your EBLs' home language. If there are multiple home languages in your classroom, include translations for all of them, and have each word in a different color to help distinguish them. It's helpful to keep the color-coding consistent throughout the year (for example, Spanish always in blue, Mandarin always in red). See sidebar for a way to help EBLs *hear* the translation if they aren't able to read in their home language.

### **3. Box 1: Add a student-friendly definition in English and the home language**

Explain a definition to students using words they will understand – NOT the technical definition from a dictionary, which could confuse them further. In a

general education/ESL classroom, you would introduce this definition in English. If you've thought ahead of time how you plan to define the word, you can translate your definition into EBLs' home languages to have it ready for this learning activity. Add the definition to the appropriate box in your model of the graphic organizer.

**4. Box 2: Discuss characteristics in English and the home language**

As you discuss the characteristics of the vocabulary word, it is very helpful for your EBLs to see these characteristics written in their home languages (or to hear them spoken in their home language – see sidebar on previous page). If you translated the characteristics beforehand (Step 1), you can display the translation alongside the English characteristics. You can also have students use all of their languages to collaboratively discuss these characteristics.

**5. Box 3 & 4: Add examples & non-examples in English and the home language**

Model a few examples and non-examples for students. Then, have students talk with a partner to orally brainstorm other examples and non-examples.

- In a bilingual program: You can use the Frayer Model for a vocabulary word in English OR the home language. However, to deepen their understanding of the vocabulary word, students could brainstorm these examples and non-examples in either or both languages. When students share with the class, translate as needed to record their ideas on your Frayer Model in the target language.
- In a general education/ESL classroom: Thinking of examples and non-examples is simply a way to have students deepen their understanding of the word. They should use their entire linguistic repertoire to achieve this by discussing examples and non-examples in English and/or the home language.

**6. Students create their own Frayer Model for the word**

When age-appropriate, you can have students complete their own Frayer Model for that word based on your model. If your EBLs are able to write in their home language, they should:

- Copy the vocabulary word in both English and the home language
- Copy the definition and characteristics in both English and the home language
- Write their OWN examples and non-examples. Support your EBLs as needed in English, but encourage them to write in their home language as well to express their full understanding of the word.

**Hearing the word in the home language**

If you teach young children, or students who aren't literate in their home language, including **SIFE students**, they may not be able to read what you have written in their home language.

On Google Translate, when you translate an English word into another language, there is a little speaker icon below the translation. If you click on this, your EBLs can hear the word or sentence spoken in their home language. The accent and fluency of the audio is remarkably good, even when reading a complete sentence or paragraph.

**Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels**

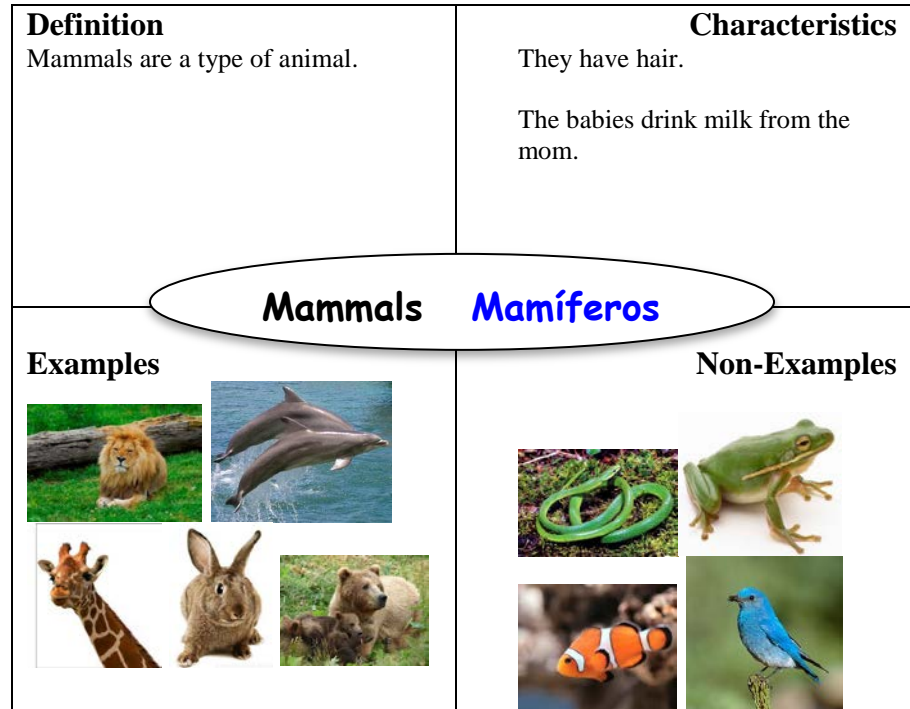
**Elementary Grades**

- A 1<sup>st</sup> grade general education teacher introduced the vocabulary word *mammals* during a science unit of study on animals. Students first heard this word when the teacher read them a Big Book about mammals that had colorful photographs.

After reading the Big Book, the teacher showed students a blank Frayer Model. She wrote the word *mammals* in English, and also in Spanish, the language her EBLs spoke (Figure 3). Even though her EBLs weren't literate in Spanish, she wanted them to see the words side-by-side and hear both words so they could make connections between their languages. She pointed to the English and Spanish words as she read each one aloud, and she reminded students that all the

animals they had seen in the book were mammals. She asked ALL of her students what they noticed about the words *mammals* and *mamíferos*. Several students noticed that they both started with an *m*. The teacher confirmed this observation, pointing to an alphabet chart she had in English, and another she had next to it in Spanish. She said that the letter *m* makes the same sound in both languages, and she had the class say the *m* sound with her. Then the teacher asked students if they saw the letter *m* anywhere else in the two words. Students came up to the enlarged Frayer Model to point out the letter *m* inside each word. Another student noticed that both words ended with an *s*, and the teacher explained how both languages use the letter *s* to show that it's not just one animal, but *lots* of animals.

Figure 3



To fill in the Characteristics box, the teacher showed students certain pages from the Big Book and asked them what makes an animal a mammal. Looking back at the book, the teacher helped students identify these characteristics, and as students said them orally, she wrote them in English. Since she knew what these characteristics were ahead of time. She did not translate these characteristics since her students were not literate in Spanish.

Finally, the teacher showed students a number of photos of different animals. She had partners talk together to decide which animals were mammals, and which were NOT mammals. The teacher encouraged her EBLs to use both Spanish and English to talk with their partners about these examples and non-examples. When the teacher regrouped students, she had them share orally with the class. EBLs who could share in English did so, and others shared in Spanish and had a classmate translate. The teacher sorted the photographs into the Examples and Non-examples boxes based on what students shared.

**Middle / Secondary Grades**

- A 9<sup>th</sup> grade ESL class, the teacher wanted his students to get a more nuanced



understanding of the Global History vocabulary they were learning. The teacher knew that some content-area vocabulary words appeared across multiple units within the course (i.e.: revolution, civilization, negotiate, resource), so he chose those to focus on in more detail. He grouped students heterogeneously so that multiple languages were present in each group, and assigned each group a word. The group worked together to fill in a Four-Box graphic organizer that contained:


- A visual representation of the word
- A definition in both English and the home languages
- A sentence using the word in both English and the home languages

As students worked together, they used both English and their home languages to negotiate the definitions, sentences, and examples and to come up with drawings that represented the word. The groups recorded their ideas onto a large Four-Box graphic organizer on chart paper, with each language written in a different colored marker.

After the group finished the posters, they presented to the class in English. Though the presentations were in English, the multilingual group members shared their translations of the word, definition, and sentence (Figure 4). Groups also explained their visuals, which were often symbolic or representational, in both English and the home languages. This helped the students in other groups who shared those home languages to better understand the word. This also helped the students who did not speak those languages to gain more multilingual awareness and hear the different languages present in the classroom.

The result of this focused work with vocabulary was a more nuanced understanding of these important, high-frequency content vocabulary words. The Four-Box posters were hung around the room so that students could see and reference them during class discussions and independent writing.

Figure 4

<p><b>English: revolution</b></p> <p><b>Spanish: revolución</b></p> <p><b>Haitian Creole: revolisyon</b></p>	
<p><b>When the people of a country overthrow or change the government.</b></p> <p><b>Quando la gente de un país derrocan o cambian el gobierno.</b></p> <p><b>Lè foul moun yo nan yon peyi jete oswa chanje gouvènman.</b></p>	<p><b>The people of France started a <u>revolution</u> and overthrew King Louis XVI.</b></p> <p><b>Los franceses iniciaron una revolución y derrocaron al rey Luis XVI.</b></p> <p><b>Moun yo nan Lafrans te kòmanse yon revolisyon Li chavire Wa Louis XVI.</b></p>

## Vocabulary Inquiry Across Languages

### Essential Questions

- *How can we scaffold emergent bilinguals' understanding of English vocabulary words?*
- *How can we develop emergent bilinguals' academic vocabulary in their home languages?*

### Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Vocabulary inquiry helps students meet various Language standards. It can be used in all content-area classes, as well as in ELA, NLA, and ESL. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Language, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Standard 4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

*Vocabulary inquiry can help students see how word meaning either changes or stays the same across languages. A focus on word origins also helps students analyze meaningful word parts. Lastly, when students engage in vocabulary inquiry, they are using specialized reference materials like cognate charts and bilingual dictionaries.*

#### Language, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Standard 5

Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

*This idea of "word relationships" is especially present in vocabulary inquiry, as*

### What is it?

Most of us utilize some vocabulary strategies in our classrooms, but how often do we look at vocabulary as an opportunity for linguistic awareness? How often do we discuss what vocabulary words "mean" without talking about where they come from, how they connect across languages, and how the same words/phrases in different languages can express different ideas? Inquiring into these kinds of questions helps *all* students to think more deeply about the languages they use every day.

The Common Core State Standards encourage students to analyze vocabulary, word origin, roots, and affixes. Comparing vocabulary from several languages deepens this skill for students – *even if* they don't speak a particular home language. If two vocabulary words are put side-by-side (English and another language), *any* student can analyze what they see. Your bilingual students can then bring another level of analysis to the discussion, which is how the word is used in the home language, versus its meaning and use in English.

Vocabulary inquiry means encouraging students to dig deeply into their various languages in order to find linguistic similarities and differences among:

- **Word origins** (roots, prefixes and suffixes)
- **Word sounds** (phonetics)
- **Word usage and expressions**

For students who are bilingual, it is important to foster their ability to move fluidly among multiple languages. Teaching these students about their languages, and how they compare to English, will help them grow as bilingual people. For students who only speak English, examining and inquiring into English strengthens their understanding of its rules and vocabulary. For all students, seeing commonalities and connections across languages is a powerful way to engage them in, and strengthen their understanding of, academic vocabulary.

### Translanguaging How-To

1. **After deciding on the vocabulary you will teach during a unit of study, find translations of the words in your students' languages and scripts.**

2. **Decide on a method of inquiry**

Depending on your grade level and goals, you can have students inquire into different aspects of vocabulary:

- **Word Origins**

With this focus, you can help students inquire into the roots and affixes (prefixes, suffixes) of new vocabulary words. Knowing where words and parts of words come from can help students to see new connections across languages. For example, teaching students about the shared Latin and Greek roots of many Romance Languages will help them see new connections

*students are encouraged to find connections among their multiple languages.*

### **Language, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Standard 6**

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

*Teaching students how to engage in vocabulary inquiry can help them to gain this independence when they encounter new terms.*

### **Cross-Linguistic Work and Awareness**

When discussing a series of bilingual arrangements that can develop multilingualism and multilingual practices, Garcia (2009) talks about the idea of cross-linguistic work and awareness. When teachers encourage this work, students can (303):

- Contrast vocabulary, structures, and discourse patterns
- Study the work of bilingual authors who translanguage in their writing for different effects
- Critically examine the languaging that occurs in real bilingual communities and reflect on this cross-linguistic use, its purpose, and effect.

When students do vocabulary inquiry, they are actively engaged in cross-linguistic work. This not only helps them develop their own bilingualism, but also raises the overall level of linguistic awareness in the classroom.

among those languages. It will also help them figure out new vocabulary they encounter in the future.

Just as it is important for students to see similarities among their languages, they must also see where their languages differ. Having a discussion with your students about the etymology of different words will show them the “bigger picture” of why our languages are similar in some ways, but different in others.

#### ○ Similarities in Word Origin

A general education science teacher wanted her students to see common roots and affixes present in science terms. After going over the concept of roots and affixes, the teacher gave students a short science reading that contained several common roots/affixes, like bio-, hydro-, chlor-, and -logy. The reading was in both English and Spanish, her bilingual students’ home language. Students read the texts, highlighting any parts of words that looked similar on both sides. Students shared out their findings, and the teacher used their findings to create a chart of shared roots/affixes that she then hung in the classroom. This activity was beneficial for all students, bilingual and English-only speakers alike. Bilingual students used their knowledge of Spanish to make connections to new English vocabulary. The English speakers learned more about their own language and gained some linguistic awareness.

#### ○ Differences in Word Origin

An 11<sup>th</sup> grade, general education ELA teacher assigned his class 1 word a week that he knew was different across languages. It was students’ jobs to use Google Translate or bilingual dictionaries to research the word independently in each of the languages present in the class (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and French), and find reasons for the differences across the four languages. Each Friday, students shared their research and the teacher helped students to see how the word’s different origins affected how it was written and pronounced. All students—bilingual and English-speakers—were excited by the research and inquiry they did. The teacher saw their engagement increase as he involved all students in the in vocabulary process.

#### • **Word Sounds**

Hearing phonetic similarities across different languages is incredibly important for bilingual students, especially those students who are younger or have beginning English proficiency. Seeing words side-by-side and hearing the way they’re pronounced can be a powerful way for students to make connections across their languages and acquire new vocabulary. To help students inquire into the phonetic similarities or differences among vocabulary words, you can have students say words aloud. Or, you can have them listen to the pronunciation of the words by having a classmate or teacher say the words aloud, by listening to a recording of the words, by using the audio feature of Google Translate, or by using the App Jibbiggo. When listening to the words or when saying the words, help students note similarities or differences in the way the words sound across languages.

- An ESL teacher had her students read a short Social Studies text aloud. Each student read a sentence as the others followed along

### **Learning a Foreign Language**

Vocabulary inquiry can be used in teaching students any new language. Just as bilingual students can use their home languages to make connections to English, so too can English speakers use English to make connections to a foreign language. Using vocabulary inquiry strategies in these classes eliminates the “passive” language learning that students often experience. Engaging students in an authentic inquiry into the similarities and differences across languages can make learning a new language more rigorous and more interesting!

### **Native Language Arts (NLA)**

Students who are deepening their language proficiency and literacy abilities in their home languages in an NLA class benefit greatly from vocabulary inquiry. Since many students in these classes are improving their literacy in their home languages, they need the same support to build academic language that they do as they learn English. Using the strategies offered here in NLA classes does the same work in the home language that it does in English—it helps all students become more engaged in the language learning process and strengthens students’ acquisition of academic language and vocabulary.

with the written text. Whenever the student heard a word that sounded like a word in their home language, they highlighted the word on their texts, annotating by writing the similar word in their home language above the word in English. After they finished reading aloud, the teacher facilitated a discussion about the words they found that sounded similar, helping them to see how these phonetic connections revealed deeper connections in meaning.

- **Usage and Expressions**

Different languages use words and expressions in many different ways. Encouraging students to inquire into these differences helps them to see how speakers of different languages make meaning. You could have students inquire into how and why different idiomatic expressions change across languages, why some languages have many words for an idea or object but others have none, or how the same word can have different uses across languages. Encouraging bilingual students to share out the ways in which they use a word their home language vs. the way they use it in English helps *all* students to gain more linguistic awareness and ability to analyze language.

- When a math teacher was helping her students translate algebraic equations into word problems, she had her EBLs share with the class the different ways they represented math processes in their home languages. If students did not know, the teacher put the English phrase into Google Translate and had students translate the home language phrase back to English to compare them. When phrases were different, the teacher wrote them next to the English phrase on a piece of chart paper, with each language getting its own color on the chart. The chart was hung and referred to in class as they continued to work on word problems.

### **3. Encourage independent vocabulary inquiry**

Once you model vocabulary inquiry with the class, you can create opportunities for students to do this inquiry on their own. Teaching students strategies for vocabulary inquiry gives them the tools they’ll need to be active, aware readers in the future. The following are strategies that students can use as they read independently to inquire into vocabulary they encounter:

- **Vocabulary Journals**

As students read (either independently or with the whole class), they can keep track of new words in vocabulary journals. You can set these up any way you feel is appropriate, depending on your program goals and the grade level you teach. You can focus students’ journal entries, encouraging them to find new words that have some connection to their home language (i.e.: cognates, words that sound similar, word parts that look familiar, etc.). In the journals, students can explain the connection and do any additional research that would explain either the similarity or the difference between the word in English and the word in their home language.

To get students discussing the similarities and differences among their various home languages, you can have them share their journal entries with their peers. Organize students in heterogeneous language partnerships or groups. Have them share the connections they made between words in English and words in their home languages. As students share, speakers of

### Using Cognates in Vocabulary Inquiry

At the middle and secondary level, you can encourage students to explore cognates on a deeper level, pushing them to do more with cognates than simply recognize them. To include an inquiry focus with cognates, you could:

- Give students a short text in several different languages, some of which students *do not speak*. Have students try to find words that look or sound similar across all of the languages.
- Have students do independent, multilingual reading about topics in your content area (newspapers, magazines, websites, books, etc.). As they read, they can keep a list of cognates that they encounter. Plan time for students to share new and topic-relevant cognates with the class.
- Pair students who do not speak the same home language. Assign them a prompt and have them talk to one another *in their home languages*. Though students will not understand one another's home language, they can listen closely for words that sound similar to either English or their own home language. Students can write down and share with the class any cognates that they find.

different languages can comment on how the word in their own home language is either similar or different to the word in English and in the sharer's home language. Students can add these similarities/differences into their journals.


### • Graphic Organizers

Many common graphic organizers can be adapted to include vocabulary inquiry. Two examples are:

#### ○ Four-box graphic organizers

This graphic organizer is easy to modify to meet your needs (see *Vocabulary: Four-Box Organizer* for more on how to use this strategy in your classroom). You can include vocabulary inquiry in one or more of the boxes. For example, figure 1 shows a Four-box graphic organizer for the vocabulary term “natural resources” in Spanish and English. The fourth box is modified to be a space where students record their inquiry into the term itself.

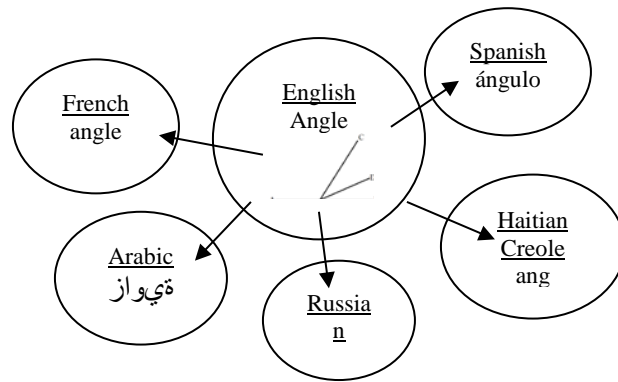
Figure 1

<p>natural resources</p> <p>recursos naturales</p>	
<p>Things people can use from nature.</p> <p>Cosas que la gente puede utilizar de la naturaleza.</p>	<p><b>Inquiry:</b>  <b>Natural and naturales look and sound similar. They look and sound similar because they both come from the Latin word <i>natura</i>. Resources and recursos both end with “s.” Spanish and English both put an “s” on plural words.</b></p>

#### ○ Semantic or Concept Maps

Great for brainstorming, these graphic organizers can help students inquire into the origins and connections between words and languages. For example, students could research a vocabulary word within a unit of study and see where there are similarities and differences in the representation of that word across multiple languages. Once they see the word in many different languages, they can inquire into the reasons for their similarities and their differences (i.e.: scripts, roots, origins, etc.). For example, before starting a unit on geometry, the teacher wanted students to see different vocabulary words from the unit in the languages of the classroom. For homework, she assigned each student a word and had them use the website Google Translate to find translations of an assigned vocabulary word in different languages. As they researched independently, they filled out a semantic map with their translations (Figure 2). The next day, they shared their findings with the whole class (what was similar, what was different, and possible explanations for any similarities/differences). The teacher used this research to create a multilingual word wall for her geometry unit.

Figure 2



## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Middle / Secondary Grades

- In a 9<sup>th</sup> grade pull-out ESL class, students did targeted work with language. Though they were pulled out of their English class, the ESL and English teacher worked together to make sure the content of both classes was the same. In both the general education classroom and the ESL classroom, students were reading *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck.

As the group read the book, the class would discuss words that seemed to connect with their home languages, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and French. Because the book took place in the 1920s and the characters were migrant workers, there were many slang words and idiomatic expressions that the teacher helped students to understand. Hence some of students' words were in modern English and others were in the regional slang of 1920s California. After students inquired into the vocabulary of *Of Mice and Men*, new words were placed on a large Word Wall and entered into students' personal vocabulary journals, which had a special focus on vocabulary **connections**.

When the group focused on a word in the 1920s slang, the ESL teacher had students work in pairs and make the following inquiries:

- What is the source of this slang word? Where does it come from?
- What is the same word in modern English (either a translation or a synonym, depending on the word)?
- What is the same word in Spanish/Haitian Creole/French?
- Are the words and their meanings similar or different across these languages? In what ways?

Throughout the unit, many in-class conversations took place around English/Spanish/Haitian Creole/French cognates, as well as how older English slang connects to today's English. The conversation deepened, moving past cognates and vocabulary to an authentic discussion of connections among languages.

At the end of the unit, EBLs created short PowerPoint presentations on connections they found among the languages—Steinbeck's English, modern English, and students' home languages. To make this exciting work more public, the English and ESL teacher decided to have the EBLs present their PowerPoint slideshows to the general education class. The two teachers then invited the English class into the discussion of connections among



	languages.
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ELEMENTARY	MIDDLE	SECONDARY
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Sentence Building
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<p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How can we scaffold students' understanding of English syntax?</i></li> <li>• <i>How can we develop ALL students' awareness of syntax and scripts in languages other than English?</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Alignment with Common Core State Standards:</b></p> <p><b><u>Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 1</u></b></p> <p>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking.</p> <p><i>For each grade, there is a list of the grammatical components that students should be able to use correctly in their writing and speaking. When you plan a sentence building activity, you can refer to this list for your grade level to see which grammatical components you need to help students incorporate into their current writing and speaking. For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Grade 2: Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences (e.g., The boy watched the movie; The little boy watched the movie; The action movie was watched by the little boy).</i></li> <li>• <i>Grade 7: Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>What is it?</b></p> <p>Sentence building teaches both emergent bilinguals and English proficient students how to construct increasingly complex sentences. You give students a basic sentence and show them how they can add a particular grammatical structure to make it more complex. Depending on the age of your students and their proficiency level in the target language, you can make this as simple or as challenging as you would like. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Beginning-level sentence building:</b> Ex: Teach students how to add one or more adjectives to a basic sentence.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. I see a pig.</li> <li>b. I see a <b>pink</b> pig.</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>2. Intermediate-level sentence building:</b> Ex: Teach students how to combine two short sentences into one.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. New York City is an urban area. Upstate New York has mainly suburban and rural areas.</li> <li>b. New York City is an urban area, <b>whereas</b> upstate New York has mainly suburban and rural areas.</li> </ol> </li> <li><b>3. Advanced-level sentence building:</b> Ex: Teach students how to insert an embedded clause in a sentence.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The father decided to leave his childhood home.</li> <li>b. The father, <b>whose family had lived in the mountainous region for generations</b>, decided to leave his childhood home.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Traditionally, this type of grammar activity is done solely in English (or the target language for bilingual programs). However, sentence building is a perfect opportunity to help emergent bilinguals compare and contrast the sentence structure of English with their home language if you put the two languages side-by-side when building the English sentence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Benefits for EBLs:</b> For emergent bilinguals, this is an excellent scaffold for them to see what aspects of sentence structure transfer from their home language to English, and what aspects are different. It also improves their comprehension of the meaning of each grammatical component in the English sentence because they can refer to the home language translation. This supports EBLs in creating more elaborate sentences when speaking and writing in English. It also helps them create increasingly more complex sentences in the home language, either orally or in writing.</li> <li>• <b>Benefits for students who only speak English:</b> Emergent bilinguals aren't the only ones who benefit from this metalinguistic analysis of sentence structure in multiple languages. By comparing and contrasting the structure of English and other languages, <i>all</i> students gain a stronger understanding of how English syntax works. They also develop their awareness of other languages – particularly when they see the surprising</li> </ul>
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- Grades 9-10:  
Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.

**Speaking & Listening:  
Presentation of Knowledge  
& Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

*Sentence building can help primary grade students learn how to create complete sentences, and different ways they can elaborate their sentences, when speaking (or writing).*

*Beginning in Grade 4, and developing through Grade 12, students are expected to adapt their speech “to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation.” Sentence building helps students see how they can take a more basic sentence and add different grammatical components to make it more formal and elaborate.*

similarities between the syntax of languages that look so different from English.

**Translanguaging How-To**

**1. Decide what grammatical component you want to teach your students**

Look at what students’ current writing to see what kind of sentence structure and grammatical components they are currently using securely, and where they could improve. Then, think about your *goal* for their writing, including any writing you have students do in the content areas. What would your students need to do with their sentences to have them meet the expectations for grade-level writing? Perhaps they need to include different types of clauses, signal words, conjunctions, adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc. Identify ONE of these grammatical components to focus on for the sentence building activity.

**2. Find or create a bilingual or multilingual model sentence.**

You will need to find or create a model sentence in English that illustrates the grammatical component you decided to focus on with your students. Then, you need to take out that grammatical component to make it a more basic sentence—representative of how your students *currently write*. This means you will have two model sentences: the basic one you show students first, and then the more elaborate one you build with students.

Instead of showing students the model sentences only in English, you can display it side-by-side with a translation in your EBLs’ home language(s). Have a translation for both the basic sentence you start with, and the more elaborate sentence that you build with students. To have your English sentence translated into your EBLs’ home language(s), you can use an online translator such as Google Translate. For authentic sources of bilingual sentences, pull one from a bilingual text, such as bilingual children’s literature, a bilingual trade book, a bilingual textbook, or a bilingual website. For example, in Figure 1, a teacher wanted to help her students include nominal phrases, or phrases that an author uses to describe a noun, to make their writing more descriptive. The teacher found a sentence with a great descriptive nominal phrase in a book she had read aloud to the class, which happened to be bilingual in English and Spanish: *Carlos and the Squash Plant / Carlos y la Planta de Calabaza*. The nominal phrase used to describe the noun *stem* is underlined.


Figure 1

<p>English: <u>A tiny, light green stem with two pear-shaped leaves</u> was growing in his right ear.</p> <p>Spanish: <u>Una raíz, verdosa, con dos hojitas en forma de peras</u> le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.</p>
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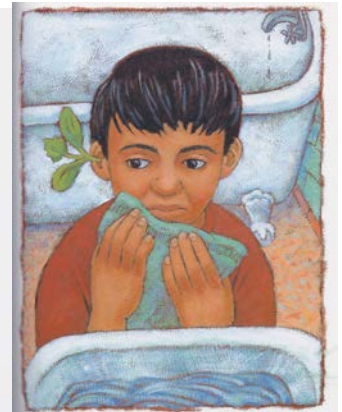
When the bright summer sun shone in his bedroom window in the morning, he woke up quickly. He had an itchy sort of feeling in his ear, and when he started to scratch it, he felt something strange.

Carlos ran to the mirror. A tiny, light green stem with two pear-shaped leaves was growing in his right ear. Just as he was wondering what to do, his mother called him for breakfast. He could smell the aroma of chorizo (spicy hot sausage) and eggs frying.



Cuando los rayos del sol entraron por la ventana de su cuarto, Carlos se despertó. Tenía una sensación rana en el oído, y cuando empezó a rascárselo, sintió algo extraño.

Carlos corrió al espejo. Una raíz, verdosa, con dos hojitas en forma de peras le estaban creciendo del oído derecho. Justamente, cuando estaba pensando en lo que iba a hacer, su madre lo llamó a desayunar. El olor del chorizo con huecos que su mamá estaba friendo le llegó a donde estaba.



### Resources

Pulling sentences from authentic bilingual sources is ideal, since it shows students that the sentence was created in both languages for a real purpose. See *Resources: Multilingual Texts & Internet as a Multilingual Resource* for ideas of how to find these sources.

### 3. Start with a basic version of the sentence

Instead of writing down the complete sentence, begin by writing down the most basic version of the sentence. Once you have determined what the basic sentence will be in English, you can use Google Translate to see what it would be in the home language. Show your students this basic sentence in each language, and tell them you are going to teach them one way they can turn it into a longer, more interesting/elaborate sentence.

Figure 2

A **stem** was growing in his right ear.

Una **raíz** le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.

### 4. Model how to build a more complex sentence

If you have the basic sentence written on a sentence strip or other piece of paper, a great way to model how to alter the sentence is to physically cut it in the place where you want to add in more words, push the two pieces apart, and place the new words in the empty space. This is particularly helpful for elementary-aged students (through the upper elementary grades) so they can *see* how the revision works. If you display the sentences digitally, you can do something similar by showing the basic sentence, and below it show that sentence with a large space where you plan to insert new words, and below that the sentence with the new words added in. If you are inserting more than one word, you may want to build the sentence word-by-word, or phrase-by-phrase, so students see how they can make the sentence increasingly more complex as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

A **stem** was growing in his right ear.

A tiny **stem** was growing in his right ear.

A tiny, light green **stem** was growing in his right ear.

A tiny, light green stem with leaves was growing in his right ear.

A tiny, light green stem with two leaves was growing in his right ear.

A tiny, light green stem with two pear-shaped leaves was growing in his right ear.

Una **raíz** le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.

Una **raíz**, verdosa le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.

Una **raíz**, verdosa, con hojitas le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.

Una **raíz**, verdosa, con dos hojitas le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.

Una **raíz**, verdosa, con dos hojitas en forma de peras le estaba creciendo del oído derecho.

### 5. Compare and contrast the English and home language sentences

Have your emergent bilinguals AND your students who only speak English compare and contrast the languages.

- What do they notice about how each of the languages incorporates the new grammatical component?
- Is it placed in the same part of the sentence?
- Does it have a different position?
- Does it use the same number of words as in English?

In the Figure 3 example, students noticed that in English some describing words came before *stem* and others came after it. The teacher helped them express this with grammatical language: the adjectives came before the noun, and the prepositional phrase came after the noun. In Spanish, they saw that all of the descriptive words came after the noun *raíz*.

### Language Focus

Once you choose a grammatical focus for your sentence building activity, it's important to stay with that focus for a period of time before moving on to another. Creating more elaborate sentences is a complex skill, and students need a lot of guided practice followed by time to try using it independently as part of their speaking or writing. Introducing a new grammatical component every day does not give students the time to practice and "master" this component of grammar in their own writing or speaking.

### 6. Provide guided practice

Once you have modeled how to build a sentence using a particular grammatical structure, have students practice WITH you, using similar basic sentences. It helps to have these sentences all relate to the same topic. That way, you are building sentences and content knowledge at the same time! As students are deciding how to build the sentence, they have to think about what they have learned about the content that they can express in the sentence.

### 7. Provide independent practice

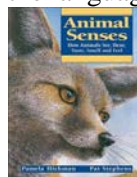
In the days that follow, when your students are writing independently, one of the things you can discuss with them is how to do the same type of sentence construction with a sentence they have written. It is essential for students to see how they can apply this more complex sentence structure to their own writing so it becomes a part of their independent language use.

## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- During a 1<sup>st</sup> grade science unit on Animal Diversity, one of the standards was for students to "Identify, describe, and compare the physical structures of animals (body coverings, sensory organs, appendages, beaks)." A general education teacher turned this into an integrated unit of study by combining it with their Reading unit "Reading, Thinking, and Talking about Texts on the Same Topic" and their Writing unit "All-About Books." Students read books about different animals throughout the unit, and in their discussions about the books they identified, described, and compared the physical structures of each animal. During the Writing Workshop they chose an animal of interest, read texts about that animal, and wrote an All-About book based on what they had learned.

The teacher wanted her first graders to add adjectives into their writing to describe their animal's physical structure. She decided to do a sentence building activity with the class. She took a sentence from one of the read alouds she had read to the class called *Animal Senses*: "A kit fox has large, pointed ears." She then created a more basic version of this sentence by taking out the adjectives: "A kit fox has ears." She translated both sentences into Russian and Japanese, the languages spoken by emergent bilinguals in her classroom.



A kit fox has	ears.
---------------	-------



Лиса есть	уши.
-----------	------



キツネ	耳を持っている
-----	---------



The teacher noticed in the Japanese translations that the additional characters all came between the characters for *fox* (キツネ) and the character for ears (耳) so that is where she cut the sentence. She highlighted each of these characters in blue and green, and told students what they meant.

A kit fox has	large	ears.
---------------	-------	-------

A kit fox has	large	pointed	ears.
---------------	-------	---------	-------

The 1<sup>st</sup> graders loved seeing their teacher cut up the English, Russian, and Japanese sentences, and helped her add in each adjective to the English sentence to make it longer and longer. The teacher had all of her students do the same thing with the Russian sentence, including her students who only spoke English. The teacher herself did not know Russian, but she could see that the adjectives in each sentence came in front of the word уши – which means *ears*. She helped the class see that in both languages, the describing words, or adjectives, come before the noun in this sentence. For the Japanese sentences, she had students “hunt” for the characters that represent *fox* and *ears*, which they highlighted in blue and green. They saw that the concept of describing the ears added characters *before* the character for *ears*.

From this activity, the first graders saw how to add describing words into their English writing to tell more about what the animals look like. By comparing different languages, the first graders also saw that Russian, Japanese, and English all put the describing words before the thing they describe. Even though the emergent bilinguals in this class weren’t literate in their home languages, they were proud to see their languages next to English, and to have them be a part of the lesson. They liked that their classmates were talking about their home languages. And, making connections between languages made the English sentence building more meaningful for them. English speakers in the class enjoyed the challenge of looking at different symbols and trying to find patterns. This activity developed *all* students’ metalinguistic awareness.

Лиса есть уши.
----------------

Лиса имеет большие уши.
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Лиса имеет большие заостренные уши.
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キツネ耳を持っている
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キツネは大きな耳を持っている
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キツネは大きな尖った耳を持っている
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### Writing Conferences

When students are writing independently, you can help them use what you practiced during the sentence building activity. With repeated support and opportunities to try it out, the new language use will become a part of students’ speaking and writing. See *Syntax: Conferring about Syntax Transfer* for more ideas of how to confer with students about their language use.

Middle / Secondary Grades



- Students in a 10<sup>th</sup> grade NLA (Native Language Arts) class were writing short memoirs in both English and their home language, Spanish. The teacher noticed that many students were writing sentences that were too simplistic—they lacked the complexity and description that was appropriate to their grade level. To address this issue, the teacher took a sentence from an anonymous student’s writing and projected it onto the Smartboard:

**Mi padre trabajó duro.**

**My father worked hard.**

First she had students analyze each sentence – what parts of the sentence seemed similar across the two languages? Was anything different? Next, she explained how in a simple sentence like this, there was one subject and one predicate in both Spanish and English—here, one person doing one thing. She told students that writers who want to express more complicated ideas include more than one subject and/or predicate. One of the ways that writers do this is by **embedding a clause** in a sentence. The teacher then projected the student’s original sentence with an embedded clause:

**Mi padre, que nació pobre, trabajó duro.**

**My father, who was born poor, worked hard.**

The teacher had the students analyze what she added to the sentence. They discussed:

- What was being expressed in this embedded clause in both languages
- Whether the clauses were embedded in the same way in both Spanish and English
- Whether the sentence structure of this new clause was similar or different in both languages

Students noticed that what was expressed in the clause was additional information about the subject (the father). They also noticed that in both Spanish and English, the new clause was put in between the subject (the father) and the predicate (worked hard), with commas on either side. The teacher then had students practice writing different embedded clauses that could be added to this sentence. Some of their examples were:

**Mi padre, que quería que su familia lo tuviera todo, trabajó duro.**

**Mi padre, que emigró a los Estados Unidos, trabajó duro.**

**My father, who wanted his family to have everything, worked hard.**

**My father, who immigrated to the United States, worked hard.**

After sharing out some of their ideas for adding to the model sentence, the teacher had students go back to the drafts of their memoirs and locate sentences that could benefit from adding an embedded clause. Students worked independently to write first in Spanish, and then translate the new sentence into English. After working independently, students shared their edits with a partner, focusing on how they embedded new clauses into both their Spanish and English sentences.



## Conferring about Syntax Transfer

### Essential Questions

- *How can we scaffold students' understanding of English syntax?*
- *How can we develop ALL students' awareness of syntax and scripts in languages other than English?*

### Alignment with Common Core Standards:

When you talk with students about syntax, you are helping them to focus on the conventions of Standard English. The focus on syntax *transfer* helps students to see the English syntax the context of their own home language. In addition to the focus on language, conferring with students helps them to practice their speaking and listening as well. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

#### Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

#### Language: Knowledge of Language: Standard 3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

#### Speaking & Listening:

### What is it?

A major part of both speaking and writing is learning how to organize and arrange words into phrases that communicate ideas effectively. Syntax varies across languages—words are organized and arranged differently. For EBLs learning to speak and write in English, this can be a source of confusion. However, you can alleviate this confusion by having conferences with EBLs that focus on syntax and *syntax transfer*. Making students aware of how syntax in English is both similar to and different from the syntax in their home language makes this important aspect of language use more transparent. Instead of merely teaching students the “rules” of English syntax, you are drawing on their knowledge of their home language syntax in order to make connections, transfer understandings, and spot important differences.

### Translanguaging How-To:

1. **Learn some basic information about the syntax of your students' home languages.**

In order to help students see connections between the syntax of their home languages and English, you'll need a basic understanding of the structure of those home languages. You don't have to speak your students' home languages to develop a working knowledge of their linguistic structure! Once you know what home languages are present in your classroom, you can do some research on the syntactic similarities and differences they have with English.

One resource that could help you learn some basic information about your students' languages is **The Languages of New York State: The CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Teachers** (2012). You can find download this guide from [www.cuny-nysieb.org](http://www.cuny-nysieb.org), under “Resources.” This guide contains information about the 11 most spoken languages in New York State.

Another resource is the website <http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/index.htm>. This site has a linguistic overview of 16 languages, including helpful information about alphabets, phonology, vocabulary, and grammar, which has information about syntax and writing structure. This site would be a great place to start if you want to learn some basic information about your students' home languages. This excerpt from the website (Figure 1) gives you an idea of how understanding some basic syntactic information about your students' home languages could help you teach them writing in English:

**Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas: Standard 6**

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

**Emergent Bilinguals**

You may have EBLs that struggle with writing in both English and their home languages. For this reason, putting English sentences side-by-side with sentences in the home language is especially important. By comparing syntax across languages, these students (including **SIFE** students) can improve their literacy in all of their languages. If your students struggle with reading in both languages, you can have them *listen* to and then compare sentences read in both English and their home language. The comparison is still powerful and can scaffold these students' ability to read and write independently.

**LTELSs**

Students referred to as LTELS (Long Term English Learners) are English speakers with low literacy in English. They often speak or understand a home language, but do not have literacy in that language. For these students, conferences that help them see similarities in syntax between English and their home language could be very powerful. Because these students struggle to write in both languages, building their syntactic awareness in both English and the home language can make them stronger writers overall. Depending on your students' level of proficiency with the home language, you can have them read or listen to sentences in that language and then translate them into English. Pointing out similarities and differences between the two languages strengthens their ability to write in **both** languages.

Figure 1

**Grammar - Verb/Tense:** In English much information is carried by the use of auxiliaries and by verb inflections: *is/are/were, eat/eats/ate/eaten*, etc. Chinese, on the other hand, is an uninflected language and conveys meaning through word order, adverbials or shared understanding of the context. The concept of time in Chinese is not handled through the use of different tenses and verb forms, as it is in English. For all these reasons it is not surprising that Chinese learners have trouble with the complexities of the English verb system.

Here are some typical verb/tense mistakes:

- What do you do? (i.e. What are you doing?) (*wrong tense*)
- I will call you as soon as I will get there. (*wrong tense*)
- She has got married last Saturday. (*wrong tense*)

If you were working with EBLs whose home language was Chinese, you could hold conferences that focused on this kind of grammar in their writing. Making students aware that these “mistakes” come from a place of syntactic difference between their languages can make it easier for students to recognize what transfers between Chinese and English, and what new syntactic rules they need to learn.

**2. Make time in your teaching to confer with students about their writing and speaking.**

One-on-one conferring gives you a chance to target EBLs' individual linguistic needs. Each student is at a different place with the type of English language they are using securely, and what syntactical features they still need to develop in English. Furthermore, EBLs with different home languages will likely make different types of errors with their English syntax, since they are transferring their knowledge of their home language syntax to English. These one-on-one conferences help you target those individual needs.

You may find that you can confer with small groups of EBLs, particularly those who speak the same home language and have a similar English proficiency level. They will likely have similar needs regarding which aspects of their home language syntax transfer to English, and which aspects are different between the two languages.

You can set up time to confer with your EBLs in a variety of ways:

**Bilingual Classrooms:**

Even though bilingual programs have set times of the day or week for each language, it's important to create spaces where students can see **BOTH** languages side-by-side. This creates a powerful opportunity for students to compare and contrast how each language is structured. Making these connections improves students' ability to use each language correctly. As adults, the syntactical similarities and differences between two languages may seem obvious, but students benefit from seeing specifically what transfers between the two languages, and what is different. You can talk with the whole class about syntax transfer whenever you teach a new aspect of grammar in English or the home language, or whenever you point out grammatical features during literacy or content-area lessons. This works well as a whole-class discussion in a bilingual program, since all of the students are developing their command and use of both

### **Additional Strategies that Encourage Syntax Transfer** **Joint construction**

During your conferences, you can jointly construct a piece of writing (with one student; with a small group of students). The text you jointly construct should, as always, match the writing the rest of the class is doing. As you write together, you and the student(s) can discuss the syntax of the text you create. As you discuss syntax specifically, you can use some of the same questions listed on the chart in “How-to,” step 3.

You can also focus your questions/discussion around common writing mistakes that you see in students’ writing because of a difference in syntax across languages. This, of course, requires that you have some understanding of the structure of your students’ home languages (see How-to, step 1). Helping students to understand the *source* of their writing mistakes in English will help them to better address them and improve as writers.

### **Cloze Activities**

Cloze activities can be used to help students see how different words are organized into sentences. Working with an existing piece of writing can help them see specific aspects of English syntax, and then transfer information about syntax between their languages. You can create cloze activities that help students practice the aspect of syntax you are working on. The cloze can be adapted from a text the whole class is currently reading, so that students see syntax in the context of an authentic text.

You can work on these cloze passages with students in your conferences, discussing the choices they make and why. You can have students talk to you about how a particular sentence from the cloze would be written in their home language, and how it is either similar or different to the way it is written in English. You can also use cloze activities as a jumping-off point for

English and the home language.

You can also meet with students individually or in small groups to help them improve the way they structure their sentences in English or the home language. If you meet with a small group, it should be with students who have similar linguistic needs. When you confer with students, show them how the sentence structure looks in each language, so they can make those important connections and solidify their understanding of how to use each language.

### General Education & ESL Classrooms:

In general education and ESL classes, the linguistic make-up of the class could be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. All of your EBLs may speak the same home language, or there may be many home languages present in one class. This can make the conferring process complicated. However, it is especially important to find time to confer with EBLs in both general education and ESL classes, as it might be the only time students can focus specifically on syntax and syntax transfer. It is also an opportunity for EBLs to practice speaking, either with you or with their peers, in English. Depending on the linguistic make-up of your class, you can set up conferences in a few different ways:

- For EBLs who **speak the same home language and have similar linguistic needs in English**, you could do small group conferences while the rest of your class does independent or collaborative work.
- If your EBLs **speak different home languages or have different linguistic needs in English**, you could have one-on-one conferences with each of those students while the rest of your class does independent or collaborative work.

### 3. **Teach your students how to talk about syntax transfer across languages.**

#### During Revision & Editing Work:

Whenever students are writing (in ELA, in the content-areas), you can sit next to a student, see a syntactical error the student has made, and can talk with the student about how to revise/edit that sentence. Instead of just saying what it should be in English, however, you can ground the discussion in how the English syntax *compares* with the EBL’s home language. You should not aim to correct every single grammatical error a student makes, since bombarding a student with an array of things to “fix” is not productive. Instead, look for grammatical aspects that the student is *repeatedly* misusing, and focus on them one at a time. Having a quick discussion about that *one* aspect of English syntax, and how it connects to home language use, helps EBLs internalize that aspect of syntax and use it correctly in the future.

#### During Writing Conferences:

It isn’t always easy starting these conversations with students—most of them are just developing their metalinguistic knowledge and may not know how to talk about syntax across their multiple languages. Here are some questions/prompts that could get these conversations started:

independent writing, with students creating a piece of writing in English using the syntax skill they practiced in the cloze activity.

Question/Prompt	Example
How would you say this in (home language)? How is it different than what we just wrote in English?	<i>How would you say this in Chinese? How is that different than what we just wrote in English?</i>
Do you notice any similarities between the sentence we just wrote and the way you'd say this in (home language)?	<i>Do you notice any similarities between the sentence we just wrote and the way you'd say this in Russian?</i>
I learned that in (home language) you (aspect of home language syntax). Can you tell me more about that?	<i>I learned that in Arabic you don't capitalize the beginnings of sentences. Can you tell me more about that?</i>
In English, we (aspect of English syntax). For example, in English I would write _____. How would you say that idea in (home language)?	<i>In English we put our adjectives before our nouns. For example, in English I would write "She is a very smart student." How would you say the same thing in Spanish?</i>
I'm noticing that when you write (aspect of English syntax), you're (error student is making). Can you say this sentence in your home language? Does it say the same thing?	<i>I see here that when you wrote this question, "Why she do that?" you forgot the word "did." Can you translate that sentence into Spanish? Does it say the same thing?</i>

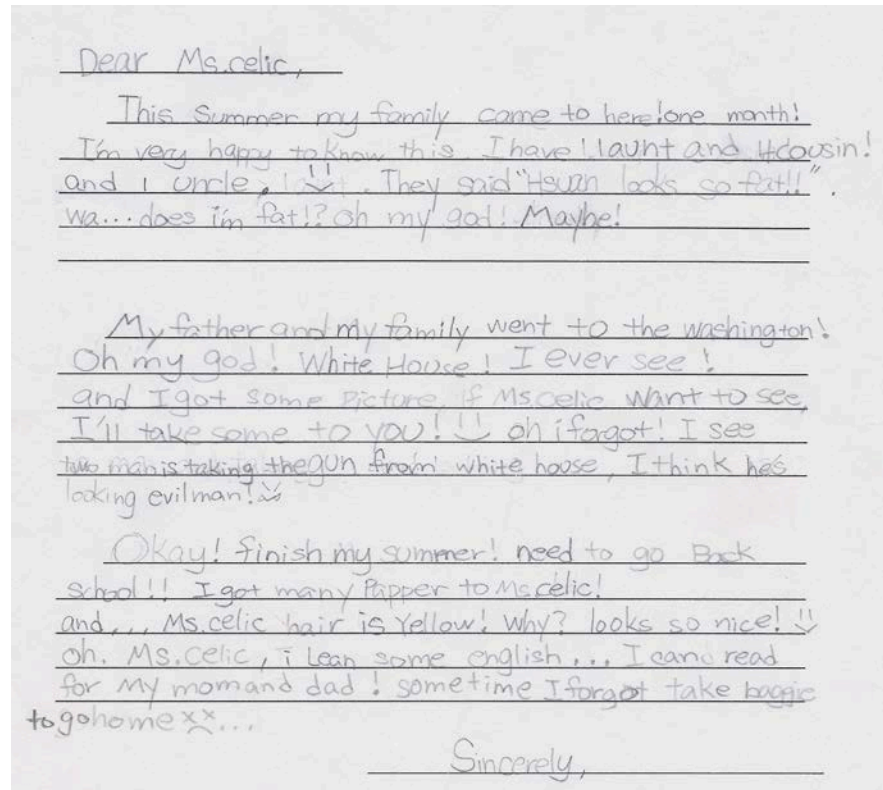
## Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

### Elementary Grades

- As a “getting to know you” activity on the first day of school, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained ESL teacher asked her students to write her a letter telling her about themselves. This was a homework assignment, and students brought the letters back the following day. The teacher used those letters to begin learning about her EBLs. It also gave her a baseline for their writing ability in English, and in some cases, in their home language if they used it to write some or all of the letter.

One of the students in the class that year was from Taiwan, and spoke Chinese at home. She had arrived to the United States in March of the previous year not knowing any English, and had had the same ESL teacher as a 4<sup>th</sup> grader. Now, in September of her 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, she used the letter as a way to update her teacher on what had happened to her over the summer, since the teacher already knew her (Figure 1).

Figure 1



The image shows a handwritten letter on lined paper. The text is written in cursive and includes several paragraphs. The first paragraph is addressed to Ms. Celic and mentions a family visit. The second paragraph describes a trip to the White House. The third paragraph discusses school and learning English. The letter ends with a signature line.

Dear Ms. celic,

This summer my family came to here! one month!  
I'm very happy to know this. I have 1 aunt and 4 cousin!  
and 1 uncle. They said "[Student's name] looks so fat!"  
Wa... does i'm fat!? Oh my god! Maybe!

My father and my family went to the Washington!  
Oh my god! White House! I ever see!  
and I got some picture if Ms. celic want to see  
I'll take some to you! Oh i forgot! I see  
two man is taking the gun from white house, I think he's  
looking evil man!

Okay! finish my summer! need to go back  
school!! I got many paper to Ms. celic!  
and... Ms. celic hair is yellow! Why? looks so nice! Oh  
oh. Ms. celic, I learn some english... I can read  
for my mom and dad! sometime I forgot take baggie  
to go home xx...

Sincerely,

Figure 1 Text:

Dear Ms. Celic,

This summer my family came to here! One month! I'm very happy to know this. I have 1 aunt and 4 cousin! And 1 uncle. They said, "[Student's name] looks so fat!" Wa... does I'm fat!? Oh my God! Maybe!

My father and my family went to the Washington! Oh my God! White House! I ever see! And I got some picture if Ms. Celic want to see. I'll take some to you! Oh I forgot! I see two man is taking the gun from White House. I think he's looking evil man!

Okay! Finish my summer! Need to go back school! I got many paper to Ms. Celic! And... Ms. Celic hair is yellow! Why? Looks so nice! Oh. Ms. Celic, I learn some English... I can read for my mom and dad! Sometime I forgot take baggie to go home.

Sincerely,  
(Student's name)

When reading this girl's letter, the teacher was pleased to see how much she had progressed with her English proficiency since her arrival six months earlier. However, as this student tried creating more complex sentences in English to express more complex ideas, new syntactical errors were emerging. The teacher read up a little about the syntax of Mandarin Chinese so she could better explain what aspects of the home language did and did not transfer to English. She did an internet search of "Mandarin Chinese syntax" to find this information.

In this particular letter, the grammatical errors that stood out the most to the teacher were the following. Although there were other errors, the student showed *repeated* difficulty with these particular features of English.

- **Verb tenses**

Some examples from student writing:

- I ever see! (Should be: *I had never seen it!*)
- I see two man is taking the gun from White House (Should be: *I saw; were taking*)
- Finish my summer! (Should be: *I finished*)
- I learn some English. (Should be: *I learned*)
- I forgot take baggie (Should be: *I forget*)

This student was not sure how to express different verb tenses in English, since Mandarin does not conjugate verbs. Instead, Mandarin relies on word order and the use of adverbs to indicate verb tense. The teacher knew she would need to work intensely with this student on how and when to use each verb tense in English. This would be a year-long goal.

- **Plural nouns**

Some examples from student writing:

- 4 cousin
- some picture
- two man
- many paper
- sometime (Should be: *sometimes*)

The student didn't use plural nouns in her writing. The teacher knew that in Mandarin, there is no distinction between singular and plural nouns, so this was a concept she would need to explicitly develop with her student through guided practice with the student's writing.

- **Articles**

- went to the Washington! (Should be: *went to Washington*)
- White House! (Should be: *The White House*)

- **Prepositions**

- came to here (Should be: *came here*)
- taking the gun (Should be: *taking a gun*)
- from white house (Should be: *to the White House*)

Articles and prepositions are grammatical features of English that present great difficulty for Chinese students. They are unsure when to use different articles and prepositions in English.

Of course, whenever we analyze students' writing, there can be any number of grammatical features to focus on with them. In this case, the teacher decided to focus on one specific aspect of syntax at a time with this student over the course of the school year, instead of trying to "fix" everything in her writing all at once. This narrow focus made a greater impact in developing the student's use of English.

### Middle / Secondary Grades

- A 7<sup>th</sup> grade ESL teacher noticed that some of her Spanish-speaking students were struggling with constructing questions in English. She saw that many students were writing things like, "Why you say that?" or "How that happen?" or "You



have pencil?” After doing some research about differences in Spanish vs. English syntax, she realized that students were struggling because there was a difference in the use of the auxiliary verb *do*—it is necessary in English, but not in Spanish. She saw that when she translated some of the students’ sentences into Spanish, they were grammatically correct (i.e.: You have pencil? translates to Tienes un lápiz?, which is correct). She organized a small group of these students into a conferencing group and met with them during independent writing time. She used her students’ own writing to point out this difference in syntax, explaining the role of an auxiliary verb and where it is placed in an English sentence. Afterwards, she had students edit their own writing, adding in the auxiliary verb when necessary (i.e.: Why *did* you say that? How *did* that happen? *Do* you have a pencil?). Over the next few days, students wrote independently, focusing on this aspect of English syntax. When the teacher saw that her students understood this concept, she had them create a side-by-side translation of a piece of writing (one side in English, the other in Spanish) that illustrated this difference in syntax. She had students create short presentations explaining this difference in syntax, which they later gave to the other students in the class. This helped reinforce the new information for both the small group of students and the other students in the class, as well as provided an authentic opportunity for students to talk about linguistic differences in syntax.

- A 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher had a small group of EBLs whose home language was Russian. During a creative writing unit, she noticed that the students’ writing, while usually grammatically correct, often did not communicate the right tone—it seemed abrupt and did not use enough description. She pulled these students into a writing conference while the rest of the students in the class were working on writing dialogues with a partner. In talking to her students, she realized that when they translated some of their sentences directly from Russian into English, the result felt “impolite”—the short sentences read as abrupt to an English speaker. She discussed this syntactic difference between the two languages with the students, which clarified the concept of “tone,” an aspect of writing that they had struggled to fully comprehend in the past. She started the conversation by saying to students:

“In English, if we use short sentences it can sound like a command – it makes it sound impolite. For example...” (*Here the teacher gave a few examples, and then pointed out an example from the student’s writing that illustrated this idea.*)

“To make the sentences sound more polite, we add in...” (*Here the teacher gave specific examples of how in English we make the sentences less abrupt. She discussed modal verb phrases like “could you please...”, “perhaps you might...”, “I would like...”*)

After explaining this specific syntactic difference between English and Russian, she asked students, “How does this compare with how you form sentences in Russian?” The group of students discussed the differences, noting that the short phrases didn’t carry the same tone in Russian as they did in English. The discussion even extended past syntax to cultural differences in Russia and the United States.

To reinforce this learning, the teacher had students work together to write dialogues that focused on adding modal verb phrases to change the tone of the writing. The comparison of Russian syntax with English syntax helped students to see “tone” as a more concrete element of writing.

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# APPENDIX

## Tools & Templates:



# Translanguaging

Created by Sarah Hesson

Always keep in mind that translanguaging:

1. Is a teaching tool that helps emergent bilinguals make sense of content and develop language learning in all lessons
2. Is a way of valuing students' cultures, identities, and bilingualism

## How can I incorporate translanguaging across my curriculum?

### In general:

- If you're not sure if translanguaging is right for that moment/lesson, ask yourself: What's my objective? What do I want this student to know or do? Will using both languages help me get there?
- Create language objectives that address the linguistic needs of students in both languages
- Reach out to families in both languages by calling, sending letters home, and conducting PTA conferences in both languages
- Be sure to display and celebrate work in both languages

### When students are...

#### Reading

- Assign bilingual reading partners for mutual assistance
- Provide bilingual books/ translations of books where possible to aid comprehension
- Provide/encourage reading material for research project in both languages

#### Writing

- Allow students to audio record ideas first using both languages, then transfer to writing
- Assign students bilingual writing partners for mutual assistance
- Students pre-write in both languages, then publish in one
- Design bilingual final projects (Two pieces, related, one in each language; Translate monolingual product for specific purpose; Create bilingual product for a specific purpose) (Idea from Translanguaging Guide)

## When students are...

### Speaking

- Assign partners: beginner speakers with intermediate speakers, intermediate speakers with any level, advanced speakers with intermediate
- Assign newcomers a buddy to show them around school, answer questions inside and outside class, etc.
- Group students so they can use both languages in small group work, then present in target language
- Encourage students to explain an idea to you or a partner in their home language to assist their explanation in target language
- Allow students to discuss lesson/ideas with partner in both languages

### Listening

- Create a multilingual listening center comprised of fiction and non-fiction texts in the classroom, narratives of community members, and books recorded by students (a favorite book or their own writing)
- Allow students to explain things to each other using both languages

## When teacher is...

### Reading

- During content area reading, give partners time to discuss difficult passages or words in home language
- Create a bilingual interactive word wall (Math, Science, Social Studies)

### Writing

- Write instructions for a small group in home language, task itself in English
- Student(s) give ideas in both languages, teacher writes on board in target language.
- Give comments on an assignment in home language
- Make connections between words used in writing to build vocabulary and improve spelling (ex. felicidad --> felicitous; revolución --> revolution; triángulo --> triangle)

### Speaking

- Use Preview (other language)-View (language of lesson)-Review (other language) to facilitate understanding/ language learning
- Conduct individual conferences with students using both languages to ensure understanding or to make language connections (in grammar, spelling, vocab, etc.)

### Listening

- Allow students to explain/share ideas using both languages (another student can translate if you don't speak language)
- Use the language structures checklist (Celice, 2009) to track what you hear in both languages

Also available in Prezi at <http://prezi.com/xcd77u46k1iq/translanguaging-in-practice/>

# Language Objectives

Created by Sarah Hesson

The **language demands** of a curriculum refer to the language structures and academic vocabulary students will need to perform the tasks given in a lesson. (*Translanguaging Guide* pages 44-50)

**Language objectives** help determine the language structures and academic vocabulary students will need in advance, to further both their language development and their content understanding. (*English Language Learners Day by Day*, Celic, 2009)

## Two sample lessons using language objectives

### Sample lesson 1:

**Content objective:** Learn the causes of the Civil War.

**Language objectives:**

- **Language structures:** Use declarative sentences and cause/effect conjunctions (in speech and writing) in English to explain the causes of the Civil War.
- **Content vocab:** slavery, abolitionist, secession
- **General academic vocab:** human, freedom, state

**Translanguaging strategies:**

- Give a preview and review of the lesson in Spanish
- Provide language partners during Turn & Talk
- Give lesson in English, but allow students to practice the material in both languages throughout lesson
- In the end, all students discuss and write the causes of the Civil War in English

### Sample lesson 2 (adapted from Celic, 2009):

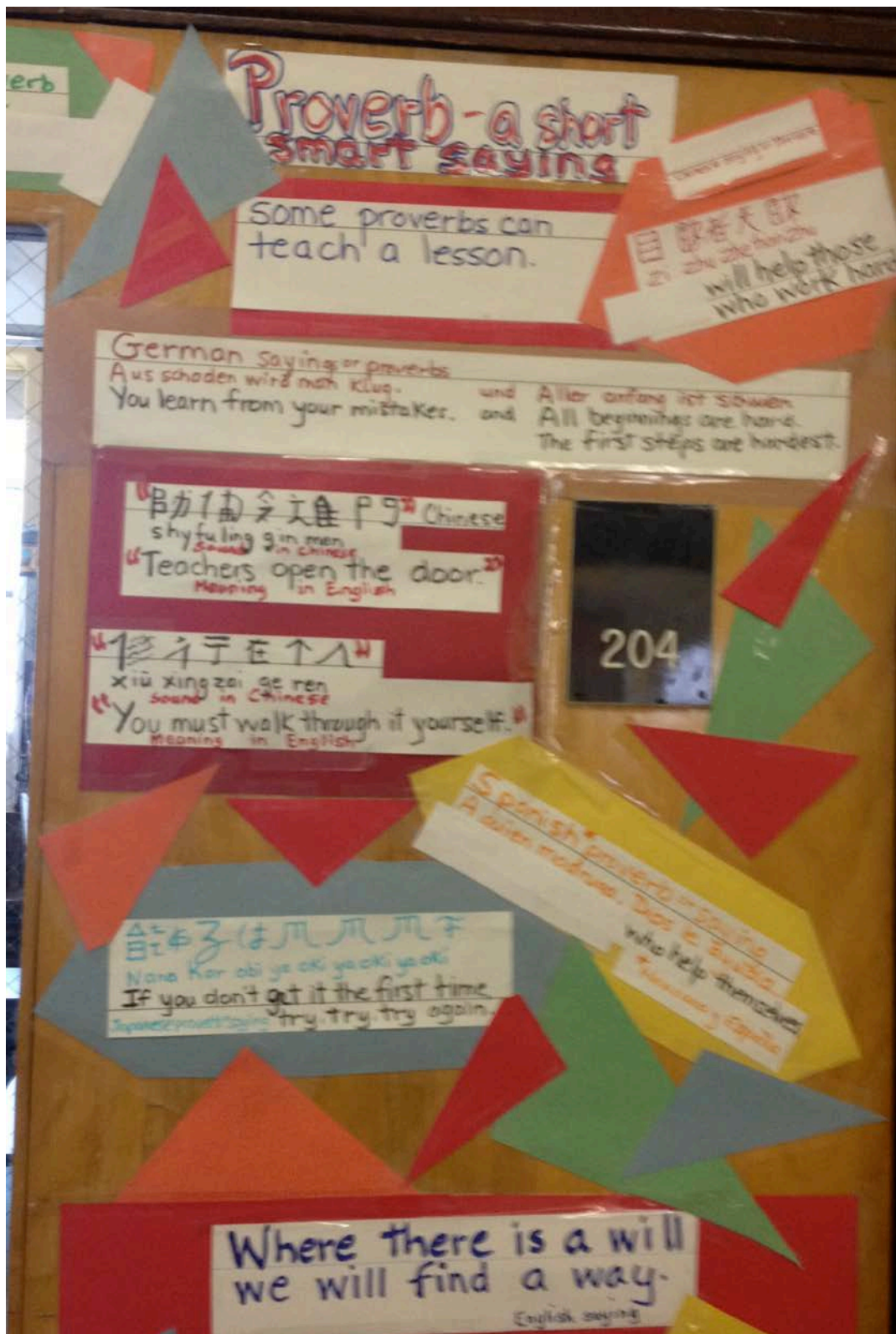
**Content objective:** Identify examples where human activity has had a beneficial or harmful effect on other organisms (e.g. deforestation)

**Learning activity:** Read texts aloud. Use T-chart to identify cause/effect.

**Language objectives:**

- **Language structures:** use the present tense; use conjunctions that show cause and effect (Ex. *When* humans cut down trees, they destroy a habitat for different organisms.)
- **Content-specific vocabulary:** deforestation, pollution, habitat, etc.
- **General academic vocabulary:** humans, impact, environment, etc.



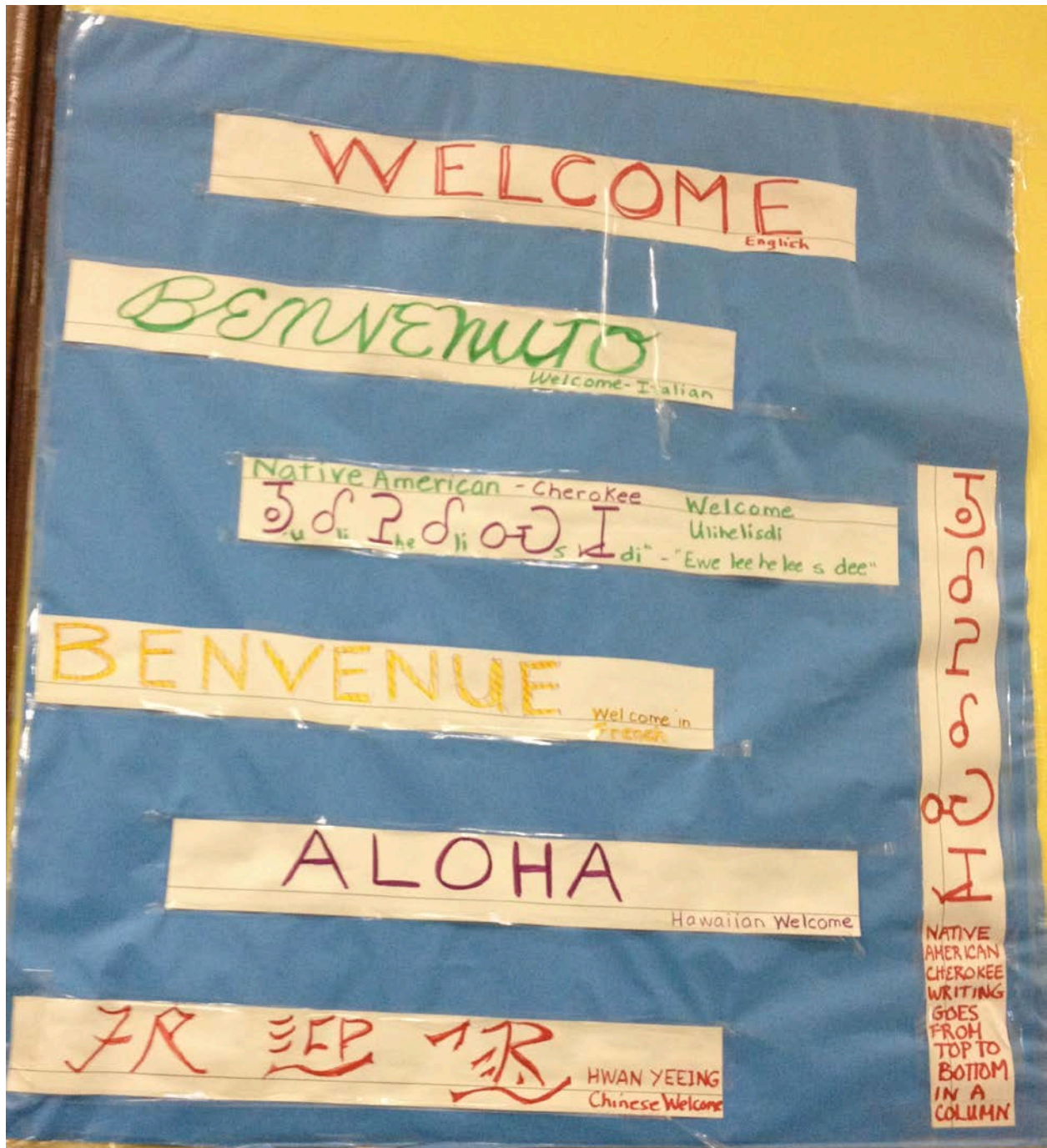


Multilingual proverbs created by teacher and students - Door display of 4th grade mainstream class (School 13, Yonkers, NY)



Bilingual signs seen throughout school (outside each classroom), created and provided by administration (MS 331, Bronx, NY)





Multilingual welcome sign - Hallway display made by teacher of 4th grade mainstream class (School 13, Yonkers, NY)





Name [REDACTED]

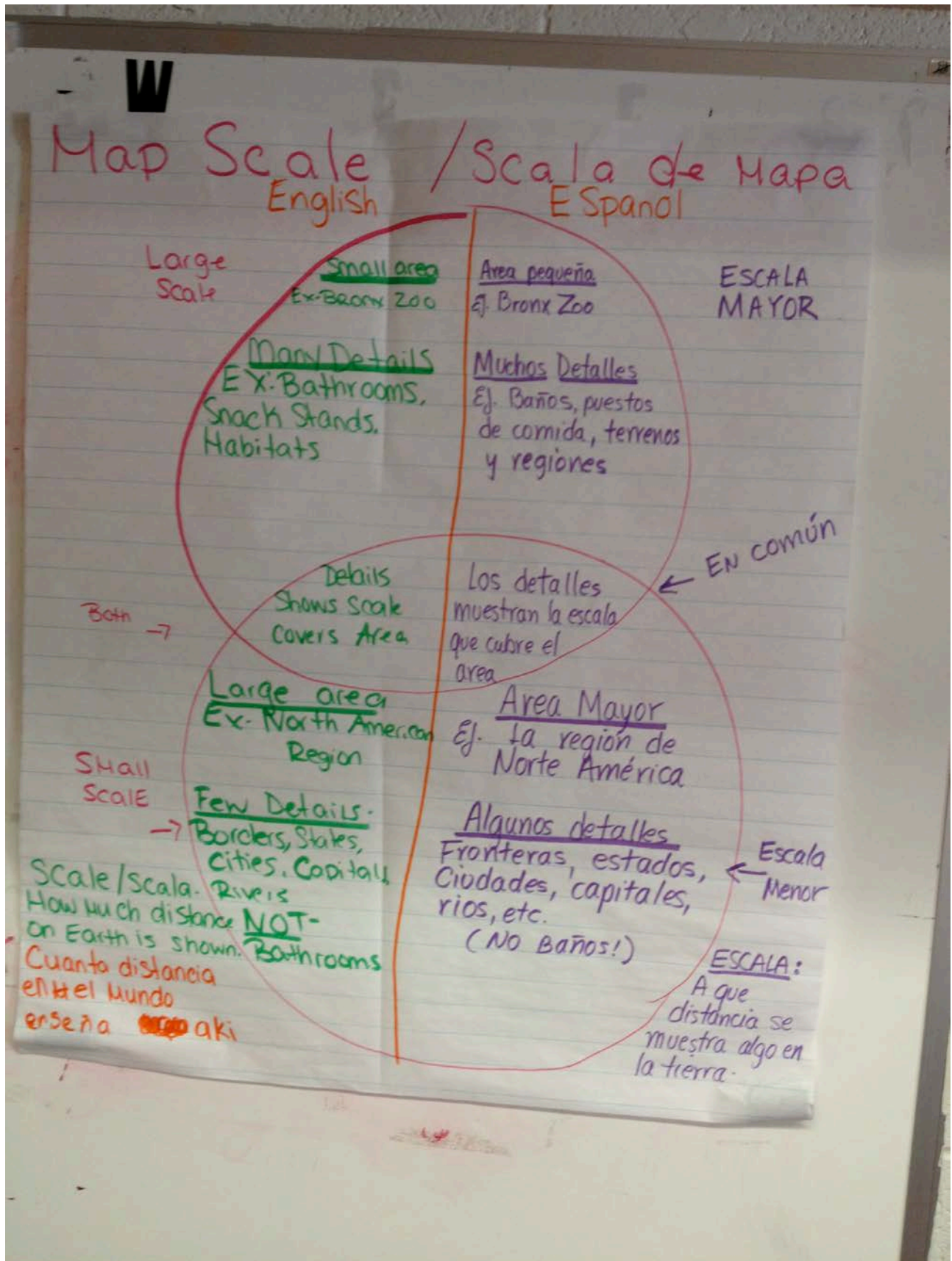
Date October 9, 2012

Making Text to Self Connections

Part of the text	It reminds me of ...
I noticed that lots of people were wearing Yankee hats. Then I saw a guy wearing Yankee earrings and a woman wearing a pin-striped Yankee uniform.	Yo me acordado cuando fuimo de Paso para la night school abra muchas personas con el uniforme de los yankees. Porque ese dia los yankees estaban jugando y ademas tenian gorra y chaqueta de los yankee.

Good!

Student work, text-to-self connections, 8th grade ELA class in Bilingual Ed program (MS 390, Bronx, NY)



Bilingual class notes - from mini-lesson facilitated by teacher, but all text provided by students in class discussion - 8th grade mainstream social studies class (MS 331, Bronx, NY)