Teacher Guidebook for ESL Students

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Ashley Ramo
Introduction

Language is the core of one’s identity, as it is essential in order to competently communicate and interact with other humans. Language preserves culture, and when educators are able to effectively teach English-as-a-Second-Language to students, it conveys respect for that culture. American society is highly culturally pluralistic which brings many languages into the classroom. Students bring their own experiences with them to school, including various native languages and a vast array of levels in English; some may not know a single word in English. Educators will encounter ESL students no matter what the location in the United States may be, whether it is a state near a Spanish speaking country or a region that has a high concentration of migrant workers, English-Language-Learners (ELLs) are extremely relevant. Teachers must embrace and learn from the various cultures that students come from. This is why it is imperative that educators are equipped with knowledge of how to effectively integrate teaching these students academic content and English.

This handbook will give teachers resources and strategies that will help when there are ELLs in the classroom. Spanish is the most prevalent language in the U.S. besides English, so there is a great deal of information about Spanish and Hispanic cultures. If teachers are aware of the processes and potential problems that ELLs must undertake, they will better support their students. By having knowledge of various instructional strategies and resources for ESL students, teachers will become more culturally responsive. By taking advantage of the material presented, there will be a smoother transition for not only the teacher, but the English-Language-Learner as well.
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Dear Families,

Welcome to our school! I am grateful to have your child in my class, as each child adds something special to the class 😊 We must work together to ensure that the maximum amount of learning is done. I understand that every family’s background or situation is unique, so please let me know if I can do anything to help, make accommodations for homework, etc. Please let me know what the best form of communication would be for me to contact you.

Also, someone from the school should be contacting you soon about a Home Language Survey. Please be sure the survey is accurate, as it will help provide the correct amount of support for your child. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I look forward to getting to know your family and teaching your child!

Sincerely,

My Contact Information:
Queridas Familias,

¡Bienvenidos a nuestra escuela! Estoy agradecida de tener a su hijo/a en mi clase, ya que cada niño/a pondrá algo especial a la clase. Nosotros tendremos juntos para asegurar que la máxima capacidad de aprendizaje se esté dando. Entiendo que cada familia tiene su propia situación y es única, por favor dejenme saber si ay algo que puedo hacer para ayudar y hacer arreglos con la tarea. Al igual por favor dejenme saber cual es la major forma de comunicación para contactarlos.

También alguien de la escuela estara contactando los pronto para un questionario de lenguaje. Por favor asegúrese de contestar adecuadamente que eso nos ayudara a proporcionar la capacidad de soporte que su hijo/a necesita. Sientase libre de contactarme con cualquier prejunta. Estoy ansiosa por conocer los mas a la familia y de educar a su hijo/a.

Sinceramente,

Mi información de contacto:
Helpful Information on ELLs & Language Acquisition

Wide Array of English Language Learners

In today’s society, encountering people who are learning English-as-a-Second-Language is inevitable. Just like all children living in the U.S., English-Language-Learners possess the right to a fair and equal education. To start, being knowledgeable of the professionally-recognized phrases commonly used regarding people acquiring a new language include (Curtin, 2009, p. 17):

- **ELL**: English Language Learner
- **ESL**: English as a Second Language
- **Immigrant**: Legally permitted to live and work in the United States. May have a visa, green card (resident alien), work permit.
- **Migrant Status**: Temporary status to work in country.
- **Native**: Born in United States but home language is not English.
- **Refugee**: Individual that is granted political asylum in the United States to escape political situation in home country.
- **NEP**: Non-English Proficient
- **LEP**: Limited English Proficient
- **FEP**: Fluent English Proficient
- **OLPT**: Oral Language Proficiency Test
- **Mainstream**: Regular classroom for native speakers.
- **BICS**: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
- **CALP**: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills

Embracing ELLs in the Classroom

When a child brings a new language into the classroom, it must be seen as an advantage. Children do not have control over the circumstances in which they must endure, therefore
they have every right to be successful in school. Teachers must embrace the differences that children bring into the classroom. Noddings (2005, 2006) states that it must be obligatory for teachers to convey “an ethic of caring” in the classroom. Regarding ELLs, Zimmerman (2000) adds that school and educators must validate and affirm a child’s background, as it is part of their identity. Teachers must make an effort to get to know each student’s situation, which can be more complex with ELLs due to potential cultural barriers, such as language. By making that effort, the family, including the student, will see that the teacher is trying. Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003) tell us how important it is for teachers to develop a set of questions to be asked privately, in order to get to know your ELL students. Make sure students’ names are being pronounced correctly. Learning some simple, helpful phrases in the family’s native language can also go a long way. Curtain (2009, p. 56) suggests considering the following when getting to know ESL students:

- Length of residence in the United States
- Country of Origin (Does the native language have a different alphabet?)
- Ties with their home country (Do they go home for months at time and if so, how does this affect the attendance policies of the district?)
- The political and economic situation in their home country (Are they refugees, from a divided family, or plan to return home anytime soon?)
- Reasons for immigrating to the United States
- Citizenship status may affect school involvement, parents may not trust school officials if they are undocumented.
- Are they voluntary or involuntary immigrants? (All children are involuntary immigrants and may resent their parents bringing them to a place they had no control over.)
- What is the educational system like in their home country?
- Can they read and/or write in their native language?
• Ask the parents about their educational expectations. This is very important as it will significantly impact the motivation of the student and may be a direct conflict with the expectations of the school.
• Consider the pressures and prejudices that ELLs face in a climate of increasing accountability. Do not allow other teachers or parents to blame the student or express negative views about English Language Learners.
• Ask about any prior instruction in English.
• Ask their age upon entry in the United States.
• Ask about previous schooling and classes they enjoyed.
• Determine the nature of the native language to see how closely it correlates with English.
• Ask about the family of the student and the habits of home literacy.

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind that greeting conventions, introductions, and physical gestures are culturally different. “Successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds—especially students from historically marginalized groups—involves more than just applying specialized teaching techniques. It demands a new way of looking at teaching that is grounded in an understanding of the role of culture and language in learning” (Lucas & Villega, 2007).

For the smoothest transition possible and to ensure that students receive the best education possible, there are procedures that must be conducted when an ELL enters a school district. By properly identifying the level of English proficiency of a student, support and resources can be applied appropriately:

1.) It must be clearly established whether or not English is the native language spoken at home. This is done through a Home Language Survey in which the parents or guardians must state the main language spoken at home. If the language indicates
something other than English, then school personnel must inform the ESL teacher or appropriate official, and procedures specific to the district will be undertaken.

2.) After it has been established that English is not the dominant language spoken for the family, a series of tests will be conducted by the ESL teacher or assigned district personnel.

3.) The results from the tests mentioned above will define the student’s English language level. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) may be arranged in order to decide the best placement for the student. This committee can consist of the general education teacher, parent accompanied by interpreter if necessary or representative of the parent, an administrator, and a school official knowledgeable of ESL education.

4.) Depending on the English proficiency level of the student (beginning, intermediate, or advanced) an ESL schedule and placement will be determined. This could range from regular classroom with ESL support to complete ESL services. All necessary documents must be completed and signed and parents must notified in writing of the conclusions reached by the LPAC before the student can receive any ESL services. The amount of time the student will be in ESL programs will be established and any exemptions from state standardized tests will be documented.

5.) The student must be monitored throughout the year to determine progress. The ESL teacher or assigned administrator is in charge of tracking the student’s progress for two years after the student stops receiving ESL services. Even after ESL instruction has stopped, ELLs still need support and monitoring. Students will be integrated into the
general classroom for the most or all of the day. The general education teacher would now be responsible for the academic success of the student (Curtin, 2009).

**Acculturation**

When a family relocates in a country or region that is different from their own, confusion of identity can create uneasy feelings. When becoming acclimated and striving to adapt to a new environment, most people will experience a series of anticipated stages while adjusting to a new culture. Cushner, McClelland & Safford (2003) suggest a “U-Curve” model that represents four phases of acculturation: honeymoon, hostility, humor, and home. In order for appropriate development of each stage throughout the acculturation process, teachers must know where students are at and be empathetic towards their experience (Curtin, 2009, p.50). During the honeymoon phase, which typically lasts up to three months, people tend to still be excited for the newness of their situation. However, the next phase, hostility, can be discomfoting and strenuous. Many grow frustrated with language disparities (it can take up to seven years to become fluent in a second language), feelings of homesickness, and identity confusion, which are all frequent emotions. This can occur from around three months to over a year.

During the hostility phase, which is said to be the most critical phase, students may enter a “silent stage” in the classroom. This stage is critical as it impedes the student from positively furthering their development through the acquisition process. Due to feelings of alienation or pressures of prejudices, students may shut down and choose not to willingly participate during classroom activities. According to Schultz (2003, p. 218):
Silence holds multiple meanings for individuals within and across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and at any given moment in a classroom interaction. In schools, however, silence is often assigned a limited number of meanings. Silence is most often thought of only as the absence of talk, and almost always as problematic rather than potentially powerful.

It is imperative that teachers give ELLs extra time to think what is going on or being said. Rather than taking the silence students may exhibit as a lack of participation or knowledge, teachers should encourage their students to take time to think, particularly the ESL students, as it will take more time to process and/or translate in their minds what is going on. Schultz (2003) also adds how important it is for teachers to keep in mind their students' cultural backgrounds when faced with silence in the classroom:

Student silence is typically interpreted either as result of his or her group membership, or as a result of individual characteristics, rather than a combination of stances toward participation. Teachers either tend to read classroom silences through individual lenses, assuming that the student is shy or reticent to speak, or understand student silences through group lenses, assuming that the student’s group membership translates into a particular style of participation or silence in class. Too often, it seems, the silence of white students is read through an individual while the silence of students of color gets read through a racialized lens. To avoid pitfalls, educators should explore the multiple meanings silence holds for students. As antiracist teachers seeking to understand and shape our teaching in response to our students, we should allow both group membership and individual characteristics to enter the analysis when we are interpreting students' silences.
The assumption that we understand a student’s silence keeps us from asking difficult questions about students both as individuals and as group members and, especially, about classroom dynamics. (p. 219)

In order to promote participation and understand the meaning silence, teachers must allow ELLs the opportunity to interact with native speakers and create an atmosphere where risk taking is encouraged and students are able to make mistakes. Curtin (2009, p. 58) recommends the following strategies for surviving the silent stage:

- Make students feel welcome by showing the native country on a map. Prepare the other students. Find movie or pop stars, sports heroes, and the like that are of interest to your students. It makes the ELL students feel they are a part of your classroom. Be sure to include other students in the discussion as well.
- Assign a buddy to the student. Students are great at taking new students under their wing at recess, in the cafeteria, at the library, etc.
- Non-verbal communication-- the smile is universal. Give students an assigned seat, involve them in every activity, show and point to things, and get them books. Even if they cannot read, they can open the book and follow along. Language and learning is occurring all the while.
- Teach greetings: “Good morning, [student’s name]”. Verbalize simple commands, label your classroom (door, window, plant, desk, chair, etc.). It is a good idea to have a visual or pictures that explain the word as well.
- Eye contact: look directly at your students to communicate with your eyes (unless this would be culturally inappropriate).
- Use drawings and diagrams to communicate meaning.
- Use gestures.
- Get a picture dictionary in the students’ native language so they can point, show, and begin the communication process if needed.
 Eventually the person will begin to understand the new culture and will have the capacity to laugh at earlier frustrations. This is described as the humor phase, which will last from 18 months to two years. An individual may become more willing to participate and is hopeful for the future. Lastly, an individual will begin to build a new sense of acceptance and identity in the home phase. He or she will appreciate the differences between the old and new cultures and will form a sense of belonging.

**Language Acquisition**

Throughout school, students learn about formal speech such as correct grammar and mechanics. The formal language, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALP), is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Silent Stage</th>
<th>Telegraphic Stage</th>
<th>Simple Sentence Stage</th>
<th>Bridging Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>BICS and increasingly proficient in CALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior</th>
<th>Silent Stage</th>
<th>Telegraphic Stage</th>
<th>Simple Sentence Stage</th>
<th>Bridging Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Minimal comprehension</td>
<td>- 1-2 word responses</td>
<td>- Whole sentences are produced</td>
<td>- Mix of simple and complex sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Physical responses only (head shakes, pointing)</td>
<td>- Broken speech</td>
<td>- Basic common grammatical errors</td>
<td>- Produces narration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comprehends key words only</td>
<td>- Mispronounces words</td>
<td>- Able to function in social contexts</td>
<td>- Shows good comprehension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Up to 500 word vocabulary</td>
<td>- Makes errors or omits words</td>
<td>- Up to 3,000 word vocabulary</td>
<td>- Starting to function on academic level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Up to 1,000 word vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Beyond 3,000 word vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Strategies                                | Use physical responses to check comprehension                              | Encourage ALL attempts to answer                                 | Encourage student to use strategies such as retelling, comparing, describing, etc. | Ask "why” questions |
|                                          | - Ask yes or no questions                                                  | - Use visuals                                                    | - Incorporate more writing practice                            | Help student develop academic language |
|                                          | - Use manipulatives                                                        |                                                                  |                                                                    | Engage student in critical thinking skills                       |

| Duration (circumstantial)                 | 2 weeks to 2 months                                                        | 2 to 4 months                                                   | 1 to 2 years                                                   | 3 to 5 years |

*Figure A. Adapted from Grognet, Jameson, Franco, & Derrick-Mescua, (2000).*
the academic language all students need to be successful and further their education. The informal language, known as Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), is the language used in casual conversation with friends or at home (Cummins & Hornberger, 2001). To smoothly transition from BICS to CALP, English must be taught through curriculum content. **Figure A** shows the stages of second language development that will help determine where ELLs stand regarding BICS and CALP, and will in turn help the teacher support the student appropriately.
Structural Differences Between English and Spanish

In order to be proactive classroom managers, teachers will predict issues that may arise as problematic and take measures to prevent them. The same holds true regarding ELLs; teachers must be aware of what may cause more challenges when learning English in order to combat them. By having knowledge of the following issues, teachers will gain a greater understanding of what is typical during the process of being a native Spanish speaker and learning English, which can help drive more effective instruction.

**Morphology and Punctuation**

English and Spanish share a common Latin influence, and the alphabet systems are extremely similar. However, the most obvious visual difference between the two languages is the word structure and punctuation. Accents are utilized in Spanish to stress vowel emphasis: á, é, í, ó, ú. This allows more predictability when sounding out a word in Spanish, which can be troublesome in English due to various short/long vowel sounds, rules, and exceptions. Tildes also exist in the Spanish alphabet with the letter N (ñ), which indicates a (ny) sound, such as piñata is pronounced pin-yat-a.

Another significant difference between English and Spanish is punctuation usage. In Spanish, exclamation points and questions marks are placed at the end of the sentence (same as English), but also upside before the sentence. This is helpful to readers as it easier to adjust prosody when you see the punctuation before reading the sentence.

Examples:

English: What would you like for lunch?

Spanish: ¿Qué quieres para al almuerzo?
English: We won the game!

Spanish: ¡Ganamos el partido!

Furthermore, quotations marks do not exist in Spanish literature. This could cause confusion for an ELL when reading, but a quick lesson on quotations marks would show usage for dialogue, changes in speaker, and direct speech.

Phonology

Another notable apparent difference between English and Spanish is pronunciation and letter sounds. Figure B shows the pronunciation that each letter in the Spanish alphabet makes, which will help teachers better understand why students are mispronouncing certain words or sounds.

Figure B: Alphabet with Spanish Pronunciation

A: ah
B: beh
C: ceh
D: deh
E: eh
F: effe
G: hay
H: hache
I: ee
J: hota
K: kah
L: ele
M: eme
According to Coe, Swan & Smith, Spanish students may make mistakes with the English vowels a, e, and i. The consonants h, j, r, and y may also cause trouble since they have significantly different names in Spanish (1987). An aspect that will prove especially challenging to ELLs is the usage of short and long vowel sounds in English. It will be difficult for these students to even perceive a vowel having the ability to create more than one sound. “Spanish has five pure vowels. The length of the vowel is not significant in distinguishing between words. This contrasts with English, which has 12 pure vowel sounds and the length of the vowel plays an important role. Specific problems include failure to distinguish the sounds in words such as ship/sheep, taught/tot, fool/full, or cart/cat/cut” (Coe, Swain & Smith, 1987). Understanding the differences and similarities in sounds that exist between English and Spanish will help teachers grow awareness as to words or word patterns that will be troublesome to ELLs.
Semantics

Word meanings can also create challenges for ELLs. In addition to trying to continuously translate and decipher meaning, ELLs must take words that do not have direct translations into consideration. There is no one-to-one correspondence in the verb tense. For example, an ELL might incorrectly use a simple tense instead of a progressive or future (Coe, Swain & Smith, 1987). Furthermore, Coe, Swain & Smith (1987) give the following examples of specific potential verb tense issues that may surface with ELLs:

*She has a shower* instead of *She’s having a shower.*

*I help you after school* instead of *I’ll help you after school.*

Verbs are also conjugated in Spanish, much like many verbs in English. However one verb tense in Spanish may have several translations in English:

*comer* = to eat
*como* = I eat, I am eating, I do eat
*comes* = you eat, you are eating, you do eat
*come* = he/she/you(formal) eats, he/she/you(formal) is eating, do eat
*comemos* = we eat, we are eating, we do eat
*coméis* = you all (informal) eat, you all (informal) are eating, you all (informal) do eat
*comen* = they/you all (formal) eat, they/you all (formal) eat, they/you all (formal) do eat

Negatives can also be problematic for students learning English. In Spanish, to make a word or statement negative, “no” is merely added in front of the verb. The lack of an auxiliary in interrogatives or negatives in Spanish may cause ELLs to say statements such as: *I no see her.*
Syntax

The order of noun and adjectives may also arise as difficult for ELLs. In Spanish, adjectives come after nouns, which contrasts with English, where adjectives come before nouns. For example:

English: I see a big house; adjective- big, noun- house

Spanish: *Veo una casa grande*; adjective- *grande* (big/large), noun- *casa* (house)

By anticipating what areas will be challenging for ELLs, teachers can give proper support in said areas and better adjust instruction to meet the needs of students, specifically ELLs.
Strategies for Effectively Teaching ESL Students

Many effective teaching strategies are universal and reach out to various types of learners. The key component to keep in mind is to teach English through academic content. “There is sufficient proven educational research to demonstrate that English Language Learners don’t have to wait until they’ve acquired basic English skills to acquire content” (Echevarria & Graves, 2006). The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model is a great tool to ensure that ELLs are receiving necessary content and language objectives. The eight essential components to the SIOP model are lesson preparation, building background, comprehensible input, learning strategies, interaction, application, lesson delivery, review and assessment (See page 21 for a sample SIOP lesson plan.) The following is a list of strategies utilizing components of the SIOP model and that is aimed specifically towards ELLs; it is compiled and adapted from Curtain (2009):

Planning

- Upon learning there will be ELLs in the classroom, label all common objects in English and Spanish.
- Utilize the SIOP model when lesson planning, as English language objectives are targeted as well. This allows ELLs to remain in the classroom while receiving both content and English instruction.
- Selecting language objectives: consider your ELLs’ age, level of reading comprehension, vocabulary, inference, meaning, new words, and their ability to explain meaning.
- Plan levels of questions to fit the appropriate level of language.

Implementation

- Vocabulary:
o Ask yourself, “What is the essential vocabulary and concepts that my English Language Learners need to have to be able to follow along rather than trying to learn each and every vocabulary word?”

o Write and illustrate words.

o Use drama to explain word meanings.

- Speak slowly.
- Give ELLs plenty of time to process information.
- Check for understanding by gauging students’ faces for confusion or frustration and stop and ask questions frequently.
- Have students rephrase what was just said.
- Use multiple examples.
- Interactive Learning: Ensure your ELLs have the opportunity to work in groups, to manipulate materials during guided practice, to see real examples, to have the lesson made into a game.
- Cooperative Learning: Use visual aids, modeling, demonstrations, graphic organizers, vocabulary previews, predictions, adapted text, peer tutoring, picture books, hands-on techniques, and consideration of students’ affective needs will all help create an environment in which the English Language Learners are more likely to take risks.
- Modify your own language. Do not use sophisticated grammar; simplify and make your language clear as possible.
- Learn to talk, model, point, show, and demonstrate at the same time.
- Activate ELLs’ prior knowledge and experiences by using pictures or by connecting the lesson to examples that are relevant in their lives.
- Accept errors to encourage students to answer.
- Use Total Physical Response (TPR). Asher (1972) states that a person will more easily learn a new language if they physically do something while they are listening and processing. Curtain (2009) adds that, “Use of written directives on cards or a visual are also helpful. Once students respond to verbal commands, a picture with the word written below it can be used. This can be following by writing the word by
itself on the board. Once students have mastered simple commands, the teacher can expand sentences into more detailed sentences using additional adjectives and a more extensive vocabulary” (pp. 128-129).

**Assessment**

- **Beginning Language Level (silent period):**
  Methods of assessment--observation, thumbs up, response board, students’ illustrate understanding, number wheel with pictures, fill in blanks, etc.

- **Intermediate Language Level:**
  Methods of assessment--fill in blanks with short answer, multiple choice, true/false, portfolio, rubrics, use of simple sentences, write simple paragraphs, match vocabulary items, develop test items with increased readability, etc.

- **Transitional (advanced):**
  Methods of assessment--self-check strategies, portfolio, rubrics, essay, grade-level test but still teaching language skills, etc.

- **Tips when Grading:**
  - Give grades for effort, creativity, and improvement.
  - Allow students to select a certain number of questions to answer instead of all of them if the test is long.
  - Give group grades.
  - Give partial credit for questions attempted.
  - Give multiple grades on same assignment (content objectives and language objectives).
  - Write positive remarks and comments in the margins of the paper.


**Culturally Relevant Teaching**

- Have a map of the world indicating the cultural heritages of all students.
- Make welcome signs in the native languages.
- Have art work and books representing other cultures.
- Be aware and respectful toward all cultures that enter your classroom.
**Sample Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol Lesson Plan**

Like mentioned above, the SIOP model will ensure that students are receiving language objectives as well as content objectives. This model will help ELLs improve on their language skills through academic content.

**Idioms (Literal vs. Non-literal Meaning)**

**Background:**
Third grade students would have been studying how reading strategies can enhance comprehension.

**English Proficiency Level:**
Beginning through advanced.

**Common Core State Standards:**
*Grade 3: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use*
- Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
  - Distinguish the literal and nonliteral meanings of words and phrases in context

*Grade 3- Speaking and Listening*
- Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

**Content Objectives:**
Students will define what an idiom is.
Students will explain how having knowledge about idioms can help them better understand a text.

**Language Objectives:**
Students will practice listening to oral reading.
Students will write what a given idiom actually means.
Students will actively participate in whole group discussion.

**Key Vocabulary:**
Idiom
Literal
Non-literal
Materials:

Document Camera
Paper
Writing Utensils

Motivation (Anticipatory Set):
- Students will be seated at their desks or at the carpet. Ask them if they have ever heard someone say, “It’s raining cats and dogs” and if so to raise their hand. To accommodate ELLs, have the expression typed out with pictures on the document camera.
- Call on someone who raised his/her hand and ask whether or not the person who said this actually meant that cats and dogs were falling from the sky. Allow the student to reply.

Presentation:
- Tell students that this expression is an idiom. Open up to the first page of *Monkey Business* and read the definition: “a group of words whose meaning cannot be understood from the meaning of the individual words; expression, peculiar to a specific language, that cannot be translated literally.”
- “We can use idioms, or phrases that are non-literal, to convey more emphasis or add ‘spice’ to our language. These expressions may have made sense when they were dubbed, but now do not make sense when taken literally.”
- Before reading *Monkey Business*, tell students: “I want you to think in your minds whether or not you have heard of these expressions and what you think they may mean when not taken literally. I also want you to also think about why it is helpful to be aware of idioms when reading a text.”
- Read *Monkey Business* and display the pages on the document camera so ELLs, who may have no familiarity with these any phrases, can see with the illustrations how they don't make sense when directly translated.

Practice/Application:
- After completing the story, have students return to their desks if they were seated at the carpet.
- Have students pick one of the idioms from the book and write out what they think it might actually mean.
- Provide paper with space for a drawing so ELLs can draw if needed to help articulate what they are mean. Students may also work in pairs.
- Allow around 15 minutes for the students to work then ask a few to share with the whole group.
- After some students have shared, display the last page *Monkey Business* on the document camera so students can see what these idioms mean.

Review & Assessment:
• Discuss as a class why it would be useful to have knowledge of idioms:
  o If the words are taken literally the correct meaning is not conveyed.
  o If you were learning a new language and translated the words literally, it would not make any sense.
  o You would know what people are talking about when idioms are used.
  o Ask ELL students if they can give an example of an idiom in their native language.
• Come up with a class definition of what an idiom is and display it appropriately in the classroom.
• Have students turn in their work.

Other Idioms to Consider:

• *Chip On Your Shoulder*: being upset or unsettled for something that happened in the past.
• *Piece of Cake*: a task that can be easily carried out.
• *On Pins And Needles*: anxious or nervous, especially when anticipating something.
• *Raincheck*: an offer or deal that is declined right now, but willing to take up on later.
“IT’S RAINING CATS AND DOGS”
Bilingual Books for Children

The following annotated bibliography will be a good starting point for teachers of ELLs, specifically Spanish-speaking.

Culture

This story follows a young girl as she spends Saturdays with her paternal grandparents, who are of European descent, and Sundays or domingos, with her maternal grandparents, who are Mexican. Both cultures are affirmed and she enjoys customs from each set of grandparents.

Prietita, a strong Mexican-American girl, helps her new friend, Joaquín, endure the hardships that immigrants face, such as discrimination, ridicule, and fear of the border patrol.

On her seventh birthday, Magda’s grandmother shows her how to make tortillas. Magda grows frustrated that her tortillas don’t look like her grandmother’s perfectly round ones, but is affirmed by her family that her tortillas are the perfect just the way they are just like she is perfect just the ways she is.

Chave recalls magical childhood memories of visiting his grandma’s ranch in Mexico. He cherishes the time his family spends in Mexico and is extremely proud of his heritage.

This story shows a typical day in the life of a young Latina who helps translate for various family members or neighbors. Although not bilingual, this story is relatable to many children who may be the only English speaker in their household and the responsibility they must undertake.

Times are rough for Puerto Rican families living in NYC during the Great Depression. With the help of a latina librarian, the warmth of Puerto Rican customs surface and bring comfort to the residents in *El Barrio*.

A young Mexican boy prepares to honor his Uncle Fernando on the Day of the Dead. He gathers food, objects, and photographs that bring positive memories of his uncle. Includes information on The Day of the Dead (El día de los muertos), which is celebrated in Mexico and Central America to honor and welcome the spirits of loved ones who have passed.


A young girl struggles as she adjusts to moving to America from Mexico. Despite some of the differences, she grows content in accepting America as her new home.


When Sabrina’s grandmother comes to visit, she brings Mexican chocolate and tells her stories of their ancestors, the Olmecs and Mayas, who were the first to make chocolate from cacao. This would be a great mentor text when teaching about ancestors or Native Americans.

**Folk Literature**


Drought is threatening a Mexican village that relies on crops. Jade journeys to give a gift to the Mountain Spirit in hopes that it will bring rain. The Spirit rewards her by giving her corn. By adding water and flattening the dough, she creates a tortilla. Thus, her tortillas grow popular throughout Mexico and become a staple in everyone’s diet.


A Mexican story of Lucia Zenteno, a beautiful woman with hair that soaks up the water in the local village. This folktale displays human impact on the ways of nature.


This story tells the legend of how the gods came to give food for the first people on earth. The illustrations are vibrant and contain symbols from codices. The book also includes information about the Chimalpopcatl Codice, which is where the story was adapted from.


This Guatemalan folktale tells the story of Black Feather, whose songs are sweeter than birds. Using his songs, he tries to win over the heart of a Mayan Princess. The story contains vibrant illustrations that are based upon ancient Mayan art.
Poetry

This vibrant collection of poems uses rich language and personification to tell the story of a young girl and her lively day with family.

The text has vivid illustrations and honors several Latino Americans who have made a difference. This book would be useful when researching people or Hispanic culture, writing biographies, or as a means of honoring Latino culture.

This poem book describes how the rooster begins each day in the universe. The text is simple so it can be utilized with younger children, yet the poem is rich with personification making it useful with higher elementary grades as well.

The troubles that immigrants face, such as language barrier or poverty, are highlighted in these bilingual poems. This text would be an excellent tool when teaching pattern in poetry or writing verse.

General

A young Puerto Rican girl is struggles at her new school where her teacher gives her a new name. This book reiterates the importance of personal and cultural identity, and why teachers must uphold them.

This magical tale tells the story of a grandmother teaching her granddaughter how to make bizcochitos, a sweet bread, made around Christmas time. She tells about how her father learned to appreciate his parent’s hard work through a butterfly that gives him some sweet bread.

This story shows how huge the impact books can have on children’s imagination and values. A librarian travels with his moving library, *El Biblioburro*, to small villages where books and learning are sparse.
When Anita’s mother sings, it seems as though the world is floating. When her mother stops singing, Anita tries to make her family happy again.

The book is a celebration of *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*, or Children’s Day/Book Day. A child’s world and imagination is limitless within the books.

Tomasa only imagines what it will be like to be free from the machinery that milks her, until one day a bird helps her escape. She is able to explore the world and see things she never would have otherwise.

Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.
The journey of the ingredients that go into *una cazuela*, or pot, are explained starting with the butter that is churned to make cream. The back of the book includes a recipe for rice pudding, which is what all the ingredients listed in the book create.
Web Resources

- **a4esl.org/**
  This site provides grammar and vocabulary activities as well as bilingual quizzes in over 50 languages.

- **brainpopesl.com**
  This resource has a specific program for ESL students and provides units depending on a student’s level proficiency in English.

- **colorincolorado.org**
  A Bilingual web resources that provides activities and advice to communities, schools, and families with research-based information that will enhance instruction for English Language Learners.

- **everythingesl.net**
  Contains unit and lesson plans, teaching tips, and resources for teachers with ELLs. Also includes blogs from teachers with ELLs around the country for everyday insight and support.

- **uen.org/k12educator/ell/**
  This site gives general information, teaching ideas, and resources for ELL educators, general education teachers with ELLs, and students.

- **TESOL.org**
  An international association dedicated to professional development for teaching English to speakers of other languages, as it provides various resources to develop oneself as educator, be informed, and connect with other teachers.


References


