

matsol



Currents

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Equity And Excellence For English Learners
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ON THE COVER

Dr. Bertha-Elena Rojas, a child and family therapist with many years' experience as an EL leader and consultant on collaboration and family outreach, conducted a one-day workshop as part of MATSOL's Fall Institute on Enhancing Parent Engagement and Family Partnerships



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President's Message

Winter 2018

Dear MATSOL Members, Colleagues, Supporters, and Friends,



I hope you noticed MATSOL's new motto—Equity and Excellence for English Learners—in the logo at the beginning of this issue, which pledges our commitment to equal opportunity and excellence for English Learners in Massachusetts. As your current President, I want to express my appreciation to you as you *carry out* our motto by delivering excellent and equitable educational programming for students of diverse cultures and languages throughout our state.

MATSOL has had a very busy fall. We enjoyed a day of networking and socializing at our Fall Social on October 20 (pg. 14), followed by two successful mini-conferences—one for private language schools and intensive English programs, and one for community college ESL faculty (pp. 12 and 13). At the end of

October, our Director of Professional Development, Ann Feldman, took a brief hiatus from her duties overseeing MATSOL's professional development offerings (pg. 6) in order to attend the annual WIDA Conference in Detroit (pg. 19). Our Executive Director, Helen Solórzano, spent the fall planning our annual Spring Conference and keeping our organization running smoothly while collaborating with the Language Opportunity Coalition to support the implementation of the newly passed LOOK Bill and Seal of Biliteracy (pg. 9). Our special interest groups—MELLC, the Teacher Ed SIG, the Community College Network, the Low-Incidence SIG, and the Private Language School/Intensive English Program SIG—continue to meet regularly and carry out their programs (pg. 16).


**MATSOL's new motto . . .
pledges our commitment
to equal opportunity and
excellence for English
learners.**

This issue of Currents will bring you up to date on all these activities, and, in addition, will offer six articles and three reviews, as follows:

- The articles by Rubaba Matin (pg. 21) and Sharifa Djurabaeva (pg. 23) suggest instructional procedures and strategies for use with high school and college-age students.
- The article by Kathy Lobo (pg. 30) makes recommendations for the implementation of MATSOL's six principles for exemplary teaching of English learners. What is the responsibility of the administrator? Kathy asks. What is the responsibility of the classroom teacher?
- The article by Cathie Ricci (pg. 34) argues for the necessity of cultural inclusiveness in the classroom, and the follow-up article by Yuiko Shimazu lists resources for creating a culturally inclusive classroom.
- The article by Melissa Latham Keh and Julia Stakhnevich (pg. 44) discusses the use of online courses for the preparation of teachers: Can online instruction offer the close personal relationships that we have traditionally found in face-to-face instruction?

[Y]our support and participation are essential to our success.

We close the issue with three reviews: the autobiography of a Sudanese refugee (pg. 50), an online “app” for communicating with parents across language barriers (pg. 52), and a website that offers an inside view of how the “experts” analyze classroom lessons.

We greatly appreciate your membership in MATSOL; your support and participation are essential to our success. See our “Get Involved” section (pg. 18) for information about how you can take a more active role in MATSOL. 

Sincerely,

Juanita Brunelle

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MATSOL President

An Update from MATSOL's Director of Professional Learning

Ann Feldman

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MATSOL continues to develop and offer high-quality professional development programs for teachers and administrators who work with English learners (ELs). Here's what we've done this fall:

CURRENT COURSE OFFERINGS

Massachusetts Sheltered English Immersion Teacher (SEI) Endorsement Course

This fall MATSOL offered eight sections of the SEI endorsement course for teachers. We have five additional open-enrollment sections starting in January and February.

CVTE SEI Teacher Endorsement Course

MATSOL has been working with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to oversee a special version of the SEI endorsement course for career vocational technical educators (CVTEs). CVTEs who were assigned EL students during the 2017-2018 school years have received official invitations from DESE to enroll, free of charge, in one of the 12 sections of this course that we will be offering during the spring and fall semesters of 2019.

SLIFE Course

In October and November in Somerville, we offered a 15-PDP course focusing on how to work with Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE). The course was developed and taught by Nicoleta Filimon, MATSOL's 2018 Teacher of the Year. We expect to offer another section in the spring semester.

Our courses are developed by expert educators, grounded in their experience teaching in Massachusetts schools and informed by feedback from educators and school districts across the Commonwealth. We also provide custom consultations to address specific district needs.

FALL INSTITUTE ON ENHANCING PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

Fueled by the new LOOK Act with its requirement that districts set up EL Parent Advisory Councils (based on the population of ELs in their districts), MATSOL hosted a two-day Fall Institute, on November 8-9, on Enhancing Parent Engagement and Family Partnerships. (See DESE's (2018) [Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils](#).)

The Institute began on November 8 with a workshop by Dr. Bertha-Elena Rojas on the topic of building family-school partnerships. Dr. Rojas is a child and family therapist who worked for many years as an EL leader in the Worcester Public Schools; she has extensive experience working as a consultant to school districts on issues of collaboration and family outreach.

Dr. Rojas started by asking participants to share the *barriers* they have encountered as they attempt to encourage parent engagement/involvement. Answers included child care, problems of scheduling events or meetings, the diversity of cultural expectations regarding school involvement, lack of time and staff to drive initiatives, and fear and insecurity in the face of the current negative political environment. Dr. Rojas then presented Mapp and Kuttner's [Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family School Partnerships](#), which outlines conditions necessary to the success of family-school partnerships—most essentially, the involvement of both families and district teachers/administrators in supporting student achievement and school improvement. Dr. Rojas went on to describe three family-outreach programs that have had significant positive impacts on student success in school: a [Washington, DC Public School program](#) that incorporates home visits, an [initiative by Chicago's Logan Square Neighborhood Association](#) to improve school culture through parent mentoring programs, and a series of 9-week sessions on parent empowerment and promoting a college-going culture offered by [California's Parent Institute for Quality Education](#).



Dr. Bertha-Elena Rojas addresses MATSOL's fall institute session November 8.


Our November 9th session was facilitated by Dr. Debbie Zacarian, a celebrated

author who writes extensively about family-community partnerships and strength-based instructional and leadership practices. Drawing from her book *In It Together: How Student, Family, and Community Partnerships Advance Engagement and Achievement in Diverse Classrooms*, Dr. Zacarian shared three overarching ideas:

- All partners have strengths and resources
- Partnerships are critical for student success
- All partners are capable of growing, learning and changing together



Dr. Debbie Zacarian explains the interconnected spheres of influence in her November 9th session.

Dr. Zacarian then used case studies to emphasize the importance of considering a student's spheres of influence and assets. Given that our EL students come from primarily collectivist cultures, Zacarian contends that it is essential to foster positive, non-competitive, and reciprocal interpersonal relationships from the moment families enter our neighborhood schools. We have to rethink classroom-based events to include building relationships, making curriculum transparent, drawing on the rich resources of families, and building a home-school shared culture of learning. 

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A Report on MATSOL's Advocacy Supporting the Implementation of the LOOK Act

Helen Solórzano

MATSOL'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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PREPARING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

When the [LOOK Act](#) with [Seal of Biliteracy](#) was signed into law a year ago in November, 2017, we joyfully celebrated this huge accomplishment, 15 years in the making. But by the next day, we were already starting to think about how much work was still left to do! Since that time, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has been working diligently to generate regulations and guidance for the new law. And many individual MATSOL members have started work in their universities and school districts to design endorsement programs for bilingual teachers, plan for new English Learner Education (ELE) programs, identify strategies to increase parent engagement, launch the State Seal of Biliteracy award, and prepare other initiatives that are needed for implementation of the new law. Meanwhile, the [Language Opportunity Coalition \(LOC\)](#), which worked so hard for the passage of the law, has continued its outreach and educational efforts to support its implementation and provide input into new regulations and policies.

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

MATSOL, together with the Multistate Association for Bilingual Education (MABE) and the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association (MaFLA), has been assisting in the development of policies and resources to support the changes that are required by the new law—including Guidance documents for new types of ELE programs, for EL Parent Advisory Councils (ELPACs), for the Seal of Biliteracy, and for Bilingual Education Endorsement. DESE has now released its [Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils](#), along with procedures for [ELE program proposals and parental ELE program transfer requests](#), and [multilingual parent information](#) on ELPACs, ELE program placement, English proficiency benchmarks, and other topics.

MATSOL is developing a bylaws template for ELPACs to support the

establishment of the new parent advisory councils. We have consulted with an attorney, are looking at other school-council bylaws, and are gathering feedback from EL Directors through our Massachusetts EL Leadership Council (MELLC). We plan to have a draft ready to share by the end of the year.

CRITERIA FOR THE SEAL OF BILITERACY

The Commissioner of Education recently announced the [criteria for The State Seal of Biliteracy](#), establishing a two-tiered award: “The Seal of Biliteracy” and “The Seal of Biliteracy with Distinction,” starting at an Intermediate-High level on the [proficiency guidelines](#) that have been set up by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (This is a functional level of proficiency that would allow someone to work as a sales clerk or bank teller.)

The LOC played an active role in the formulation of these criteria. When the original draft regulations were released last spring, we strongly objected to some of the provisions. First, the regulations, as drafted, failed to create an equitable opportunity for ELs, because the criteria for English language proficiency were, unfairly, based solely on 10th grade [MCAS](#) test scores. In other words, while world language students would have had until 12th grade to demonstrate proficiency, ELs would have had to do so by 10th grade. Because of policies prohibiting MCAS retests, this would have permanently excluded many ELs and former ELs from receiving the Seal, even if they otherwise qualified for graduation. As a further issue, the proposed regulations did not reference the ACTFL language proficiency levels, which have been established as [a national standard for the Seal of Biliteracy](#), and they failed to provide a multi-tiered award structure like the one we employed in the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project to encourage long-term and sustained language studies.

As a result of a campaign urging our members and participants in the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project to submit public comment, DESE received an unusually large number of comments—over 130—and, after further consultation with



Language Opportunity Coalition members Helen Solorzano, Nicole Sherf, Phyllis Hardy and Kim Talbot presented on the new bilingual law (the LOOK Act) at the MASC/MASS Joint Leadership Conference, November 2018.


the Coalition, the Department decided to revise the regulations. The final regulations, which were released at the end of October, provide for a two-tiered award system, as we requested, tied to the ACFTL guidelines, and they add an alternative pathway, including consideration of [ACCESS](#) scores, for students graduating with an Educational Proficiency Plan. That will give former and current ELs another opportunity to demonstrate English proficiency. MATSOL is particularly concerned that ELs and former ELs have an equitable opportunity to earn the State Seal of Biliteracy and that they have access to language programs that will help them develop and maintain bilingualism and biliteracy in their home languages.

“PATHWAY” AWARDS

In order to encourage long-term and sustained language studies, the LOC has committed to supporting locally established awards for students at lower grade levels. These “pathway” awards, developed during the pilot project, recognize that language learning is an ongoing process and encourage students to continue with language study over the long term, in order to qualify for the award at graduation. The LOC plans to release updated guidelines for the pathway awards, which can be adopted at the local level, based on the criteria and procedures developed during the pilot.

To support this project, the MATSOL Board of Directors has approved a grant to the LOC of up to \$10,000 over the next year to support development and management of the local pathway awards and to do outreach and education to families, communities, and businesses about the Seal of Biliteracy.

LOOKING FORWARD TO A NEW ERA


MATSOL will continue to celebrate the LOOK Act and examine the approaches and challenges of implementing the new law at the MATSOL 2019 Conference with the conference theme “LOOKing Forward to a New Era” and a session strand related to the LOOK Act. We also invite our members to share information and experiences related to this change in policy in a Currents article or at a MATSOL member meeting. Together, we hope to realize the transformative potential of this important policy shift in Massachusetts that recognizes the value of multilingualism and allows school districts to make student-centered choices for English learner education. 

The Private Language School/Intensive English Program Conference

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THANK you to everyone who came out to participate, present, and network at our third annual MATSOL Private Language Schools/ Intensive English Programs Conference on Saturday, November 10, at Boston University's Center for English Language & Orientation Programs (CELOP). We had a great turnout, with over 100 participants from Massachusetts and beyond, who selected from over 30 sessions in six time slots. Sessions were 50 minutes in length and covered a variety of topics, including professional development, administrative roles in schools, the future of English language learning, and English for STEM, as well as tips on how to motivate students, improve language skills, teach students how to write research-based reports, develop materials and activities, use technology in the classroom, and advocate for ESL students. There were also presentations by exhibitors, including ETS, IELTS, Pearson, Pro Lingua Associates, ISX Tours, Oxford University Press, Townsend Press, Cambridge University Press, and National Geographic Learning. We all enjoyed talking about current and future trends and brainstorming about how we can improve our industry and better the education of our students.

A special thanks to CELOP for allowing us to once again use their space to host this conference. We would also like to thank National Geographic Learning for providing lunch. A big thank you to Helen Solórzano, Teresa Kochis, and MATSOL for helping us organize and carry out this event. 



Schools and programs from all over New England were represented at the 2018 MATSOL PLS/IEP Conference.



Participants check out the variety of exhibitor booths.

The Community College Conference

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THIS Fall's successful Community College Conference took place on October 26, 2018, at Quinsigamond Community College, with 31 attendees from thirteen Massachusetts community colleges and other institutions.


Dr. Mya Poe . . . shared her ten years of research and advocacy [on] more equitable writing assessment for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Dr. Mya Poe, Associate Professor of English and Director of Northeastern University's Writing Program, delivered the keynote address, entitled "Keeping Democracy's Door Open: Fair Writing Assessment at the Two-Year College," in which she shared her ten years of research and advocacy to promote more equitable college writing assessment for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The conference included three workshops on the following topics:

Denzil Mohammed, Director, Public Education Institute, The Immigrant Learning Center, spoke on "Strategies to Retake the Immigration Narrative." In his talk, Mr. Mohammed advocated for new strategies to more effectively serve, empower, and advocate for immigrant students and families.

Stephanie Marcotte, Adjunct Professor of ESL, Holyoke Community College, presented "Integration of Universal Design and Captioning in the ESL Classroom." Ms. Marcotte described a successful collaboration between a student with an accommodation agreement and an ESL professor as a model for creating a more equitable classroom for all students.

Our keynote speaker, Dr. Mya Poe, presented a workshop entitled "Writing, Diversity, and Consequence: Key Questions for Writing Teachers." Participants engaged in activities to utilize the three dimensions of a fair writing assessment: construct, demographics, and consequence. 

MATSOL's Fall Social

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Photos by Yuiko Shimazu

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MATSOL held its annual Fall Social on Saturday, October 20, at the Union Street Restaurant in Newton, with nine MATSOL Board members and some 35 other MATSOL members in attendance—from universities, public school districts, and private language schools throughout the state. After an introductory greeting by MATSOL President Juanita Brunelle, our Executive Director, Helen Solórzano, walked us through a Power Point showing MATSOL's structure and finances and the workings of our website, publications, and advocacy efforts—for the implementation of the LOOK Act (see pg. 8 of this issue) and, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), to oppose the Trump administration's efforts to block green-card applications from immigrants who fall below a certain income limit or who have ever depended on public assistance (the "public charge" proposal"). Ann Feldman, our Director of Professional Development, then showed us a list of the various professional development opportunities that MATSOL offers, and Helen finished the presentation by announcing several upcoming MATSOL events and showing us a list of ways that MATSOL members can take a more active role in our organization.

With the formal part of the gathering behind us, participants settled in to socialize with colleagues and enjoy a complimentary luncheon of chicken wraps, beef "sliders," four kinds of salads, and a variety of desserts. Ann Feldman led us through a powerful social-connection exercise involving picture postcards: Each participant chooses a postcard that relates to his or her own interests or life experience and shares



MATSOL president Juanita Brunelle welcomes participants to the event while our Director of Professional Development Anne Feldman looks on.



Participants listen attentively to Helen's presentation.



From l to r: Kate Phillipson (Watertown Public Schools), Bonnie Perkel, Gareth Honig (Newton Public Schools), and Sara Hamerla (Newton Public Schools) enjoy lunch and conversation.

that story with the group.¹ The formal activities closed with a distribution of raffle prizes, but many participants stayed on for further conversation with colleagues.

The MATSOL Board is looking to create more opportunities for our members to get together in an informal setting to meet one another and share ideas about the many issues that concern us all. We recently sent out a survey to gather members' views about structures and platforms that we can use to facilitate connections among our members. If you were unable to respond to the survey, or if you have additional ideas about ways for our members to connect, please write Yuiko Shimazu, chair of MATSOL's Program and Membership Committee, at yshimazu@matsol.org. 



Participants laugh together over a postcard story.



David Green and Alexandra Alterra show off raffle prizes.

¹ To make this exercise meaningful, you will need postcards with interesting images. Ann ordered hers from [Pomegranate Communications](http://PomegranateCommunications.com).

What's Happening in MATSOL's Special Interest Groups (SIGs)?

MATSOL offers Special Interest Groups (SIGs), with online and face-to-face meeting options, for teacher educators, low-incidence districts, community college ESL faculty, private language school/intensive ESL program teachers, and English learner coordinators/directors (MELLC).

Here are reports on the recent activities of four of our SIGs:

THE TEACHER EDUCATOR SIG

The Teacher Educator SIG meets on line, via ZOOM, from 10:00 to 11:30 on the third Monday of each month. Our members work collaboratively to inform other teacher educators, educational leaders, and policy makers about effective practices for preparing in-service and pre-service teachers of emergent bilingual learners. We have prepared collaborative articles for publication in ESL journals such as *MATSOL Currents* and *TESOL Journal*, as well as general education journals such as *The Reading Teacher*. Our members have also collaborated to develop and submit presentation proposals to conferences for language and general education teachers. For more information about the Teacher Educator SIG, please contact Chris Leider at christine@leiders.org or Michaela Colombo at michaela_colombo@uml.edu.

PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS/INTENSIVE ESL PROGRAMS (PLS/IEP)

On November 10, we held our third annual MATSOL Private Language School/Intensive English Program conference at Boston University's Center for English Language & Orientation Programs (CELOP) (See the article on pg. 12 of this issue.) We will continue to plan small meet-ups throughout the year in order to keep the great conversations going and to stay informed and motivated about what is happening in our industry. For information about the PLS/IEP Special Interest Group, please contact Joy MacFarland at joymacfarland@gmail.com or Joshua Stone at jstone@highpointenglish.com.

THE LOW-INCIDENCE (LI) SIG


The goal of the LI SIG is to provide ongoing support to EL educators in low-incidence schools about best practices, state policies, current research, and upcoming events. We also gather and disseminate information, materials, and resources from MELLC meetings and DESE Low-Incidence meetings.

[The Low-Incidence SIG] is creating EL Progress Report templates aligned with the new WIDA standards.

The LI SIG will meet four times in 2018-2019. We are continuing our task (begun last year) of creating EL Progress Report templates aligned with the new WIDA standards and tools. When completed, the templates will be made available on MATSOL's website for school districts to use or adapt. We are also digging into the various components of the LOOK Act so as to be able to support low-incidence districts to understand and implement the new legislation within the required timelines. For more information about the LI SIG or to reach members of the planning committee, please contact Jennifer Fitzgerald at jfitzgerald@seemcollaborative.org.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL FACULTY

The Steering Committee of the Community College ESL Faculty Network met regularly throughout the summer and fall to plan our third annual Community College Conference, which took place in October at Quinsigamond Community College. (See the article on pg. 13 of this issue.) Issues the group has addressed in the past include credentialing for ESL faculty; relationships between Adult Basic Education, workforce ESL, and academic ESL; over-reliance on adjunct faculty; grants and their effects on our programs; defining success for a community college student; anti-immigrant backlash; and academic credit for ESL students. Members of the Community College Steering Committee and their designated colleges are Darlene Furdock (Middlesex, Northern Essex, North Shore); Eileen Kelley (Holyoke, Greenfield, Springfield Tech); Bruce Riley (Cape Cod, Bristol, Massasoit); Madhu Sharma (Mt. Wachusett, Berkshire); Jennifer Nourse (Mass Bay, Bunker Hill); Anne Shull (Quinsigamond, Roxbury); and Juanita Brunelle (liaison to the MATSOL Board). For further information about the Community College ESL Faculty SIG, write Juanita Brunelle at jbrunelle@matsol.org.

Additional information about MATSOL's SIGs can be found at <https://www.matsol.org/member-groups>. We are presently conducting a member survey to find out if our members would like additional interest groups, on what topics, and whether they prefer a formal meeting structure, as with our present SIGs, or a more informal networking platform to connect members who share common interests or concerns. 

Get Involved in MATSOL

JOIN A MATSOL SUB-COMMITTEE OR TASK FORCE

For members who would like to be more actively involved in MATSOL, we encourage you to become a MATSOL Ambassador or an e-list leader, to join our Conference Committee or our Publications Committee, or to consider creating an issue brief or webinar on a topic that is of interest to our membership. (Assistance is available for all these tasks.) For the latest listing of volunteer opportunities, please go to our “Get Involved” webpage at <http://www.matsol.org/get-involved-with-matsol>.

SUBMIT TO MATSOL PUBLICATIONS

MATSOL E-BULLETIN

The *MATSOL E-Bulletin* is published monthly. It includes short (one-paragraph) notices relevant to EL/ESOL education in Massachusetts. Submission deadline: the 25th of each month for publication in the first week of the next month. For more details, see <http://www.matsol.org/matsol-e-bulletins>.

MATSOL CURRENTS

There's a lot going on in the world of TESOL and EL education, and we'd like all of it to be reflected in *Currents*! We want reviews of books and materials, reports on meetings and events, personal experience accounts, and articles on everything of interest to MATSOL members: adult education, PreK-12 education, bilingual and dual-language programs, community outreach, ESL in higher education, educator-preparation programs, professional-development initiatives, Intensive English Institutes, private language schools, teaching ideas, profiles of and interviews with significant figures, and discussion of issues that our members should be aware of. We'd also love to publish stories from students—about their adjustment to life in New England and their experiences learning English in our English-language programs and elsewhere.

We welcome articles with scholarly content as well as those that share interesting experiences or give practical advice. If you have something to share, don't hesitate to send it to us at currents@matsol.org. We will work with you to get your article or report into good shape for publication. For more details and a copy of our submission guidelines, see <http://www.matsol.org/matsol-currents> or write to the editor, Mary Clark, at currents@matsol.org. 

The 2018 WIDA Conference

Ann Feldman

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I was fortunate to be able to attend WIDA's Annual Conference from October 23-26, 2018, in Detroit, Michigan. The theme of the conference was "Schools and Communities Empowering One Another."

Among the presentations featured at the conference were several by our own Massachusetts professionals: MATSOL Board member Christine Leider, from Boston University, presented "What Does Effective Content Teaching for Multilingual Students Look Like?" and—with Megan Schantz from the Waltham Public Schools—"Student Identity and Learning: Integrating Language, Content and Social Justice."

Fernanda Kray (DESE) and Patti Aube (Fitchburg Public Schools) shared the ground-breaking work that our state is doing with regard to ESL curriculum in a presentation entitled "Empowering Teachers, Empowering Language."

The following were some salient take-aways I gleaned from the conference sessions I attended:

- **From "Designing Quality Professional Opportunities for Teachers of English Learners," by Cynthia Kiser, Rochester Michigan Community Schools:** The "musts" in professional development for educators of ELs are that it is (1) sustained (not stand-alone, one-day or short-term workshops), (2) intensive (specific, systematic, strategy embedded), (3) collaborative (including work with colleagues), (4) job embedded (with multiple opportunities to review and practice what is learned), (5) classroom- or student-focused (incorporating case studies, videos of classrooms, etc.), and (6) informed by data such as teacher surveys.



Patti Aube, Margo Gottlieb, and Fernanda Kray after their Conference presentation

- **From Ofelia Garcia's keynote address on October 24:** Our learners are not just English learners. Most of our students are *bilinguals* who fall along different points of the continuum. Bilinguals are not all sequential. Bilingualism is not just additive or subtractive. Bilingual use is always dynamic and complex and adjusts to the listener in communicative transactions.



Ann Feldman and Anne Dolan (from MATSOL's professional development team) with Fernanda Kray from MA DESE's Office of Language Acquisition

- **From “Advocating and Leading for EL Family Engagement and Empowerment,” by Diane Staehr Fenner, of Support Ed:** An effective family advocacy framework includes (1) isolating the issues/barriers (language, transportation, time, fear, childcare, understanding the school system, and the role of the parent), (2) identifying your allies, (3) being clear about the rights of ELs, (4) organizing and educating others, and (5) identifying how you might go about effecting change within your context.

- **From Gloria Ladson-Billings' keynote address on October 25:** Most literature over the past 20 years has described African-American students in deficit language such as culturally "deprived" or "disadvantaged." The languages and cultures

of our students have to be validated and supported! Black English Vernacular, African American Vernacular, and Ebonics have all the features of legitimate languages. Teachers must be culturally competent and must validate their students' language by integrating cultural songs and games and youth culture (“Hip-Hop Pedagogy”) into their instruction. **C**

The languages and cultures of our students have to be validated and supported.

A Useful Classroom Activity: Ask the Question!

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N my classes at Holyoke Community College, I promote reading comprehension skills by asking my students to create and answer WH- questions based on a close reading of an assigned text. The activity creates excitement as the students compete to read and respond to questions created by their peers. This exercise is suitable for use with intermediate- to advanced-level ESL students at the high school or college level.



LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen students' ability to form and answer WH-questions
- To improve students' comprehension of the factual content of a reading

PROCEDURE

1. Divide the students into groups of 3-4 and give each group a short passage (2-3 pages) which they have previously read for homework.
2. Each group is asked to create 3-4 questions, using WH words that are elicited from the students and put up on the board (*who, what, which, where, when, how, and why*).
3. The groups take turns asking their questions. The first round would be question #1, the second round question #2, and so on.
4. The first student who raises his/her hand gets a chance to answer the question. (Students are not allowed to shout out answers.)
5. The group asking the question has to confirm the answer. If the answer is correct, the student wins a point for his/her group. If it is incorrect, the next student to raise his/her hand gets to answer the question.


6. If no one gets the answer right, the group asking the question provides the answer, and *they* win a point.
7. The group with the most points wins and may be awarded extra credit.

I first used this activity more than a decade ago in an intermediate-level speaking/listening class in our ESL program at Holyoke Community College. We were using *News for You*, a newspaper publication for ESL students. The students were asked to read the entire newspaper (about four pages) for homework. I would then divide them into groups and ask each group to compose questions about a particular article. The students enjoyed the exercise and got to practice their speaking and listening skills while having fun. Since then, I have successfully adapted the exercise for reading/writing classes at the intermediate, high-intermediate, and advanced levels. I have used it with readings from *News for You*, *Password*, *Weaving It Together*, *Great American Short Stories*, and a short novel, *Seedfolks*.

The students . . . got to practice their speaking and listening skills while having fun.

As a follow-up to this lesson, students can be asked to use their deepened understanding of the factual content of the reading to address questions about the main idea, plot, or characters. They can discuss within their groups or do individual low-stakes writing in response to a prompt from the instructor. This promotes critical-thinking skills and can lead to some lively discussions in class. As a final step, an essay prompt can be developed out of these discussions.

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Rubaba Matin is a professor of Academic ESL at Holyoke Community College, Holyoke, MA. She has a Master's in English Literature from the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh, and a Master's in Applied Linguistics from the University of Illinois, Chicago. She has been teaching ESL for 37 years, and is not yet tired of it! Her students are her constant inspiration and motivation. 

Instructional Strategies for Teaching Basic Literacy

Sharifa Djurabaeva

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A **LTHOUGH** the overall student population enrollment in Massachusetts has dropped since 2000, the emergent bilingual population¹ has doubled (Massachusetts Language Opportunity Coalition, 2018). Some students arrive here with no literacy in any language, but many of them are already literate in their first, second, or even third languages. Now they must learn to read in English.

Reading in any language is a complex cognitive skill that requires both higher-level and lower-level skills (Yamashita, 2013). Higher-level skills allow us to comprehend meaning at the sentence and text levels and to interpret the text, using pragmatics, metacognitive skills, and other cognitive processes. Lower-level skills allow us to map letters to sounds ("orthography") and match words with their lexical meaning ("word-recognition"). To read efficiently, students must be able to use both higher- and lower-level skills. In this article I will focus on the lower-level skills that constitute basic literacy: decoding the orthography, learning to recognize words, and developing "automaticity" (recognizing words quickly and automatically).

DECODING THE ORTHOGRAPHY: THE INFLUENCE OF THE STUDENT'S FIRST LANGUAGE

Research indicates that the orthographical system of a student's first language plays an important role in learning to read English (Hamada & Koda, 2011, p. 500). Therefore, the teacher should begin by learning about the orthography (writing system) of the student's first language.

According to Birch (2015), writing systems are divided into three broad categories: logographic (e.g., Chinese), in which each symbol represents a whole lexical item without regard to its pronunciation; syllabic (e.g., Japanese Hiragana), in which each symbol represents a whole syllable; and alphabetic (English, Italian, Spanish, and Korean Hangul, etc.), in which each symbol ("letter") or combination of letters (e.g., *ph*, *ey*, *oi*, *ou*) represents an individual consonant or vowel sound. Alphabetic languages are further divided into transparent systems such as Spanish, Italian, and Russian, in which there is a

¹ I use the asset-focused descriptor emergent bilingual learners throughout this article.

consistent letter-to-sound correspondence, and opaque systems, such as English and French, where letter-to-sound mapping does not always follow predictable patterns. (For example, think of the multiple ways in which the English spelling *ough* can be pronounced.) Some alphabetic languages, such as Hebrew and Arabic, are “consonantal,” meaning that vowel sounds are not always represented overtly. This works well in these languages, because, unlike English, they have very few distinct vowel sounds. When Arab speakers read a word in Arabic, they rely on syntactic, semantic, and discourse contexts to fill in the missing vowels.

Among our emergent bilinguals in Massachusetts we have speakers of Spanish, Cape Verdean, Portuguese, the Chinese languages, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Arabic (Slama et al., 2015); thus, we have students who come from all orthographic traditions, and they will experience different difficulties in learning to read English. For example, learners from logographic language backgrounds will have acquired different strategies for reading words than the strategies that are typically taught for reading English. Since logographic symbols represent whole morphemes (Perfetti, 2003, cited in Yamashita, 2013, p. 53), logographic literacy does not demand that readers analyze individual consonant and vowel sounds, as in alphabetic reading (Yamashita, 2013, p. 53). Li & Seun (2015) have demonstrated that Chinese students tend to rely on their visual memory to recognize whole English words by sight. Although this is a useful strategy for some English words (so-called “sight” words), these learners need explicit instruction in English phonics so that they can learn to sound out and spell new words that they haven’t encountered before.

Students from transparent alphabetic backgrounds will be accustomed to “sounding out” words, but will have difficulty with the irregularities in the English spelling system and with the fact that English letters sometimes correspond to a different sound value from the student’s first language (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005). For example, the letter <e> in English typically represents the sound of *bet* or *beet*, but in other IndoEuropean languages it has the sound of *bait*. As I began learning English the absence of certain English sounds in Uzbek, my native language, hindered me from pronouncing English words properly. For example, when reading in English, I gave the letter <a> the sound it would have in Uzbek. However, I quickly found out that this strategy did not work. I checked reading rules with my teacher and tested my pronunciation, using online dictionaries. Conversing with native speakers, and practicing these sounds by audio-taping and repeating them multiple times over a long period of time helped me learn to pronounce English words properly.

Students from consonantal alphabetic languages such as Arabic may have so called “vowel blindness” (Saigh & Schmit, 2012), meaning that they have difficulty recognizing vowels even in very common English words. Since Arabic has only six to eight distinct vowel sounds (“phonemes”), while English has approximately 17, it is not surprising that Arabic-speaking students find it difficult to hear, pronounce, and spell English vowel sounds accurately. Teachers with students from these languages will need to teach vowel sounds explicitly and encourage the students to attend to these sounds and how they are spelled. For example, students can be taught to sort words according to vowel sound (short <a>: *cat, pat, sat, mat* vs. long <a>: *date, cake, rake, make*) and come up with pronunciation rules on their own.

When I taught students whose first language was Arabic, I noticed that they were constantly confused by the irregularities in English spelling of vowel sounds. Based on the research I had read, I gave my students examples of words that were spelled the same but pronounced differently. We sorted, spelled, read and played with these words. For example, to differentiate the two vowel sounds that are spelled <oo> (the sound of *book* vs. the sound of *moon*), I asked the students to write these words in an online dictionary of their choice (Google Translate, Merriam-Webster, Dictionary.com, etc.) and to listen to their sounds. Then I gave them a list of words that were spelled with <oo> (*cook, took, shook, loom, room, soon, etc.*) and asked them to sort the words according to the sound of the vowel. Learners then played a game in which they asked their partners to guess how each word was pronounced. If the partner did not know, they could check the pronunciation in their online dictionary. For adult learners, I also asked them to transcribe the vowel sounds using International Phonetic Alphabet symbols, so they could remember that <oo>, for example, might represent either [ʊ], as in *cook* or [u:], as in *room*.

Most languages have a simpler syllable structure than English, with at most one consonant sound at the end of the syllable, so students typically don’t have strategies for recognizing *onsets* and *rimes* in their native languages (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005, p. 4). (The *onset* is the consonant or string of consonants at the beginning of the syllable; the *rime* is the string of letters that follow.) Students from these languages should be introduced to the concept of *rhyming*, along with strategies for reading rimes. For example, with *-ough*, students can be taught sets of rhyming words such as *tough, rough, enough* and *fought, bought, brought*.

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING WORD RECOGNITION

Learning to decode and sound out words is important, but to understand what they read, readers have to connect sound to meaning. Readers utilize various strategies to recognize words and interpret their meanings. Sometimes they

learn new words incidentally, while reading a text, watching a TV show with subtitles, or playing a word game. This is great! However, it remains important for teachers to teach vocabulary explicitly. A study by Oliver and Young (2016) showed that students with limited vocabulary can benefit from intentional vocabulary training and that this training is most effective when words are taught in context rather than in isolation. Once a word is taught, students will need multiple exposures to ensure that word recognition and meaning are firmly established. Webb (2008, cited in Oliver & Young, 2016) asserts that students require six to 20 exposures to a new word before they can be said to *know* that word (p. 127). Shaw (2014) suggests the following strategies for providing multiple exposures to words:

1. Identify words to learn by listing new words for the topic at hand or highlighting unknown words in a text.
2. Ask the students to guess the meaning of the words.
3. Check to see if the students have any prior knowledge related to the words.
4. Define the words using the dictionary or with the help of a teacher or peer.
5. Use the words in sentences.
6. Create a concept map for a group of words.
7. Use nonlinguistic resources (drawing, mimicking) to illustrate word meaning.
8. Play games with the new words.

Morphological structure is an important component of word meaning. English words consist of morphemes (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) which have fairly consistent meanings and spellings. One of the most effective instructional strategies for developing word recognition is to help students recognize how words are formed morphologically and to use this knowledge to figure out the meanings of new words (Li & Seun, 2015, p. 101). For example, if students recognize the prefix *un-*, meaning 'not', they may be able to work out the meaning of the word *unkind* by using word-form analysis. To teach the students to analyze words, the teacher can give them a list of words using the same prefix and ask them to figure out their meanings, or give them a prefix such as *un-* and ask them to generate a list of words that could begin with that prefix.

Another instructional strategy is to ask students, individually or in small groups, to sort

words according to their prefixes, roots, or suffixes. Following the sorting, students can look for patterns in the words and draw conclusions based on the patterns that they observe.

For example, Shaw (2014) asked her students to add the suffix *-ing* to a set of roots, including words in which the consonant was doubled when adding *-ing* (*stop-stopping*), words where a letter was dropped prior to adding *-ing* (*hope-hoping*), and words in which nothing changed (*track-tracking*). Students then hypothesized why letters were doubled, dropped, or remained the same and applied these patterns to analyze new words. These instructional activities boost students' critical thinking and help them to develop word-recognition strategies based on the word patterns they have observed.

Fluent reading requires more than simple word recognition; it requires automaticity.

AUTOMATICITY

Fluent reading requires more than simple word recognition; it requires *automaticity*—rapid (automatic) access to words (Hamada & Koda, 2010, p. 514). Proficient readers recognize words quickly and automatically, and immediately use semantic and grammatical information to integrate the word meanings into larger units such as phrases and sentences. Only when students have developed automatic recognition of a large number of words will they be able to read fluently and have the cognitive space they need for text comprehension (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008).


One instructional strategy to help students develop automaticity is to have them read a timed passage five or six times, using the following process: The teacher provides readers with a stopwatch and a text of approximately 500 words at *their reading level*. Each time the students read the text, they note the time spent on a time-log sheet. During the first reading, they simply read the text and try to understand it. The second and third time they read, they listen to a recording of the text (or of someone reading the text) and again note the time spent. During the fourth and subsequent readings, students read the text and time themselves. (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008)

Time-controlled multimedia applications can also be used to improve automaticity (Sato, Matsunuma & Suzuki, 2013, p. 148). For example, [Quizlet.com](https://www.quizlet.com) (free version) has an option to measure the time spent in playing *match* games with words. To play this game, students first create flashcards with words that share a certain property—for example, words that end with the same rime, or words that have the same prefix or suffix. Then they shuffle the cards and sort them into matching pairs. Because the goal is to match the words with

automaticity, students can be timed as they carry out the task and can engage in a game in which the student who finishes first establishes a time for others to beat.

In a study by Shaw (2014), adult emergent bilingual students developed automatic word recognition by sorting words, discussing their meanings, using them in conversation with attention to pronunciation, and, finally, using them in writing.

CONCLUSION

All students, but especially emergent bilingual learners, will benefit from literacy instruction in higher- and lower-level reading skills. In this article I have drawn on the research and my own experiences as an English learner and ESL teacher to share strategies that foster lower-level reading skills for emergent bilingual learners from various first languages. I have found that when teachers develop an awareness of the writing systems of their students' first languages, they are better prepared to implement strategies to support basic literacy in English. Prepared teachers are able to help students develop strategies that increase their word recognition skills and their automaticity, which will ultimately help them to become fluent readers. 

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Some Thoughts on TESOL's 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners

Kathy Lobo

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AT the TESOL Conference in Chicago last March, TESOL International launched a new initiative in the form of a book entitled *The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners*. The six principles are a set of research-based guidelines that show how administrators, ESL teachers, and mainstream teachers can work together to (1) better know our English Learners, (2) create optimal conditions for language learning, (3) design high-quality lessons for language development, (4) adapt lesson delivery in a responsive way, (5) monitor and assess language development and acquisition, and (6) better engage and collaborate within our community of practice. The chart below sets out some specific suggestions for what teachers and administrators can do, principle by principle, to implement this new initiative and promote language acquisition in an environment that is respectful and affirming:¹

THE 6 PRINCIPLES, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

1. KNOW YOUR LEARNERS

What administrators can do

- During the registration/intake process, ask meaningful questions that not only help with placement, but also provide valuable information about the past experiences (assets) that the student(s) and their families/guardians bring to the community.
- Share what is learned with the school community in which the child will be learning.

What teachers can do

- When planning lessons, take into account what was learned during the registration/intake process.
- Make and take opportunities to learn more from the child, parent, guardian.
- Learn as much as you can about the languages and cultures of the students you serve (current events, geography, history, language, and language interference).

2. CREATE CONDITIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

What administrators can do

- Try to anticipate what the students/ teachers will need in the way of staffing, scheduling, space, and materials, and be proactive in providing that support.
- Be responsive to changes in demographics in the classroom/ school context.

What teachers can do

- Create a classroom culture that is welcoming, affirming, and safe.
- Provide lots of visuals and realia.
- Establish (and teach) classroom routines.
- Make expectations explicit.
- Show off examples of student work.
- Consider a wide range of options to differentiate and scaffold instruction, including cooperative learning activities.

3. DESIGN HIGH-QUALITY LESSONS FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

What administrators can do

- Support teachers as they grapple with multiple challenges in the classroom.
- Appreciate that while there may be opportunities *missed*, there will also be many opportunities *taken* to design and implement high quality lessons that support language development.

What teachers can do

- Familiarize yourself with tools such as WIDA's CAN DO Descriptors and GO TO Strategies.
- Be familiar with the milestones of second-language acquisition and with the first-language interference issues that may be present.
- Consider using backward design for unit and lesson planning.
- Be explicit about content objectives and language objectives (the language function and discourse styles that will be needed to access the content).

¹ I first shared these thoughts with MELLC in the form of a presentation in May, 2018, and later at NNETESOL in November, 2018.

4. ADAPT LESSON DELIVERY AS NEEDED

What administrators can do

- Brainstorm with the teachers you supervise about ways to better adapt/adjust and assess lessons.
- Provide some examples of creative adapted lessons you have seen to inspire the teachers you support.
- Cultivate standards-based unit and lesson planning that includes cooperative learning activities and plenty of scaffolding. Allow teachers the freedom to be creative and artful in their work and to take advantage of the teachable moments that arise.

What teachers can do

- Use a variety of formative assessments to monitor student learning.
- Be responsive and creative as you adjust the delivery of a lesson. (This is the art of teaching ☺!) Take advantage of *teachable moments*.
- Engage in learning *with* the students.
- Pay special attention to how you/ the teacher can recast what students say to model and promote speech that lays the foundation for academic discourse and academic writing that will be most likely be required in your final/summative assessments.

5. MONITOR AND ASSESS STUDENT LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

What administrators can do

- Provide a multi-faceted view of student progress by encouraging the use of a variety of assessments that range from observations to formal tests.
- Help the teachers you support to know about possible/typical scenarios for learning, including things some learners may find easier or more challenging based on their home language/culture.

What teachers can do

- Be familiar with the milestones of language acquisition, but remember that not all learners learn at the same rate.
- Make use of a wide range of assessments (pre-assessment, observational, formative, authentic, portfolio, summative) and share/ make use of what you learn.


6. ENGAGE AND COLLABORATE WITHIN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

What administrators can do

- Use meeting time as an opportunity for teachers to share with one another their challenges and successes, the opportunities taken and the opportunities missed.
- Let teachers know about professional development opportunities within the district and outside of the district.
- Show an interest in and support for their learning and sharing.

What teachers can do

- Seek professional collaboration within the district as well as outside of the district.
- Look after your own learning so that you can better look after the learning of others.
- Consider joining a professional organization, going to a talk or lecture, taking a course, and/or reading books and articles on a topic of interest.

TESOL's 6 Principles are a natural next step in continuing the conversation, post-RETELL, about how best to serve ELs and support teachers in the mainstream classroom. For more information about the 6 Principles, go to www.the6principles.org. 

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It's the Culture, Stupid: Revisiting Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children* in a Data-Driven World

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WINNER of an American Educational Studies Association Critics' Choice Award and Choice Magazine's Outstanding Academic Book Award, and voted one of Teacher Magazine's "great books," Lisa Delpit's *Other People's Children* is one of the classic texts of our field. It is an eye-opening, sometimes uncomfortable examination of the various and often conflicting values and perceptions that exist in our classrooms. While the book focuses on teacher relationships with students of color, it is equally applicable to the English Learners (ELs) we serve.



In the 1990's, then-president Bill Clinton, critical of government's blindness to the key issue for voters, famously declared, "It's the economy, stupid!" Only after addressing that problem, he reasoned, could politicians address the other problems that concerned Americans. At about the same time, Lisa Delpit was writing her classic book on why students from non-dominant cultural traditions fail to thrive in school. Now, more than 20 years later, it's time to look back and recognize the real reasons why minority students, especially ELs, are underperforming. The elephant in the room is *cultural competence*. We have to begin valuing diverse cultures and traditions. Depending on how well we cultivate cultural competency, teachers will either help or hinder ELs' academic progress.

There are many reasons why our ELs underperform, researchers tell us: They don't have grit, they lack motivation, they need better teacher cheerleaders. Furthermore, they tell us, teachers don't pay enough attention to data; they aren't targeting the specific skills (data points) that are key to academic success. Today's teachers feel ever-increasing pressure for gains in standardized

test scores; the stakes are high for both children and school districts. But in focusing on data-driven instruction, schools have misplaced priorities and failed to address the central, underlying reasons why children do not engage with education or persevere towards achievement. If he were an EL teacher, Bill Clinton might say, "It's the culture, stupid!" The real reason why children fail to engage with schooling is that they struggle to participate in an alien discourse and live in a foreign environment where their background, language, and traditions are often devalued or dismissed.

If we want ELs to succeed—and lately, our immigrant children sometimes wonder whether we do—we need to find ways into their world. Creating bridges between cultures will give us the biggest return on our instructional investment. When my high-school-aged ELs read literature, for example, they rise to the occasion for texts that reflect their values,

[S]chools have failed to address the central, underlying reason why children do not engage with education.

depict characters that they recognize and can identify with, and discuss themes that resonate with their experience. The kind of literature that my students really connect with features themes of identity, alienation, and dislocation. Whether it is racism in *The House on Mango Street*, identity in *American-Born Chinese*, gender role conflict in *The Book of Unknown Americans*, or the overwhelming immigrant experience in *The Arrival*, my students, finally seeing themselves in the work, open up and engage. I have seen reticent girls moved to argue over women's roles "at home" and in the U.S., and boys finally understanding why their once-tight family units are coming apart as they begin assimilating. Young people are stunned to discover these notions and can't help but engage with the works that expose them. There is no data point on a standardized test to measure the power of motivation that such connections inspire.

In her classic book, Delpit argued that maintaining student investment in learning requires power sharing. A central part of our job as teachers must be to recognize and respect differences while negotiating power in the classroom. We cannot ignore divergent views of gender roles, sexuality, ethnicity, and race in the cultures from which our students come. That does not necessarily mean encouraging views that most Americans would take issue with, but we do need to understand cultural differences and work to find common ground. A teacher's cultural literacy can make the difference between an atmosphere of inclusivity, where ELs feel respected and confident, and one of exclusivity,

where they feel dismissed and self-doubting. When students hear messages of disapproval or condescension, they lose motivation, develop an attitude of “us” versus “them,” or give up entirely, believing it impossible to succeed in this context.

One central and controversial piece of Delpit’s discussion asserts that students who want to succeed in American society may need to make compromises in how they communicate with and present themselves to others, creating a new voice in order to fit into their adopted society. According to James Paul


[S]tudents who want to succeed in American society may need to make compromises in how they communicate.

Gee (cited by Delpit, 2006, pg. 153), each societal group has its own discourse variety, a kind of political “literacy kit” that prescribes ways of “saying—writing—doing—being—valuing—believing.” There is the discourse of doctors and the discourse of politicians, to give two examples. ELs enter school with their own discourse styles and must acquire the dominant discourse of native-speaking American students, one that is often quite different from their own. Like Gee, Delpit believes that we learn literacy within the context of some larger set of values and beliefs. But if my values and beliefs differ from yours, and yours reflect the beliefs of the dominant group, how do I become sufficiently proficient in *your* discourse to share in that power? How much of my own discourse do I have to jettison to achieve it? The bottom line is: What do I need to do to be accepted into the club?

Students who move successfully between home and school, Delpit asserts, are engaging in a kind of cultural code-switching. In order to accomplish this transition, they have to be supported. It is the responsibility of the teacher to provide this support by assuring that all cultures and traditions are acknowledged and validated in the classroom. At the same time, a common, negotiated set of classroom values must be articulated and posted.

From there, teachers must explicitly instruct the discourse of American schooling, with the clear understanding that this instruction is intended solely for the purpose of fostering school success—it is not meant to supplant the the student’s home language or values. The teacher’s approach and attitude can make all the difference in the students’ investment in their education. Teachers who want their students to succeed, Delpit advises, should practice a kind of self-

actualization strategy. We must look in the mirror every day and ask ourselves: What are the beliefs, experiences and practices that I bring to my relationships with other people's children? Are those relationships close, honest, and based on mutual respect? Do I understand the values of the communities from which those students come? Do I know my students' needs, and does the curriculum address those needs? This is a complex and delicate job, and trusting relationships are essential to making it work. But in terms of a return on our effort, standardized-skill instruction pales in comparison.

A culturally sensitive, welcoming environment will make the real, sustainable difference in our children's achievement in school. When we respect their traditions, students will feel they have a place in our community of learners, and they will be able to accept and adapt to the discourse of American education, along with those data-determined skills that our educational system is so keen for them to master. When our ELs are recognized as bringing assets, rather than deficits, to their education, they will be able to focus on their learning. Only then, as Delpit argues, will "other people's children" finally become our own, fully invested schoolchildren, as well. 

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Editor's Note: Please take time to look over the extensive list of resources for building awareness of race, culture, and community, compiled by Yuiko Shimazu, which immediately follows this article.

A Selection of Activities and Resources for Building Awareness of Race, Culture, and Community

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THE following list of activities and resources is based on a list that was compiled by the participants in a Cultural Awareness Networking Session at MATSOL's Annual Conference, Spring, 2018, with additional sources from Bill Kraft and Janis Fovel's online course, *Allies, Achievers, and Risk Takers: Tapping the Social and Academic Potential of All Students Through Community Building*.

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD SELF-AWARENESS

- All About Me: Each student will write about him/herself.
- The Best Part of Me: <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/best-part-me>
- Check-In (on a scale of 5-1): During the morning meeting, each student does a quick share of their feelings ("5" is the best) and tells the reason why.
- Spark (Peter Benson): Ask students what "sparks" them. They can write about it or create a poster.
- Who Likes/Is/Has?: Ask questions such as "Who likes...?" If your answer is yes, sit down.
- "I Am From" Poems: Students create a poem to describe or identify themselves using "I am from..." sentences.
- Ask the students to write "My Immigration Story."

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD EMPATHY AND COMMUNITY

- Peer mentors: Assign peer mentors for incoming students.
- Learn classmates' names: <http://www.residentassistant.com/ra/motion-name-game/>
- "We All Fit": Each student decorates a puzzle piece and glues the piece into a complete puzzle on a poster board. Lesson to be learned: We all have a place and fit in.
- Watch the following inspirational videos:
 - "The Kindness Chain: Life Vest Inside - Kindness Boomerang - One Day": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgGEi1OXM_Y
 - "What's Your Effect on Others": <http://iwitnessbullying.org>
 - "Healing Our Humanity," a HTH (High Tech High School) student project: <https://www.hightech-high.org/hthi/project/healing-our-humanity>
 - "How Would you Feel?" (K-4 Empathy Activities): www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/how%20would%20you%20feel%20k-2.pdf

ACTIVITIES TO LEARN ABOUT ONE'S OWN AND OTHERS' CULTURES

- Heritage paper dolls: The students make paper dolls based on the traditional clothing worn in their families' native countries.
- Holidays: Have the students research and create a brochure of different holidays around the world.
- Teacher for a Day: ELL students teach others their language.
- International Festival: Students set up booths and showcase traditions, perform dances, etc.
- World Culture Day: Students/parents present an all-school assembly performance.

ACTIVITIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF PRIVILEGE

- Book Inventory: Make an inventory of how many books in the class-

room have a character that looks like me/us.

- The video “Step Up, Step Back (The Privilege Walk)”: <https://edge.psu.edu/wrkshops/mc/power/privilegewalk.shtml>

ACTIVITIES TO CONNECT WITH FAMILIES

- Family Tree: Students bring in a picture of their family and share a story at morning meeting. The pictures stay up all year.
- Family Tree and Class World Map: Students fill in a family tree with their country of origin. They mark where their family members are from on the class's world map.
- ELL Showcase: Hold a family evening with spaghetti dinner to showcase student work.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

- *All the Colors We Are/Todos los colores de nuestra piel: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color/La historia de por qué tenemos diferentes colores de piel*, by Katie Kissinger
- *Alma and How She Got Her Name*, by Juana Martinez-Neal
- *Apple Pie Fourth of July*, by Janet S. Wong
- *The Christmas Menorahs*, by Janice Cohn
- *Don't Call Me Special*, by Pat Thomas
- *Finders Keepers? A True Story in India*, by Robert Arnett
- *Henry and the Kite Dragon*, by Bruce Hall and William Low
- *How My Family Lives in America*, by Susan Kaklin
- *I Hate English!*, by Ellen Levine
- *I Love Saturdays y domingos*, by Alma Flor Ada
- *If the World Were a Village: A Book about the World's People, 2nd Edition*, by David J. Smith
- *I'm New Here*, by Anne Sibley O'Brien
- *Inside Out and Back Again*, by Thanhha Lai

- *Joseph's Big Ride*, by Terry Farish
- *Just Kidding*, by Trudy Ludwig
- *Marianthe's Story: Painted Words and Spoken Memories*, by Alike
- *My Diary from Here to There: Mi diario de aqui hasta alla (English and Spanish Edition)*, by [Amada Irma Perez](#)
- *My Name is Yoon*, by Helen Recorvits
- *My Secret Bully*, by Trudy Ludwig
- *My Two Blankets*, by Irena Kobald
- *The Name Jar*, by Yangsook Choi
- *One*, by Kathryn Otoshi
- *The Only One Club*, by Jane Naliboff
- *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed*, by Emily Pearson
- *The Other Side*, by Jacqueline Woodson
- *The Rainbow Tulip*, by Pat Mora
- *Ruby's Wish*, by Shirin Yim
- *Seed Folks*, by Paul Fleischman
- *Shades of People*, by Shelley Rotner and Sheila M. Kelly
- *Those Shoes*, by Maribeth Boelts
- *The Upside Down Boy/El niño de Cabeza*, by Juan Felipe Herrera and Elizabeth Gómez
- *Wishtree*, by Katherine Applegate

SEE ALSO,

- *Diverse and Inclusive Books for Children*, Barefoot Books: <https://www.barefootbooks.com>
- *Read Brightly (17 new Authors of Color Writing Much-Needed Stories for Kids)*: <http://www.readbrightly.com/new-authors-of-color-writing-for-kids>
- WNDB (WeNeedDiverseBooks): <https://diversebooks.org>

BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND VIDEOS FOR ADULTS AND TEENS


- “Code Switch”: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch>
- “A Conversation on Race”: A series of short films about identity in America: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/your-stories/conversations-on-race>
- “Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity”: www.crackingthecodes.org
- “The Danger of a Single Story,” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>
- Discovering Justice: <http://discoveringjustice.org>
- *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real About Race in School*, ed. by Mica Pollock. Jersey Channel Islands: Barnes Publishing, 2000.
- “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant,” by Jose Antonio Vargas <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/26/magazine/my-life-as-an-undocumented-immigrant.html>
- *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*, ed. by Fawzia Afzal-Khan. Ithaca, NY: Olive Branch Press, 2005.
- “Speak Up: Responding to Everyday Bigotry,” by the Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/20150125/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry>
- *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? and Other Conversations About Race*, by Beverly Daniel Tatum. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997.

BOOKS AND VIDEOS FOR EDUCATORS

- *Awakening the Heart: Exploring Poetry in Elementary and Middle School*, by Georgia Heard. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.
- “Discovering Justice”: <http://discoveringjustice.org>
- “Empathy and Inclusion for ELL Students”: <https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/empathy-inclusion-ell-students>

- “Empathy in Action: How Teachers Prepare Future Citizens”: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/8-pathways-empathy-in-action-marilyn-price-mitchell>
- “Empathy in the Classroom: Why Should I Care?": <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/empathy-classroom-why-should-i-care-lauren-owen>
- *Even on Your Worst Day, You Can Be a Student's Best Hope*, by Manny Scott. Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 2017.
- “Five Ways Literature Can Teach Global Lessons in Elementary Classes”: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/literature-teaches-global-lessons-elementary-becky-morales>
- Teaching Empathy: Are We Teaching Content or Students?: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/teaching-empathy-content-or-students-terry-heick>
- “Sparks: How Youth Thrive,” by Peter Benson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqzUHcW58Us>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yuiko Shimazu is a K-5 ESL teacher in the Lexington Public Schools and a member of the MATSOL Board, where she serves as chair of MATSOL's Program and Membership Committee. She grew up in Japan, and her first language is Japanese. Even though she has been living in this country for many years, she is still learning English every day, so she understands the challenges that our ELs are facing and tries to advocate for them. She is passionate about celebrating diversity, equity, and inclusion to support all students, families, and educators. She asks that if you have talents or good ideas for assisting our ELs and their families, please share them with MATSOL! 

Teaching TESOL Online

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AMONG the most fulfilling parts of our work with pre-service teachers of English Learners (ELs) are the deeply human, personal, and caring aspects of working directly with students. When we first began offering TESOL courses in an online or hybrid format at our state university, we wondered how we would create these aspects without face-to-face time. After five years, we have come to see that it is possible to promote collaboration, reflection, and engagement in web-based courses. Now that we are in the process of moving our graduate TESOL programs completely online, we would like to reflect on our experiences so far and share some of our takeaways. In this article, we share several strategies that have helped us to foster an online learning community that is interconnected, supportive, and engaged.

CAPITALIZE ON WHAT ONLINE LEARNING DOES BEST

Our courses use [Blackboard](#) as an online platform. One thing we like about Blackboard is that it provides a lot of tools and lot of options for how the course is structured, depending on the nature of the material, instructors' technical skills, and students' familiarity with online technologies. Blackboard supports online discussions, assessments, and peer reviews, offers virtual space to conduct small-group activities, and can host links to third-party online tools. It is user-friendly for beginners but offers advanced options for instructors and students as they become more experienced in their use of online learning technology.

Although some activities, such as student conferences and instruction on teaching strategies with a spatial aspect work best in a face-to-face format, online teaching offers opportunities of its own, such as asynchronous collaborative exchanges for small-group projects, discussions, and peer reviews. In addition, we've found that online teaching allows students to work at their own pace. Some students take advantage of the opportunity that Blackboard gives them to view course materials and classroom videos multiple times. Online

communication also provides more time for composition and response, which can be useful to all students, but especially those who are communicating in a second language (Harklau & Pinnow, 2009).

ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS IN COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

One activity that we have found particularly powerful is a rubric design and critique project. The goal of this project is to create a rubric or checklist for use with multilingual learners which includes both language and content criteria. For example, our students have created rubrics for oral presentations and essays, and checklists for elementary students to evaluate their own sentence writing. In a Blackboard discussion forum, students post their draft rubrics and provide feedback to one another. Then they revise their rubrics in response to feedback and, finally, reflect on how they integrated feedback in their revisions. This task offers an authentic opportunity for our students to give and receive feedback in a public forum, an increasingly common activity in schools and a valuable skill for future teachers to practice.

[A]lthough some activities . . . work best in a face-to-face format, online teaching offers opportunities of its own.

Another activity that we successfully tested is a project where students used online resources, including search engines and databases, to research potential cross-linguistic transfers from selected languages. Students then worked in small groups on Blackboard to create presentations, using the digital lesson-creation platform [TesTeach](#). At the end of the presentation, they measured each other's comprehension via student-created games designed with [Kahoot](#), a free platform for making engaging quizzes. As a final step, they critiqued one another's work in a Blackboard-supported peer-review forum.

SET UP RICH AND VARIED INTERACTIONS

Varied group configurations are a recommended strategy of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2017), and we have found this to be an important component of online teaching, as well. In our experience, students benefit from a variety of online interaction tools, including small-group discussions and projects, online reading, and peer-review forums, and external tools such as [closed Facebook](#) or [Yammer groups](#), [Google docs](#), [Pinterest boards](#) and [Instagram](#).

The list can go on, depending on the particular course or learning activity, but we have found that it is useful to include both academic tools (such as Blackboard discussions) and non-academic tools (such as Facebook closed groups). For example, Pinterest offers collaborative sharing of information by allowing students to create topic-based boards with images, a smidgen of text, and links to third-party sites. Our students have used Google docs for collaborative writing, such as a [role-audience-format-topic \(RAFT\) writing project](#) about working with ELs with exceptionalities. Closed Facebook groups are great when we want our students to participate in private online discussions on a site to which they have unlimited access through their smartphone or other mobile device. Facebook users' ability to receive instant notifications about other posts in their closed-group discussion is a bonus that can energize the conversation.

BE CLEAR ABOUT COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Since online classes have their own culture, it is important to be very explicit about the type, quality, and quantity of postings that students are expected to create. We have also found it useful to give students a specific description of the participation they should expect from us, and when and how they will receive our feedback. For example, we let students know that we don't respond to every post on a weekly basis; instead, we provide a weekly *cumulative* response in which we share the most interesting points from online exchanges, clarify topics that need to be further explored, and provide additional sources for further investigation. We respond to individual students and their specific contributions occasionally throughout the semester. By explaining these interactive patterns directly at the outset, we hope to make our students feel comfortable and supported even when we are not in direct communication with them.

BE CLEAR ABOUT YOUR EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Standards from the Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, 6th Edition, suggests that instructors communicate with students in advance about the required level of technology skill and capability with hardware and software. This can help ensure that students will have the necessary experience and materials to navigate the course successfully. Of course, it is also possible to design an online course that allows students with a range of technology skills to experiment and participate. Luckily, TESOL educators are usually highly skilled at differentiating instruction for students' varied backgrounds and abilities. To help

students who are not technologically sophisticated, we model the use of external technology tools students are less likely to be familiar with, create screencasts to introduce the layout of fully online Blackboard course sites, and invite experienced students to share and showcase their own knowledge. To alleviate anxiety, we sometimes tell students that we want them to try something new, but will focus on their understanding of the content rather than how well they used the technology.

Online courses are an opportunity to show our students . . . technical tools that they can use in their own classrooms.

MAKE PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES WITH TECHNOLOGY ONES THEY CAN CARRY OVER INTO THEIR OWN CLASSROOMS

Online courses are an opportunity to show our students a variety of technological tools that they can use in their own classrooms to replace or enhance existing teaching methods. In one of our courses, we ask the students to read about and try several online apps that are recommended for language and literacy learning, such as e-books, [Nearpod](#), and [iAnnotate](#) (Israelson, 2015; Latham Keh & Rinder, 201). As a culminating activity, the students develop a lesson plan that will require their ELs to use at least one selected app to complete an enhanced activity. We also ask them to create an annotated list of online resources that they can use in teaching ELs and for their own professional development. The students share their lists online and, in an online roundtable, select at least two additional sources to add to their original list. Although the specific technology tools we use in our courses may not be the same ones our students will later use in their schools or professional networks, students nevertheless gain useful experience with using remote communication for professional purposes.

TAKE TIME TO TALK ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF A PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

We talk to our students about the ways we've been able to support ELs by reaching out to our professional networks. Pre-service teachers may not realize how important colleagues will be in their future careers, especially if they are the only ESL teacher in their school or district. For example, ESL teachers often exchange resources with other teachers and request help from colleagues for translations or information about cultural groups to which they belong. In our courses, we encourage students to form online connections with peers by


setting up their first online discussion as a 'meet-and-greet' forum where students introduce themselves professionally and personally and make connections to the goals of the course. We have also created non-evaluative spaces for resource sharing.

"[T]he constant interaction with peers has been beneficial in learning . . . [new] ways to collaborate."

CONCLUSION

Although we initially wondered whether online teaching could resonate in the same way as a face-to-face experience, some of our students have reflected that the online discussion boards in our hybrid classes were especially memorable as learning experiences that helped them to connect with peers and share teaching ideas. Individuals participate differently in online and face-to-face formats, and this has given us the opportunity to hear the voices of our students in a variety of ways. As we continue to grow in our ability to teach online, we have come to experience how rich, warm, and collaborative an online "classroom" can be.

As one of our students stated:

[T]he constant interaction with peers has been beneficial in learning not just about new ways to provide instruction, but also ways in which I can learn to collaborate with peers. . . [W]e have been exposed to in-person, online, and offline interaction with our peers. . . One valuable asset about this course is that students are allowed to interact on both platforms . . . and learn from one another. (Student Journal, Spring 2018) 

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Melissa Latham Keh has been teaching TESOL at Bridgewater State University since 2014, after more than a decade teaching ELs. She teaches most of her courses in online or hybrid modalities. Her research interests include second language reading, academic language instruction, and multilingualism across the lifespan.

Julia Stakhnevich has been teaching ESL and TESOL at Bridgewater State University since 2000. She loves experimenting with technology and teaching via Blackboard. Her major research interests include the construction of identity in multilingual societies and the representation of multilingual speakers in contemporary children's literature and film.

What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng,

by Dave Eggers. Vintage Books, New York, 2006. ISBN 978 0 307 38590 1. 538 pages.

Reviewed by Eileen Feldman

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DAVE Eggers is a well-known American author who writes on social and political themes. This biographical novel is based on the life of Valentino Achak Denk, who immigrated to the United States in September 2001 as one of 4000 “lost boys of the Sudan.” The book was a finalist for the 2017 National Book Writers Circle Award for Fiction and was recommended by Barack Obama to members of his administration.

As the book opens in Atlanta, Achak is being held at gunpoint during a home robbery. The thieves cannot get away until the police leave the parking lot outside the apartment. While they wait for the police to leave, Achak flashes back to his harrowing escape from his besieged home in Sudan, eventually reaching a refugee camp in Ethiopia and then, later, a camp in Kenya, where he completed his elementary and secondary education. But the horrors he faced on his journey out of Sudan could not prepare him for the disappointments he faced as a newcomer to the U.S., trying to get his education credits recognized and having to work low-paying jobs to support himself and cover his tuition. Like other young men in similar circumstances, he became impatient with his progress and sometimes ended up in trouble.

Organizationally, the book alternates between present-day Atlanta and the past in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya. While in Africa, Achak did not feel “lost.” He had demonstrated his bravery, composure, and intelligence during his harrowing escape from Sudan and while attending school and participating in student organizations in Ethiopia and Kenya. But in America his credits are continually short for going to university, and he laments, “I am tired of this country. I am thankful for it, yes. I have cherished many aspects of it for the three years I have been here, but I am tired of the promises ... [F]or most of us the slowness of our transition has brought chaos ... Too many have fallen; too many feel they have failed ... We have exhausted our host ... [Y]oung men are

prone to vices [including] weaknesses for prostitutes, drugs, alcohol, gambling.” Such lamentations are sprinkled throughout the narrative. Achak’s boss sees him, bedraggled, after the robbery and asks, “Why are you Sudanese always fighting?”

The struggles of Achak and the other “lost boys” are partly the result of circumstances created or ignored by U.S. agencies and other well-meaning participants. However, the book’s title, which comes from a saying of Achak’s Dinka father, suggests that the Sudanese boys themselves have a responsibility to turn from a passive acceptance of life toward a more proactive mindset.


“The mistake of the Dinka before us were errors of timidity, of choosing what was before us over what might be,” Achak says. “We are men.

Now we can stand up and decide

... There has been pain, but now there will be serenity.” After the robbery he declares, “I will not trust so easily. I will look at who is at the door before opening it. I will try to be fierce. I will argue when necessary... I will not smile reflexively at every person I see.” That is the WHAT.

Achak's story is relevant to all of us whose lives touch newcomers.

Educators, administrators, immigrant sponsors, employers, and law-enforcement authorities should read this memoir to familiarize themselves with the experiences of refugees. Achak’s story is relevant to all of us whose lives touch newcomers. Our educational and resettlement systems must address the needs that will inevitably arise after the honeymoon period is over. Culture shock can last for years, not months.

Valentino Achak Deng and David Eggers have worked together to set up a Foundation, [the Valentino Achak Deng \(VAD\) Foundation](#), which is raising money for community-driven development projects in post-conflict South Sudan. The Foundation’s first major project was the construction and operation of a 21-structure educational complex in Valentino’s hometown of Marial Bai, South Sudan. In 2014, Mr. Deng was named education minister of the South Sudanese state of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal. 

Class Dojo: A Tool for Communicating with EL Families (class dojo.com)

Reviewed by Christina Terranova

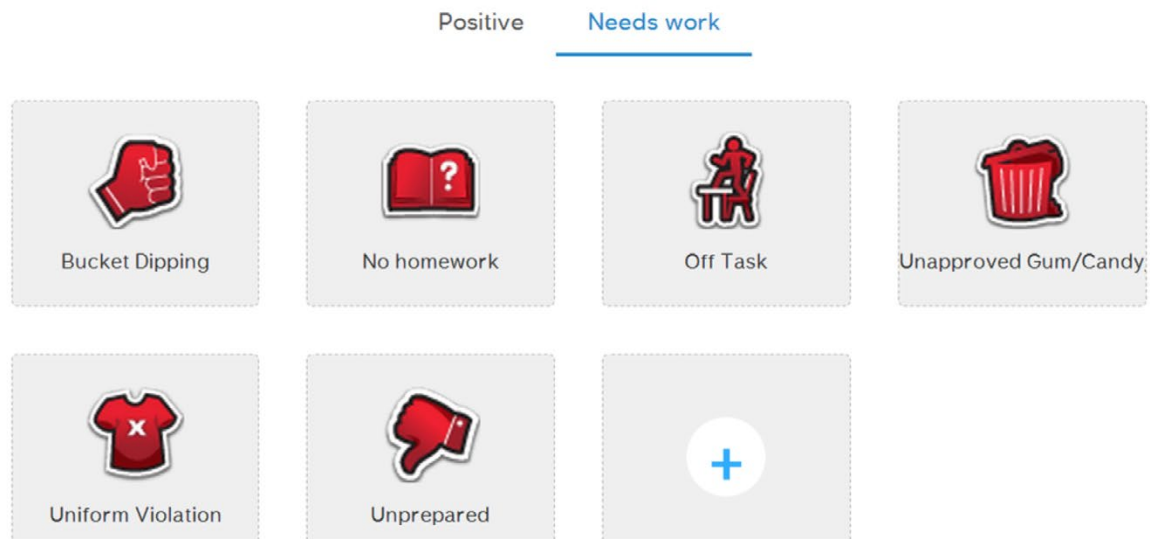
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Establishing relationships with parents and extended families should be an important objective for school leaders at all grade levels... maintaining strong partnerships with the families of English learners (ELs) should continue through high school. We may be familiar with the importance of parent involvement, but we sometimes overlook its special relevance for parents from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds (Zacarian, 2011, p. 114).

E DUCATORS are agreed on the importance of building relationships with the parents and extended families of our students, but there are many barriers to the implementation of this goal. Happily, I have found a useful tool to facilitate home-school connections with my students' families: an app called "Class Dojo." This app is free for anyone to download to their mobile phone, which is convenient, and it allows for quick and easy communication via either a text message, or a simple graphic that signals that a student is having a good or a bad day in class, that they have forgotten something, or really any type of message the teacher wants to send.

An important benefit for EL parents is the app's "Translate" button, which allows messages typed in English to be translated into any of 36 different languages, and vice versa.

To encourage my parents to download the app, I handed out small prizes to my second- and third-graders whose parents signed up. This prize program quickly set the wheels in motion! Once the parents were signed up, I used the app's text-messaging feature to question them about their understanding of the support their children were receiving for English language learning and to find



out whether they had questions or wanted more information.

As an example, I used the app to interview the mother of “Santiago,” a fourth-grade boy from El Salvador who speaks only Spanish, and the mother of “William,” a second-grade boy who speaks some Mandarin and English. I had been working with both students since September but had not been able to make contact with either child’s parents. Interestingly, neither mother knew much about the support her child was receiving for English language development, but Santiago’s mother knew his WIDA Access comprehensive score from last year and that he had been in a “special program for international students” (SEI I). William’s mother was less satisfied with his progress, saying, “He is doing alright (sic), but I would like to see improvement in his writing, speaking, and reading skills in a fun way.”


Neither parent had any questions for me about how English is taught in the school, and neither parent made mention of her child’s report card (which is provided only in English), or to the [Imagine Learning](#) program materials that I had previously sent home with them. However, both parents were eager to discuss their child’s progress. Santiago’s mother wanted to know my opinion of how he is doing, and William’s mother expressed her concern that he is learning informal English very quickly, but not formal English.

The final question I posed to both mothers via Class Dojo was about how they help their children with their language development. Santiago’s mother told me that the family speaks and reads only in Spanish at home, so that he doesn’t

lose his native language. William's mother told me that they speak both English and Mandarin at home. She said that William gets a book from the library each week and reads every night in English, since he does not recognize Chinese characters. She said they make a chart for study, play, and bedtime. She worries about the challenge for her as a non-native speaker attempting to teach her own child properly.

Santiago has been in the U.S. for only a little over a year, but likely due to his strong literacy skills in his native language, he is an excellent writer in English. His scores from the [WIDA ACCESS](#) test from January 2016 would have allowed him to exit from ESL services at the beginning of this school year, but regulations disallow such quick exiting of ELs. William, not literate in his native language, is having more difficulty in English. His informal language is progressing quickly, but academic language is proving more difficult, as his mother pointed out.

Reaching out to EL families can be very challenging, due to linguistic and cultural barriers. However, families of ELs need information about their child's educational program and supports for English language development delivered to them in a comprehensible and easily accessible format. The Class Dojo app allowed me to overcome some of these barriers in communicating with my students' parents. First, since most of the parents do have mobile phones, they have easy access to the app, which is free. Furthermore, the language barrier is no longer an issue, because of the translation feature. And those who work can use their phones to interact with me at their own convenience, whenever they have the time. Finally, the app allows parents who might not feel comfortable coming inside the school building to find out about their children's progress in a less intimidating format. When I asked Santiago's mother how she felt communicating with me using the app, she replied, "I feel good! I like this app because I can see Santi's behavior everyday (sic) and also is a direct way to communicate with his teachers."

I've been very pleased with the results I've obtained with Class Dojo, and I recommend it to other teachers who want a better, easier way to communicate with the parents of their EL students. 

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Learning How to Look and Listen: Building Capacity for Video Based Social & Educational Research.

Supported by the Spencer Foundation & Arizona State University. Website, visualizations, videography and commentary designed by Ben Rydal Shapiro, Rogers Hall, Frederick Erickson, and A1 Studios © Info.

www.learninghowtolookandlisten.com

Reviewed by Johanna Tigert

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HAVE you ever wanted to be a fly on the wall as scholars such as Barbara Rogoff, Charles Goodwin, Jürgen Streeck, or Kris Gutiérrez watch and analyze classroom interaction? *Learning How to Look and Listen* is a great set of resources for anyone wanting to learn more about how to observe, analyze, and interpret classroom video recordings.

The website provides videos of 17 scholars thinking aloud as they watch the same two-minute clip of a teacher leading a physics lesson to a small group of elementary school students. The teacher, a bilingual English and Spanish speaker, leads the lesson in English but also engages in instructional talk in Spanish with several of the students, who comment on the experiment and make connections while code-switching between English and Spanish.


Each think-aloud video, called an “Individual Viewing Session,” is between 30 and 40 minutes long, and consists of a split screen with the classroom video on one side and the scholar discussing it on the other. In some of the videos, participants discuss their observations with Rogers Hall, another scholar. There is also a “Group Viewing Session,” in which all 17 scholars analyze the classroom video together, as a group. Fourteen of the scholars further clarify their analytical approaches in a traditional conference-presentation format, videos of which are also available on the website. Finally, the whole group of scholars engages in a panel dialogue about the significance of gender and race, generational trends, technological advances, and future directions in video analysis. It is also possible to access just the classroom video together with its transcript, which includes descriptions of the nonverbal communication between the teacher and her students and English translations of classroom exchanges that take

place in Spanish.

As the scholars describe and discuss their observations, a range of different viewpoints unfolds. Some scholars focus on the teacher's talk, while others discuss the use of Spanish

in the lesson. Many of the scholars highlight the significance of the teacher's and students' gestures, body positionings, and proximity to each other and to the lesson materials. Clearly, these aspects of classroom interaction would not be foregrounded to the same degree if the analysis were based only on a transcript of the lesson.

All the scholars view the video multiple times in their individual viewing sessions. With each viewing, the scholars peel back another layer in their analysis, allowing viewers to see how the process of moving from observations to interpretations takes place. For example, you see the scholars begin to interpret the teacher's and students' motives, goals, and classroom histories. Multiple viewings also reveal new details previously left unnoticed or unanalyzed. All of this highlights the importance of recursive analysis of data.

This website is a valuable resource for teachers, teacher educators, and researchers alike. Teachers can use the scholars' analyses as a model for reflecting on their own practice. By video-recording their own lessons and then analyzing them in this manner, teachers can become aware of interactions, patterns, and classroom behaviors that are not readily apparent in the hustle and bustle of everyday teaching. Teacher educators can use the videos to develop pre-service teachers' reflection skills and to illuminate aspects of classroom interaction, such as students' motives, that are frequently unnoticed or misinterpreted by novice teachers. Finally, researchers who use video recordings as their data source will gain a better understanding of how to use the unique aspects of visual data along with verbal interactions to deepen their analysis and interpretation of interpersonal interactions, whether in the classroom or in other contexts. I highly recommend this website to anyone interested in "learning how to look and listen." 

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