Preparing the Way
Teaching ELs in the Pre-K-12 Classroom

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Is anyone in your family bilingual? How about your ancestors? Do you know which languages they spoke? Ask your parents and grandparents about your ancestry and linguistic diversity. Identify the languages spoken, and reflect further here.

Languages spoken on my mother’s side:

Languages spoken on my father’s side:
• Early U.S. languages: Dutch, French, Spanish, English
• Early immigrant languages: Italian, Yiddish, Polish, Greek
• On the rise in the U.S.: Chinese, Arabic, Hindi, Tagalog, Vietnamese
• Melting pot/Sink or swim
• 1968 Bilingual Education Act (BEA) supported bilingualism
• 1978 amendment – ”bilingual” became “English as a second language”
• 1998 California Proposition 227
Benefits of Bilingualism

- **Personal/Social**
  - Traveling
  - Cultural relationships

- **Economic**
  - Greater earning potential
  - High demand for bilingual workers

- **Cognitive**
  - Promotes creative thinking
  - Improves memory
  - More resistant to dementia
• **Bilingualism**: Some degree of proficiency in two (or more) languages
• **Simultaneous bilingualism**: When children learn two (or more) languages from birth
• **Sequential bilingualism**: When an L2 is added after L1 is acquired
• **Additive bilingualism**: When someone maintains development of L1 while acquiring L2
• **Subtractive bilingualism**: When L2 weakens or replaces L1
- **Balanced bilingualism**: Someone with near equal proficiency in two (or more) languages.
- **Dominant bilingualism**: Shows preference for one language over another.
- **Code-switching**: Using elements/words from two different languages within the same conversation or sentence.
- **Translanguaging**: The process when multilingual speakers use their languages as an integrated communication system.
1. Meaningful learning experiences are necessary as opposed to rote memorization.
2. Thorough knowledge leads more likely to transfer.
3. Similarity between the two situations fosters probability of transfer.
4. General principles and rules are more easily transferred than specific facts and information.
5. The number and types of examples and opportunities to practice increase the likelihood that knowledge and skills will be applied in new situations.
6. The longer the time interval between old and new learning decreases the likelihood of transfer.
7. Transfer of learning increases when the circumstances promote and expect transfer. (Ormod, 2012)
Teachers can support L1 to L2 transfer through reading, spelling, vocabulary with cognates, reading strategies, and writing.

- ELs who have a chance to learn and become fluent in two languages progress better than ELs who are in English-only classrooms.
- This is true for ELs who move to English instruction before they are fully developed in their first language oral skills.
- Teachers should encourage ELs to speak their L1.
- Teachers should inform parents that full development of L1 supports learning of L2.
• Teachers should demonstrate sincere interest and learn about ELs’ culture.
• Teachers should label classroom items in two or more languages; classroom rules should be posted in multiple languages.
• Books and tech resources should be multilingual; teacher should teach multilingual songs.
“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way.”

-Frank Smith
Review this resource:

National Association for Bilingual Education

www.esolinhighered.org