

BROOKES

Multilingual Education Toolkit

Tips, Insights, & Resources for Educators and School Leaders



INSIDE:

Tips and resources on

- Getting to know your students
- Supporting language and literacy development
- Implementing schoolwide change
- Using co-teaching to support students
- Partnering with families

Meet the learning needs of **multilingual students:**
this year and beyond.



DEAR EDUCATOR—

In challenging times, what can you do to support multilingual learners and meet their unique learning needs, this year and far beyond? We've gathered some practical tips for you, straight from our expert authors on multilingual education. On the next pages, explore strategies and guidance on:

- **Getting to know your students**
- **Supporting language and literacy development**
- **Implementing schoolwide change**
- **Using co-teaching to support students**
- **Partnering with families**

As a pioneering publisher in inclusive education, our priority is getting **practical, cost-effective professional development guides** into your hands so your school can make a real difference for multilingual students and their peers (**[email your sales rep today about bulk purchases](#)**). And our **free learning resources**—our blog, the resource library on our website, our webinars with experts—are always being updated to meet your needs.

Thanks for everything you do to welcome all students and help every learner reach their potential!

Getting to know your students



Explore our complete collection of
multilingual education titles! →



5 Ways to Gather Information About English Language Learners

Adapted from Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners, by Shelley Fairbairn & Stephaney Jones-Vo



REVIEW THE CUMULATIVE FOLDER

To guide instruction and assessment, ELP test results, information about prior schooling and literacy, and other data should be kept in a student's cumulative folder. Schools may also include information about content knowledge and skills.

USE MULTIPLE MEASURES OF KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Design authentic, culturally, and linguistically appropriate assessments of student learning (such as portfolios) that demonstrate what students can do with content and language, as well as their progress.



SEEK INPUT FROM COLLEAGUES

A variety of school personnel can share insights on the best ways to work with a student. A teacher or group of teachers may have worked with students from a particular country and have experience with the group's cultural and educational backgrounds.

MAKE HOME VISITS

This can help you build relationships with students and families, promote educational parity for families unfamiliar with U.S. schools, and reduce cultural distance between family and school.



ASK STUDENTS THEMSELVES

Ask students about their prior schooling and literacy, cultural practices, background knowledge, interests, activities, and so on. (Asking such questions may require the assistance of a bilingual paraeducator.)

Teacher Tips for Conducting Home Visits with Diverse Families

Adapted from Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners, by Shelley Fairbairn & Stephaney Jones-Vo



Plan your visit carefully. Consider the purpose of your visit when planning the length of your stay, bearing in mind that a quick 10-minute first visit may be viewed as rude. If the purpose is to meet family members and invite their participation in the educational process, take along materials for meaningful activities and discussions. You might want to bring pertinent school materials and forms, and (if possible) provide new students with school supplies.



Observe others to avoid cultural missteps. For example, follow your host's lead regarding whether to remove your shoes and where to sit during the visit. This precaution can prevent a faux pas such as sitting in the position reserved for the head of the home.



Take note of the environment to better understand your students' context at home. Notice the general surroundings and cultural artifacts, such as religious symbols, handmade textiles, pictures from the home country, and so on. Also notice the print materials in the home: Are these in English or the home language?



Allow for differences in communication styles. Communication styles may be more direct or indirect, depending on culture. To avoid miscommunication, these differences in style must be considered.



Pay attention to the power structure. Observe which family member assumes a lead role during your visit, who participates, and who remains silent. Some teachers assume that it is appropriate to direct conversation equally to both parents, whereas the culture may be patriarchal or matriarchal, rather than egalitarian, in this respect.



Teacher Tips for Conducting Home Visits with Diverse Families (con't)



Don't take offense at "distractions." It is possible that the television may be turned on or that other children may interrupt the discussions and activities. A productive visit may still be possible, particularly if your hosts do not seem distracted by the activity. As the guest, it is important not to take offense at distractions or allow them to disrupt your visit.



Reinforce the importance of the home language. Don't insist, or recommend, that parents speak English to their children. Doing so can cause breakdowns in family communication when children learn to speak English more quickly than their parents. Maintaining the home language is also important to content and literacy learning in English for ELLs.

Collect information efficiently.

Home visits can be a productive time for completing necessary tasks and paperwork. Have important forms like these translated into the appropriate languages:

- Accurate and detailed contact information
- Enrollment forms, including registration forms and immunization documentation
- Free or reduced-cost lunch application forms
- Information on students' previous schooling and home language literacy practices
- Information about household structure and home environment



10 Questions to Guide Your Work with English Language Learners

Educators who work with ELLs must be aware of the diversity in their schools and surrounding communities. The following questions can help guide you!

What countries are the students or their families from?

What languages and language varieties are spoken in the students' homes?

What are their ethnicities and with which cultural groups do they identify?

How long have the students (or their families) been in the United States?

What prior schooling do the students have, either in their home countries or in the United States?

Can they read and write in their home languages?

What are the parents' levels of education, and do they have literacy skills in their home languages?

What are the students' neighborhoods like?

What is each student's socioeconomic status?

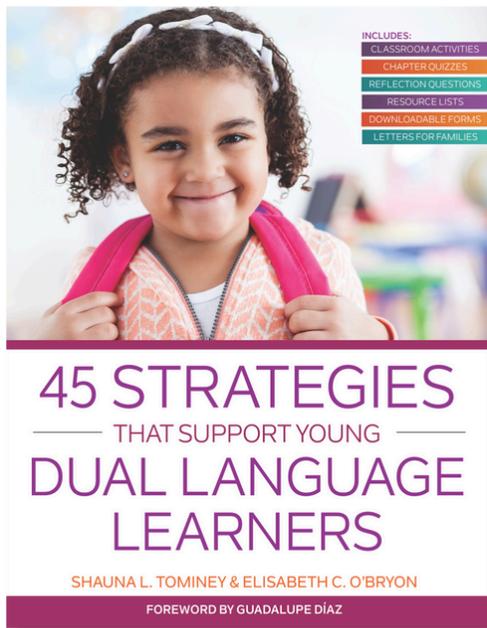
What birth position does each student hold among their siblings, or are they an only child?

Are You Ready?

Do you have the knowledge you need to support children from diverse backgrounds and ensure their academic and social success?



Take our quiz to find out!



The quiz is adapted from the book **45 Strategies That Support Young Dual Language Learners**, which provides best practice strategies for supporting children and families from diverse backgrounds and ensuring the academic and social success of dual language learners.

START QUIZ



Supporting language & literacy development



Explore our complete collection of multilingual education titles! →



What the Research Says About Reading Instruction for ELLs

- Literacy instruction approaches for mainstream students are not sufficient for ELLs. Instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension should be adapted to their unique needs.
- Effective literacy instruction for ELLs provides direct, explicit instruction in skills and strategies, in interactive learning environments.
- English oral language development is critical for English literacy development beyond word-level skills.
- Literacy instruction must be combined with high-quality ESL instruction.
- Oral proficiency and literacy in the first language is an advantage for literacy development in English.
- Individual differences contribute significantly to English literacy development—no two ELLs are alike.
- Most literacy assessments do a poor job of gauging ELL strengths and weaknesses.
- Home language experiences can have a positive impact on literacy achievement.



Adapted from **Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners, Fourth Edition**, by Wayne E. Wright; culled from: the NLP report (2006, 2014), the Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) report (2005, 2006), and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report

4 Key Strategies for Teaching READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS to English Learners

Adapted from Literacy Foundations for English Learners,
edited by Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan

Teach and model helpful routines. Preview text with ELs prior to reading to activate their engagement and understanding. Show students how to use context clues and analyze word parts when they encounter words, phrases, and concepts that may be unclear. Help ELs formulate relevant questions and review the text to answer the questions.



Integrate metacognitive awareness strategies. Metacognition involves awareness and control of learning and thought processes. Before reading, prompt ELs to predict what they will learn. During reading, ask questions to help students recognize when comprehension breaks down and identify knowledge they need to repair comprehension. After reading, help students create a main idea statement.

Scaffold story retells. Oral retelling of stories is a good way to promote language learning and boost comprehension for ELs. Give students opportunities to work in small groups to identify retell components and practice retells with peers. If needed, provide scaffolds by prompting the retelling with who, what, when, where, and why questions.



Teach summarizing skills with graphic organizers. Visual and spatial displays of information help highlight important information and are associated with improving learning and reading comprehension. With the proper instruction, graphic organizers aid in organizing information or depicting relationships and provide the ideal scaffolding for helping students summarize.

10 Tips for Implementing Oral Reading Practice

Adapted from the chapter “Reading Fluency Among English Learners” by Coleen D. Carlson, in *Literacy Foundations for English Learners*, edited by Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan

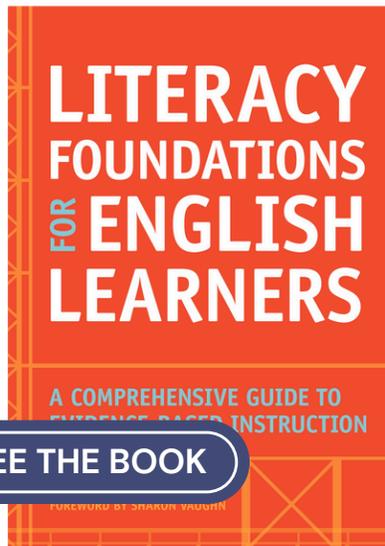
- Implement practice **consistently**, multiple times per week.
- Choose texts that are **approximately 100–200 words**. Longer texts can be used as students become more proficient.
- Ensure that the selected text is **decodable** to the reader—on or near their instructional level.
- **Preread** the text and briefly teach the student any words you think they will not know.
- **Model reading** in a fluid manner with appropriate expression.
- Prior to student reading, instruct them to **focus on accuracy** as well as appropriate expression and comprehension.



- **Record and chart** reading accuracy, rate, and appropriate expression as students read a passage out loud.
- If a student misreads a word or asks for the pronunciation, **provide the correction and encourage them to continue**.
- Focus on **deeper text comprehension** through summarizing, predicting, linking to personal experiences, etc.
- Have a student **reread a passage as many times as needed** until the reading is fluent and the student shows good comprehension.

Your guide to evidence-based literacy instruction for **ELLs**

“Chock full of ideas for adapting and differentiating literacy instruction... an **invaluable resource.**”—Nancy Hennessy, M.Ed., Educational Consultant, author of *The Reading Comprehension Blueprint*



Literacy Foundations for English Learners

A Comprehensive Guide to Evidence-Based Instruction

Edited by Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan, Ed.D.,
CCC-SLP, CDT, CALT, QI

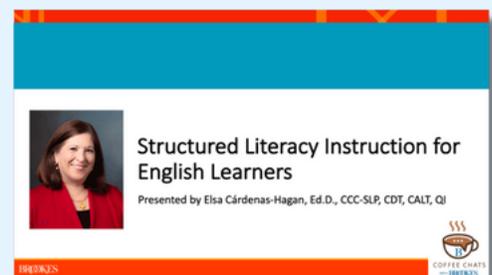
Are you ready to help English learners develop the literacy skills they need to succeed? Strengthen your knowledge base with this comprehensive guide to delivering evidence-based, systematic literacy instruction for English learners in Pre-K–Grade 6.

- ✓ Teach English learners the key components of language and literacy
- ✓ Enhance your teaching with ready-to-use principles and strategies for instruction
- ✓ Leverage technology to adapt and enhance instruction for English learners

WATCH THE WEBINAR

Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan gives practical guidance on supporting the literacy skills of English learners.

WATCH NOW: bpub.fyi/ECweb



FREE RESOURCES



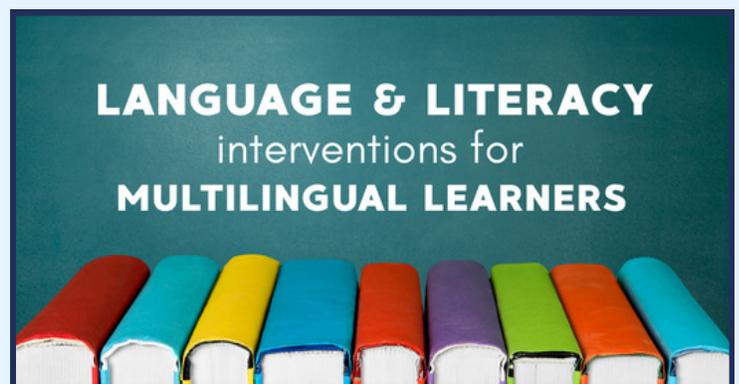
5 Strategies Tip Sheet

Download this tip sheet of five practical, easy-to-implement classroom strategies for supporting the language and literacy skills of dual language learners.

[GET STRATEGIES](#)

40+ Language & Literacy Interventions for Multilingual Learners

Using interventions that make the most of students' home language while promoting English language learning is key to your students' success. Here are 40+ home-language and English interventions that one education team found most effective.



[SEE THE TIPS](#)

NEW FROM BROOKES!

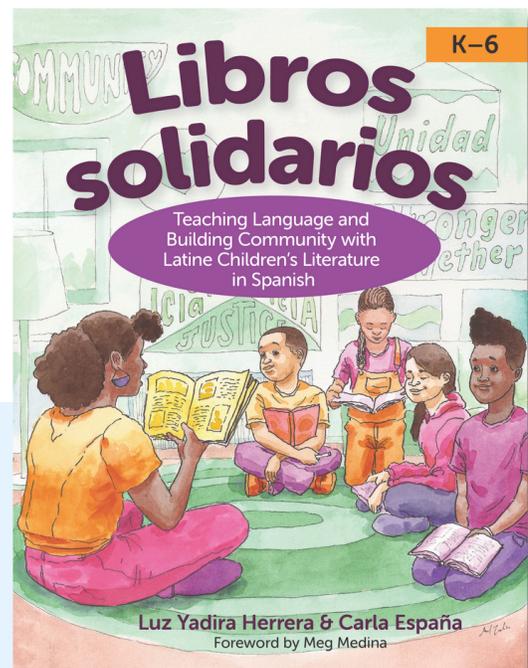
Use **Latine Spanish-language children's literature** to support bilingual learners' language and literacy development

Libros solidarios

Teaching Language and Building Community with Latine Children's Literature in Spanish, K–6

By Luz Yadira Herrera, Ph.D., & Carla España, Ph.D.

Grow biliteracy through authentic Spanish-language picture books, early readers, and middle-grade literature on key topics like identity, family, community, and immigration.



- Written in Spanish with brief English introductions to each chapter
- Includes 18 K–6 classroom-ready unit plans built around Spanish-language text pairings
- Helps teachers nurture students' language and literacy skills while honoring their linguistic and cultural practices
- Offers recommendations for multiple means of expression to evaluate student learning (aligned with UDL)
- Provides language study charts, sample teacher moves, personal reflections, and more

GET THE BOOK

10 Tips for Making Teacher Talk More Comprehensible for ELLs

Adjust the way you talk with English language learners to ensure that your speech provides comprehensible input.

Slow down! Use a slower rate of speech when talking to students at beginning levels of English proficiency, but maintain a steady pace.

Speak clearly, but don't over-enunciate to the point where the words sound unnatural.

Speak at a normal volume. Shouting does not make English more comprehensible.

Use simple sentence structure with students at beginning levels of English proficiency (e.g., subject-verb-object).

Avoid long, complex sentences with embedded clauses. As students make progress, increase the complexity of the vocabulary and syntax appropriate to their English language proficiency.

Emphasize key vocabulary through frequent repetition of these new words throughout the week and across subject areas.

Avoid idioms unless they are explained or were previously taught.

Avoid cultural references that may be unfamiliar to students unless they are explained.

Use gestures, facial expressions, realia, and other visuals.

Repeat, paraphrase, or use other recast techniques when students do not understand.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Answered by Wayne Wright in
Foundations for Teaching English
Language Learners, Fourth Edition.



Is the English language development of ELLs solely the responsibility of the ESL teacher or specialist in a school setting?

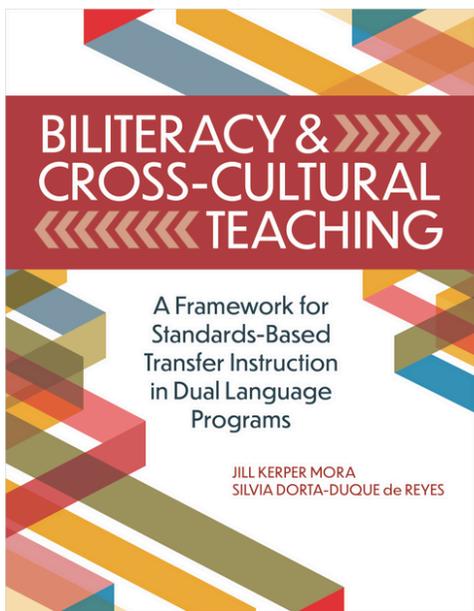
All teachers are language teachers. Whether you are, or plan to become, a “general, mainstream” classroom teacher, a content-area teacher or specialist, a special education teacher, a bilingual teacher, or an ESL teacher, you are also a language teacher. **You share responsibility** for helping students develop their proficiency in English and use oral and written English for academic purposes across content areas.

Content teachers, for example, teach lessons with both language and content objectives. In schools with ESL or bilingual teachers/specialists, there are **several points of collaboration for language and content teachers:** for example, planning lessons that address English language proficiency standards, providing support to identify the language demands of differentiated content areas, writing language objectives, differentiating instruction, strategically using home languages to support learning, and creating and using appropriate formative assessments.

In schools where there are no designated language teachers, **it is essential that content teachers also provide the types of language instruction typically provided by language teachers** and lead discussions with other decision makers at the school.

NEW FROM BROOKES!

A comprehensive guide for dual language educators



Biliteracy and Cross-Cultural Teaching

A Framework for Standards-Based Transfer Instruction in Dual Language Programs

By Jill Kerper Mora, Ed.D., & Silvia Dorta-Duque de Reyes, M.A.Ed.

Unlock the full potential of bilingual education and elevate your teaching practice with this indispensable resource for K–12 educators working in Spanish/English dual language programs. With this comprehensive guide on curriculum design for biliteracy instruction and cross-cultural teaching, you'll discover a model for creating inclusive, dynamic, and effective multilingual and multicultural learning environments.

Authored by leading experts in bilingual education, this book offers a robust decision-making framework and wealth of strategies to foster effective transfer of knowledge and skills between languages. It equips teachers with the tools they need to design and implement standards-based instruction that integrates four critical domains: language, literacy, content, and culture.

INCLUDES model lesson plans that showcase practical strategies educators can use in the classroom!

LEARN MORE and see the full TOC at
www.brookespublishing.com

Implementing schoolwide change



Explore our complete collection of
multilingual education titles! →



9 Ways School Leaders Can Support Young Multilingual Learners

High-functioning schools provide cohesive guidance about teaching children who are multilingual learners (MLLs). Based on Karen Nemeth's book [Young Dual Language Learners](#), these strategies will help school leaders answer some of teachers' top concerns.



Prepare teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff to work effectively with MLLs. Staff who are bilingual need guidance about how and when to use their languages to build literacy, learning, and a sense of belonging. Those who don't speak the different languages need skills and information to ensure every child is getting the most from their learning experience. Paraprofessionals can play an important role by engaging MLLs in play and conversation, especially if they speak the languages of the children.



Develop a cohesive system of policies and supports that is understood and used by all members of the school community. Plan for effective collaborations to design environments, purchase curriculum materials, and facilitate sharing among staff.



Work together to create a language plan for each classroom, every year. With the support of school leaders, there should be a plan for each classroom based on the languages spoken by the teacher and assistant and the languages needed for children. This plan determines who will speak which language(s) and at what times of the day. It also facilitates planning between the teacher and paraprofessional and informs the administration about needs for materials and professional learning.



Focus on implementing strategies for language development. MLLs need intentional supports for first and second language development. These include ways to enhance comprehension, facilitate expression, and check for learning. Bring in experts, webinars, or print resources for staff to learn components of language development that should be supported using each child's home language and scaffolding for English.



9 Ways School Leaders Can Support Young Multilingual Learners (con't)



Plan together to obtain materials to enrich learning for all the children. Instead of ordering all supplies months in advance, assist teachers in being responsive to the interests and needs of children by working together to obtain materials when needed throughout the year. This may change purchasing patterns or increase access to local sources or borrowed materials. Leaders should avoid making large orders of materials that teachers haven't requested or don't know how to use.



Engage in job-embedded professional development. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff can benefit from coaching, mentoring, professional learning communities, and other forms of ongoing professional learning (language learning classes, apps, etc.).



Advocate on behalf of teachers to get the support they need to implement the curriculum. When a curriculum is purchased for the school, it is up to the school leaders to make it clear to the company that they expect supports to implement the curriculum properly in linguistically diverse classrooms. Teachers should be able to ask questions and learn specialized strategies to teach the MLLs in their classes.



Emphasize the importance of small groups and two-way conversations that build individualized learning opportunities for all children. Leaders, evaluators, coaches, and colleagues should work together with the goal of hearing more child talk and less teacher talk in classrooms. Two-way conversations in home languages, English, or via translanguaging help children engage, process, and advance in their language, literacy, and cognitive skill development.



Manage a program of bilingual volunteers that helps teachers learn to provide high-quality two-way interactions with the children. Bilingual volunteers might be family members, other staff, participants from local universities, or members of the community.

WHAT IS TRANSLANGUAGING?

(and how can it help your school support MLLs?)

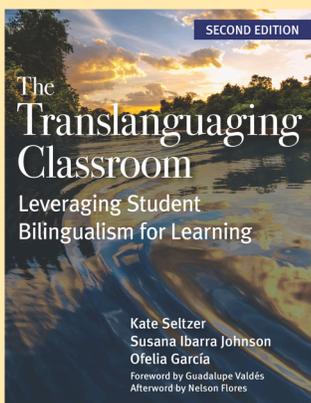
Adapted from the second edition of *The Translanguaging Classroom* by Kate Seltzer, Susana Ibarra Johnson, and Ofelia García.

A translanguaging classroom is any classroom in which students are invited to deploy their full linguistic repertoire, not just the particular language(s) that are officially used for instructional purposes in that space.

A translanguaging classroom is a space built collaboratively by the teacher and bilingual students as they use their different language practices to teach and learn in deeply creative and critical ways, as they develop bilingualism.

Translanguaging classrooms can be of any type—bilingual (dual language or transitional) or English-medium (ESL programs or mainstream classrooms)—and they can serve young children as well as older students. Translanguaging also can be used by any teacher: bilingual or monolingual teachers; elementary, middle school, or high school teachers; “official” language teachers (English or a language other than English); or content teachers.

One of the best ways to understand translanguaging is to see and hear it in action. Many teachers have “aha moments” when they stop and listen to the ways students use language in their classrooms. For example, two students may negotiate in Spanish how to solve a math problem posed in English.



LEARN HOW to implement translanguaging in your school! Get this new edition of the definitive guide to understanding translanguaging and using it strategically and meaningfully to support bilingual learners.

[SEE THE BOOK](#)

6 Priorities for Teachers in Translanguaging Classrooms

Adapted from the [second edition of *The Translanguaging Classroom*](#) by Kate Seltzer, Susana Ibarra Johnson, and Ofelia García.

1 Listen to and deepen our perceptions of the **translanguaging corriente** (the natural flow of students' bilingualism through the classroom) that already exists in classrooms.

Learn how to **intentionally and strategically navigate** the translanguaging corriente in instruction and assessment by integrating the translanguaging stance, design, and shifts.

2

3 Demonstrate ways bilingual students and teachers leverage the corriente to **learn and access** content, **develop linguistic practices**, foster secure **socioemotional identities**, and make space for all students' language practices and ways of knowing.

Become more critical as we take up the stance of **reflective practitioner** and/or critical researcher and work toward **social justice**.

4

5 **Confront the kinds of challenges** educators may face in translanguaging classrooms and **reflect** on how to navigate them.

Launch an **action-oriented, social justice agenda** to strengthen translanguaging pedagogy, practice, and research in diverse multilingual contexts.

6

6 Specific Schoolwide Actions to Support Literacy Development for MLLs

Adapted from Special Education Considerations for Multilingual Learners by Else Hamayan, Barbara Marler, Cristina Sánchez-López, & Jack Damico



Ensure that all grades have access to reading specialists. Young children aren't the only learners who need reading and literacy supports!

Establish a home-school reading program. Include books in students' languages. Encourage families to read to the students in their home language.



Diversify your library and school displays to help multilingual students feel seen, represented, and respected.



Block out time for free-choice reading—a great way to motivate learners to practice and expand their literacy skills.



Create classroom newsletters using teams of students as reporters in different content areas. Make digital multilingual versions to share with families.

Establish connections with partner classrooms in another country, preferably one that some of your MLLs or their families come from.



How to find, hire, and nurture high-quality teachers

8 TIPS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

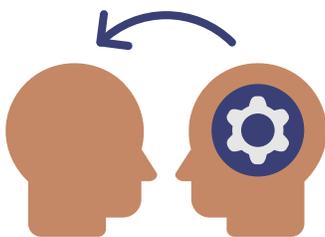
Adapted from [Special Education Considerations for Multilingual Learners](#) by Else Hamayan, Barbara Marler, Cristina Sánchez-López, & Jack Damico



- Use a plan for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of teachers that reflects the student population based on historical and projected demographics.
- Post job vacancies in publications that ESL/bilingual teachers read.
- Partner with universities that have preservice requirements in ESL/bilingual programs.



- Work with local high schools and Future Teachers of America to help “grow your own” teacher candidates.
- Start a graduate level cohort of teachers who receive training that leads to ESL/bilingual certification.



- Design and implement a long-term professional learning plan that includes all staff that interact with MLs and focuses on ML education.
- Institute a mentoring and/or coaching program.
- Reduce large class sizes and ESL/bilingual teacher caseloads.

IMPLEMENT LITERACY SQUARED

to promote biliteracy in your school

A brief introduction from the book [Biliteracy from the Start](#)

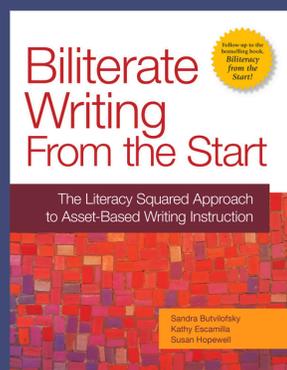
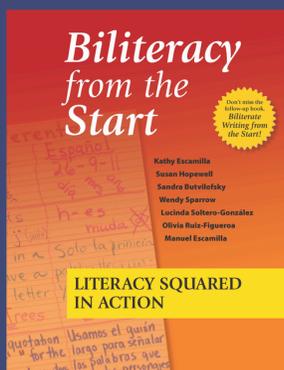
The powerful Literacy Squared approach was conceived and developed as an innovative holistic biliteracy framework that could be used to nurture and develop bilingualism and biliteracy in the millions of Spanish-speaking students in U.S. public schools. Literacy Squared has four components:

Instruction: A framework for holistic biliteracy instruction, which includes recommended teaching approaches and time allocations across the grades intended to foster development and learning in two languages through paired literacy instruction.

Assessment: Recommended procedures, including formative and summative measures, for monitoring students' progress on trajectories toward biliteracy.

Professional development: The PD component is closely aligned to our ongoing research and involves our work with schools that are fully implementing Literacy Squared as their model for the education of emerging bilingual learners.

Research: Our team is engaged in ongoing, longitudinal research to confirm and extend the evidence of the effectiveness of Literacy Squared.



Get these two books on the Literacy Squared approach for reading and writing, and explore our other books on biliteracy!

[SEE THEM NOW](#)

Using co-teaching to support students



Explore our complete collection of multilingual education titles! →



Beliefs First: The Foundation of Effective Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners

By Holly Porter, author of [Intentional Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners](#)

**Here's the truth—
beliefs shape
everything.**



If you launch a co-teaching program without digging into the core beliefs that drive it, you're setting yourself up for confusion, frustration, and resistance. At Cherry Creek School District [in Greenwood Village, Colorado], we knew we needed to get crystal clear on what we believed about multilingual learners and how those beliefs guided every move we made.

**Here are the
core beliefs we
landed on.**



- Multilingual learners should learn with their peers in the same classroom, tackling the same grade-level content together.
- Language and content are inseparable—you can't teach language effectively without connecting it to the academic content students are expected to master.
- Content teachers are experts in their subject areas. ML specialists are experts in language development. Together, they create something powerful.
- When you bring language and content together in the general education setting, you ensure the rigor stays high—and students stay included.

**See what changes Cherry Creek School District
made to reflect these core beliefs! →**

6 changes Cherry Creek School District made to reflect core beliefs about multilingual education



We transitioned from pull-out models to inclusive classrooms, ensuring multilingual learners received instruction within the general education setting. This shift wasn't just logistical—it required a deep alignment in beliefs about language acquisition, equity, and the value of linguistic diversity.



We redefined the role of our language educators by changing their title from “ML teachers” to “ML specialists.” This change highlighted their expertise and emphasized the leadership they bring in co-teaching environments, language development, and collaboration.



We required ML specialists to hold a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse endorsement. This ensured that every specialist was fully certified in supporting multilingual learners and equipped with both pedagogical knowledge and a strong understanding of culturally responsive practices.



We openly communicated our core beliefs about inclusive programming and aligned them with all aspects of implementation, including staffing.



We updated hiring practices. Job postings and interview questions were revised to explicitly highlight our commitment to co-teaching and multilingual learner inclusion. This helped attract candidates who already aligned with our program values.



We prioritized belief alignment and cultural responsiveness in professional learning. Through ongoing training and coaching, we created space for reflection, growth, and a shared language around the goals of our co-teaching model.

3 Things Co-Teachers Should Do in Every Co-Planning Session

Here's an easy way to remember the guiding principles of every planning session with your fellow co-teacher!



PLAN TO PLAN. Decide on a time and place to plan together. Have a backup if something comes up.

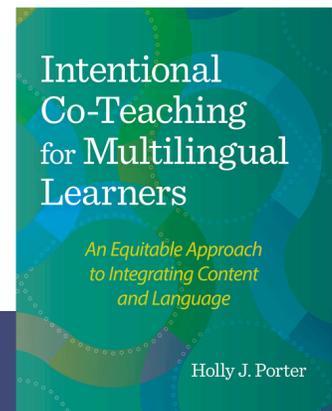


USE A PLAN. Choose a planning template that works for both of you and use it to plan together.



CHECK YOUR PLAN. Use a checklist. Did you cover everything you wanted to cover?

Learn more in [Intentional Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners](#) by Holly J. Porter, your guide to using co-teaching to strengthen success for multilingual learners.



Co-Teaching: The Role of the Administrator

Adapted from [Intentional Co-Teaching for Multilingual Learners](#)

A school leader's main role is to focus on holding high expectations of the co-teachers. Without the intentional focus on choosing co-teaching approaches based on lesson outcomes and student needs, the integrity of the co-teaching program is lost.



There are several ways that school administrators can be instrumental in focusing co-teaching teams on their thoughtful planning and application of the co-teaching approaches and roles.

- Use **walk-through observations** to make anecdotal notes about the approaches you are seeing and their applicability to the lesson and student needs. These can be shared with co-teachers in follow-up notes or conversations.
- Have **occasional planned conversations** with the co-teachers about their use of the approaches and their roles within the classroom as a way to provide a continual focus and remember the importance of being thoughtful about their use of such approaches and roles.
- Leverage the formality of the **teacher evaluation process** to highlight the use of varied approaches and roles and/or create goals for co-teachers as they improve their use of such approaches and roles.

Partnering with your students' families



Explore our complete collection of multilingual education titles! →



ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Answered by Mariela M. Páez & Lisa M. López, in Teaching Dual Language Learners



How should I approach talking with parents and caregivers when their beliefs regarding parenting and education differ from mine?

Beliefs vary by culture and individual experiences. Therefore, you should not assume that all parents have the same beliefs and goals regarding their children. Work with each family to **come to a consensus on how their beliefs and traditions will be respected**, even if different practices are in place in the classroom due to standards requirements. Having this talk **prior to the first day or within the first week** will help ease the families' transition into the new early education environment.

Conversations about parental beliefs **should happen in the language the family is most comfortable speaking**. This may result in the need for a translator or someone who is familiar with the family's culture and can help you understand the cultural implications of adapting the family's belief system. Note that this conversation may happen with family members other than the parents, as **extended family often takes an active role** in raising the child. There will also likely be variability in beliefs even within families who share the same ethnic background. These beliefs are often informed by culture, as well as level of education and acculturation.

Helping parents **understand some of the developmental consequences of their beliefs, while also respecting their perspectives and being culturally responsive**, will enhance the relationship between the educator and the family and encourage further family engagement.

5 Effective Strategies for Engaging Diverse Families in School

Adapted from 45 Strategies That Support Young Dual Language Learners,
by Shauna L. Tominey & Elisabeth C. O'Bryon

1 Invite parents to visit school to read a story with the class, share a talent, teach a song, or share a family tradition.

2 Use interactive bulletin boards to encourage ongoing, two-way communication with families.

3 Schedule regular parent–teacher conferences to facilitate relationship building and information sharing.

4 Send ideas for quick, easy activities that parents can do at home with children to help build their social and academic skills.

5 Hold a family workshop

This is a great forum for families to ask questions, learn more about what is going on in school, and connect with other families. Here are some guidelines:

- Survey parents to identify appropriate days and times to hold workshops.
- Choose workshop topics that are meaningful to families from diverse backgrounds (English skills, school readiness, finding community resources).
- Provide child care or consider hosting workshops that are child-friendly (include “make and take” activities families can create with their children).
- Involve interpreters when necessary.
- Help families connect during workshops. Allow time for parents to introduce themselves and visit with the families of their child’s classmates.

6 Tips for **Communicating** with Diverse Families

Adapted from [45 Strategies That Support Young Dual Language Learners](#),
by Shauna L. Tominey & Elisabeth C. O'Bryon



Ask families verbally as well as through written communication

how they would like to receive information from the school and how they would prefer to communicate with the school. Use family recommendations to guide the way you share ongoing information.



When possible, provide families with information in English as well as their home language. Identify bilingual staff who can assist with translations for families when needed.



When translations are not available for families with limited proficiency in English, ask if they can identify someone in their lives who speaks their language and English who would be willing to help them to interpret and understand written material that is sent home.



Consider alternative means of communication. Families may prefer text messages, short phone calls, bulletin board postings, emails, or touching base in person when time allows.



Include pictures and images in your communication to families over email, in newsletters, or on a bulletin board. Seeing images of their child engaged during the school day is something most families will appreciate. Images can help families feel connected with school activities and prompt conversations about school with their children.



Let families know when the best times are to connect with you in person during or after the school day. For example, if drop-off time before 9 a.m. is fairly quiet and an easy time to discuss issues because children are occupied with getting settled and the number of staff members is high, let families know you are available to communicate then.

ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS

Answered by Johanne Paradis and Fred Genesee, coauthors of Dual Language Development & Disorders.



Parents sometimes choose to speak only English at home, even if their English language isn't proficient. How can we support parents to speak their heritage language?

It is important for parents to believe that their heritage-L1 is valuable both at home and at school to foster their child's well-being and sense of identity. I think the first thing that needs to be done is to **convince them that they are not helping their children learn English faster by speaking English at home.**

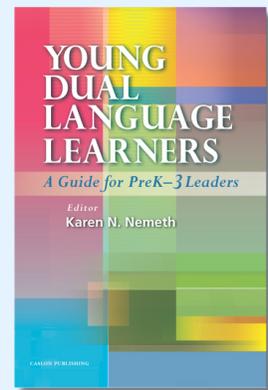
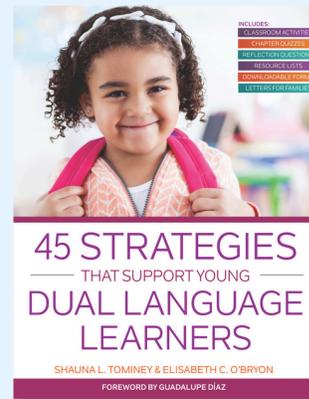
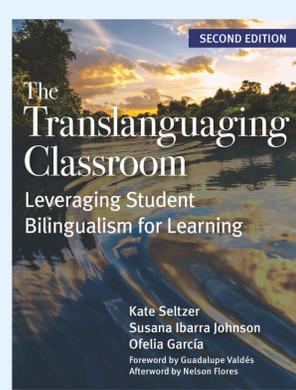
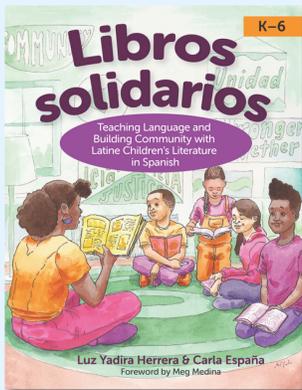
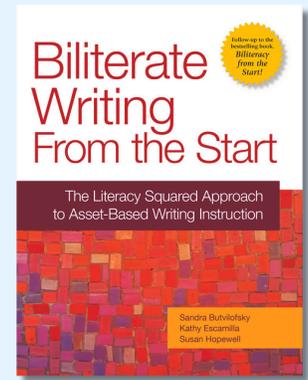
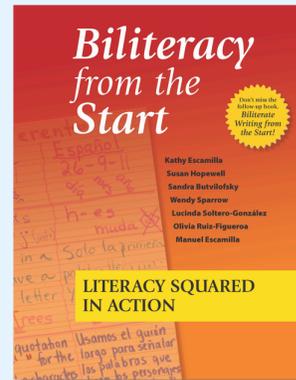
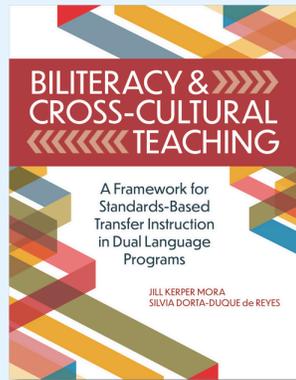
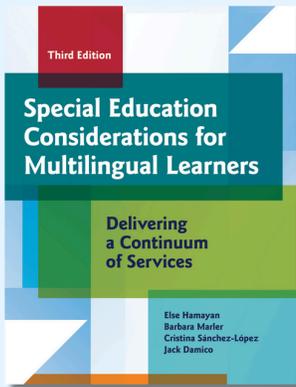
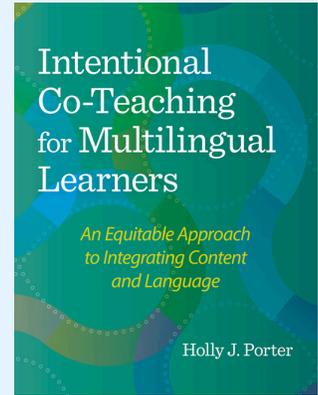
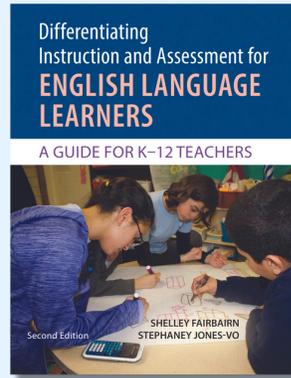
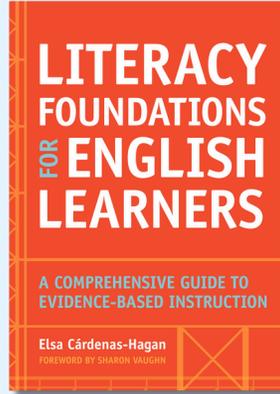
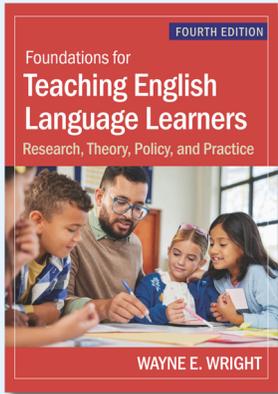
I also point out that even if they believe their English is good enough to manage communication with a young child, that it might not be good enough when that child is a teenager and nuanced communication is of the utmost importance. I like to bring up the point about how the **two languages build on each other rather than take away from each other**, as well as the other benefits of bilingualism.

In terms of supporting parents, it is important that strategies for supporting the development of the heritage-L1 be **appropriate for the family's cultural and education background.** For example, asking mothers with low levels of education/literacy to read to their child every night might not be effective, but asking them to tell stories to their child might be effective.

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