



Effective Practices for Holistically Educating English Language Learners in New York State

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Introduction

The purpose of this monograph is to present a variety of effective practices on how to educate English Language Learners (ELLs) in New York State (NYS) to become successful in their education, and in life. This monograph focuses on data and strategies that school teachers, school administrators, university faculty and staff, parents and other stakeholders can utilize to maximize their collective efforts on behalf of ELLs.

The ELL population has grown exponentially. This observation is evidenced by the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) report of June 2012, which states that there is a total of 315,171 ELLs across the State, speaking more than 200 languages. In a memo from the NYS Education Department, dated December 8, 2014, addressed to Deans and Directors of Institutions Offering Preparation Programs in New York State, Deputy Commissioner D'Agati, from the Office of Higher Education, and then Associate Commissioner Infante-Green, from the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL), emphasized that over the past 10 years, (NYS) ELL enrollment has increased by 20 percent. This trend is not unique to New York; but rather is a national phenomenon. According to the aforementioned memo, the US Department of Education claims that the school enrollment of ELLs has increased by 18 percent nationally.

The mission of the New York State Education Department/Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) is founded on "ensuring that all NYS students, including ELLs/Multilingual learners (MLLs) attain the highest level of academic success and language proficiency [possible]" (NYSED, NYESLAT Parent Information Brochure, updated 2015). With this commitment, along with the New York State Common Core Standards, comes a higher level of accountability for teachers and school administrators to provide quality English as a New Language (ENL, formerly known as English as a Second Language or ESL) and bilingual education programs for ELLs.

The higher level of expectations and the lack of adequate training for teachers of ELLs, coupled with the academic, and socio-emotional challenges that newcomer students face from being in a new environment, a new culture, and learning a new language, all play a role in the fact that many ELLs are underachieving and not performing on grade level. As per the New York City Department of Education 2015 grades 3-8 ELA test scores data, 4.4%

of ELLs scored at or above grade level, as compared to 25% of Former ELLs, 52.5 % of Asian students, 19.0% of Black students, 19.8 % of Hispanic students, and 51.3 % of White students. This points to the extent to which the ELL population needs support, as well as the amount of professional development required for staff to adequately prepare ELLs for the academic challenges they face.

Many ELLs feel disengaged; not valued in school. This may be due to the fact that they are often placed in inadequate programs where their language and culture are not appreciated, and the instructional content is completely disconnected from their reality, background knowledge and culture. Inadequate placement results in miseducation. Additionally, programs often do not acknowledge the "funds of knowledge" of ELL parents, which Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) explain, refers to the knowledge construction and resources from families of different backgrounds. Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) add further that funds of knowledge refer to the knowledge, cultural artifacts and cultural resources that students' homes and communities possess. Many schools tend to believe that immigrant parents who do not speak English don't have any knowledge that could be valuable in an educational environment. This may be a factor in why many immigrant families do not feel welcomed in numerous schools.

Bilingual/bicultural children come into the New York State school system with one or more languages; something that should be seen as a wealth of linguistic and cultural knowledge, and experience. Rather, many educators look at these youngsters from a deficit point of view. Students should be welcomed and supported in a positive classroom environment where their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are recognized and valued (Richard, Brown, & Forde, 2006). This approach to educating ELLs should be anchored within the construct of educating the whole child, where every aspect of the child is taken into consideration. Pedagogues should help the students to continue to maintain their languages, while teaching them English as a new language. Students should not have to lose their language(s) in order to learn English, as doing so reinforces a subtractive approach to bilingualism (Wright, Macarthur, & Taylor, 2000). Even in cases where teachers do not speak the home languages of students, they can encourage students to continue reading in their home languages as this will promote biliteracy. Multiple research findings (included in the Social Policy Report on

Multilingual Children that was endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, 2014) have proven that being bilingual is beneficial as the brains of polyglots are more flexible, allowing them the ability to be more creative, and to understand different perspectives. Additionally, bilingual employees are valuable to the global market. In sum, it is understood that ELLs deserve a quality, linguistically and culturally-responsive education that is rigorous, and acknowledges the student's socio-emotional needs. From a critical pedagogical research perspective, this monograph features the following sections which will lead to the type of education initiatives ELLs deserve:



Brief History of Bilingual Education in the United States



Benefits of Being Bilingual/Multilingual



Identification and Placement Process of ELLs in New York State



Effective ENL/Bilingual/Mathematics Instruction and Classroom Practices for ELLs



Socio-Emotional Support for ELLs



Parent/Family Engagement

A black and white photograph of three women standing in a line, likely at Ellis Island. The woman on the left is wearing a light-colored headscarf and a dark dress with a large white shawl draped over her shoulders. The woman in the middle is wearing a dark headscarf and a dark dress. The woman on the right is wearing a dark headscarf and a dark dress with a white shawl draped over her shoulders. They are all looking towards the camera. The background is a plain wall with vertical lines.

Brief History of Bilingual Education in the United States

"Immigrant Women in Line for Inspection at Ellis Island"

Photograph by Hine

Bilingualism in the United States (US) is not a new, “flavor of the month” construct. Bilingualism has always been part of the national landscape. Researcher James Crawford (2004) noted “language diversity in North America ebbed and flowed, reaching its lowest level in the mid-20th century. It has existed in every era, since long before the United States constituted itself as a nation.” Before the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the United States was populated by Native Americans followed by the French, Spanish, Dutch and German explorers eager to live in this rich land. By 1664, when the British took control of New York from the Dutch, 18 languages, (not including the native tongues of the indigenous people) were heard spoken in today’s lower Manhattan.

During the 19th century, millions of immigrants came to the United States bringing additional languages with them. This enormous wave of migration spouted a change in sentiment from celebrating language diversity and bilingualism toward a resounding call for “Americanization.” It should be noted that immigration is one of the central “authenticities” in the history of the United States along with the promise of liberty and a better life. “We are a nation of immigrants!” is a popular refrain.

Gathered primarily from Mora Modules’ Legal History of Bilingual Education, what follows is a brief timeline highlighting key struggles and victories as our nation moves forward fulfilling its promise of “liberty and justice” for all.

Early 1500s 1776 1839 1840

In what today is the United States, many Europeans could be heard speaking Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French and English. Also being heard were speakers of African languages such as Ashanti, Yoruba and Kru as well as many different Native American (indigenous), languages such as Navaho, Ojibwa, and Cherokee.



July, 1776, across the 13 founding colonies of today's United States, German, Dutch, French, Swedish, Spanish and Polish were spoken. When writing the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, the writers decided not to name any language as the official language of the new nation since the colonists who had fought for the establishment of the new nation were multilingual.

Founder John Adams called for a Language Academy to set official standards for American English. This request was denied by the other founders who believed that the government should not mandate the people's language choices. Thus today, there is no "official" language in the United States.

Ohio became the first state to adopt a bilingual education law allowing German-English instruction at a parent's request.



In several Midwestern states German language instruction was required in schools where 75 or more parents requested it.



1855

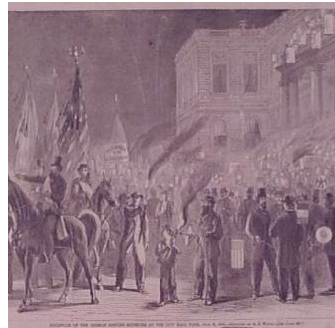
California passed a series of laws mandating English as the language of instruction in schools.

1859

Chinese parents petitioned California schools to open the first public school that admitted Chinese students.

1865

German parents lobbied for German classes in public schools in Chicago.



1871

United States government ended treaty-making policies with Native Americans and pursued a policy of assimilation. Indian children were punished for using their native language. Assimilation was the process of “eradicating student’s barbarous dialects, along with other remnants of Indian-ness.”

1896

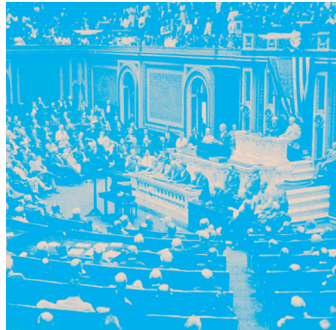
Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 US 537, US Supreme Court case which upheld the constitutionality of segregation under the "separate but equal" doctrine.

It stemmed from an 1892 incident in which African-American train passenger Homer Plessy refused to sit in a Jim Crow car, breaking a Louisiana law.

Rejecting Plessy's argument that his constitutional rights were violated, the Court ruled that a state law that "implies merely a legal distinction" between whites and blacks did not conflict with the 13th and 14th Amendments. Restrictive legislation based on race continued following the Plessy decision, its reasoning not overturned until Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954.

1906

Congress passes the first federal language law requiring that all naturalized citizens should be able to speak English given the increased influx of immigrants arriving from additional regions of Europe.



1908

Speaking English began to be equated with political loyalty as World War I approached. This stance was targeted primarily toward Germans.

1912

New Mexico became a state and its state constitution declared that "children of Spanish descent shall never be denied the right and privilege of admission and attendance in the public schools."

This was contrary to existing policy which had separate schools for Mexican-American children, shorter school year, less funding and the prohibition of the use of Spanish.



1917

World War I brought anti-German sentiments and the banning of German in schools.



1929

Mexican-Americans in Texas established the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the first national ethnic civil rights organization for Latinos in the United States.

1930

Bilingual Education was virtually non-existent across the United States. English as a Second Language, developed to meet the needs of foreign diplomats and university students, was now used in schools for children who did not speak English.



1947

The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held that the segregation of Mexican and Mexican-American students into separate "Mexican schools" was unconstitutional.



1954

In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the United States Supreme Court maintained that "separate but equal" educational facilities were unconstitutional.

The Court maintained that enforced segregation of schools inherently promotes inequality. This ruling overruled *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896 that permitted "separate but equal education for negro children."

1963

Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, Florida grouped children by primary language for the first Bilingual Education program. The program was designed for middle-class Cuban children in response to the Cuban Revolution. The goal of the program was full bilingualism in English and Spanish.

1964

The Supreme Court passed the Civil Rights Act which outlawed discrimination. That same year, the Supreme Court, citing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, declared that by providing all students with the same instruction in English, school administrators failed to provide equal educational opportunities to non-English speaking students.

This became a significant initiative for bilingual education in the United States. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act allowed the withholding of Federal funds from school districts that did not promote integration. This ruling served as the foundation for the *Lau v. Nichols* decision of 1974.

1968

The Bilingual Education Act, also known as Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, provided funding for schools that wished to implement bilingual education programs. The Bilingual Education Act is considered the most important law that recognized linguistic minority rights in the United States.



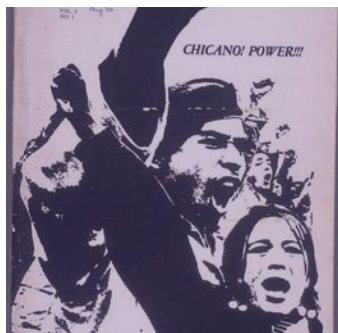
1968

The passage of Title VII provided funds as a way of encouraging schools to experiment with new pedagogical approaches for non-English speaking students. This was the start of Transitional Bilingual Education programs which were intended to provide part of the daily instruction in the student's native language in order to ease their transition into an all English instructional model.



1970

United States Office for Civil Rights informed school districts that they had an obligation under the Civil Rights Act to develop programs for students in need of English-language instruction and must take affirmative steps in that direction.



1973

In the *Keys v. School District* decision, the court held that Denver schools had pursued an intentional policy of segregation and separation of Mexican-American students.

This was the first application of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to what was considered an "ethnic group."

1974

In San Francisco, Chinese parents brought forth a class-action lawsuit on behalf of Chinese students against the San Francisco Unified School District for their failure to provide equal access for Chinese students who did not speak English. The students maintained that they were not provided with equal educational opportunities and, therefore, were not afforded their 14th Amendment rights. Failing local courts, the case was heard by the United States Supreme Court. It found that the California Education Code required that the English language was the basic language of instruction in all schools, and that it was a policy of the state to ensure the mastery of English by all students in the schools.

In addition, the Code required compulsory, full-time education for children between the ages of 6 and 16 and required that no student who had not met the standards of proficiency in English would be allowed to graduate and receive a high school diploma. In the opinion of the United States Supreme Court, these state imposed standards did not provide for equality of treatment simply because all students were provided with equal facilities, books, teachers and curriculum. The *Lau v. Board of Education* decision called for school districts to take affirmative action so that access is not denied due to language. *Lau* signified a fundamental turning point that reaffirmed the rights of non-English-speaking students to be free from discriminatory practices in educational programs and services.

1974

The Bilingual Education Act was amended to define bilingual programs, identify goals and identify how such programs were to be assessed.

Aspira of New York, Inc. v. Board of Education (signed into law August 29, 1974), resulted in what today is commonly called the Aspira Consent Decree. The Aspira Consent Decree established bilingual instruction as a legally enforceable federal entitlement for New York City's non-English-speaking Puerto Rican and Latino students.

While the Aspira Consent Decree was intended to represent non-English speaking Puerto Rican and other Latino students, ELLs from other ethnic and linguistic groups also benefited because of the Lau v. Nichols legislation which mirrored the Consent Decree's key features.

For a variety of reasons, including the near bankruptcy of New York City in the mid-seventies and the concerns of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), bilingual education has been viewed as an imposed legal obligation rather than a legitimate instructional program. Forty years later, the intended, optimal implementation of Bilingual Education programs still take a back seat for many school administrators. The original reasons for the lawsuit (high dropout rates among non-English speaking students, poor academic achievement, poorly trained teachers, etc.) are still unresolved.

1975 1997

From 1975 to 1997, a growing bilingual education field developed credential certification and professional development programs to ensure a well-trained teaching force.

Most states passed legislation on bilingual education. Models of effective bilingual education programs were developed and a network of educators and activist grew. Researchers such as Jim Cummins, Stephen Krashen, Kenji Hakuta developed the "theoretical framework" to guide the development of bilingual programs.

1980

California passed AB 507 (Bilingual Education Improvement and Reform Act) making bilingual education mandatory when there were 20 or more students of the same primary language at the same grade level.

Voters in Dade County, Florida pass an anti-bilingual ordinance.



1981

NYS Board of Regents passed the Commissioner's Regulation Part 154 (CR Part 154) for Pupils with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), referred today as ELLs. The purpose of this legislation was to establish the legal requirements for the education of ELLs in NYS. School districts were charged with developing and implementing Free Standing English as a Second Language programs, or Transitional Bilingual Education program for ELLs. CR Part 154 was revised and amended in 1988 to include holding school districts accountable for identifying and serving ELLs; requiring school districts to adopt a policy on the education of ELLs; plan and provide appropriate services for ELLs; evaluate and report their achievement in English and math; and provide assurance that all provisions of the statute were met. Since its passage, CR Part 154 has been amended a few times, the most recent amendment being in September, 2014.



1983

The English-Only movement was established in an effort to make English the official language of the United States. By 2010, 26 states had laws in their books calling for English as the official language.

1986

Proposition 63, the English Only initiative, passed in California. This was a key point for English Only sentiment spreading across the nation.



1994

The Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized, recognizing that bilingual education was a resource to help immigrants become fluent English speakers and a potential asset to develop the Nation's national languages resources, promoting the country's competitiveness in the global economy. This was the gateway to Dual Language Programs.

1998

Proposition 227 passed in California mandating that ELLs be placed in English immersion programs for one year and then in primarily English-only programs thereafter.



2001

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, identifying English Language Learners as a significant subgroup for accountability.

NCLB describes ELL as students, aged three through twenty-one, who are enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may affect their ability to participate fully in society and to succeed in school and on state assessments. ELLs may include immigrants and migrants as well as U.S. born citizens whose language proficiency is affected by an environment in which a language other than English is spoken at home. Significantly, although NCLB did not ban bilingual education programs, NCLB did impose a high-stakes testing system that promoted the adoption and implementation of English-only instruction.

2002

Massachusetts approved a referendum banning bilingual education. This was done on the argument that they wanted all their students to learn English.



2009

California released its Seal of Biliteracy initiative which recognized high school graduates who displayed proficiency in two or more languages. The legislation was passed in California in 2012 and was passed in New York by Governor Cuomo in 2012. It now exists in 16 states.

2010

California passed the first legislation in the nation which called attention to the urgency of Long-Term ELLs and the need for strengthening ELL programs.



2010

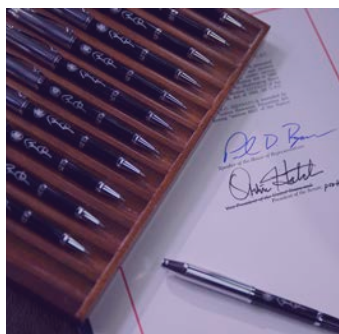
Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted almost nation-wide. The standards called for a more rigorous focus on language development across the curriculum. Recognizing the need for guidance and resources in this area, Stanford University launched a privately funded initiative led by researcher Kenji Hakuta in 2012 called the Understanding Language Project. The mission of this project is to heighten educator awareness of the critical role that language plays in the CCSS and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Although the historical paradigm of teaching content and language to ELLs focused mainly on vocabulary and grammar, the Understanding Language Project emphasizes that the new paradigm of the CCSS requires teachers to teach content and language by focusing on such language constructs as discourse, complex text, explanation, and argumentation, and purpose, typical structure of text, sentence structures, and vocabulary practices.

According to the experts at the Understanding Language Project, ELLs' success in terms of the CCSS requires a different kind of collaboration at all levels, including students, teachers, site and district leaders, state leaders, pre- and in-service providers, test makers, publishers, and funders.

2015

December 10, 2015 President Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replacing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Presently the law is undergoing the regulatory process to establish how the law will be implemented. The final regulations of ESSA will be made public October 2016. The law will go into full effect during the 2017-18 school year. Relating to ELLs, the ESSA maintains Title III, and increases its authorization level, as a separate title with a separate funding stream dedicated to the education of ELLs.



Bilingual Education in the United States has many proponents as well as opponents. Opponents highlight the lack of academic skills and educational opportunities of minority language students. However, the current negative view can be explained by researcher J. Crawford who notes “bilingual education has aroused passions about issues of political power and social status that are far removed from the classroom.” Research has revealed the psychological and educational benefits for students to learn in environments where they are able to develop their skills and academic knowledge, where their confidence and self-esteem are developed as their previous backgrounds and previous knowledge contribute to their acquiring a new language.

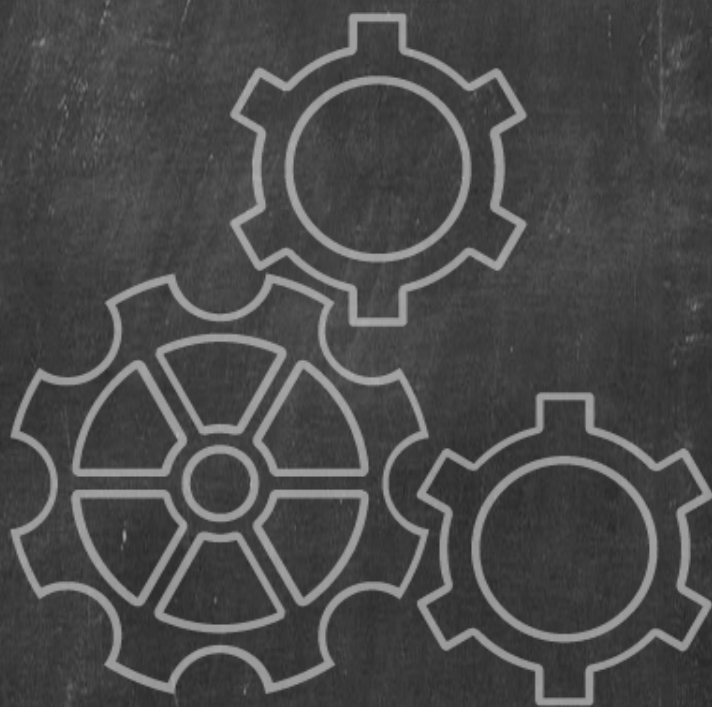
The debate continues: In the United States bilingualism is not seen as an asset but rather as a deficit. If, however, bilingualism were viewed as an asset, as affluent families enroll their children in prestigious bilingual programs, the future historical timeline for bilingual education may indeed look like a nation that honors multilingualism for all.

A person is holding a vintage-style globe of the world. The globe is centered on the African continent, with Europe and Asia visible. The person's hands are visible at the top and bottom of the globe. The background is a light-colored, textured surface, possibly a wall or a large map. The text 'Benefits of Being Bilingual/Multilingual' is overlaid in a white, serif font, with a vertical line to the right of the text.

Benefits of Being Bilingual/Multilingual |

Bilingualism and multilingualism are important building blocks in the American educational system. Being bilingual or multilingual opens one's mind to understanding and respecting other cultures, and thus creates individuals with the ability to appreciate and value others who may be different from them. Proficiency in multiple languages is critical in enabling individuals to participate effectively in a global, political, social and economic context. In essence, proficiency in another language contributes to a student's cognitive development and to the national economy and security of the US.

Bilingualism/multilingualism—"Speaking two languages [or more] rather than just one has obvious practical benefits in an increasingly globalized world... Being bilingual, makes you smarter." (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Further, "[b]ilingualism provides enrichment and increased opportunities for everyone. Far from being a problem, bilingualism is an asset both to individuals and to society." (Goldenberg, 2015). Bilingualism/multilingual can be viewed as a bridge that connects people of various cultures.



COGNITIVE BENEFITS

COGNITIVE BENEFITS

“Being bilingual...can have a profound effect on your brain, improving cognitive skills not related to language and even shielding against dementia in old age.” (Bhattacharjee, 2012) “[B]ilingualism has also been linked to a number of positive cognitive outcomes, such as increased control over attention, abstract-and-symbolic representation skills, and delayed onset of Alzheimer’s.” (Goldenberg, 2015). “Since the 1960s, several studies have shown that bilingualism leads to many advantages, beyond the obvious social benefits of being able to speak to more people. It also supposedly improves executive function—a catch-all term for advanced mental abilities that allow us to control our thoughts and behavior, such as focusing on a goal, ignoring distractions, switching attention, and planning for the future.” (Yong, 2016). “Bilinguals, for instance, seem to be more adept than monolinguals at solving certain kinds of mental puzzles.” (Bhattachajee, 2012). “Bilingual children were more often than not able to adapt to rule changes.” (Crivello 2016). It seems that the “key difference between bilinguals and monolinguals may be more basic: a heightened ability to monitor the environment.” (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

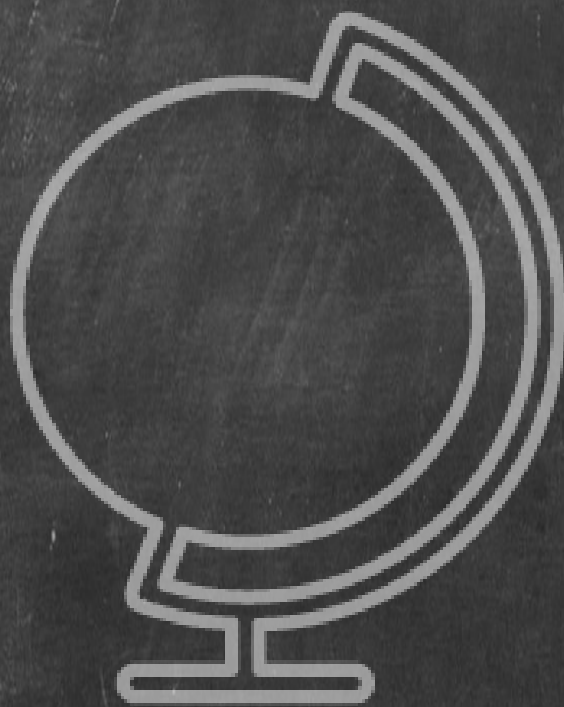


ECONOMIC BENEFITS

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

As the nation competes economically in a globally competitive market place, the need for bilingual and cross-culturally sensitive individuals in the United States and abroad has increased. A University of Phoenix Research Institute survey, reported in The Wall Street Journal, found increasing demand among prospective employers for workers who speak foreign languages, particularly Chinese and Spanish. A New York City executive coach noted, "It's easier to find [bilingual candidates] jobs, and they often get paid more."

For example, in the fields of tourism, engineering, international education, development, and law when companies have contracts in other countries, they select qualified employees who are bilingual or multilingual to represent them and lead the project. (Goldenberg, 2015). "Conversely, monolingualism may have costs: A lack of proficiency in one's primary language was found to be associated with annual income losses between \$2,100 and \$3,300." (Goldenberg, 2015).



EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

“As America becomes increasingly diverse, and school districts take steps to prioritize bilingual education, challenges will continue to arise as [they] consider the linguistic support needed in the transition from home to school.” (Wong, 2016) “Two-way bilingual education (also known as bilingual immersion, two-way immersion, developmental bilingual, and dual language programs) has taken root in many schools across the United States.” (National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning, 1999). This is a step in the right direction for many reasons. When monolingual students are in the same classes with bilingual students in a dual language program, both groups benefit from the cognitive advantages explicated earlier. Both groups are learning each other’s language and culture. They develop connections that promote positive human relations while becoming biliterate and bicultural.

“Nationally, bilingual education has been rechristened “dual-language programs” and is gaining fresh appeal. The templates of dual-language instruction vary—some programs transition students into English-only after several years while others emphasize ongoing two-language immersion at different ratios—but the common strand is an attempt to build literacy and proficiency in more than one language.” (Anderson, 2015).

Dr. Libia Gil, assistant deputy secretary and director of the Office of English Language Acquisition at the federal Education Department, stated that “while there was no definitive count of dual-language programs nationwide, there are clear indications of a movement.” (Harris, 2015). “In New York City, there were 39 new or expanded dual-language public-school programs [during the fall of 2015], in addition to an increase of about 25 programs two years ago. Today New York City has about 180 such programs, according to the Department of Education. Languages offered now include Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian-Creole, Hebrew, Korean, Polish and Russian, as well as Spanish.” (Harris, 2015).

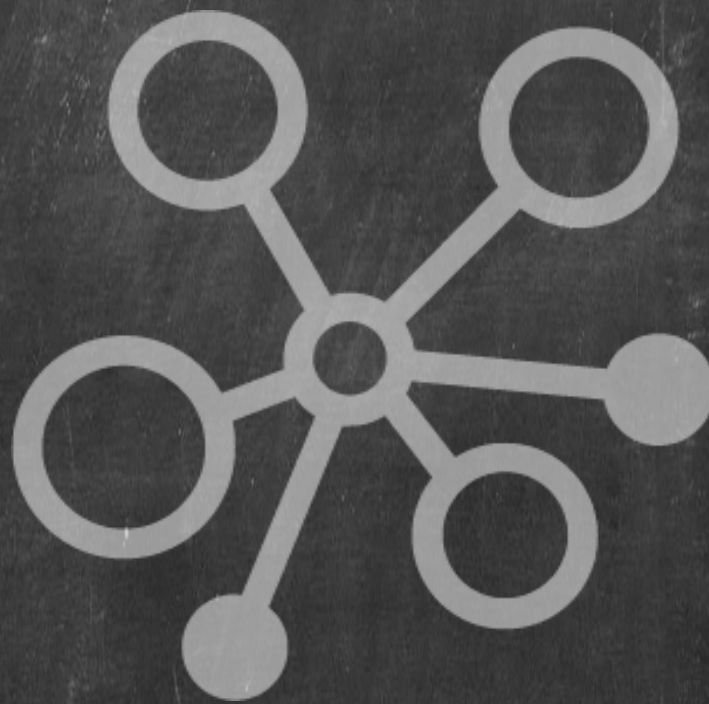
“The goals of dual-language programs are related and [interlaced] with those of quality bilingual education programs for ELLs—better teaching models for non-English speakers, fostering cross-cultural understanding,” (Anderson, 2015) in a space where all students feel valued and welcomed. Dual-language or “[t]wo-way bilingual programs work toward [building] academic language, and affective goals. Language minority students benefit from the opportunity to develop and learn through their native language as well as English (Krashen, 1991), and English speakers achieve well academically in an immersion

environment (Genesee, 1987).

The additive bilingual environment supports the development of both languages and enhances students’ self-esteem and cross-cultural understanding. (Christian, 1994).

Further, “research shows two-way language instruction is linked to numerous positive and long-term benefits, including stronger literacy skills, narrowing of achievement gaps, and higher graduation rates. The academic advantages of two-way language programs carry over as well to an unexpected group: children who only speak English at home. A Michigan State University study of Texas elementary students in 2013 found “a substantial spillover effect”—higher math and reading scores—for children from English-only homes who were enrolled in schools with bilingual education programs.” (Anderson, 2015).

In recognition of the importance of bilingualism, many states, including New York, are beginning to award a seal of biliteracy in formal recognition of students who have studied and attained a high proficiency in two or more languages by the time of their high school graduation. “The intent of a seal of biliteracy is to: encourage the study of languages; identify high school graduates with language and biliteracy skills for employers; provide universities with additional information about applicants seeking admission; prepare students with twenty-first century skills; recognize the value of foreign and native language instruction in schools; and affirm the value of diversity in a multilingual society.” (Slentz, 2012).



SOCIAL BENEFITS

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Immigration into the US continues through multiple pathways. Living and surviving in a diverse society requires the ability to interact with people of multiple languages and cultures. "Bilingualism also has positive social outcomes, such as improved intergroup relations and increased cross-ethnic friendships for students in bilingual programs." (Goldenberg, 2015).

This enables youngsters to relate to others who are different from them and thus, they have no fear or judgement of their peers from various backgrounds.



NATIONAL SECURITY BENEFITS

NATIONAL SECURITY BENEFITS

In 2006, President George W. Bush determined that an essential component of US national security in the post-9/11 world is the ability to engage foreign governments and people, especially in critical regions, to encourage reform, promote understanding, convey respect for other cultures and provide an opportunity to learn more about America and its citizens. To do this, Americans must be able to communicate in other languages, and they must be opened to interact with those who may be from different cultures and/or linguistic backgrounds.

To address this need, President Bush initiated the National Language Security Initiative—a comprehensive national plan developed to expand US foreign language education beginning in early childhood (kindergarten) and continuing throughout formal schooling and into the workforce with new programs and resources.

Considering the cognitive, economic, educational, social, and national security benefits gained, having individuals who are bilingual/multilingual becomes a national and global asset.



Identification & Placement Process of ELLS in New York State

In New York State, the Commissioner's Regulation Part 154, amended in 2014, is the section of education laws that govern the education of English Language Learners (ELLs).

As per the amended Commissioner's Regulation Part 154 (CR PART 154), all public schools in NY State are required to use the following process to identify and place ELLs enrolling in a school for the first time, or re-enrolling after two years of leaving the school system

1

At initial registration, administration of the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ) in NY State, or the Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS) in NY City;

The identification and placement process must be conducted by a qualified personnel, defined as a NYS certified Bilingual Education or English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher; or a teacher trained in cultural competency, language development and the needs of ELLs who is proficient in the home language of the student or parent/guardian; or a qualified interpreter/ translator of the language the student or parent/guardian best understands (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/docs/CRPART154Overview-webversion.pdf>, on 11/12/15).

The purpose of the HLQ or the HLIS is to identify students who speak a language other than English at home. The interview must be conducted in the parent's preferred language by a qualified personnel or with a translator/ interpreter provided by the school/district. The interviewer gathers additional, relevant information, such as: the student's literacy level in the home language, prior schooling, length of time in the US, and much more.

A review of the student's academic history, abilities or work samples in reading and writing in English and in the native language should be included to determine the student's level of literacy and math in the native/home language. This interview also helps to determine whether this is a student with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education (SIFE). (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/biling/docs/CRPART154Interview-webversion.pdf>).

2

An individual interview of the student and parent/guardian conducted in English and in the student's home language;

3

Administration of the NYS Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) to determine English language proficiency;

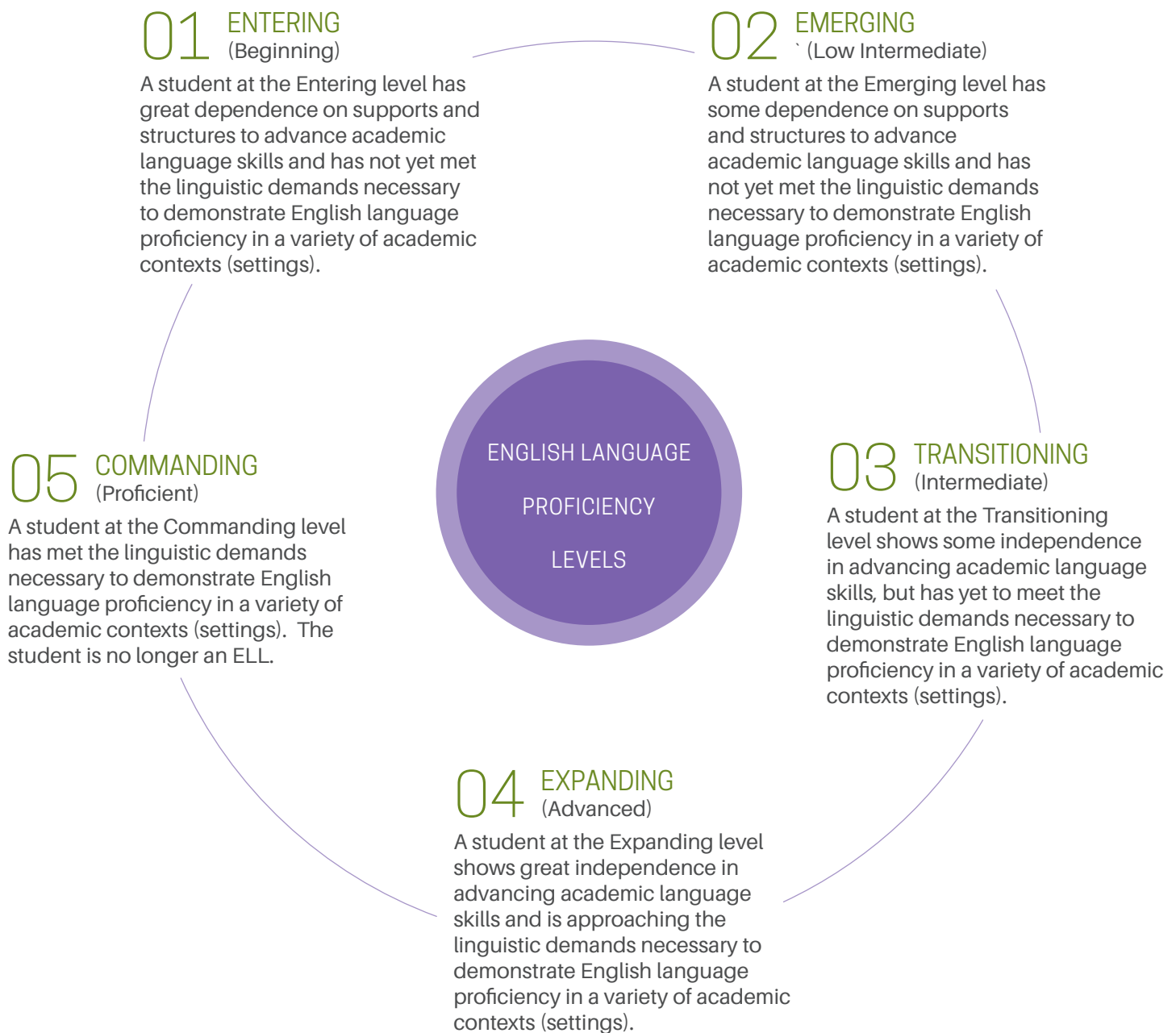
4

Parent notification and orientation session; and

5

ELL program placement.

Following the informal interview, the student is administered the NYSITELL. The results of this exam are used to assess the child's English language proficiency level. Following is a chart describing the five English language proficiency levels:



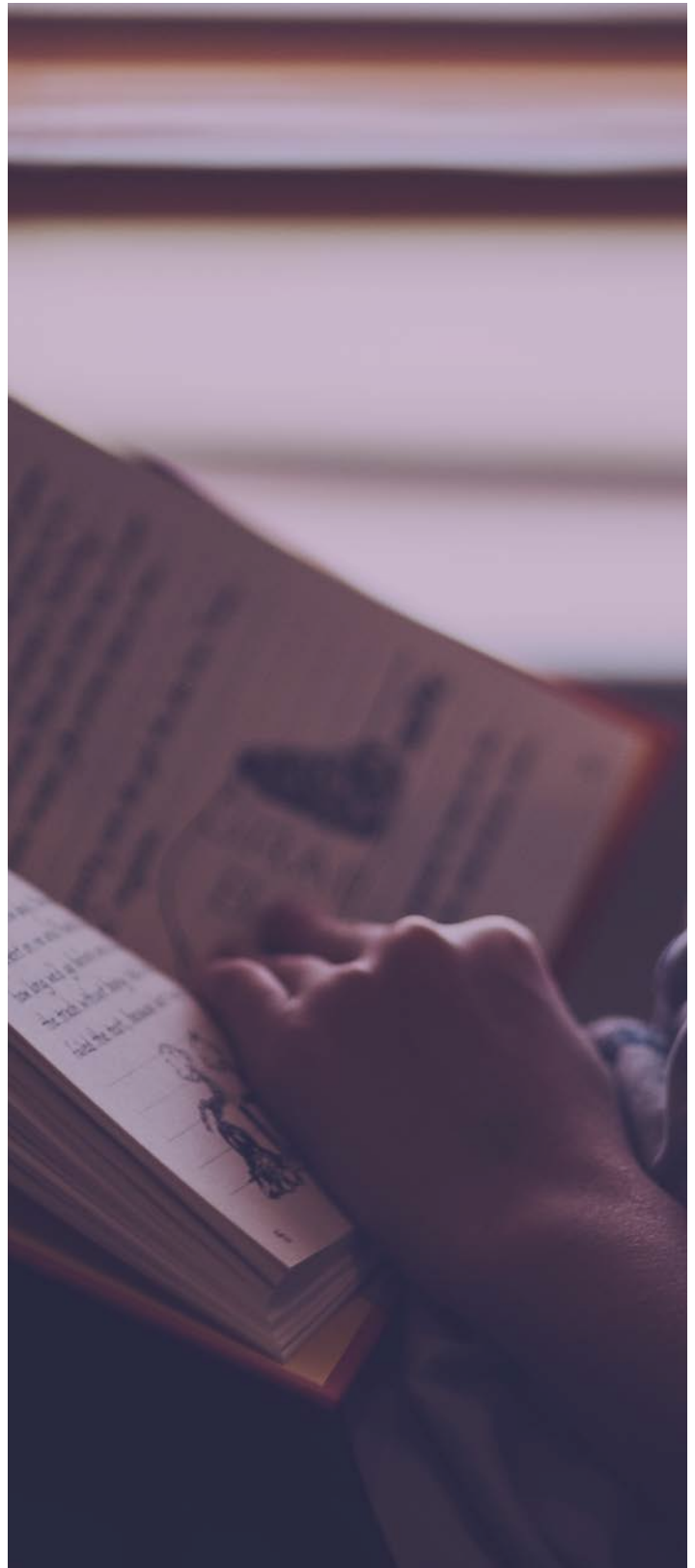
(The New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages. *A Guide for Parents of English Language Learners in New York State*. (2015).

Once the student is identified as an ELL, the parents must be provided with a high-quality orientation session describing program goals and requirements, and the different program options from which they may select for their child. Parents must be notified of their child's placement in a language they best understand. As per the CR Part 154-2.3 (f) 1, the orientation session must be conducted by qualified personnel and must include the following:

- Program goals and requirements for Bilingual
- Education and English as a New Language (ENL) Programs;
- NYS Common Core Learning Standards;
- State/Local Assessments; and
- School expectations for ELLs.

Honoring parent choice, the student is placed in either a Transitional Bilingual Education, a Dual Language program, or an English as a New Language (ENL) program. In each program, ELLs are required to receive ENL instruction (formerly known as English as a Second Language or ESL). In Transitional Bilingual Education programs, students also receive instruction in their native/home language.

In NYS, any school or district, which has a minimum of 20 or more students within one or two contiguous grades who speak the same language, must create a bilingual program to provide instruction in the home language and in English. In NYC, as per the Aspira Consent Decree, a bilingual program is required in grades K-8 if 15 or more students in one or two contiguous grades who speak the same language are identified as ELLs. Placement in an appropriate program must occur within 10 days of enrollment



PROGRAM MODELS FOR ELLS AS PER THE COMMISSIONER'S REGULATION PART 154

In NYS, there are two types of bilingual education programs: the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) program and the Dual Language program.

The goal of the TBE program is to help ELLs rapidly develop their English language proficiency within a period of three years. All ELLs in a TBE program share the same home language. Instruction is provided in both the native/home language and in English.

The goal of the Dual Language program is to enable both ELLs and native English-speaking students to develop biliteracy (bilingualism in two languages), attain high academic achievement, and cross-cultural understanding. For example, in a Spanish/English dual language program, there will be both native English-speakers and native Spanish-speakers. Instruction is delivered in both languages. However, districts and schools follow different models of language use, for example some schools might use English on Mondays, Spanish on Tuesdays, etc. Other schools might use Spanish in the morning, and English in the afternoon.

As stated above, whether an ELL is placed in a bilingual or monolingual program, all ELLs must receive ENL for a certain amount of minutes/units per week. The amount of time per week of ENL instruction will depend on the student's level of English proficiency as determined by the results of the NYSITELL or NYSESLAT. As per the amended CR Part 154, an integrated co-teaching model affording ELLs the services of two dually certified teachers is the preferred model of ENL instruction. Although, the push-in/pull-out models have been commonly used, current research supports the collaborative/co-teaching model to accommodate the academic, sociocultural, and linguistic needs of diverse ELLs within our classrooms. (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

Every spring, all ELLs are administered the NYSESLAT to evaluate their progress in the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the English language, and the need for continued ELL services. The results of the NYSESLAT establish the student's English proficiency level for the following school year.



EXIT CRITERIA FROM ELL PROGRAMS

CR Part 154 establishes the following exit criteria from ELL programs:

1

Scoring at the Commanding (Proficient) level on the NYSESLAT in grades K to 12; or

2

Scoring at the Expanding (Advanced) level on the NYSESLAT, and attaining a 3 or above on the NYS English Language Arts (ELA) assessment in the same school year in grades 3-8, or scoring at the Expanding (Advanced) level on the NYSESLAT and obtaining a 65 or above on the Regents Exam in English in grades 9-12.

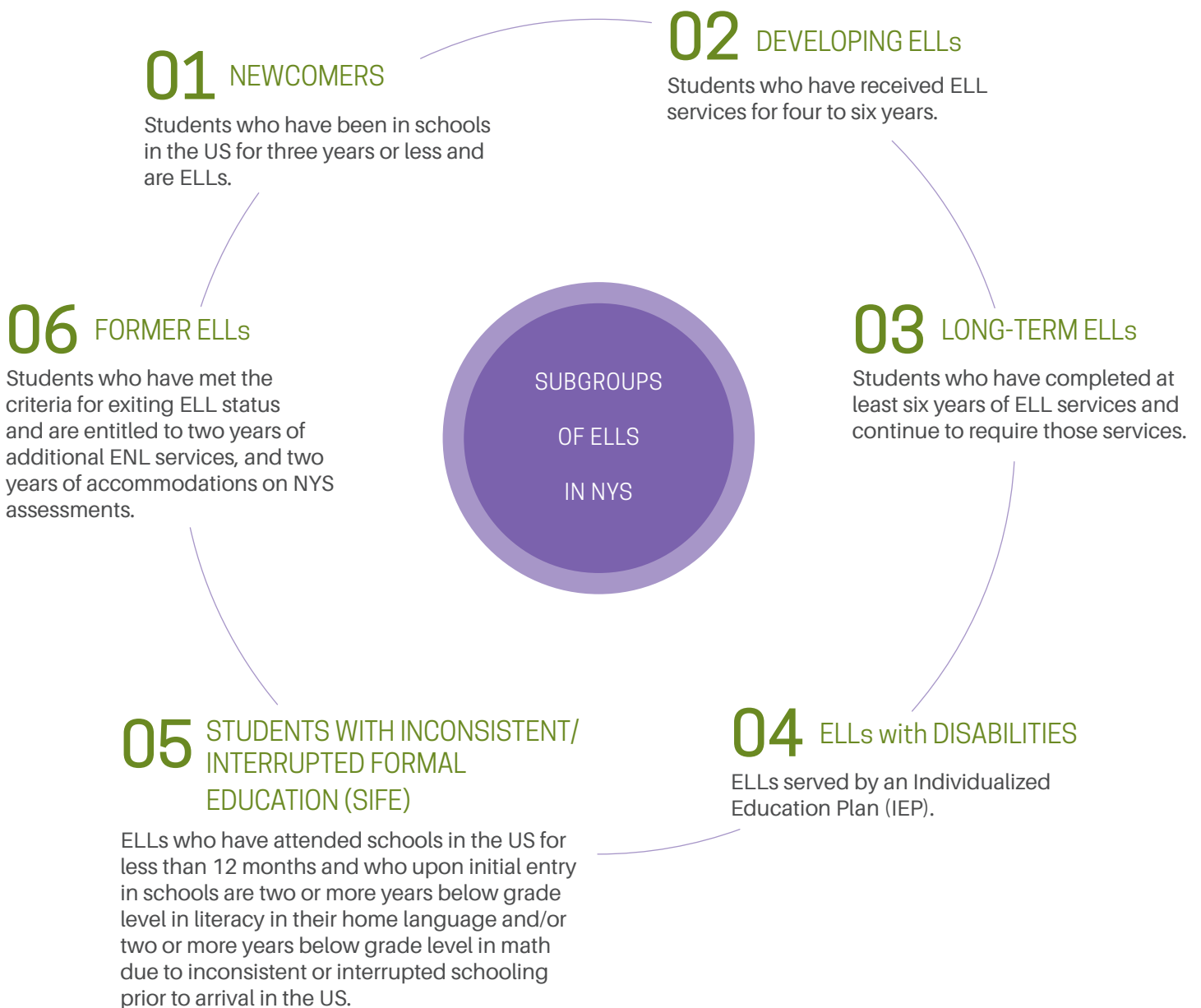
3

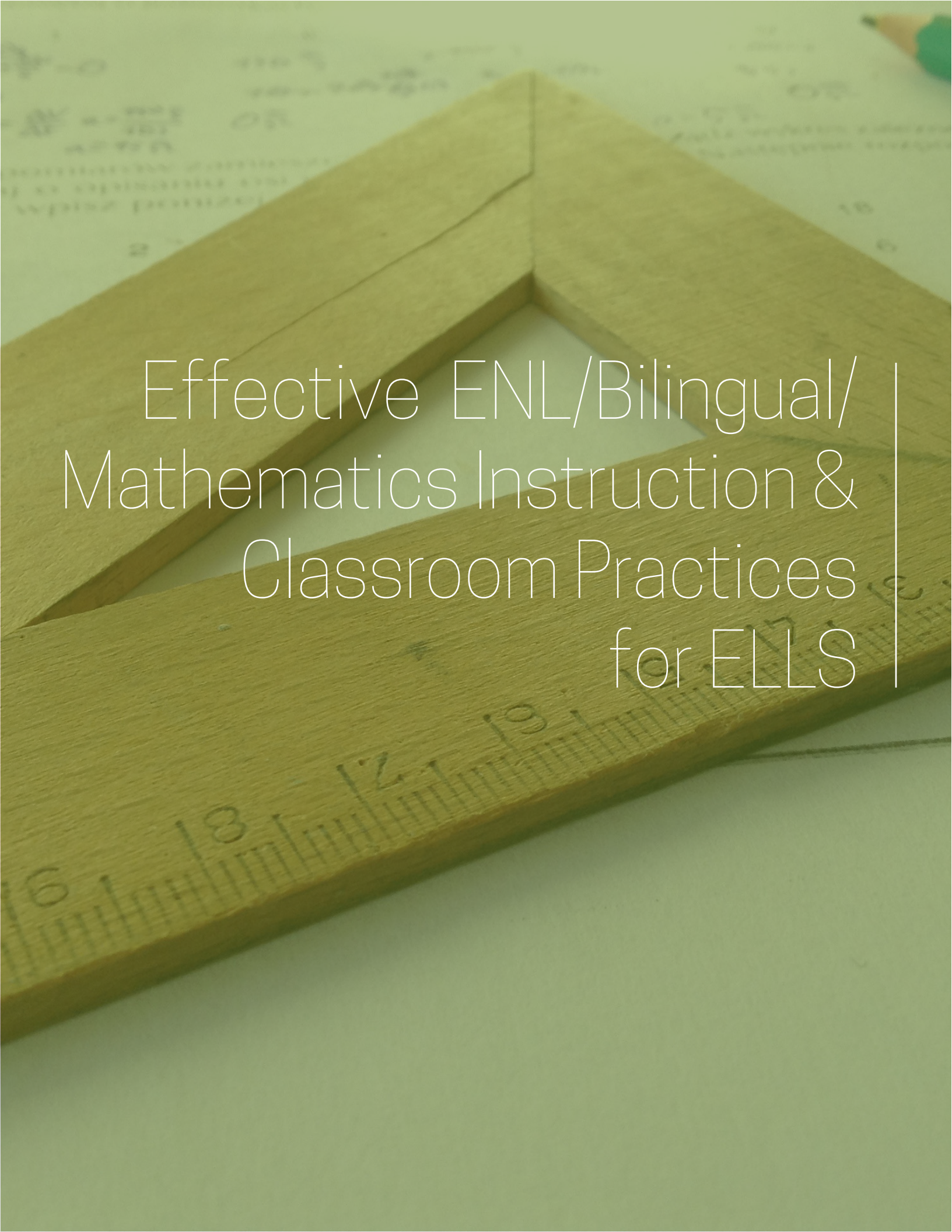
Regarding students with disabilities who have been identified as ELLs: Annually, year each school district will determine if a student with a disability who has been

identified as an ELL will continue to be identified as such. The Committee on Special Education (CSE) of each district shall determine which method of assessment shall be used to determine if such student will continue to be identified as an ELL. (NYS Education Department Proposed Addition of Subpart 154-3 of the Commissioner's Regulations, 2014).

SUBGROUPS OF ELLS

As Wright (2015) explains “there is great diversity” among ELLs, even within the same language group. This is due to many different factors, such as place of birth, prior schooling, literacy level in their native language, etc. As per the CR Part 154, below is a chart describing the subgroups of ELLs in NYS:



A wooden ruler and a wooden corner piece are placed on a math worksheet. The ruler is positioned diagonally across the bottom half of the image, with markings visible from 6 to 19. The corner piece is made of light-colored wood and is positioned in the upper left quadrant. The background is a math worksheet with various numbers and formulas, including $100 - 20 = 80$, $100 - 30 = 70$, $100 - 40 = 60$, $100 - 50 = 50$, $100 - 60 = 40$, $100 - 70 = 30$, $100 - 80 = 20$, $100 - 90 = 10$, $100 - 100 = 0$, and $100 - 110 = -10$.

Effective ENL/Bilingual/ Mathematics Instruction & Classroom Practices for ELLS

Effective practices in instruction for ELLs start with the program rather than instruction. Many studies argue that the best programs for ELLs are those that promote bilingualism and biliteracy. While this statement may be true, researchers have also found that another critical aspect in creating an effective program for ELLs is the incorporation of the “sociocultural context of the school, background of the students, and the unique needs of the ELL population to be served.” (Wright, 2015, p. 307). It is beneficial when the school values the students’ home language as well as their culture, and helps the students to continue to develop their native language. Schools should acknowledge the parents and community’s “funds of knowledge...”, “a construct that is based on the notion that every day practices, including linguistic practices, are sites of knowledge construction.” (Garcia and Kleifgen, 2010). Educating ELLs should be done within the concept of the whole child where every aspect of the student is taken into consideration. This includes the child’s physical, mental, socio-emotional, linguistic, cultural aspects, and even “their soul”, (Miller, J. P., 2010) echoing (Miller, J. P., 2007) in Educational Leadership. Hence, schools should endeavor to “help students bring forth their creativity, compassion, curiosity, moral and aesthetic sensitivity, critical intellectual skills, and their ability to participate in a robust democracy.” (Miller, R., 2000).

In designing effective instructional activities for ELLs, considering “the basics” is paramount. As Kirkland (2016) so aptly clarified, in this context, “the basics” do not mean “reading and writing”. Instead, they refer to a space where students may engage in activities that incorporate play, spark their curiosity, highlight their uniqueness, and allow for their creativity to unfold. Kirkland added “these are the true foundations of education”. These concepts ought to be incorporated in the bilingual/ENL classrooms along with the curriculum, which in the State of New York is guided by the Common Core Learning Standards. In order for this to be successful, effective educational leaders need to commit themselves to on-going support for the program. Professional development should be an integral part of the program for teachers and school administrators to receive information and training that is relevant to the student population, methods, and skills that are necessary in order to provide the students with the high-quality education they deserve. Adopting these measures will not only help ELLs become proficient in English, but they will be more likely to graduate from high school and become college and career ready. Now, let’s take a snapshot at some of the effective instructional practices in the bilingual and ENL classes.

INSTRUCTION IN BILINGUAL AND ENL CLASSES

“Effective teachers know that it is important to create a positive classroom environment where the affective filter is kept low, and the relationship(s) (are) embedded within the concept of care”

An effective program for ELLs should take place in an environment where the students are safe, feel welcomed and comfortable. In such a space, they are able to take risks in using the second language without being afraid of making mistakes. Effective teachers know that it is important to create a positive classroom environment where the affective filter is kept low, and the relationship between teacher and student and student-to-student is embedded within the concept of care. This type of environment enables students to engage comfortably in the various activities, whether individually, in small groups or in whole class, without worrying about how they sound in the second language.

When ELLs are placed in bilingual programs, there is no lapse in time learning new academic concepts while also learning the new language. In a bilingual education class, whether it is a transitional, or a dual language program, ELLs receive instruction in both their native language and in English. This way, an ELL who arrives in the US with an age-appropriate academic background from their native country is able to continue to build and develop their academic concepts while acquiring academic English and all of the structures of the language. Subsequently, instruction in ENL strategies must be purposeful and rigorous, and integrated in all subject areas, as in “Sheltered Instruction.” Sheltered Instruction is an approach to teaching ELLs which integrates language and content instruction, provides access to mainstream, grade-level content, and promotes the development of English language proficiency. It also renders the content accessible to ELLs. (Echevarria, J., Short, D. J, & Vogt, M. 2008). The strategies that teachers use need to be cemented in research and aligned to the skills that students must acquire in order to negotiate complex meaning and comprehension.



Teachers must optimize teaching and learning through the use of direct instruction and modeling where opportunities are created for students to practice before, during, and after their instructional time. When instructing ELLs in any content area such as math, teachers should incorporate strategies that facilitate language acquisition, such as helping students to make connections to prior knowledge and background experiences, as well as use formative and summative assessments that would enable them to measure student progress and inform them how to make adjustments to their instructional practices.

The ELL population enters NYS classrooms at various levels of mastery of their native language. Considering that some students arrive in schools with a non-alphabet-based language and others whose exposure to schooling may have been limited or non-existent, developing English modalities, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing is paramount. ELLs also need to develop literacy skills appropriate for the instructional context of the higher academic standards that are required today. Additionally, there is a necessity to equip classrooms with a variety of instructional and supplementary materials at different levels in both English and the native language. Students benefit as they continue to develop their intellectual knowledge and their native language, while also being taught English, and all the other subject areas. This approach to educating ELLs is what Cummins calls an “additive bilingualism” (2000), as opposed to the opposite approach which disregards the students’ native language and prior knowledge, and only teaches them in English. Using the latter approach produces students who speak only one language by the end of their education. This outcome is “subtractive bilingualism” because while adding one language (English) to their linguistic repertoire, schools take away their native language.

Cummins (1979) coined the terms BICS and CALP through his second language acquisition theory. BICS refers to Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, which is the social, everyday conversational speech. CALP refers to Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, which is academic language required to perform, using higher-level thinking and abstract language in schools. As Wright (2015) states, “Cummins (2012) argues that it takes about one to two years for ELLs to develop conversational fluency in English (BICS), but that it takes five years or longer for ELLs to catch up to proficient English speakers in academic language proficiency” (CALP). This theory is one of the most important theories used in bilingual education. Educators with this understanding agree that indeed, children who arrive in the US from their home countries with a language, and culture should be seen as an asset.

“(...) it takes five years or longer for ELLs to catch up to proficient English speakers in academic language proficiency”



Cummins (1981, 2005) also developed the “Interdependence Hypothesis” which helps us to understand how bilingual and multilingual speakers transfer knowledge from one language to the other. For example, ELLs who learn about the solar system in the native language would be able to transfer and build on their knowledge of the solar system when they’re in an English-only classroom studying the solar system. Cummins explains that transferring is a common practice that bilingual and multilingual speakers perform quite automatically. In a bilingual program, although we need to keep some separation of the two languages, we should not restrict students from using the two languages while carrying out an academic task, as this creates an unnatural way of communicating for bilinguals. He goes on to explain that doing so, does not prevent ELLs from developing academic English and catching up to their native English speaker peers. In essence, Cummins can be said to be equating the practice of “translanguaging” in which a bilingual/multilingual student is able to “mediate complex social and [academic] activities using two or more languages in a fluid manner leading to increased comprehension.” (Wikipedia, 2/19/16).

ENL teachers can serve as co-teachers with the ELA or other content area teachers to make content accessible to ELLs, to share their knowledge and skills and to help ELLs develop appropriate academic language related to the content areas. When done correctly, the results can “enhance teaching and learning for ELLs and all other students.” Honigsfeld, and Dove (2010).

Whether ELLs are in an ENL or bilingual program, Wright (p.296) argues that many learning theories support the use of Primary Language Support (PLS). This approach is done through the use of the student’s native or home language. The purpose of this method is to make English language instruction accessible and comprehensible to ELLs in the content areas through sheltered instruction. Wright asserts that PLS “can be provided even if the teacher only speaks English,” as well as “in classrooms where students speak many different languages.”

The Literacy Squared instructional framework, introduced by Escamilla, et al. (2014) is another approach that is considered as an effective practice for ELLs. Within this framework, there is an approach called “cross-language connections” wherein teachers provide direct and explicit attention to developing student’s metalinguistic awareness about, for example, differences and similarities between Spanish and English. This approach can be applied and adapted in any bilingual program, including those languages such as Chinese and Arabic that have different writing systems from English.



Translanguaging:
a bilingual/multilingual student is able to “mediate complex social and [academic] activities using two or more languages in a fluid manner leading to increased comprehension.”

The following is an adaptation of some examples from Wright's work on how teachers can implement PLS in their classrooms:

- Have bilingual dictionaries/glossaries in the classroom as they can be an important resource for ELLs who are literate in their native language. It is important to teach students how to use these resources and encourage them to do so when necessary.
- During independent work, the teacher or paraprofessional can pull an individual or a group of students aside and re-teach key concepts in the home language when necessary.
- If the teacher does not speak the student's home language, and there is no bilingual paraprofessional, the teacher may have a bilingual student translate briefly for the ELL who needs it. This should be kept to a minimum, however.
- Teachers who speak the home language of ELLs or bilingual paraprofessionals can provide assistance to struggling students as a way to clarify key concepts in the native language. Once they understand the concepts, they can transfer into English.
- At the beginning of a lesson, during the vocabulary introduction, key words can be translated into the native language of ELLs.
- Give quick explanations in the home language during a lesson taught in English to the whole class or a small group.
- Cognate word study is very beneficial in helping students who speak Latin-based languages, such as Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian.

“Teachers who speak the home language of ELLs or bilingual paraprofessionals can provide assistance to struggling students.”



EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL/MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

-  Throughout all of the content areas, critical analysis and higher-order thinking skills should be infused, as this helps students to develop the ability to analyze, explain, infer, compare, interpret, self-regulate, evaluate, and synthesize. (Facione, 1998).
-  It is recommended that teachers plan and teach content instruction through themes because this allows students to see connections between various content areas throughout the curriculum, and “because themes provide extensive opportunities for language use and language learning.” (Hamayan et al., 2013, p. 115). In addition, instructional themes enable students to delve deeper in their exploration of a topic.
-  The use of flexible grouping and cooperative learning optimizes opportunities for learners to engage in low-risk settings for the purpose of practicing new skills, with the guidance of the teacher or a peer.
-  The use of graphic organizers, thinking maps, and other visuals is beneficial as they assist students in organizing their thinking.
-  Classroom decorations reflecting the various cultures and languages in the classroom are very important. This way, from the beginning, ELLs might feel comfortable because they are able to see things they are familiar with through the pictures and words in a language they know and understand. This is very important because ELLs go through a process of adjustments and adaptation in the new society, school, and language where they find themselves. Some adjust faster than others; however, if the classroom environment and the school treat them as “the other” then it takes even longer for them to adjust. As Wright (2015, p. 19) so aptly writes, “ELLs may experience a cultural and linguistic mismatch between the culture and the language of their home and the school’s culture and language. They are disadvantaged when schools do not recognize, value, and incorporate these differences.”
-  Teachers should use storytelling, tales, fables, proverbs, and riddles etc. in English as well as the various languages and cultures of the ELLs within the classroom. Students are motivated to listen to and read stories and tales which allow them to experience other time periods and cultures, as well as awaken the “imaginary.” Diaz-Rico (2008) quotes Vygotsky, stating that, “the process of imaginary play is key to the creation of meaning,” as well as language development. This means that imaginary play and stories, in the classroom or at home, help students to develop their creativity. The development of imagination precedes language development as it happens when babies are learning to speak their first language. The use of storytelling and tales also helps students to have a better understanding, and appreciation of people from cultures that are different from their own.
-  According to Hamayan, et al (2013, p. 120) and Echevarria, et al. (2008), researchers working with the ELL population argue that when developing lesson plans for ELLs, it is important to state both the content and language objectives that will be met in each content area lesson.

“ELLs may experience a cultural and linguistic mismatch between the culture and the language of their home and the school’s culture and language.”

EXAMPLE OF A CONTENT AND LANGUAGE OBJECTIVE

Content Objective: "Students will be able to learn and [appropriately] use vocabulary related to transportation."

Language Objective: "Students will be able to use the sentence frame:

When I go to _____, I travel
by _____." (Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., Short,
D.J. 2008).



Tasks must be specific and the language of instruction must be clear, outlining the tasks step by step. Teachers must create time to model the tasks and activities that would allow students to practice the new concepts in the lesson.



As it relates to the bilingual classroom environment, and as stated in Hamayan, et al "Teacher Tips", (p.163), the following are excerpted from a more comprehensive list:



Help students make connections to background and prior knowledge. These connections are critical as they help students to transfer what they know into their new learning circumstance.



Make sure that your classroom library showcases books in English (which are usually more readily available) as well as books in the native language.



Take students on field trips. This is very important because students need to see, feel, and do activities in order to understand concepts at a deeper level and develop language. Such experiences enable them to discover, reflect and go deeper in an authentic manner in class activities that are done around concepts learned on field experiences. When done appropriately, field trips will support comprehension of academic content.



Ensure that all publications, websites, and blogs ELLs are exposed to present the two languages with equal status.



Be conscious of the selective use of one language for certain functions, such as comforting or joking in one language (English) vs reprimanding in the other language (Spanish, or Haitian).



Invite parents, community leaders, artists and other members of the community to meet and engage with students. This provides the students with evidence of people from their ethnic and language group that have contributed to this society and possibly their home country, or beyond. This offers them positive role models, and is expected to help in developing their self-esteem.



Language learners benefit from explicit teaching. Effective teachers explicitly demonstrate how to identify textbook structures, use textbook features and cues to facilitate the construction of meaning.

An effective instructional program for ELLs should value the students' home languages, and cultures. It should acknowledge the parents' and community resources that are available, as well as follow a rigorous curriculum. In so doing, such a school would implement a bilingual and ENL program that comprises all of the elements described herein, with the imperative of the ELL being at the center. Programs that are anchored in these values tend to produce students with a strong sense of self, and who will be successful in their academic endeavors and in life.

EFFECTIVE MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Since time immemorial, mathematics has been among the few disciplines deemed indispensable to be taught in school. Its preeminence has transcended the ages, and its usefulness has become increasingly more evident in modern times. Permeating all walks of life, mathematics crosses national boundaries and curriculum landscapes regardless of culture. Presently, there is an urgency across the nation and globally for math proficiency in the 21st century. Yet, it has remained among the most evasive subjects that students, especially ELLs, are grappling with. In fact, ELLs throughout NYS historically struggle in all core academic subjects, mathematics being no exception.

According to the NYSED website engageny (August 2015), ELLs in general have made slight gains on standardized assessments in mathematics. However, disaggregated data within this subgroup demonstrate that current ELLs have continuously been outperformed by other subgroups of ELLs. In fact, in 2013, 2014, and 2015 respectively 9.8%, 12.1% and 12.7% of Current ELLs scored at or above grade level. Current ELLs are students who are identified as ELLs during the reported year. These achievement data are significantly slim compared to 35.6% and 40.6% of Ever ELLs found proficient in math during 2014, and 2015 respectively. The term Ever ELLs refers to students who are identified as ELLs any year prior to the reported year, but not included in the reported year. Meanwhile, 39.1% and 40.7% of English-speaking counterparts in mainstream classes scored at or above grade level respectively in 2014, and 2015. This perplexingly and perennially low achievement among ELLs sent stakeholders reeling for explanations and effective solutions to this crisis. Indeed, one reason behind the underachievement of ELLs, advanced by Alvarez et al. (2012), is that ELLs face a double task. First, they have to learn the math content. Second, they have to acquire English proficiency in the process of mastering that content.

In addition, student attainment in mathematics would not be possible without teachers' qualifications, professional development, and personal cogent beliefs about teaching and learning (Clark, de Piper, et al., 2014). Twenty-first century effective practices suggest that teachers' beliefs ought to be consistent with progressive pedagogy, such as constructivism of Jean Piaget and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) posited by Lev Vygotsky. Piaget holds that people create new knowledge through the process of assimilation-accommodation on the basis of prior knowledge. For example, using manipulatives, the teacher can engage students in exploring geometric

shapes, and through this process, the student will arrive at establishing the similarities and differences among the shapes. This is done with minimal guidance of the teacher. Vygotsky holds that learning does not occur in stages, contrarily to Piaget, but manifests itself within the Zone of Proximal Development. As to instructional practice, ZPD is characterized by activities the students can more successfully complete when working cooperatively [with more proficient peers, or adults] than when working alone. (Moore, 2005). For example, a student at the Emerging level of English proficiency working collaboratively with another student at the Expanding level of English proficiency, or with an adult, toward the accomplishment of a task which he would not have otherwise been able to perform alone.

A wide body of research concurs that multilingual students persistently tumble in mathematics primarily because of the way the discipline is taught-in a traditional manner-often overlooking their cultural and linguistic assets. Thus, in order to help ELLs succeed, mathematics instruction must be:



culturally relevant and rigorous, and

linguistically appropriate (integrating ENL with the math content).

CULTURALLY RELEVANT AND RIGOROUS MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION



Based on the above non-negotiables, effective instruction for ELLs must incorporate cultural artifacts (e.g. games, toys), life experiences, and differing modalities of learning. Indeed, these cultural elements, purposely embedded in mathematical activities, would most likely trigger student interest leading to sustained engagement. Teachers should use cognates as a way for ELLs to increase their academic math vocabulary. For example, the use of geometric terms such as: triangle, trapezoid, and hexagon are very similar in Spanish, Haitian Creole, and French. As Walqui & Van Lier (2010) put it, to assist students, teachers must harness and transform the ELL potential into reality and success through teacher scaffolds and student engagement. The cultivation and transformation of ELL potential suggest that the general math curricula be modified and transformed into a culturally responsive math classroom curriculum, which meets the needs of ELLs and guarantees comprehensible input. Krashen & Terrel (1938).

One of the many performance-based tasks that could spark motivation and the imaginary among ELLs is kite construction and flight. Featuring varied shapes, i.e., elongated prism, oval, and rhombus, kites are popular across the globe. Immigrant students, from Haiti, for example, would be more interested in the hexagon-shaped “kap” in Haitian Creole, or “cervolant” in French, because of design simplicity and flight efficiency.

Besides bringing back pleasurable memories for ELLs, such a culturally-anchored experiential endeavor can be project-based, academically rigorous (complex activities) while remaining coherent across the grades (transcending with varied degrees of sophistication). Relevant grade-band lesson objectives based on the hexagon-shaped kite may include (but are not limited to):

Grades 3-5 students will be able to:



- Measure (meters/inches) and compare the stick lengths used in the construction of hexagon-shaped kites.
- Find the perimeter of the hexagon that has been constructed.
- Compare characteristics of all polygons (triangle, rhombus, trapezoid, hexagon) deriving from the construction.
- Find the perimeter of one smaller polygon (triangle, rhombus, and trapezoid).
- Differentiate the notion of perimeter from the concept of area. Provide examples of perimeter and area.
- Find the total area of the six tessellating triangles that compose the hexagon.





GRADES 5-8 WILL BE ABLE TO:



- Determine the area of one rhombus.
- Determine the area of the hexagon using various strategies.
- Determine the area of a trapezoid.
- Discuss types of angles (e.g., acute, obtuse, reflex) and relationships among angles (e.g., vertical, supplementary, complementary, corresponding, alternate interior, and alternate exterior).
- Determine the sum of the angles of the hexagon.

GRADES 7-12 STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO:



-  Prove the formula: $s = 180^\circ (n-2)$, based on the exploration of the sum of the measures of all the angles of a polygon
-  Construct a hexagonal prism with a certain height, given the volume.
-  Determine the area of a regular decagon.
-  Generate and graph functions representing relations of the number of smaller polygons (x-independent variable) and resulting hexagons (y-dependent variable).

PROBLEM: FUNCTION AND GRAPHING

On the same Cartesian plane, graph functions that represent relationships between, Trapezoid and Hexagon, Rhombus and Hexagon, and Triangle and Hexagon. Determine the slopes and analyze the graph directions.

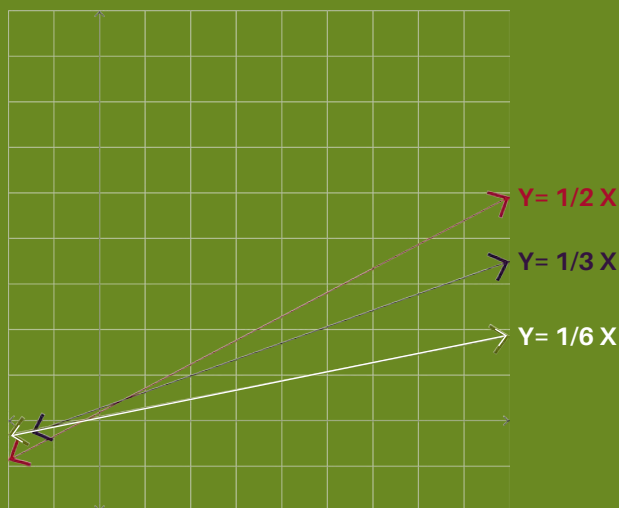
Solution

+ Because it takes 2 trapezoids to form 1 hexagon, the function representing the relationship between Trapezoid and Hexagon is: $f(x) = 1/2x$, wherein $1/2$ is the slope.

+ Because it takes 3 rhombuses to form 1 hexagon, the function representing the relationship between Rhombus and Hexagon is: $f(x) = 1/3x$, wherein $1/3$ is the slope.

+ Because it takes 6 triangles to form 1 hexagon, the function representing the relationship between Triangle and Hexagon is: $f(x) = 1/6x$.

Note: Graphs are provided (without graphing processes). Teachers should ensure that students take time to engage in appropriate steps for graphing.



PROBLEM: SYSTEM OF EQUATIONS

Thirteen hexagons and trapezoids combined tessellate on a ceramic floor. They will be replaced by 54 triangles that will also tessellate on the floor. Determine the number of hexagons and trapezoids to be replaced on the floor.

Solution

Bear in mind that Hexagon is 6 times Triangle and Trapezoid is 3 times Triangle.

Let the system of equations for the involved polygons be:

$$H + T = 13$$

$$6H + 3T = 54$$

Let's draw H in terms of T in one equation.

$$H = 13 - T$$

Let's draw H in terms of T in the other equation.

$$H = (54 - 3T)/6$$

Let's compare both values of H.

$$(54 - 3T)/6 = 13 - T$$

$$54 - 3T = 78 - 6T$$

$$6T - 3T = 78 - 54$$

$$3T = 78 \text{ for } T = 8$$

Now, let's replace T in the equation $H = 13 - T$

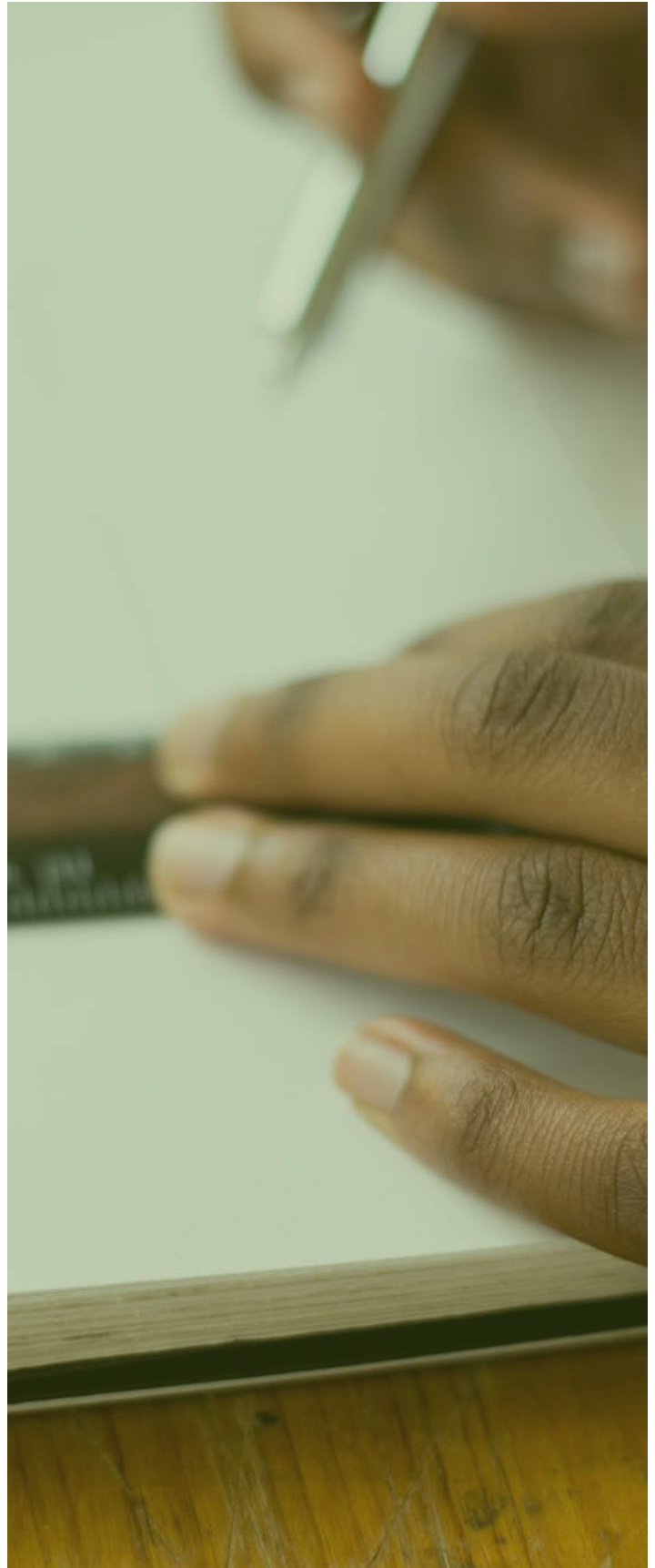
$$H = 13 - 8 \text{ for } H = 5$$

Answer: There were 8 Trapezoids and 5 Hexagons in the bags.

The use of the comma and the decimal point in mathematics could pose great confusion for ELLs. For example, francophone countries (e.g., France, Senegal, and Haiti) use the comma and the decimal point differently from how it is used in the US. Whereas American students symbolically write nine dollars and eighty cents as \$9.80, ELLs from these aforementioned nations write this sum as \$9,80 (using a comma rather than a decimal point). Similarly, in the US we symbolically write one thousand two hundred thirty-four dollars and fifty-six cents as \$1,234.56, while other countries may express this value as \$1.234, 56.

Additionally, ELLs with prior schooling, bring to the NYS classrooms prior knowledge with respect to the Metric System of Measurement. When teaching the metric system, teachers must be aware that some ELLs may be interpreting the information differently from what the teacher intends. Unlike their mainstream counterparts, some ELLs would use the metric table to convert within the metric system instead of operating with powers of 10.

These pedagogical expectations from practitioners are among effective practices supporting the constructivist philosophy of Jean Piaget (1978) and the thinking of John Dewey (1916). For example, to convert 3.5 kilometers into meters, ELLs would construct the table as shown below. They would place 3 in the column of km followed by 5 in the next column (hm), and use zeros for dam, and m. At the end, one can easily see: 3.5 km equals 3,500 m. This technique also facilitates more complex conversions such as 245,878 cm in km. To accomplish this task, table users would place one digit per column as the metric rule requires, starting with the unit (cm) to be converted to the desired unit (km). Finally, one can easily read: 245,878 cm equals 2.45878 km. (See table below).



METRIC SYSTEM OF MEASUREMENT TABLE (FOR LENGTH)

Kilometers km	Hecotmeters hm	Decameters dam	Meters m	Decimeters dm	Centimeters cm	Milimeters mm
3	5	0	0.			
2.	4	5	8	7	8	0

Because both the metric system of measurement and the decimal system of numeration (place value) are base-10 oriented systems—each unit (from left to right) in both systems is worth 10 times the preceding unit. This is a unique opportunity for teachers to engage students in exploring the similarities between both systems of measurement, both of which operate on powers of ten.

The metric system is analogous to the decimal system in that kilometer is to decameter as thousand is to ten. (See tables below for illustrations).

METRIC SYSTEM OF MEASUREMENT TABLE (FOR LENGTH)

Kilometers km	Hecotmeters hm	Decameters dam	Meters m	Decimeters dm	Centimeters cm	Milimeters mm
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DECIMAL SYSTEM OF NUMERATION TABLE (PLACE VALUE)

Thousands	Hundreds	Tens	Ones	Tenths	Hundredths	Thousandths
1000s	100	10	1	0.1	.001	.0001

The native language can be reinforced when teachers inform ELLs of the value of cognates, illustrating the significance of such prefixes as kilo (1000); hector (100); deca (10); deci (0.1); centi (0.01) and milli (0.001). Also, advantage should be taken of the Greek/Latin etymology of words. For example, a polygon (from Greek, poly = many + gonōs = angle) is an enclosed plane figure with many angles.

Indeed, to promote success among ELLs, teachers must have the subject-matter knowledge, and awareness of the languages and cultures of students. They must also be instructionally savvy to customize classroom curricula, addressing the interests, and lived experiences of students. (Milner IV, 2015).

The critical difference is the pedagogy used to compel and motivate learning. Customizing classroom curricula reflecting complex tasks often compels teachers to modify the sequence of the topics presented in the text books. For instance, concepts such as fractions, decimals, and percentages can be taught in the same lesson. Following is an example of intra-disciplinary (multi-concepts) activities that combine rigor and multiple concepts (fractions, decimals, percentages, and basic operations).

PROBLEM (GRADES 4-6)

Given the supermarket flyer provided, and a \$50.00 budget, you are to purchase the following items: 10 bags of spinach, 10 packs of corn, and 4.5 pounds of oranges. The rest of the money goes to strawberries. Use a separate sheet to show your work, then complete the budget.

TABLE TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

Item	Quantity	Cost	Budget Fraction	Decimal Notation	Budget Percent
Spinach					
Corn					
Oranges					
Strawberries					
Total	xxxxx	\$50.00		1	100%

COMPLETED TABLE

Item	Quantity	Cost	Budget Fraction	Decimal Notation	Budget Percent
Spinach	10 lbs	\$9.90	$\frac{198}{500}$.198	20%
Corn	10 pks	\$18.90	$\frac{378}{500}$.378	37.8%
Oranges	4.5 lbs	\$13.46	$\frac{269}{500}$	26.9	27%
Strawberries	6 lbs	\$7.74	$\frac{154}{500}$	15.48	15.48%
Total	xxxxx	\$50.00		1	100%

Linguistically-sensitive (Integrated ENL) content area subjects demystify the language of mathematics and integrate language and content. This is done by the teacher presenting, demonstrating and practicing the language of math, affording ELLs accessibility. Mathematics can be seen as a language in itself. The sheer syntax and the lexicon of the mathematics register are elusive enough to challenge monolingual students, and even more challenging for ELLs. For instance, the translation of the passive-voice sentences into symbolic math forms creates confusion even in students taking the Math Regents in high school. The following question type is frequent on NYS Math Regents: What is the result when the quantity $(a^2 + 2ab + b^2)$ is subtracted from $(a^2 - b^2)$. Confused students would tend to start wrongly with: $(a^2 + 2ab + b^2) - (a^2 - b^2)$. Rather, the first step must be: $(a^2 - b^2) - (a^2 + 2ab + b^2)$, for a net result of $(-2ab - 2b^2)$. To assist students in solving this problem, the teacher must clarify the meaning of the phrase “subtracted from” which cannot be translated symbolically by writing the first expression first. Marylyn Burns (2009) reminds teachers of ELLs that they must “investigate and analyze a math task, determine the language requirements, identify and categorize instructional strategies..., and engage in a reflective conversation.”

Precaution must be taken against stumbling on homonyms, i.e., words with the same spelling and pronunciation with multiple related meanings. Example: table (furniture) in English and table (graphic organizer) in math; mean (unkind) in English and mean (average) in math; domain (territory) in English and domain (set of ordinates) in math, and so on. (NYU 2009; Garrison & Mora, 1999).

Effective practices compel support for ongoing assessment of students before, during, and after instruction through timely constructive feedback. When coupled with rigorous curricula, formative assessment must contribute to effective instruction. (Garrison et al., 2010). The teacher can provide students with constructive feedback by underlining the strengths and weaknesses of the students’ work, as well as how they can reach the expected outcome.

According to the NYSED Blueprint for ELLs Success (2014), all teachers are teachers of ELLs. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM 2013) further affirms this statement by declaring their position as follows: “teachers must attend to all students, including those who speak a first language other than English or have related cultural differences.” These declarations call for the need to design appropriate professional development for ELL math teachers around math content, as well as students’

linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The declarations also imply that teachers must take into consideration that every lesson, regardless of the subject area, becomes a language lesson to some extent (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). That is, designing integrated lessons for ELLs with language objectives and content objectives is indispensable. However, simply adding grammar or discussing vocabulary is not enough. The Common Core State Standards recognize that complex disciplinary language and literacy skills are essential to students’ success (Alvarez, L. & Catechis, N. Chu, H. et al. (2012). Lodged at the heart of mathematics, communication) is paramount for achieving optimal levels of math sophistication. (Sammons, 2011).

Dealing with a two-pronged sword (the language of mathematics and the development of English proficiency), a confluence of efforts is needed. It requires compassion and wit from all stakeholders to purposefully adjust math curricula so that it would become culturally-relevant and instruction would become comprehensible for ELLs.





Socio-Emotional & Classroom Practices for English-Language Learners

There is extensive evidence that suggests that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience poorer educational outcomes than their peers (Bennett et al., 2004; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; Sanders, 2000). Thus, educators have a responsibility to understand how best to meet the needs of ELLs as our nation becomes more culturally and linguistically diverse. Research has demonstrated that school counselors that have a positive impact on ELLs intentionally interact and connect ELLs and teachers (Burnham et al., 2009; Hagan, 2004; Roysircar et al., 2005).

School counselors are at the forefront of promoting multicultural education and, together with administrators, teachers, and other school personnel, help in creating a welcoming school environment (e.g., interview parents and students regarding their countries of origin, customs, histories, and language(s) spoken; giving them a tour of the school, discussing the bell schedule and school routines, posting welcome signs in different languages at the entrance of the school, etc.). They ensure that all ELLs and their families are provided with the support they need to be successful in school.

CULTURAL AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS OF ELLS

“(...)cultural conflict(s), understandably, may be confusing for ELLs. For these reasons, it is important to consider the cultural diversity and norms of ELLs when establishing instructional programs for them.”

ELLs might experience a time period of cultural shock upon entering our schools since they are unable to easily socialize in their second language. Many ELLs develop socio-emotional distress. They may miss the caregivers and friends they have left behind in their home country (e.g., parents, grandparents, extended family and friends), and this may lead to feelings of isolation. ELLs may be reuniting with family members whom they have not seen in years and who may not be familiar with them. They may also have problems adjusting to new step-parents or half-siblings that they may or may not have met before. The socio-emotional support for ELLs plays a critical part in helping them adjust to life in this country.

In addition to learning English while maintaining their native language and culture, ELLs need to manage differences between their culture and that of the American school system. For example, many of the countries of origins of ELLs teach by traditional methods with a teacher teaching at the chalkboard while students sit in rows, or they may have had to learn their lessons through memorization and recitation. This is very different from the way schools function in the United States. As well, they need to understand the grading system, which may be different from that of their native country, including the notion of earning academic credits at the high school level. More differences may include: content areas are usually taught by different teachers in middle and high schools; instructional time is divided into “periods”; length of school day and school year may also be different; there may be differences in expectations for the behaviors of boys and girls, and school discipline codes; parents are expected to take an active role in their child’s education; and even the physical structure of the school building may be different from schools in their country.

Attendance has been identified as a factor that prevents ELLs from succeeding in school. There are circumstances that occur in the household that impact on school attendance. An ELL may be the most proficient English speaker in their family and is often called upon to take care of adult business, such as accompanying family members to various doctors’ appointments, meetings with landlords, tax agents, social services, etc. School staff should inform parents of their right to request to have a translator or interpreter at various appointments so that their child would not have to miss school.

Educators need to understand that students whose primary language is not English have cultural norms and values that may conflict with teachers’ expectations in the classroom. For example, notions of modesty, a preference for competition and approaches to problem solving lie below the visible surface and permeate every aspect of the lives of ELLs at school.

Additionally, many cultures prohibit children from looking into the eyes of an adult. Children are expected to keep their heads down as this is an indication of respect. In the American school system, children are often admonished for not looking at an authority figure in the eyes. This cultural conflict, understandably, may be confusing for ELLs. For these reasons, it is important to consider the cultural diversity and norms of ELLs when establishing instructional programs for them.

BULLYING AS A CHALLENGE FOR ELLS

“ELLs are often the targets of bullying due to their cultural and language differences (...) Teachers must be aware of the warning signs that may indicate that a student is affected by bullying--either being bullied or bullying others ”

ELLs are often the targets of bullying due to their cultural and language differences. Teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel need to teach ELLs (through simplified language, visuals, role play, and peer translation) about what bullying is and that it can be manifested in the form of verbal, emotional and/or physical acts. School personnel can help ELLs learn the language they need in order to deal with bullies. They need to learn to ask an adult and/or peer for help, to stand up for themselves, and to avoid becoming targets. They need to understand that they must report bullies, and that they have a right to a bully-free school environment. ELLs will benefit from having an advisory class to discuss different topics, such as bullying.

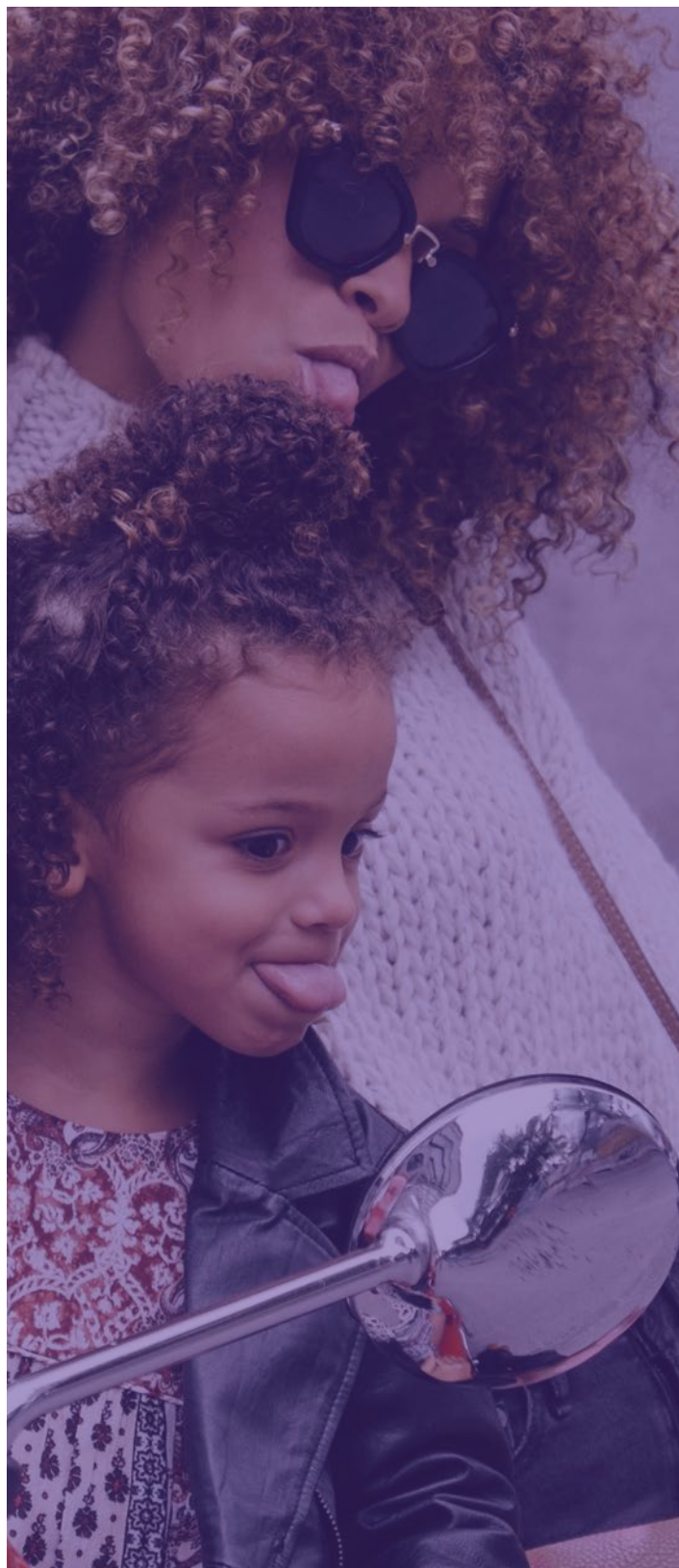
There are certain things that teachers can do in the classroom to prevent the bullying of ELLs. At the beginning of the school year, all teachers should make sure that their students are clear of the rules of the school in reference to bullying and the resulting consequences. These rules should be posted in the classroom and throughout the school building. Teachers must be aware of the warning signs that may indicate that a student is affected by bullying--either being bullied or bullying others. Some of the signs of a student being bullied may be unexplained injuries; destroyed school supplies; clothing, electronics, or jewelry; feeling sick or faking illness; not wanting to attend school, etc. Signs that a student is bullying others may be a student who frequently gets into physical and verbal fights, associates with students who bully others, becomes increasingly aggressive, has extra money or new belongings, etc.

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT ELLS IN SCHOOLS

Schools should give parents the academic calendar at the beginning of the school year so they can plan accordingly. Often, many parents of ELLs plan family trips to their country of origin during winter and spring recess and extend their trip. While extended family vacations are positive experiences, ELLs miss valuable instructional time.

Educators need to make parents aware of having their child attend school on a daily basis to prepare them for college and careers. It is also important to note that some ELLs who are of working age contribute to the family's financial needs by working outside the home. Furthermore, there are ELLs who are responsible for younger siblings and household chores while their parents go to work. These responsibilities leave little time to complete homework assignments. Counselors, and other educators need to speak to ELLs and teach them time management skills to manage these additional responsibilities.

ELLs benefit from individual counseling to deal with their personal issues and adversities. Guidance counselors and other support staff can provide group counseling or classroom guidance lessons throughout the year encouraging students to talk about their cultures, traditions and languages; to set short-and long-term goals; to encourage them to participate in school trips to college visits, college fairs, as well as financial aid workshops; to introduce them to college and career search websites, and other resources.





Administrators, counselors, and other school personnel can create a Summer Institute for incoming sixth and ninth grade ELLs entering middle schools and high schools, respectively. This will enhance their learning, while they acclimate to the new school, teachers, and other students before the beginning of the academic school year.



Administrators, school counselors, and other school personnel can work with the Student Organization and other departments in organizing schoolwide events to celebrate different cultures, such as a multicultural shows and festivals, various foreign language (native language) poetry contests and plays.



Counselors and other educators can monitor the academic progress of ELLs by actively conducting report card and transcript review conferences and arranging Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and Response to Intervention (Rti) services for ELLs in order to assist them in improving their academic skills and reduce their stress in learning.



School personnel must become aware of the cultural diversity that exists among all ELLs in the school. They must also be open to learning about the culture, norms, and values from the ELLs themselves and from their families.



Create before, after-school, and Saturday tutoring by having former ELLs or ELLs whose English proficiency level is high help newcomer ELLs with academics and other aspects of adjustment.



Encourage ELLs to participate in school and community services, join the Key Club and Tolerance Task Group and other school clubs. Being involved in extra-curricular activities helps ELLs mingle with other students and improve their social communication skills, increase their sense of belonging and develop empathy for others. The school should also create situations where ELLs and mainstream students have opportunities to be in the same classrooms, working on academic tasks together.



Counselors and other educators need to maintain close contact with parents of ELLs and inform them of their child's progress. If the guidance counselor is not bilingual, have bilingual staff or an interpreter help in the communication. Counselors can also attend PTA meetings, conduct family counseling sessions and parent workshops, and create guidance newsletters for parents in different languages.



Administrators should conduct schoolwide award ceremonies, such as Student of the Month, Perfect Attendance Awards, Most Improved Student Awards, Seniors Awards Night, Arista Awards, Spark Helpers' Awards, Peer Mentoring Awards, etc. and ensure that ELLs are included. "Awards to recognize student achievement can build students' self-esteem, encourage additional effort, and promote positive values." (Super Teacher Worksheet).

This helps both the mainstream and bilingual students to get to know each other, and minimize fear and bullying.



Keep close contact with parents of ELLs. If the school counselor is not bilingual, have bilingual staff or the Parent Coordinator help in the communication. Conduct family counseling sessions and workshops, and disseminate guidance newsletters for parents in the different languages of the school community. Make Phone Master phone calls to parents about important issues and events in different languages and publish Parents Newsletters in different languages. Teachers should be encouraged to contact parents of ELLs at the beginning of the school year to introduce themselves as their child's teacher and include a positive statement about their child. Teachers should let parents of ELLs know their expectations of their child and how they can partner with the teacher in the education of their child.



To create a safe and amicable learning environment for ELLs, counselors and other educators may refer ELLs and families to counseling and social service organizations for additional support, resources and advocacy. A list of helpful social service resources and advocacy organizations for ELLs from different cultural groups should be created and disseminated for this purpose.



The school should work closely with ethnic community-based organizations (CBOs), such as South Asian Youth Action, Inc. (SAYA), Hispanic Immigrant Association, Chinese Planning Council, Flanbwayan, Haitian Literacy Project, etc., to provide after school tutoring programs and enrichment classes. Encourage students to be involved in various athletic and artistic activities. Establish long-term relationships with CBOs to provide counseling in different languages. In addition to attendance teachers, some CBOs conduct home visits, such as United Ways of Queens Community House. School personnel may also want to create programs in collaboration with CBOs to meet the needs of parents of ELLs. For example, if there are parents who do not speak English, an English as a New Language/English as a Second Language (ENL/ESL) program may be created.



As Qi Shi and Sam Steen from George Washington University stated "Group counseling also has been shown to provide ESL students the following elements:"



Supportive context where their concerns can be normalized and their feelings of isolation can be decreased (Baca & Koss-Chioino, 1997);



Comfortable environment to practice English skills (Asner-Self & Feyissa, 2002);



Social support network in school (Villalba, 2003);



Exposure to problem-solving techniques and useful resources available to them in the community or school (Dipeolou, A. et al, 2007); and,



Opportunities to explore ethnic identity (Malott, Paone, Humphreys, & Martinez, 2010). Studies of effective middle schools have shown that the common denominator among different types of schools reporting academic success is their systematic process for promoting children's socio-emotional development. Effective schools have school-wide mentoring programs, group guidance and advisory periods, creative modifications of traditional discipline procedures, and structured classroom time devoted to social and emotional skill building, group problem solving, and team building. (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development 1989). Of course, they have sound academic programs and competent teachers and administrators, but other schools have those features as well. "It is the Social Emotional Learning component that distinguishes the effective schools." (Elias, M. J., et al., 1997).

"Instead of focusing on what ELLs cannot do, practitioners are encouraged to understand more about their strengths and abilities, which requires learning more about their culture and the experiences that they bring into the classroom."

It is important for schools to establish systems and understandings of how to support and sustain the social and emotional development of ELLs. Instead of focusing on what ELLs cannot do, practitioners are encouraged to understand more about their strengths and abilities, which requires learning more about their culture and the experiences that they bring into the classroom. They can then develop culturally relevant pedagogy which is an effective instructional practice and theoretical model that promotes student achievement, supports students' cultural identity, and helps students to develop the critical perspectives needed to challenge inequities in schools. (Ladson-Billings, 1995). We can securely state that ELLs who participate in the events and activities presented in this paper will take pride in their culture and increase their intergroup skills. They will feel better about themselves and this will help them improve their academic performance.

Parent/Family Engagement |



Parent/Family engagement is key to the success of ELLs in schools. However, many schools struggle with providing meaningful opportunities for non-English-speaking parents to have a voice and actively participate in the education of their children. This may be due to the fact that the ELL population has increased exponentially in New York State as well as across the nation, as indicated by a New York State Education Department report of June 2012 which states that “more than 200 languages are spoken in schools in New York State” and these students who arrive here with their families come from different and diverse cultures, many of whom are also from a low socio-economic status. (Wright, 2015).

Parent involvement has been affected by the rise in single-parent homes and broken families as is the case of many of our immigrant students who have had to flee their home country with only one parent. Many of these families (whether single parent or not) are in “survival mode” as they are struggling to adjust to a new life in a new country. This adjustment is a process which is imbedded in culture shock while they are barely able to negotiate basic needs such as housing, work, and the education of their children. Parents are confronted with different norms of child rearing and discipline, and their own children who quickly want to embrace and assimilate into the American mainstream at the expense of their language, culture and values.

Researchers state that given the increasingly cultural and linguistic diversity of families, schools may hold different and sometimes diverging beliefs about the appropriate degree and nature of parent involvement. It is some of these discrepancies that contribute to making assumptions and stereotypes on both sides, often hindering communication between school staff and parents.” (Lazar & Slostad, 1999). Schools can benefit from implementing the effective practices which we propose, which should lead to improved outcomes in building sustainable partnerships with parents and families of ELLs.

HOW SCHOOLS CAN HELP

The first premise in order to establish an effective Parent/Family Engagement strategy in schools is to ensure that parents/families feel welcome at their child's school. Just as our best teachers differentiate instruction in their classroom, effective school administrators can also benefit by first learning about the cultures and languages of their students, parents and community, and adjusting to the needs of students and families that come from diverse cultures in their school. This awareness and adjustment would enable the school administrators and staff to find creative ways to connect with immigrant parents and families of the students.

Teachers can support parents by sending weekly progress reports where they thank them for their support and invite them to comment. As much as possible, these progress reports should be translated in the home languages as this would ensure that the parents understand the text and are able to respond. Educators should be aware of the fact that many immigrant parents are pre-literate in their native language. Even in such cases, these parents can still support the education of their children. It is recommended that teachers call parents and communicate with them via a telephone. If the teacher does not speak the home language of the parents, they can often find a school staff member who does and is able to translate. For parents who are literate in their native language, teachers can provide information on topics that their children will be studying and perhaps invite them to borrow some library materials in the native language that could be of assistance. Many of our ELLs and their parents might have never learned how to use technology, therefore, teachers have to know their students and family situations prior to sending reports or any form of electronic communication. Lazar & Slostad quote Ladson-Billings who states that "several studies have found that collaboration with caregivers from nonmainstream cultures helps teachers gain the cultural competence they need to enhance student motivation and achievement." Additionally, it is recommended that schools provide frequent parent workshops addressing a variety of topics including alternate ways to discipline their children. In order for parents to be an asset to the school in

educating their children, it is important to establish clear communication from the outset. Surveying parents for their preferred language for school and home communication serves as a base to make them feel that their voice counts. Having a protocol to identify the various languages of the parents is necessary. Without a common language, very little communication occurs.

Schools can contact the local community-based organizations to enlist their assistance in a variety of ways, including publishing articles about the success of the students, school events calendars, student of the month, best attendance and even to commend families for their collaboration and support in the success of their children.

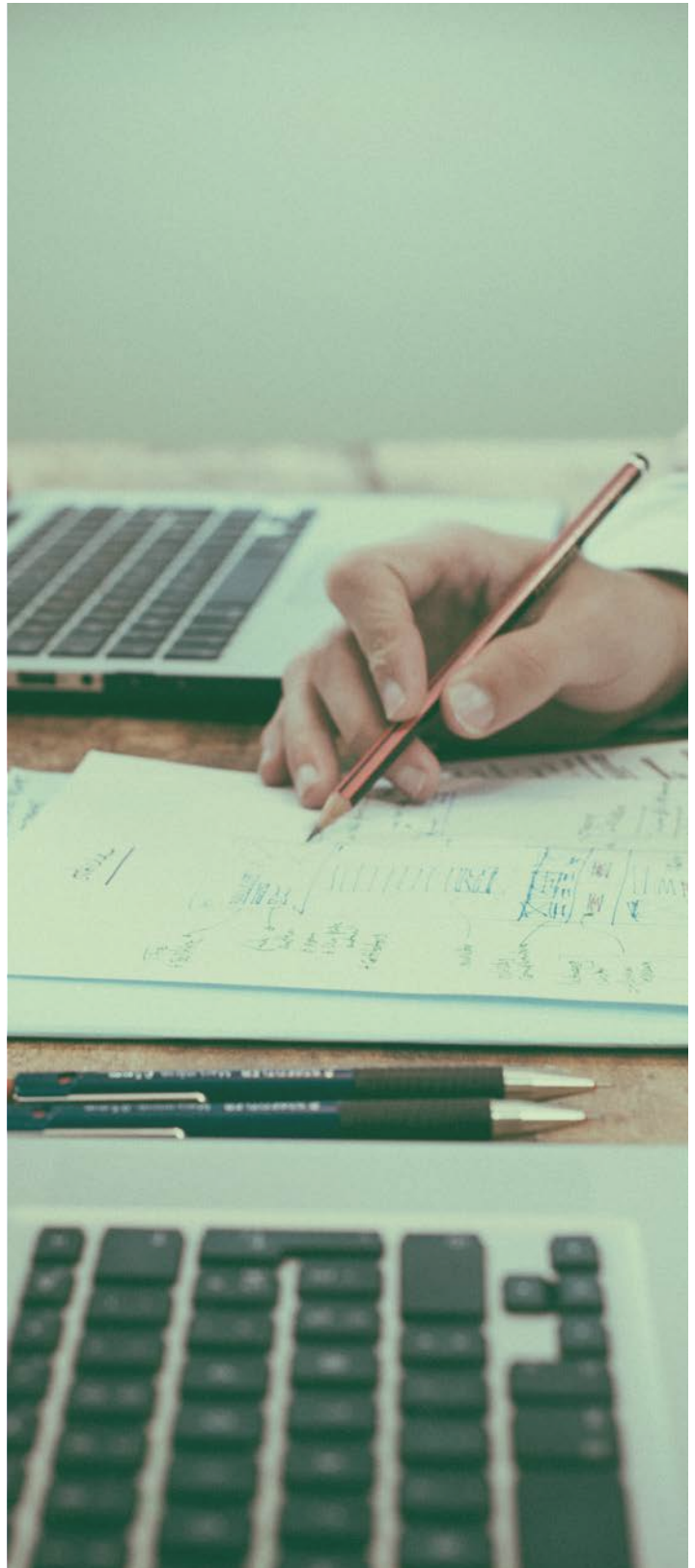
Parents need to have a clear understanding of the school's expectations and how they can help their child. Having in writing, in the form of a parent handbook, providing basic information such as what is expected in terms of their participation in school events, in their child's homework, the school's academic, behavior expectations, promotion and graduation requirements. The voice of the parents and families is necessary when it comes to decisions that affect their children.

"Parents need to have a clear understanding of (...) what is expected in terms of their participation in school events, in their child's homework, the school's academic, behavior expectations, promotion and graduation requirements. ."

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR STAFF WORKING WITH PARENTS OF ELLS

It is important for school administrators and staff to identify the barriers that prevent immigrant parents and families from engaging in meaningful ways in their children's education and school activities. Once these barriers are identified, the administrators should invite specialists to conduct professional development that would broaden the staff's understanding of the students' cultures, and resources in the community. This would help to improve staff's perceptions of immigrant families, and help them become knowledgeable of the various cultures and community resources that can assist their students and their families.

This type of professional development would aid school staff in understanding the needs of immigrant parents that either work late or have multiple jobs to make ends meet. This new understanding would support the school in the development of a culturally-responsive environment for students as well as parents and families.



APPROPRIATE STAFF FOR PARENTS OF ELLS

“A translator should be available for parents who do not speak English.”

It is important to hire a Parent Coordinator who speaks at least one of the home languages of parents, establish a Parent Resource Room, secure funding or collaborate with the Office of Continuing Education to offer ENL, literacy in the native languages, and computer classes for parents. Before the beginning of the new school year, schools should invite parents to a back-to-school day or night or on a Saturday to accommodate the needs and schedules of all parents. Schools can use discretionary funds to pay counselors and teachers to prepare monthly parent trainings. A translator should be available for parents who do not speak English.



SUPPORT FOR PARENTS OF ELLS

“By developing a positive, proactive attitude, and a carefully designed parent engagement policy, schools can cultivate a valuable resource that will contribute to the academic and social development of all ELLs.”

Schools can host activities and invite interpreters from CBOs or the public school system to give a tour of the school and plan Saturday Academies offering workshops for parents that can enhance their participation in school events. ELL parents can benefit from knowing how the school system works in this country. In many Latin American countries, for example, the culture is such that the teacher is an authority and the parent trusts him/her explicitly. The parent that questions the teacher is considered to be disrespectful or rude. By contrast in this country, we encourage a productive dialogue between the school and the home, centered on the student. Workshops should lead parents to understand that this is an acceptable norm in this country.

Parents of ELLs need to understand how to navigate the school system. Schools should review with parents the school hours, schools holidays, schools rules and regulations, and the school administrative ladder. It's important to explain the school curriculum, the teacher's expectations etc. Schools can assign parents a “buddy parent” whom they can call to clarify questions. Discussing at the beginning of the school year how attendance affects the students' academic success will inform parents of how much instruction their child will be missing if the family takes an extended vacation during the school year.

When schools have difficulty getting parents to the school, they may want to consider home visits, keeping in mind the time frame, language, culture and purpose of the visit. Home visits and parent communication are two ways to establish relationships with parents or families of ELLs. These visits should be made for the purpose of welcoming and engaging them and not to make them feel intimidated by the school. Arrange these visits to include an interpreter to be present if the person doing the visit doesn't speak the parent's language.

As more districts and schools are taking advantage of telephone technology to aid in communicating with parents and families, there are electronic devices that schools can use to call parents in less time than ever. They can group the calls, for example, ELL parents of sixth graders and furthermore group them by languages. (Hopkins, 2008). This strategy can be used especially to disseminate schools' events and for reminders such as for parent-teacher conferences. This can also be monitored by schools by getting a printout that gives the percent of parents who received the calls and by parent attendance at the particular events.

By developing a positive, proactive attitude, and a carefully designed parent engagement policy, schools can cultivate a valuable resource that will contribute to the academic and social development of all ELLs.

In Conclusion |

PThe premise of this monograph was to identify effective practices for holistically supporting ELLs to successfully graduate from NYS schools, ready for college, careers and life as productive citizens of the nation and the world. Through the exploration of the history of Bilingual Education in the US, presenting the benefits of bilingualism, following how an ELL is identified and placed in programs that will lead to their linguistic development, identifying effective practices for ELL instruction, reflecting on the socio-emotional support ELLs need in order to meet the academic and linguistic challenges of their new environment and promoting the benefits of engaging parents and families in the education of their children, the numerous effective practices put forth in this monograph have emerged as critical to the success of ELLs in NYS schools.

A strong belief of the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism propelled the guiding questions at the start of this study. The conclusions drawn by the review of the research confirmed this belief. The words of Nelson Mandela, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language that goes to his heart" steered us toward advocating for a philosophy of education that is needed in NYS schools to support ELLs. The philosophy of education that is supported in this monograph embraces valuing the whole child with their language, culture, wounds and dreams.

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NYS Statewide Language RBE-RN at NYU Metro Center

The NYS Statewide Language RBE-RN is funded by the New York State Education Department Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages to provide support for the education of limited English proficient/English language learners (LEP/ELLs), and students of languages other than English. Districts and schools statewide are offered technical assistance, professional development and resource materials, including information that strengthens the teaching and learning of students of English as a new language, and students of languages other than English. As part of the NYS Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network, the focus of the Language RBE-RN is to promote high academic achievement for LEP/ELLs from various languages and cultural backgrounds.

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