Illinois Committee for Effective Literacy

Accessible and Responsive Literacy Instruction: Grade-Specific Recommendations for Multilingual Learners in Illinois

Grades 9-12

Introduction

Supporting the literacy development of multilingual learners (MLs) in grades 9-12 is a critical and multifaceted endeavor. These students are uniquely challenged with the simultaneous tasks of advancing their English language proficiency while grappling with the high academic demands across all subject areas. Given the diverse course configurations often found at the high school level, it's essential for educators across all content areas to be equipped with effective strategies. The goal is to empower educators to utilize student linguistic assets and actively support linguistic growth, all while effectively scaffolding the complexities of English language and academic content learning. While learners at every grade level should experience a linguistically and culturally supportive environment, meaningful interaction through oracy, and literacy planning for content and language acquisition, the following guidelines will address high-school-specific recommendations.

Key Developmental Characteristics for Grade Levels 9-12

To effectively support high school multilingual learners, it's essential to understand a complex set of developmental characteristics that uniquely impact their learning. Cognitively, these students are ready for abstract thinking and metacognition, yet they simultaneously face the immense challenge of bridging the gap between their social/conversational English and the academic language required for high-level content. This is further complicated by the fact that their prior educational experiences are highly diverse, ranging from strong literacy foundations in their home language to limited or interrupted schooling. At the same time, they are navigating a critical period of identity formation, grappling with their place across multiple cultures and languages. All of this underscores the need for educators to recognize their growing autonomy and future-oriented motivation, ensuring that learning is not only linguistically accessible but also culturally relevant and personally meaningful to empower their success.

Age-Appropriate Teaching and Learning Practices for Grade Levels 9-12

Age-appropriate practices for high school multilingual learners should be academically rigorous, highly collaborative, and relevant to their future goals. Instead of simplified tasks, educators should design complex, project-based learning where students engage in authentic linguistic and content-area inquiry, like conducting a research project or creating a digital portfolio. Teachers can scaffold these projects by facilitating structured academic discourse through debates, Socratic Seminars, and group presentations, providing MLs with essential practice in using academic language in a low-stakes, interactive setting. Leveraging technology is also key, as students can utilize multimodal materials such as videos, podcasts, and interactive simulations to build background knowledge before tackling complex texts. By focusing on higher-level thinking and providing opportunities for students to apply language skills

in meaningful ways, these practices empower high school MLs to not only master content but also to develop the autonomy and confidence needed for future academic success.

Guidelines

Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Learning Environment

Social Emotional Well-Being

To bolster the social-emotional well-being of multilingual high school learners, educators must first understand the unique challenges they face during a critical period of identity and social development. These students navigate the complex stress of acculturation, often feeling like outsiders as they balance their home culture with a new one. This can lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety related to academic and linguistic performance. Instead of focusing on these challenges, a more effective approach is to adopt an asset-based mindset, validating students' multiculturalism as a strength. By acknowledging their ability to function in and draw from two cultural contexts, schools can help these learners build a strong sense of pride and a positive self-image, all while reducing the pressure and trauma they may be experiencing.

Key Concepts	Applications
Stress Management Acknowledge the load that multilingual learners carry and create systems and plans to minimize stress.	**Schedule Carefully** Strategically build students schedules so that not all high load classes are back to back
	Reduce Homework Less homework gives MLs more time for activities that help them acclimate to a new environment, such as spending time with family, working, or participating in extracurriculars, which supports their overall well-being.
	Provide Study Hall Access with an ML Specialist This provides MLs with targeted academic support, as the specialist can clarify assignments and scaffold complex concepts to reinforce classroom lessons. This support also fosters a safe environment for language practice, helping MLs build confidence and crucial self-advocacy skills.
	Teach and Practice Stress-Reduction and Emotional Regulation Strategies - Mindful breathing (e.g., 4-7-8 method) - Grounding exercises - Short stretching breaks - "Calm Down" activity or space
Acknowledge and Validate Their Experience: Don't just see students as learners of a new language; recognize their full identity. They may be navigating a new culture, a different school system, or even trauma from their home country. Validate their linguistic and cultural assets by	**Name Stories** Make a conscious effort to learn and correctly pronounce students' names, signaling respect and inclusion. Create opportunities for students to share name stories as a part of community building at the start of the year.
	Learn about Home Language and Culture Take time to learn about where students are coming from, what language they communicate in at home, and what types of experiences that have had prior to coming to your school. Create spaces and opportunities for students to use their home language and see their home language displayed. Find ways for students to connect with others of similar language and culture backgrounds.

acknowledging their home language and celebrating their background in the classroom. This builds a sense of belonging and respect.	**Safe and Trauma Informed support** Use private check-ins to learn about students' interests, family, and past experiences. This can help you understand the context of their lives and any potential trauma they may have faced without putting them on the spot.
	Use a Calm and Empathetic Tone The tone of a teacher's voice can significantly impact a student's sense of safety. Using a calm, warm, and empathetic tone when speaking to students can de-escalate anxiety and build trust. This is particularly important when a student is showing signs of distress or frustration, as a gentle voice can help regulate their emotions.
Cultivate a Safe and Trusting Environment: High school can be intimidating, especially when you're learning a new language. Some students may have experienced trauma before, during, or after their start in school. Foster a classroom where students feel comfortable taking risks without fear of judgment. This means being a "warm demander"—someone who is both caring and supportive while holding high expectations.	**Predictable Classroom Routines** Students who have experienced trauma often benefit from a predictable and structured environment. By establishing and consistently following clear routines for activities, transitions, and daily tasks, you can reduce anxiety and provide a sense of safety and control. This predictability allows students to feel secure and focus on learning rather than on navigating an unpredictable environment.
	Emotional Vocabulary Explicitly teach multilingual learners specific vocabulary related to emotions, feelings, and self-regulation in English, while also encouraging students to share how these emotions are expressed in their home languages. Use visuals, such as mood meters, check-in surveys, or feelings charts.
	Peer Language Partner Program Pair ML students with proficient English-speaking peers that volunteer for one-on-one or small-group practice. These partnerships can be structured with specific activities or topics to discuss, providing a safe and informal environment for students to practice conversational English and receive real-time support from a peer.
	Cooperative Learning Activities These structured group activities promote teamwork and shared responsibility, ensuring every student has a valuable contribution. Jigsaw activities, for instance, make each student an "expert" on a specific part of a topic. They then teach their peers, making everyone's contribution essential to the group's success. Other activities include "Reciprocal Teaching," where students take turns summarizing, questioning, clarifying, and predicting text, or "Numbered Heads Together," (Kagan & Kagan, 2009) where a teacher asks a question, and students work together to find an answer before one student is called on to respond for the group.
Provide Structured Opportunities for Expression: High school MLs may be hesitant to speak in front of the class due to anxiety or nervousness to try new vocabulary with all eyes on them. Offer structured, low-stakes ways for them to express themselves, using strategies that reduce anxiety and build confidence for future participation.	**Video or Audio Journals** Speaking practice doesn't always have to happen live. Invite students to record brief video or audio journals where they can reflect on a topic. This provides a private, low-stakes way for them to practice their speaking skills, build confidence, and get comfortable with their own voice without the pressure of a live audience.
	"Think-Pair-Share" (Kagan & Kagan, 2009) This strategy breaks down the task of speaking in front of the class. Students first have a private moment to think and write down their ideas ("Think"), then they practice articulating those ideas to a single partner ("Pair"), before finally sharing with the larger group ("Share"). This reduces the pressure of public speaking by providing a rehearsal opportunity.
	Use Sentence Starters and Graphic Organizers For students who struggle with vocabulary or organizing their thoughts, providing a scaffold can be extremely helpful. Sentence starters (e.g., "In my opinion...", "I agree with [name] because...") give them the language they need to begin a contribution, while graphic organizers

	(like mind maps or Venn diagrams) help them visually structure their ideas before they speak or write.
	Assign Roles in Small Group Work Rather than expecting every student to contribute spontaneously, assign specific, pre-defined roles within small groups. For example, one student might be the "Note-Taker," another the "Materials Manager," and a third the "Reporter." This gives each student a clear purpose and a structured way to participate, reducing anxiety about what to say.
	Facilitate Structured Debates and Discussions For more formal speaking opportunities, provide a clear framework. For a debate, give students pre-assigned positions and key vocabulary. For a Socratic seminar, provide a list of questions and phrases they can use to respond to others. This structure helps students participate meaningfully even if they are still developing their spontaneous conversational skills.
Connect Them to the School Community: Isolation is a major threat to social-emotional well-being. Actively encourage and support MLs' involvement in extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports. These activities provide a natural way for them to build relationships, practice language in informal settings, and develop a sense of belonging outside the classroom.	**Help Students Join - Create a Student Activities Directory in Multiple Languages** Develop a comprehensive, multilingual directory of all school clubs, sports teams, and extracurricular activities making things feel easy with a step-by-step approach. Help students understand the process of signing up and what to expect. Use translation resources to create bilingual sign-ups and flyers. Encourage club and sports leaders to create a photo gallery or collection of video clips to introduce the activity they sponsor.
	Pair MLs with Peer Mentors Establish a peer mentoring program that connects new MLs with a student who is already active in a club or sport. The mentor can serve as a guide, helping the ML navigate sign-ups, introductions, and the social dynamics of the group. This "warm handoff" provides immediate social support and reduces the anxiety of joining a new activity alone.
	Highlight and Celebrate ML Participation Actively feature MLs who are involved in school activities in school announcements, newsletters, and social media. Share success stories about their involvement in the robotics club, on the soccer team, or in the drama department. This public recognition validates their participation and sends a powerful message that their presence is valued and celebrated throughout the school community.
	Language and Cultural Support for Extracurriculars Staff Provide training for club advisors and coaches on how to be more inclusive and supportive of ML students. This could include using visual aids, simplifying instructions, or encouraging peer-to-peer communication. Additionally, provide a list of common sports terms or club-specific vocabulary in students' home languages to help them feel more comfortable and confident.
Be Aware of Mental Health Resources: Understand that high school MLs may face unique stressors. Be prepared to connect them and their families to appropriate school and community resources, such as counselors, social workers, or cultural liaisons. Ensure these resources are linguistically and culturally responsive. It's important to approach these	**Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Resource List** Create and regularly update a curated list of mental health professionals, school counselors, and community organizations that have staff fluent in the languages spoken by ML families. Include information on whether these resources offer culturally specific services, as different cultures have varying perspectives on mental health and therapy.
	Collaborate with School and Community Mental Health Professionals Build strong relationships with the school's social workers, counselors, and psychologists. Inform them about the unique challenges faced by ML students, such as acculturative stress, trauma, or the pressure to serve as interpreters for their families. Work together to create a referral process that is easy to navigate and respectful of family privacy and cultural beliefs.
	Informational Sessions on Mental Well-being Organize workshops or presentations on topics like stress management, dealing with academic pressure, and building resilience. These sessions should be offered in multiple languages and in

conversations with sensitivity and an awareness that different cultures have different views on mental health.	a way that normalizes mental health discussions. Frame the topics in a positive, strengths-based manner to reduce stigma and encourage families to participate.
	Train Staff on Recognizing Signs of Distress Provide professional development for all staff—including teachers, administrators, and coaches—on the signs of mental health distress in students. Train them to recognize both the general signs (e.g., changes in behavior, academic decline) and those that may be unique to ML students (e.g., social withdrawal, physical complaints). Emphasize the importance of a sensitive, non-judgmental approach when approaching a student or family about these concerns. There are different cultural norms, connotations, and comfort levels when discussing these personal matters.

Family and Community Connections

Recognizing that a student's social-emotional well-being is deeply connected to their family and community, educators should prioritize creating strong, culturally responsive partnerships with families of multilingual learners. For high school students, whose needs are shifting toward independence, these connections must evolve from simple communication to a collaborative partnership that respects the expertise of families and community members. By intentionally engaging families as assets and leveraging the wisdom of the broader community, schools can build a support system that affirms a student's bicultural identity and reinforces their sense of belonging.

Key Concepts	Applications
Establish Accessible and Consistent Communication Go beyond standard English-only communications. Employ multiple communication channels to ensure families receive and understand vital information. Make it easy for families to communicate with teachers and administrators.	**School-Wide Communication App** Implement a school-wide communication app like **TalkingPoints** or **ClassDojo** that offers automatic, real-time translation for messages.
	Multilingual Section on the Website Create a dedicated, multilingual section on the school website with all key documents, announcements, and calendars translated into the most common languages spoken by families.
	Utilize Interpreters Use a phone-based interpretation service for immediate three-way calls between staff, families, and a professional interpreter. Offer to pay internal staff for interpretation services outside of their regular responsibilities or create a 30 minute block each day in a bilingual staff members schedule, where they can be available to support calls.
	Print Format Provide school calendars and event flyers in print and digital formats, with key information highlighted in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Some families may not readily navigate digital resources and can engage with the school better through printed materials. Translate these in the most common languages of your school population.
Recognize and Value Family Assets View families as partners and experts in their children's lives. Rather than just asking for help, ask how families can contribute their	**Family Expertise Survey** Create a brief survey for families at the start of the school year, available in multiple languages. Ask parents to share their skills, hobbies, cultural traditions, or professional expertise. Use this information to create a database of "family experts" who can be invited to speak in classrooms or lead workshops for high schoolers. This approach moves beyond traditional volunteer roles and recognizes the unique knowledge and value families bring to the school. Your leadership may even discover a new elective idea that reflects the school community!

cultural and linguistic knowledge to the school community.	**"Cultural Corner" in the School Library** Designate a specific area in the school or library to showcase books, art, and artifacts that represent the diverse cultures of the student body. Encourage families to contribute items, share stories about them, or suggest books in their home language. This makes the school environment more reflective of its students and validates their cultural identities.
	Incorporate Family Narratives into the Curriculum In a **history or social studies class**, ask students to interview a family member about a significant historical event from their home country, such as a political change, a natural disaster, or a major social movement. Students can then create a project, podcast, or presentation that connects their family's personal experience to the broader historical context being studied. This makes the curriculum more relevant and authentic to the students' lives.
	Cultural Heritage Celebration Instead of a generic "international night," host a celebration that is planned in collaboration with families. Invite them to showcase their culture through food, music, clothing, and traditional performances. This event should be a collaborative effort, with families leading the planning and execution, which empowers them and highlights their contributions to the school community.
Build Bridges with Community Organizations Schools can't do it all alone. Actively connect families with local community resources such as cultural centers, immigrant and refugee support services, mental health clinics, and after-school programs.	**Community Resource Fair** Instead of simply handing out flyers, organize a resource fair at the school, specifically for ML families. Invite local organizations—such as immigrant and refugee support services, college preparatory programs, and cultural associations—to set up booths. This gives families a chance to meet representatives face-to-face, ask questions, and make a personal connection to a service.
	Student-Led "Community Connector" Program Empower high school students to become liaisons between their peers and local community resources. Train a group of bilingual students to research, vet, and compile a directory of useful organizations. These students can then host "office hours" in the library or cafeteria to help their peers access academic tutoring, college application support, or mental health services.
	Formalize "Warm Handoffs" with Key Partners Go beyond just providing a list of phone numbers. Establish formal partnerships with trusted community organizations. This means having a clear process for a school counselor or liaison to make a direct referral or a three-way call to an organization. For instance, if a family needs legal advice on immigration, the school can make a direct, personal introduction to a vetted legal aid service, ensuring the family doesn't have to start from scratch.
Offer Technical and Navigational Support Recognize that many high school ML families may be unfamiliar with the school system's structure and its digital platforms. Practical support helps reduce frustration and empowers families to be more involved in their child's education.	**Host "Digital Literacy" Workshops for Families** Offer hands-on workshops in the evening or on weekends, with sessions run in different languages. These workshops should focus on specific high school-level tasks, such as navigating the student information system to check grades and attendance, using the school's email system, or completing online forms for college applications and financial aid. Providing this practical, step-by-step guidance in their home language reduces frustration and builds family confidence.
	Create a Student Technology Support Team Establish a program where tech-savvy high school students are trained to assist ML families. These student volunteers can hold weekly "office hours" to help parents with technical issues, from logging into the school portal to troubleshooting a laptop. This peer-to-peer approach is less intimidating for families and empowers students to take on a leadership role.
	Develop a Visual, Multilingual Troubleshooting Guide Create simple, step-by-step visual guides or short video tutorials for common technical tasks. The guides should use screenshots and arrows to walk families through tasks like resetting a

	password or accessing a teacher's online classroom page. These resources, available in multiple languages, offer on demand support that families can access at home at their convenience.

Classroom Physical Space and Routines

For high school multilingual learners, a classroom's physical environment and established routines are as critical as the curriculum itself. To promote language acquisition and academic success, educators should intentionally design a physical space that feels safe and encourages collaboration, moving beyond traditional, teacher-centered layouts. One powerful way to do this is to validate students' linguistic assets by displaying and incorporating their home languages. At this age, students need routines that foster a sense of predictability and independence, empowering them to take ownership of their learning. This includes providing clear pathways for asking questions and seeking support, which can be made more accessible by inviting students to use their home language to brainstorm ideas or collaborate with peers who share their linguistic background. These intentional choices—from the visual display of multiple languages to the strategic use of students' native tongues in learning activities—can transform the classroom into a dynamic, supportive space that facilitates both language growth and academic achievement.

Key Concepts	Applications
Language-Rich & Accessible Physical Space The classroom should visually support language acquisition. This means creating a print-rich environment where students can access and engage with language.	**Display Students' Home Language and English in the Classroom** To create a language-rich and accessible classroom, label classroom items in both English and the languages spoken by students, making everyday objects a simple and constant source of language acquisition. Move beyond a traditional English-only word wall by making it a collaborative, multilingual resource. Instead of just listing academic vocabulary, the word wall can display key terms with their definitions, a simple image, and their equivalent in students' home languages. Highlighting cognates—words that look and sound similar in different languages—provides an easy bridge to new vocabulary. These intentional visual cues create a print-rich environment that not only reinforces new concepts but also validates students' home languages as a valuable asset for learning.
	Strategic Use of Sentence Stems and Anchor Charts Create and display anchor charts with high-frequency sentence stems and frames for different academic functions. These charts serve as accessible scaffolding for students, giving them the language they need to participate in discussions and write independently. For example, a science class might have an anchor chart with stems like "My hypothesis is...," "Based on the data, I can conclude that...," or "In comparison to..." These visual tools empower students to produce language with confidence, reducing the anxiety of a blank page or a silent classroom.
	Culturally Responsive Classroom Library A classroom library should be a dynamic space that reflects and celebrates the identities of all students. Stock the library with a wide range of books that go beyond simple English-only titles. Include a variety of bilingual books and texts that authentically represent students' cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. For high school, this can mean fiction and non-fiction texts that discuss relevant cultural topics or historical events from different perspectives. Having these resources shows students that their heritage is valued and provides them with texts they can personally connect with, fostering a love of reading and a sense of belonging.
Flexible Seating Arrangements High school MLs benefit from varied seating that facilitates different types of interaction. This	**Small-Group Pods or Tables** Arranging desks into small pods or using small-group tables is an effective way to support multilingual learners. This setup encourages peer-to-peer conversation and makes it easy for students to collaborate on tasks. When students are in a small group, they feel more comfortable asking questions and can use their home language to clarify concepts with peers who share their language. This reduces the pressure of speaking in front of the entire class and

allows students to work with peers, use their home language, and receive support in a low-pressure environment.	builds a sense of community.
	U-Shaped or Horseshoe Arrangement A U-shaped or horseshoe seating arrangement is ideal for facilitating whole-class discussions and presentations. This layout allows every student to see both the teacher and their peers, which promotes eye contact and encourages participation. For multilingual learners, this setup can be less intimidating than a traditional row formation because it allows them to follow the flow of a conversation more easily. It also makes it simple for the teacher to circulate and provide one-on-one support without disrupting the entire class.
	Designated Collaboration and Quiet Zones Creating distinct zones within the classroom provides students with options based on their learning needs and comfort levels. A collaboration zone might feature small tables or comfortable seating for group projects and discussions. In contrast, a quiet zone could offer individual desks or carrels where students can work independently without distractions. This flexibility allows multilingual learners to choose a space that best supports their current task, whether they need to engage in peer-to-peer conversation or focus on individual reading or writing.
Predictable Routines & Procedures Consistency is crucial for students who are new to the school or language. Establish clear, predictable routines for daily tasks like entering the classroom, turning in work, and transitioning between activities.	**Visual Daily Agendas** Post a clear, visual agenda for each class period. The agenda should include a list of activities, estimated times, and icons or brief descriptions. Students mentally prepare for what's next, reducing anxiety and allowing them to follow along with the day's flow even if they can't understand everything being said. For instance, a schedule might show "Warm-Up (5 min) 📝," "Group Discussion (15 min) 🗣️," and "Independent Work (20 min) 💻."
	"Entry & Exit" Routines Create a consistent routine for how students enter and leave the classroom. An "Entry Ticket" activity, where students answer a quick question as they walk in, provides a structured start to class. Similarly, a clear "Exit Ticket" routine signals the end of the lesson and gives them a final chance to demonstrate understanding. This consistency provides a sense of control and predictability that reduces cognitive load and fosters independence.
	Non-Verbal Cues and Total Physical Response (TPR) Pair common classroom commands with consistent physical gestures. When you say "sit down," for instance, you can use a downward hand motion. For "open your book," you can mimic the action. This helps MLs associate the spoken word with a concrete action, making them more likely to understand and follow instructions without needing a verbal translation. This strategy reinforces language acquisition through kinesthetic learning.
Visible Progress & Goal Setting Create a physical routine and space for students to see their own learning journey. Post clear learning targets or success criteria on a dedicated board so students know what they are working toward. Establish a simple routine for students to track their progress.	**Public Learning Wall with Success Criteria** Dedicate a prominent wall or board in the classroom to display the unit's learning targets and success criteria. For each unit, write out the goals in a clear, accessible format. For example, "I can write a persuasive paragraph" and "I can use three pieces of evidence to support my argument." This makes the learning process transparent and gives students a clear visual map of what they need to master. To make this especially useful for MLs, also include language objectives. For instance, a language objective could be "I can use transition words like 'therefore,' 'however,' and 'in addition' to connect my ideas."
	Personal "Progress Tracker" Folder Provide each student with a personal folder to track their own progress throughout a unit. This could include a simple checklist of skills, a graph to plot their scores on quizzes or assignments, or a place to store their graded work. By having a tangible record of their own improvement, students can see how far they've come and feel a sense of ownership over their learning journey. Don't let students get lost in their digital spaces without a clear way to track what

	they must do to succeed in the course, and how they are progressing on their content and language goals.
	Goal Setting with Regular Check-ins Guide students to set specific, short-term goals for themselves each week or unit. The goals should be based on their progress tracker data. For example, a student might set a goal to improve their vocabulary on the next quiz. Schedule brief, one-on-one check-ins with students to discuss their goals, celebrate their successes, and help them strategize if they are struggling. This personalized support makes goals feel achievable and builds a strong teacher-student relationship.
Dedicated Resource & Check-in Zones Designate specific areas in the classroom to support student needs. This makes support easily accessible without drawing public attention to the student's needs.	**"Help Desk" or "Resource Zone"** Designate a specific, easily accessible table or shelf where students can find essential tools. This area should contain items like **bilingual dictionaries, grammar reference charts, thesauruses, highlighters, and graphic organizers**. This allows students to get the support they need independently and without interrupting the teacher or drawing attention to themselves.
	Use a Non-Verbal Check-in System Implement a simple, discreet system for students to request help or a private conversation. This could be a small "check-in" box on the teacher's desk where a student can drop a sticky note with their name, or a set of colored index cards they can place on their desk to signal a need for assistance without having to raise their hand publicly.
	Create a "Quiet Corner" or "De-escalation Zone" For students feeling overwhelmed or stressed, designate a quiet area in the classroom with a comfortable chair or beanbag. This area can be stocked with calming items like coloring pages, a timer, or a stress ball. Students can use this space to take a brief, self-regulated break when they feel their anxiety rising, allowing them to recenter and return to the lesson. While these are typically found in elementary classrooms, they are equally effective and needed in spaces for teens.
	Curate a Digital "Resource Hub" Create a dedicated page on the class website or a shared document with links to digital resources. This hub could include access to **online translators, grammar checkers, educational videos with subtitles, and links to relevant language-learning apps**. This provides a wealth of support that ML students can access from anywhere, at any time.
	Establish a "Peer Support Station" Dedicate a space where students who have mastered a concept can be available to provide help to their classmates. This could be a specific table or a designated day where proficient students can act as peer tutors. This not only reinforces the learning of the student doing the explaining but also provides a non-intimidating source of support for those who are struggling.
	Implement a "Frequently Asked Questions" Board Use a whiteboard or poster board to record and answer common questions students ask. For example, "What is a thesis statement?" or "How do I cite a source?" This public resource provides a quick reference for students who may be hesitant to ask a question they think has already been answered. Regularly update the board with new questions and answers as they come up.

Oracy Development and Linguistic Interaction

Emergent Relationship between Oral Language and Reading/Writing/Drawing

For high school multilingual learners, the relationship between oral language and literacy is not linear but an emergent, interconnected process. At this age, students draw on their full linguistic repertoire—their native language, emerging English, and even nonverbal forms like drawing—to construct meaning and express complex ideas. Therefore, educators must recognize that students' developing oral proficiency in any language is a direct asset to their reading and writing skills. By creating opportunities for students to leverage their first language and multimodal communication, teachers can validate their existing knowledge while building bridges to academic literacy in English.

Key Concepts	Applications
Spoken Thought to Written/Visual Expression Establish a routine where oral language is a required first step before writing or drawing. This oral rehearsal builds a bridge between spoken thought and written production.	**Establish a "Talk-to-Write" Routine** This routine makes verbal rehearsal a mandatory first step before any written assignment. For example, before writing a lab report, students must first use an outline to orally explain their procedure, results, and conclusion to a partner. Or, before drafting an argumentative essay, they must verbally state their claim and at least two reasons to a small group. This practice helps them organize their thoughts and builds a bridge between their spoken language and written expression.
	Implement "Reciprocal Teaching" This structured routine turns students into teachers. Before writing, students work in small groups and take turns assuming one of four roles: summarizer, questioner, clarifier, and predictor. For example, a student might summarize a paragraph, a second student asks a question about it, a third clarifies any confusing words or ideas, and a fourth predicts what comes next. This process forces students to orally process and articulate their understanding of a text before writing about it.
	Use a "Sentence Stem Brainstorm" Provide a series of sentence stems on a whiteboard or handout to guide students' spoken thoughts. For example, to prepare for a literary analysis paragraph, a stem might be: "The author shows the character is [adjective] by [action]... This is important because..." By requiring students to complete these stems orally, you help them structure their ideas and practice the academic language needed for the final written product.
	Incorporate Verbal Diagramming Before students draw a diagram for a science lab or sketch a model for a physics problem, have them verbally explain each component and its function to a small group. For example, a student might say, "The first part is the generator, which creates electricity. It's connected to the wires, which carry the electricity to the lightbulb..." This oral explanation solidifies their understanding and helps them visualize the components before they put pen to paper.
	Use Voice Notes as a Pre-writing Tool Allow students to use their phones or a computer to record a voice note where they talk through their ideas for a project or essay. This can be a more comfortable and low-stakes way for them to organize their thoughts. They can then listen back to the recording and transcribe their main points to begin the writing process.
	Create Storyboards or Skits Before writing a narrative or historical account, have students create a short skit or a series of comic panels to act out the key events. This requires them to verbally sequence events and articulate the characters' motivations, building a strong foundation for the written story. It turns the pre-writing stage into a collaborative, engaging activity.

Intentional & Strategic Linguistic Grouping Move beyond random grouping. Intentionally pair or group students to foster linguistic interaction. Consider pairing an ML who is highly proficient in their home language but still developing English with an ML who is more advanced in English. Encourage them to use their home language to clarify complex ideas before attempting to articulate them in English.	**"Linguistic Bridge" Grouping Model** Create small, consistent groups of MLs who share the same home language. This allows them to discuss complex academic concepts, a lab procedure, or a historical debate in their most fluent language. This initial conversation clarifies the content and builds confidence, serving as a "linguistic bridge" before they are expected to produce work in English.
	Form Mixed-Proficiency Project Teams For long-term projects, create teams that include students with varying levels of English proficiency, including native English speakers. Assign specific roles that play to each student's strengths. For example, a student proficient in their home language might be the "Content Expert," responsible for summarizing key ideas, while a more fluent English speaker could be the "Editor" or "Presenter." This structure ensures all students have a vital contribution and provides natural opportunities for peer-to-peer language support.
Themed Academic Talk Routines High school students need to move beyond basic conversational skills. Design and consistently use structured routines for academic talk focused on specific subjects. This explicit practice builds confidence in using academic language aloud.	**Debate Talk Routines** In social studies or civics, establish a formal debate routine. Provide students with a list of sentence starters and academic phrases like, "My evidence supports the claim that..." or "I respectfully disagree with the premise because..." This structured talk gives MLs the specific language needed to articulate complex arguments, helping them engage in sophisticated discourse.
	Procedural Talk in Science Before beginning a lab or experiment, have students orally walk through the steps of the procedure using a structured routine. Encourage them to use academic phrases like, "First, we will observe...", "The data suggests...", and "Our hypothesis was supported/unsupported because...". This practice helps them internalize the process and vocabulary necessary for scientific writing and reasoning.
	Literary Analysis Talk Framework In English class, use a framework for discussing literature. Provide prompts and sentence stems to help students analyze characters or themes. For example, "The author's use of [literary device] conveys the idea that..." or "This quote reveals that the character is [adjective] because...". This routine helps MLs move beyond summary and into a deeper, more analytical conversation about text.
	Mathematical Reasoning Talk Routine In a math class, require students to verbally explain their problem-solving process. Provide a routine with sentence starters like, "My first step was to...", "I know this is correct because...", and "This solution proves...". This practice helps them articulate complex mathematical ideas and prepares them for explaining their work on tests and in group settings.
	Critique and Feedback Talk Protocol For art, design, or project-based learning, establish a protocol for giving and receiving constructive feedback. Provide students with specific phrases such as, "I appreciate how you used [technique]...", "Could you explain your choice for [element]?", or "A suggestion I have is...". This structured talk helps them give thoughtful critiques and learn from their peers without feeling judged.
	Project Pitch Routine In project-based courses, create a routine where students must orally "pitch" their project idea to a small group before beginning. The pitch must include a clear problem statement, proposed solution, and necessary materials. This routine forces them to articulate their ideas concisely and use persuasive language, preparing them for future presentations.

Active Listening & Clarification Routines Explicitly teach and practice active listening skills. For MLs, it's not enough to just "hear" the speaker. Provide them with a pathway to navigate conversations, fill in comprehension gaps, and build confidence in linguistic interactions.	**Clarifying Question Protocol** Teach students a set of sentence starters to use when they don't understand something. Provide a list of prompts like, "Could you please rephrase that?" "Could you give me an example of what you mean by [term]?" or "I'm still a little unclear on the point about..." Post these phrases on a classroom wall so students have a tool to get clarification without feeling like they are interrupting or asking a "dumb" question.
	Pause, Paraphrase, Ask After a teacher gives a set of complex instructions or a new concept is introduced, pause the lesson and have students turn to a partner. The routine is simple: one student paraphrases what they heard in their own words, and the other student listens for clarity. Then, they ask each other a clarifying question before moving on. This ensures they have processed the information before attempting the task.
	Vocabulary Check-in As part of a daily routine, set aside a moment to review new or difficult academic vocabulary. You can use a quick poll or a verbal check-in to see which words students are unsure about. For words that are particularly confusing, have a student who understands it explain the word in their own language or give a quick example. This proactive approach prevents misunderstandings before they become a barrier to learning.
Low-Stakes Performance Pathways High school students are often required to give presentations. Build their confidence by creating a **pathway of low-stakes performances** leading up to a formal presentation. Start with having them present just one sentence or a single fact to a partner. Progress to sharing a paragraph with a small group, then to a short, informal presentation to the whole class. This graduated approach reduces anxiety and provides multiple opportunities for them to rehearse language and receive feedback in a supportive environment.	**Podium Practice** Before a formal presentation, have students practice their speech in a smaller, more intimate setting. They can give their presentation to a single partner, a small group, or even record it on their phone. This low-stakes practice allows them to work out nervousness, get comfortable with their content, and receive constructive, non-judgmental feedback before speaking in front of the entire class.
	Use a "One-Point-at-a-Time" Approach Break down the presentation into individual components. For example, have students present just their introduction one day, their first main point the next, and their conclusion on a third day. This approach focuses their attention on mastering one piece at a time, making the overall task feel less overwhelming and building confidence incrementally.
	Gallery Walk Showcase Instead of a traditional presentation, have students create a poster or visual display of their work. They then stand next to their display as classmates walk around the room. This format encourages one-on-one or small-group conversations, which are less intimidating than public speaking. It allows students to practice explaining their ideas to peers in a more casual, conversational setting.
	Speed-Dating Presentations Organize the classroom so students sit in two concentric circles. Each student on the inner circle presents their work to the student across from them. After a set amount of time (e.g., 2 minutes), one circle rotates, and a new pairing begins. This routine allows students to present their ideas multiple times to different peers in a fast-paced, low-stakes environment, which helps them become more fluid and confident with their content.
	Record and Reflect Have students use their phones or a computer to record a video of themselves giving their presentation. The recording is for their eyes only. This allows them to self-assess their body language, pace, and delivery without the pressure of a live audience. They can watch the video to identify areas for improvement, rehearse, and ultimately build confidence. Not all recordings need to be seen by the teacher or peers. The depth of reflection and notes on improvements over time can be what is reviewed or shared.

	Implement the "TAG" Peer Feedback Model This model provides a simple, structured framework for students to give and receive feedback. After a presentation, students are prompted to give a Tell something you like, Ask a question, and give a suggestion. This clear protocol helps students give thoughtful, actionable feedback, and ensures that the ML student receiving the feedback gets specific, helpful input without feeling overwhelmed.
	Incorporate Peer Feedback via a Rubric Provide students with a simplified rubric to use when they're the audience for a peer's presentation. The rubric should focus on actionable feedback, like "The speaker's voice was clear" or "The presentation was well-organized." This formalizes the peer-to-peer feedback process, making it less intimidating and more helpful.

Engagement and Interaction

For high school multilingual learners, engagement and interaction are not merely supplements to instruction; they are critical components of language growth. Research has consistently shown that genuine, purposeful interaction—both with peers and teachers—is a cornerstone of second-language acquisition, as it provides opportunities to practice and negotiate meaning in authentic contexts. For this age group, who are navigating complex social dynamics and academic demands, these interactions are most powerful when they allow for the flexible use of all their linguistic resources.

Key Concepts	Applications
Leveraging Digital Tools for Oracy Move beyond traditional verbal tasks by integrating technology that lowers the barrier to speaking.	• Utilize **voice recording tools** or platforms like Flipgrid where students can rehearse and record their oral responses. • This strategy allows students to practice their pronunciation, receive peer feedback, and perfect their delivery without the pressure of a live performance. It is particularly effective for students at varying language proficiency levels, as it empowers them to **engage and interact at their own pace** before sharing their polished thoughts.
Structured Academic Discourse	• Design and facilitate highly structured academic discussions, such as **Socratic Seminars** or **collaborative debates**. • Provide students with specific roles (e.g., questioner, summarizer, evidence-finder) and **sentence stems** to guide their contributions. • This framework ensures that all students, regardless of their language proficiency in English, have a clear, active way to participate in the conversation. For example, a student may be responsible for asking a clarifying question, while another provides a one-sentence summary.
Content-Based Role-Playing & Simulations Bring content to life through simulations and role-playing activities that require linguistic interaction.	• Have students act out historical negotiations, a scientific debate about a theory, or a mock trial. Assign students character briefs that include key vocabulary and phrases. • This engagement strategy provides a safe, meaningful context for students to use **academic language in a purposeful and interactive way**, building confidence and fluency through authentic communication.
Physicalizing Opinion & Argument Get students physically engaged to	• Use activities like **Four Corners** or a **Continuum Line**, where students move to a designated area of the room based on their level of agreement with a statement.

express their opinions and practice argumentation.	• This physical action sparks immediate engagement. The real interaction and oracy development comes when they are then asked to **verbally justify their position** to their peers in their group or to those with a different opinion.
Jigsaw and Expert Group Activities Transform reading and research into an interactive, collaborative process.	• Divide a complex text or topic into smaller parts, assigning each group a specific section to become "experts" on. Students read and discuss their section together, often in their home language for deeper understanding. • Ask students to form new "jigsaw" groups where they **teach their peers** the information they learned. This structure ensures every student contributes and interacts meaningfully, leveraging their expertise to support their peers' learning.

Translanguaging Practices

Translanguaging leverages the full linguistic repertoires of multilingual learners, affirming their identities and strengthening their academic skills. Rather than viewing a student's languages as separate systems, educators can create a dynamic learning environment where students strategically use all their languages to deepen their understanding of content, engage in critical thinking, and express complex ideas. By intentionally incorporating translanguaging, teachers validate students' existing knowledge and empower them to build bridges between their home languages and academic English, transforming the classroom into a space where linguistic diversity is an asset for learning.

Key Concepts	Applications
Translanguaging for Cognitive Scaffolding Establish a routine where students are explicitly encouraged to use their entire linguistic repertoire to access new information. This practice leverages their cognitive strengths and validates their home language as a powerful tool for learning and thinking.	**The "Two-Column" Note-Taking Method** This strategy helps students organize and connect information across languages. Students can create a two-column note-taking template. In the left column, they take notes on a lecture or reading in their home language, focusing on capturing the main ideas. In the right column, they write down key vocabulary, new concepts, or a summary in English. This method makes note-taking a fluid process that reflects their thinking and allows them to access information in their most proficient language while simultaneously developing their academic vocabulary and summarization skills in English.
	The Bilateral Brainstorming When introducing a new, complex concept or project, invite students to use their home language to brainstorm ideas on a whiteboard or a shared digital document. This can be done individually or in small groups. They can draw diagrams, map out connections, and write down keywords in their home language. The visual nature of the activity, combined with the freedom to use their most proficient language, helps them organize their thoughts and build a solid conceptual foundation. They can then use their home language notes as a scaffold when writing or discussing the ideas in English.
	Bilingual Texts Provide students with opportunities to both read and create texts that represent their bilingual linguistic repertories. Engage students in reading texts with translanguaging as ways to validate and model their language use. Provide students with opportunities where they can create their own bilingual texts by using translanguaging.
	Translanguaging as Pre-Writing Scaffold During the brainstorming and pre-writing phrase, encourage students to get all of their ideas down (on paper or via a graphic organizer) using their full linguistic repertoire. As students proceed through the writing process, provide them with linguistic support to create a final product that is only in the targeted language (English).

	Multilingual Sentence Stems/Frames Sentence stems/frames are a powerful tool that support students in how to say something in a particular way. Provide students with sentence frames to support both talk and writing by using intentional structures and key vocabulary. Create sentence frames for students to select how they respond in English, home languages, and translanguaging formats. For example: ● I think the main character feels _____ because _____. ● Creo que el personaje principal siente _____ porque _____. ● En mi opinión the main character feels _____ porque _____.
Translanguaging for Collaborative Sense-Making When students work in small groups on a challenging academic task, encourage them to use their home language to discuss the problem, brainstorm solutions, and clarify misunderstandings. This collaborative use of multiple languages allows them to build a deep, shared understanding of the content.	**Home Language Groups** Consider grouping students in similar home language groups for various English Language activities. While they are working, don't police students' language use. Encourage students to interact using their full linguistic repertoires to complete the targeted language activity.
	"Think-Pair-Share" Across Languages Teachers can adapt the classic "Think-Pair-Share" activity to explicitly encourage translanguaging. First, present a complex question or problem and give students a few minutes to think silently in both their home language and English, taking notes in either, and/or both. Then, they pair with a student who shares their home language to discuss their ideas, using whichever language is most comfortable. Finally, they share their collective thoughts with the larger class in English, with the teacher providing support for vocabulary and sentence structure. This process allows them to process and develop their ideas fully before expressing them in their new language.
	Bilingual Peer Feedback Encourage multilingual learners to provide peer feedback to their classmates. By using translanguaging to clarify ideas or suggest edits, students can offer more precise and nuanced feedback, leading to a deeper understanding of the content. This approach not only strengthens their academic work but also validates their linguistic skills, turning their bilingualism into a powerful tool for collaborative learning.
Multilingual Oral Storytelling Encourage students to share personal stories, cultural narratives, or summaries of books using a mix of their home language and English. This low-stakes oral activity is a natural form of translanguaging. It allows students to use the language they need to express themselves most effectively at that moment, building confidence and fostering a sense of community as they share a piece of their identity.	**Community Story Circle** Create a routine where students take turns sharing a short personal or cultural story with a small group. Encourage them to use a mix of their home language and English to tell the story. For example, a student might begin in English and then use their native language to express a specific emotion or describe a cultural detail that is difficult to translate. This low-stakes environment allows for genuine expression and builds confidence in their oral skills.
	"My Life in Six Objects" Have students present a brief personal narrative using six objects that are meaningful to them. They can describe each object and its significance, using their home language to provide richer context for objects that are culturally specific. The presentation can be in a mix of languages, with the goal of communicating their personal story effectively and authentically. This encourages them to be creative and use their full linguistic repertoire.
	Sharing Home Language Sayings Create opportunities for students to share popular sayings or idioms from their home language and help explain what they mean using a combination of their home language and English. Students use their full linguistic repertoires to explore the meaning of the sayings and build up cultural knowledge of their home language and English. For example: In English we say "It's raining cats and dogs" and in Spanish we say "Está lloviendo a cántaros". Both sayings describe that it's raining very hard, but their literal explanations are different.

Enhance Literacy Development Across Content Areas (language arts, math, science, social studies, social emotional, physical and the arts)

In high school, literacy development is not the sole responsibility of a language arts department; it's a shared endeavor that enhances academic success across every discipline. Educators must see themselves as literacy instructors, integrating reading, writing, and vocabulary strategies into their core curriculum, from math and science to social studies and the arts. By intentionally embedding literacy-building practices—such as analyzing discipline-specific texts, explaining complex concepts orally and in writing, and using formative assessments to monitor comprehension—teachers can help multilingual learners meet rigorous academic demands, making curriculum content more accessible while preparing them for college and career readiness.

Key Concepts	Applications
Explicitly Teaching Academic & Domain-Specific Vocabulary Literacy instruction must move beyond ELA. All content-area teachers should explicitly teach academic and domain-specific vocabulary crucial for their subject. This involves identifying key terms and teaching them using a tiered approach. This practice enhances literacy across all subjects by making complex language accessible.	**The Tiered Vocabulary Approach** Teachers should use a tiered approach to explicitly teach vocabulary. This means differentiating between Tier 2 words, which are high-frequency academic words used across multiple subjects (e.g., *analyze, synthesize, conclude*), and Tier 3 words, which are domain-specific terms crucial for a particular discipline (e.g., *photosynthesis, cytoplasm, quadratic equation*). By teaching both with equal intentionality, students build a vocabulary foundation that is both broad and deep. Teachers can use graphic organizers to help students define the word, identify its part of speech, and use it in a sentence.
	Leveraging Cognates and Crosslinguistic Connections To make new vocabulary more accessible, teachers should highlight cognates—words that are similar in English and a student's home language. For a science teacher, this could mean pointing out the similarity between *cellular* and *celular* or *organism* and *organismo*. This strategy validates students' existing linguistic knowledge and provides a familiar entry point to new terms. Inviting students to create personal vocabulary cards that include the word, its definition, an image, and its cognate or equivalent in their home language reinforces this connection.
	The Visual and Contextual Vocabulary Builder Instead of just providing a definition, teachers should use visuals and provide clear context for new vocabulary. For a word like *photosynthesis*, a teacher can show a diagram of the process and use a hands-on activity to demonstrate the concept. For a word like *analyze*, the teacher can model the process by thinking aloud and breaking down a complex problem. This approach helps students connect words to concepts, making them more memorable and understandable.
Curating Multilingual & Multimodal Resources The curriculum should be a rich tapestry of resources, not just a single textbook. Supplement content with texts, videos, and infographics in students' home languages to build background knowledge and deep comprehension before tackling English-only materials. This	**Bilingual Video and Tutorial Library** Build a library of bilingual videos and tutorials for core concepts. Before introducing a new science unit, for example, find a short video in both English and a student's home language that explains the topic. This allows students to build background knowledge and conceptual understanding in their most proficient language first, making it easier to engage with English-only texts later. Video tutorials for lab procedures or math problems are also effective, as they provide a visual and auditory scaffold that can be replayed as needed.
	Primary Source Document Analysis in Home Language Instead of using translated primary sources, find and use authentic historical documents in their original language. For a social studies class, this might involve using a news article, letter, or political cartoon from a student's country of origin. This strategy not only validates their linguistic skills but also provides a more nuanced understanding of the historical context. Students can analyze the source in their home language, discuss their findings, and then present their insights

approach acknowledges students' linguistic assets and makes rigorous content accessible through multiple modalities, enhancing literacy development.	to the class in English, acting as experts on the topic.
	The Multilingual Infographic Project Use infographics to present complex information in a visually accessible way. A teacher can find or create infographics in multiple languages that summarize a unit's key concepts. This is especially useful in subjects like health or economics where data and statistics are central. You can then challenge students to create their own infographics, using both English and their home language to synthesize information. This project is a powerful way for students to demonstrate their biliteracy and their ability to organize information across different languages and modalities.
Disciplinary Literacy as a Core Skill All content teachers should see themselves as literacy teachers. This means explicitly teaching students how to read and interpret texts unique to their discipline. By providing strategies for navigating the specific literacy demands of each subject, you build disciplinary literacy, empowering students to succeed across the board.	**Deconstructing Word Problems in Math** In math, teachers should explicitly teach students how to read and deconstruct complex word problems. This involves breaking the problem into smaller, manageable parts. Students can be taught to first identify key vocabulary, then locate the numbers and quantities, and finally, determine the operation or process required to solve the problem. Using a graphic organizer or a simple checklist can help students systematically approach the problem and move beyond just looking for keywords. This strategy empowers students to tackle the language-heavy aspect of math.
	Reading and Interpreting Scientific Texts in Science Science teachers should teach students how to read discipline-specific texts like lab procedures, data tables, and diagrams. For a lab procedure, a teacher can have students first read the entire procedure silently, then reread it aloud with a partner, and finally, paraphrase each step in their own words before beginning the experiment. To interpret a data table, students can be guided to first read the title and labels on the rows and columns before analyzing the data points. This explicit instruction helps students navigate the specialized vocabulary and format of scientific texts, making complex information accessible.
	Analyzing Primary Sources and Artist Statements in Social Studies and the Arts In subjects like social studies and the arts, teachers should provide strategies for analyzing primary sources and artist statements. For a historical document, students can be taught to first identify the author, date, and purpose of the text before trying to understand its content. In the arts, students can be guided to first identify the artist and the title of the piece, then read the artist's statement to connect the artist's intent with their creative choices. This helps students move beyond simple comprehension and engage in higher-level analysis.
Performance-Based Assessment Move beyond traditional written tests and offer alternative forms of assessment that allow students to demonstrate their learning without being solely judged on their English writing proficiency. These performance-based tasks make learning visible and provide a more accurate measure of a student's content knowledge and literacy development.	**The Digital Showcase** Instead of a traditional essay, students can demonstrate their learning through a digital showcase. This could be a podcast episode, a digital timeline, or a short video. For a social studies unit on a historical period, a student could create a digital timeline with images, dates, and short captions, or record a podcast episode explaining the key events and their significance. These projects allow students to demonstrate their content knowledge and critical thinking skills using visuals and speech, which may be more accessible than long-form written work.
	The Model and Oral Explanation Students can create a physical model and provide a verbal explanation of its function. For example, a student learning about the solar system could build a model and then record a short video or give a presentation explaining the relationships between the planets. This strategy focuses on conceptual understanding and oral communication skills, providing an alternative to a written test. The visual and hands-on nature of the task makes the content more concrete and the assessment more equitable.
	The Multimodal Character Analysis In an English language arts (ELA) class, students can use multimodal projects to analyze characters. Instead of writing a traditional essay, they could record a monologue from a

	character's perspective or create a series of digital art pieces with short, written explanations. For instance, a student could record themselves performing a monologue as a character from a Shakespeare play, or create a character profile using images and short captions to show their understanding of the character's motivations and traits. This allows them to demonstrate their comprehension in a creative way that leverages their strengths beyond formal academic writing.
Integrating Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy The curriculum should not just be culturally responsive, but **culturally sustaining**, meaning it actively values and develops students' cultural competencies. This practice makes all content areas relevant and deeply engaging, which fosters the motivation and confidence crucial for literacy development.	**Proverb and Story-Based Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** For social-emotional learning, teachers can use proverbs or stories from students' heritage to discuss key concepts like resilience, respect, or community. For example, a teacher could ask students to share a proverb from their home language that relates to perseverance. The class can then discuss the proverb's meaning and cultural context. This practice honors students' backgrounds and provides a familiar framework for understanding complex social and emotional ideas, which can be less intimidating than starting with a new, unfamiliar concept.
	Global Games in Physical Education Physical education can be a powerful venue for integrating culturally sustaining pedagogy. Instead of focusing solely on popular American sports, teachers can introduce and teach a sport or game from a student's culture. For instance, a teacher might ask a student to teach the class a popular game from their home country. This gives the student a leadership role, validates their cultural knowledge, and provides an inclusive and active learning experience for everyone. It makes the curriculum relevant and allows students to share a piece of their heritage with their peers.
	The "Community Data" Math Project In a math class, teachers can create a project that uses data from students' home countries. For a statistics unit, students could collect and analyze data on topics relevant to their heritage, such as population growth, economic indicators, or climate trends in their home country. This approach makes abstract mathematical concepts personally meaningful and deeply engaging. It not only reinforces statistical skills but also helps students develop a stronger connection to their cultural background and global identity.

Materials

Material selection, adaptation, and development are crucial for ensuring high school multilingual learners can access complex academic content. Educators must move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach, intentionally choosing and adapting materials that are culturally and linguistically relevant to their students. This involves sourcing and creating content that not only aligns with curriculum and assessment standards but also incorporates home language resources, allowing students to build upon their existing knowledge and cultural schema. By thoughtfully adapting materials to enhance scaffolding and reduce cognitive load, teachers can make rigorous content accessible while simultaneously promoting the literacy skills and conceptual understanding necessary for academic success.

Key Concepts	Applications
Sourcing Culturally and Linguistically Authentic Texts Curriculum materials should be both culturally responsive and linguistically authentic. This means actively seeking out and using texts and media from students' home cultures. These	**The "Voices from Home" Text Collection** Actively curate a collection of culturally and linguistically texts that reflect the backgrounds of students. This goes beyond a single book; it's about sourcing a variety of materials. In language arts, this could mean finding short stories or poems by authors from the students' countries of origin. A social studies teacher might find and use primary source documents, speeches, or historical accounts written in their home language. These materials serve as an entry point for students, allowing them to engage with complex topics from a familiar and culturally relevant perspective.

authentic materials validate students' backgrounds and provide an entry point into the content, which builds a strong cultural schema and motivates engagement with academic topics.	**The Bilateral Primary Source Analysis** In social studies or history, this strategy is particularly powerful. Instead of relying solely on English translations, have students analyze primary sources in their home language. For example, if a unit covers Latin American history, a teacher could provide a historical document or a political cartoon in its original Spanish. Students can work in small groups to analyze the document, discussing its context and message in their most proficient language. This validates their linguistic skills and allows for a deeper, more nuanced analysis of the source's cultural and historical context. The class can then discuss the document in English, with the students serving as experts.
	The "My Story" Multimodal Project Encourage students to bring their own cultural knowledge and media into the classroom. Instead of just reading a teacher-provided text, a teacher can assign a project where students find and present a text or media from their home culture that relates to a class topic. For example, for a unit on climate change, a student might share a documentary, a news report, or a folktale from their home country. For a unit on identity, students could analyze a song or poem in their home language and explain its cultural significance. This strategy makes students experts on the topic, validates their cultural knowledge, and fosters a sense of ownership over their learning.
Leveraging Multimodal and Interactive Materials To reduce cognitive load and enhance accessibility, materials should move beyond traditional text-based formats. Use multimodal resources such as short videos, animations, interactive simulations, and infographics. These materials provide a visual and auditory scaffold, allowing students with varying levels of literacy to engage with complex concepts effectively.	**Video Introduction** Before assigning a complex textbook chapter, use a short, relevant video to introduce the key concepts. For example, in a science class, a teacher could show an animation of the water cycle before students read the accompanying text. This strategy provides students with a visual and auditory schema for the topic, making the subsequent reading less intimidating. It allows students to grasp the core ideas and vocabulary visually, which reduces the cognitive load when they later encounter the same information in written form.
	Interactive Simulations and Virtual Reality Experiences Leverage interactive digital tools to bring abstract or historical concepts to life. In a biology class, students can use a virtual lab simulation to manipulate DNA, or in a history class, they could use a virtual reality experience to explore an ancient city. These tools provide a hands-on, engaging way for students to interact with the content, building a deeper understanding that goes beyond memorization. They allow students to learn through exploration and discovery, which is particularly effective for those who may struggle with traditional text-based learning.
	Infographics and Visual Organizers Instead of asking students to read a long article, present the key information through a visually rich infographic or a graphic organizer. Infographics use a combination of text, images, and charts to convey information in a concise, visually appealing way. This helps multilingual learners quickly identify the main ideas and relationships between concepts without getting lost in dense paragraphs. Teachers can also have students create their own infographics, which is a great way to assess their comprehension and their ability to summarize complex information.
Harnessing Digital Tools for Material Adaptation Leverage digital tools to make existing materials more accessible. Use platforms like Google Docs with built-in translation and text-to-speech features to empower students to independently access content.	**Translation as a Home Language Support** By pasting a complex reading passage into a translation site (can even use Google Docs), students can use the built-in translation feature to view the text in their home language. This allows them to quickly grasp the main concepts without needing to translate every word individually.
	Leveraging Online Adaptation Tools Use online tools and websites to quickly adapt complex articles or academic papers. These platforms can simplify a text by replacing difficult vocabulary with simpler synonyms or by shortening long, complex sentences. For example, a teacher can paste a dense historical document into a simplifying tool to make it more digestible. This allows students to access the core content of the document, and the teacher can then focus on teaching the more nuanced or abstract ideas in class.
	Text-to-Speech The "text-to-speech" function, often available in browser extensions or other integrated apps,

	allows students to hear the English text read aloud. This auditory support helps with pronunciation and reinforces the connection between written and spoken words.
	Using AI Strategically Teachers and students can both leverage artificial intelligence to provide customized, leveled support for multilingual learners. AI tools can help develop scaffolded lessons, texts, and assessments, tailored to diverse language proficiency levels.
Teacher-Crafted Scaffolding and Study Guides Given that many textbooks are not designed for multilingual learners, educators must take an active role in creating their own materials. These teacher-crafted materials are essential for bridging the gap between a student's current proficiency and the high-level content they are required to learn.	**The Side-by-Side Scaffolded Study Guide** Teachers can create scaffolded study guides to accompany complex texts. On one side of the guide, they can list key questions and essential vocabulary from the reading. On the other side, they can provide sentence stems to help students structure their answers. For instance, after a history reading, a question might be "What were the main causes of the war?" The corresponding sentence stem could be "The primary causes of the war were...," providing a clear starting point for students to formulate their response. This reduces the cognitive load and allows students to focus on the content rather than the language required to express it.
	Engineered Text with Visuals and Chunking For difficult passages in a textbook, a teacher can create an adapted version. This involves chunking a long text into smaller, more manageable sections, each with a clear heading. Within each chunk, complex sentences can be rewritten in simpler terms. To further support comprehension, the teacher can add relevant visuals, such as diagrams, charts, or images, that directly correspond to the text. This strategy makes high-level content accessible and helps students build a stronger conceptual understanding.
	Bilateral Vocabulary and Concept Organizer Teachers can create a graphic organizer that helps students bridge new vocabulary and concepts. The organizer could have three columns: the English term, a visual or a simple definition in English, and a space for the student to write the equivalent term or a brief explanation in their home language. This practice encourages students to connect new information to their existing knowledge base, reinforcing their understanding. It also provides a valuable study tool that they can refer back to as they progress through the unit.

Enhance Biliteracy Development and Crosslinguistic Connections

For high school multilingual learners, biliteracy is a valuable asset that deepens conceptual understanding and strengthens academic skills in both English and their home language. Educators should purposefully design curriculum and assessments that encourage students to make explicit crosslinguistic connections, recognizing that language knowledge is transferable. By integrating instructional practices that leverage a student's first language—such as comparing sentence structures, analyzing cognates, or discussing complex ideas in their native tongue before tackling them in English—teachers can promote biliteracy. This approach not only affirms a student's identity but also provides a powerful tool for accelerating their literacy development and enhancing their academic performance across all content areas.

Key Concepts	Applications
Explicitly Teaching Crosslinguistic Transfer Teachers should intentionally design activities that guide students in transferring literacy	**Cognate Connections** In any content area, teachers can begin a new unit by having students identify cognates between English and their home language. This strategy makes vocabulary acquisition more efficient by activating prior knowledge. For example, before a biology unit on the human body, a teacher can provide a list of terms like *skeletal*, *muscular*, *circulatory*, and *digestive*. Students can work in small groups to find the cognate in their home language (*esquelético*, *muscular*, *circulatorio*, *digestivo*). This activity not only builds vocabulary but also visually demonstrates how languages are

skills from their home language to English. This instructional practice capitalizes on students' existing knowledge. This builds biliteracy by showing students their languages are interconnected tools for learning.	interconnected, validating students' linguistic skills.
	Side-by-Side Reading and Annotation This strategy helps students transfer reading comprehension skills from their home language to English. Teachers can provide a short, grade-level appropriate text in English and its translation in the students' home language. As students read the home language text, they can be guided to annotate for key ideas, main characters, or the sequence of events. They then repeat the process with the English text, using the same annotation strategies they just practiced in their home language. This shows students those skills like summarizing, making inferences, or identifying the main idea are universal and can be applied regardless of the language.
	Sentence-Level Translation and Analysis To build biliteracy and improve writing skills, teachers can guide students in a focused translation activity. Students can be given a complex sentence in English and asked to translate it into their home language. The goal isn't just a literal translation, but to analyze the grammatical structures. For example, they can compare word order, verb conjugations, and the use of articles. After translating, students can reverse the process, translating a complex sentence from their home language into English. This strategy highlights the similarities and differences between the two languages, making students more aware of their own writing choices and improving both their reading and writing in English.
Comparative Text Analysis in Two Languages A powerful curriculum practice is to have students analyze the same or similar texts in both their home language and English. Students read a text in their most proficient language to build deep conceptual understanding, then read a corresponding text in their developing language to focus on linguistic features. The assessment comes in a biliterate comparison, where students identify similarities and differences in grammar, tone, or rhetorical strategies.	**Bilingual Poetry and Song Analysis** This strategy is highly engaging and accessible. A teacher can select a poem or song with a strong message or theme that has been translated into English. Students first analyze the text in their home language to grasp its conceptual and emotional depth. They can identify literary devices, the author's tone, and the overall mood. Then, they read the English translation and focus on how the language choices differ. Students can compare how the two versions convey the same feeling or message, noting any shifts in word choice, rhythm, or rhyme.
	Thematic Text Comparison In a social studies or science class, students can read two texts on the same topic—one in their home language and one in English. For example, a student might read an article about climate change in Spanish and then read a similar one in English. The goal is to compare not just the content but also the rhetorical strategies. The assessment can be a Venn diagram or a chart where students compare the texts' key arguments, the type of evidence used, and the tone. This strategy shows students how they can transfer their content knowledge and critical reading skills to a new language.
	Biliterate News Article or Informational Text Critique This strategy helps students develop critical thinking and media literacy skills in two languages. Teachers can select a news story or an informational text on a current event that has been reported in both English and a major news outlet in the students' home country. Students read (or listen to) the article in their home language to build a foundational understanding. Then, they read the English version and focus on how the information is framed. Students compare the point of view, word choice, or headlines used in each article. This teaches them to be aware of how language influences perspective.
Fostering Metalinguistic Awareness Go beyond simply using both languages and encourage students to think and talk about language itself. This metalinguistic awareness is a core component of biliteracy. In all content areas, have students identify	**Linguistic Investigations** This strategy encourages students to actively investigate and discuss language. In any content area, you can give students a set of words related to a topic and have them act as "linguistic detectives." Their task is to identify and discuss the cognates (e.g., *democracy* and *democracia*) and false cognates (e.g., *embarrassed* vs. *embarazada*). This activity can extend to analyzing prefixes, suffixes, or root words shared across languages, helping them see the patterns and logic within vocabulary. It transforms them from passive learners into active observers of language.
	Connotation Conversation This strategy goes beyond literal meaning to explore the cultural and social context of words. In a

linguistic patterns, such as cognates, false cognates, or grammatical structures, across their languages. This high-level practice builds a deeper understanding of how language works.	history or literature class, introduce a complex term like “freedom,” “patriotism,” or “justice.” Ask students to reflect on the word’s meaning and connotations in English and then discuss how its meaning might differ in their home language and culture. For example, the term “patriotism” can evoke different feelings and historical contexts in the United States versus a country with a history of colonialism. This practice fosters a high-level understanding of how language shapes perspective.
	Sentence Structure & Grammar Comparison Instead of simply correcting grammar errors, guide students to compare the grammatical structures of English and their home language. For example, if a student consistently omits subjects in English sentences, a teacher can explain that while Spanish often drops subjects (“Trabajo”), English requires one (“I work”). You can also have students compare the placement of adjectives or the use of verb tenses. This explicit comparison helps students understand the rules of English grammar by connecting it to a system they already know. It demystifies the language and builds a foundational understanding of its structure.
Curriculum Integration through Biliterate Genre Study Design a curriculum unit that centers on a specific genre in two languages.. This practice helps them understand the function and structure of a specific type of text in a biliterate context, which is a powerful step towards true biliteracy.	**Bilingual Scientific Reports** This strategy directly applies the concept to a science curriculum. A unit can be structured around the genre of a scientific report. Students begin by analyzing sample scientific reports in their home language to identify key components: the abstract, introduction, methodology, results, and conclusion. They can discuss the formal tone, objective language, and specific vocabulary used. Next, they read similar reports in English, focusing on how those same conventions are expressed. The final project would be for students to write a short scientific report themselves, with different sections drafted in both languages. This practice builds their understanding of the report’s function and structure in a biliterate context.
	Comparative Literary Analysis In an English language arts (ELA) or world literature class, a genre study could focus on a specific literary form, such as the short story or a persuasive essay. Teachers can select a renowned short story that has been translated into the students’ home languages. Students first read the story in their L1 to understand the plot, characters, and theme without the burden of decoding a new language. Then, they read the English version and focus on the author’s specific word choices, tone, and stylistic elements. The culminating task would be to write a comparative analysis, either a paper or a presentation, on how the two texts use different literary devices to achieve a similar effect. This approach validates their cultural knowledge while strengthening their analytical skills.
	“Journalistic Genre Study” This strategy focuses on the genre of news writing, which is a key part of media literacy. A unit could explore the conventions of a news report, including the headline, lead paragraph (the inverted pyramid structure), and objective tone. Students can read news articles on the same current event from major news outlets in both their home country and the United States. They can compare and contrast the structure, point of view, and type of language used. For example, they might notice that headlines in English are often more direct, while headlines in their home language might be more poetic or sensational. The final task could be to write a short news story about a school event, drafting the headline and lead in their home language and the body in English.
Biliterate Portfolio Assessment Rethink assessment by creating a biliterate portfolio where students can demonstrate their literacy skills in both their home language and English. This approach validates all the students’ linguistic resources and provides a more complete picture of their literacy development, and empowers them to showcase their	**The Reflective Writing Piece** Have students select a piece of writing they completed in their home language, such as a creative story, a personal essay, or a journal entry. They then include this piece in their portfolio alongside a short reflective piece written in English. The English reflection should explain why they chose the piece, what they were trying to communicate, and what they learned from the process. This strategy not only showcases their writing skills in their home language but also assesses their metacognitive awareness and ability to reflect on their own learning in English.
	Bilateral Content Area Summaries In a subject like science or social studies, students can complete a project or lab report in English and include a bilateral summary. This summary, written in both their home language and English, would highlight the key findings, conclusions, or takeaways. This approach demonstrates their conceptual

biliterate identity.	understanding of the content without the pressure of having to produce a full, flawless report in English. It provides a more complete picture of their academic knowledge and validates their ability to transfer learning across languages.
	The Academic Vocabulary Card Set Instead of traditional flashcards, students can create a set of academic vocabulary cards that serve as a living glossary in their portfolio. For each card, they would write the English term on one side and its translation, a definition, and a sentence example in their home language on the other. This strategy moves beyond simple translation by requiring them to actively use the words in context. It provides a tangible way for students to track their vocabulary acquisition and demonstrates their growing linguistic repertoire.

References

Bialystok, E. (2011). Reshaping the mind: The benefits of bilingualism. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology/Revue canadienne de psychologie expérimentale*, *65*(4), 229–235.

Cummins, J. (2001). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.

Cummins, J., & Early, M. (2010). *Identity texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools*. Trentham Books Ltd.

García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. Wiley-Blackwell.

García, O., & Li Wei. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.

Genesee, F., Hamayan, E. V., & Cloud, N. (2017). *Dual language education and the common core*. Caslon Publishing.

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.

Kagan, Spencer & Kagan, Miguel. *Kagan Cooperative Learning.* San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing, 2009

Lewis, G., Jones, B., & Baker, C. (2012). Translanguaging: Origins and Development from the Classroom to a Theory of Change. *Educational Linguistics*, *1*(2), 53-65.

Nieto, S. (2010). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities*. Teachers College Press.

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.

Schleppegrell, M. J., & Go, A. L. (2007). *Analyzing the writing of English learners: A functional approach*. The National Council of Teachers of English.

Shanahan, T., & Shanahan, C. (2008). Teaching disciplinary literacy to adolescents: Rethinking content-area literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, *78*(1), 40–59.

WIDA. (2020). *Reading development and multilingual learners: Research-based guideposts for equitable literacy instruction*. WIDA. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/ReadingDevelopment-MLs-Guide.pdf

WIDA. (2021). *WIDA focus on disciplinary literacy: High-impact practices for multilingual learners*. WIDA. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-Focus-Disciplinary-Literacy.pdf

Wiliam, D. (2011). *Embedded formative assessment*. Solution Tree Press.

Zwiers, J., & Crawford, M. (2011). *Academic conversations: Classroom talk that fosters critical thinking and content understandings*. Stenhouse Publishers.

Zwiers, J., O'Hara, S., & Pritchard, R. (2014). *Common Core standards in diverse classrooms: Essential practices for developing academic language and content knowledge*. Stenhouse Publishers.

FAQ

Common Literacy and Teaching Related Questions at the High School Level

How can I help multilingual learners with academic vocabulary when they have basic English skills?
This is a common concern, especially with newcomer students. The key is to provide explicit vocabulary instruction while also leveraging their existing knowledge. Don't assume they don't know a concept just because they don't have the English word for it. High school multilingual learners often have a deep understanding of academic topics in their home language.

Answer: Research shows that explicit vocabulary instruction is crucial for multilingual learners. This includes directly teaching discipline-specific words (e.g., "photosynthesis") and high-utility words (e.g., "analyze," "interpret") that appear across content areas (Digital Promise, 2023). Use a multimodal approach with visuals, real-world examples, and opportunities for students to practice the new words orally and in writing. Encourage them to connect new English words to cognates and concepts they already know in their home language.

Won't allowing students to use their home language in class prevent them from learning English?
This is a persistent myth rooted in a monolingual mindset. A student's home language is a powerful tool for learning.

Answer: Research on translanguaging shows that it's a powerful pedagogical practice. Rather than viewing languages as separate, this approach recognizes that multilingual individuals have a single, integrated linguistic repertoire (García & Li, 2014; Ofelia García, 2019). Inviting students to use their home language to brainstorm, discuss ideas with peers, or clarify a concept doesn't hinder English acquisition; it supports it. Translanguaging is a "strategic, meaning-making tool" that helps students access and understand complex content, which in turn strengthens their English skills.

My multilingual learners are quiet and don't participate. How can I get them to engage?
Lack of participation is often misinterpreted as disinterest or a lack of understanding. For high school multilingual learners, it's often a sign of anxiety, fear of making a mistake, or cultural differences in classroom expectations.

Answer: Building a safe and low-anxiety classroom environment is critical. A meta-analysis on student engagement in second language learning found that "emotional engagement affects achievement both directly... and indirectly through cognitive engagement" (Okunuki & Kashimura, 2025). This means that when students feel emotionally safe,

they're more willing to take the risks necessary for learning. Promote engagement through collaborative activities, think-pair-share, and small group discussions, which can feel less intimidating than speaking in front of the whole class. Validating students' cultural backgrounds and encouraging peer relationships also builds the emotional security needed for participation.

How do I help students with reading comprehension when they struggle with foundational skills?
Even in high school, some multilingual learners may still be developing foundational reading skills in English. It's crucial not to assume that their struggles are due to a lack of effort.

Answer: First, acknowledge that literacy skills from a student's home language can transfer to English (Reyes, 2012). For students with limited literacy in their home language, a multisensory approach is effective (August & Shanahan, 2006). This can involve using phonics instruction within the context of meaningful text, reading aloud to model fluency, and using visual and graphic organizers to build comprehension. Scaffolding is essential. Provide sentence stems, word banks, and pre-reading activities to activate prior knowledge and vocabulary.

How can I possibly grade writing assignments when multilingual learners' grammar and syntax are so different?
Focusing solely on grammatical errors can be demoralizing and unproductive. High school multilingual learners' writing often reflects the grammar and structure of their first language, which is a natural part of the learning process.

Answer: Shift the focus from grammatical correctness to content and communication. For formal assignments, provide a rubric that prioritizes the ideas, organization, and use of evidence over perfect syntax (University of Minnesota, 2024). Use a process approach to writing, with peer review and teacher-student conferences to provide targeted feedback. A small number of focused corrections on a few specific error types (e.g., verb tense or article usage) is more effective than marking every single mistake (Ferris, 2002).

My multilingual learners seem to understand when I'm speaking, but they can't produce language themselves. What am I doing wrong?
This common observation highlights the difference between receptive (understanding) and productive (speaking/writing) language skills. It can take much longer for a student to feel comfortable producing language.

Answer: This is a normal stage in language acquisition. Students are in a "silent period" where they are absorbing language before they are ready to use it. As Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985) suggests, comprehension precedes production. To encourage production, create low-stakes opportunities for students to practice. Use small group discussions, one-on-one conferences, and non-verbal activities (like drawing, acting, or using graphic organizers) that allow them to demonstrate understanding without the pressure of speaking or writing perfect English.

How do I differentiate instruction for multilingual learners at different proficiency levels in the same class?
High school classrooms are often a mix of newcomers and students who have been in the U.S. for years. One-size-fits-all teaching won't work.

Answer: Implement a differentiated instruction model that provides multiple pathways to learning the same content. For example, use tiered assignments where all students learn the same concept but engage with texts at different reading levels. Provide different levels of scaffolding, such as sentence frames for emerging learners and an open-ended prompt for more advanced students. This approach is supported by research from Tomlinson (1999) who found that differentiating instruction by content, process, and product can effectively meet the needs of diverse learners.

How can I get students to read the complex, academic texts required for my high school curriculum?
Dense academic texts are a major barrier for many multilingual learners. The language is often abstract and the

sentence structures are complex.

Answer: Don't just assign the text; pre-teach it. Before students read, provide an overview of the key concepts and vocabulary. Use a strategy like the jigsaw method where students become "experts" on one section of the text and then teach it to their peers. This breaks down the reading load and promotes collaboration. Additionally, provide a variety of reading materials on the same topic at different Lexile levels, including articles, infographics, and videos. This ensures all students have access to the content regardless of their reading proficiency.

My multilingual learners are not performing well on standardized tests. What am I doing wrong?
Standardized tests are often a major source of frustration because they may not accurately reflect a student's true knowledge and abilities.

Answer: Standardized tests are often linguistically and culturally biased, measuring English proficiency more than content knowledge. While you can't control the test, you can prepare students by teaching test-taking strategies. However, the most effective approach is to focus on building genuine language and content mastery throughout the year. As Dr. Jim Cummins (2000) differentiated, students need to develop both Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), which is conversational language, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which is the academic language needed for school success. Your daily instruction should prioritize developing CALP through rich, academic tasks, which will better prepare them for any assessment.

How can I help multilingual learners with writing in different genres (e.g., persuasive essays, lab reports)?
High school requires students to master a variety of writing genres, each with its own conventions. This can be overwhelming for multilingual learners.

Answer: Make the rules of each genre explicit. Don't assume students understand the structure of an argumentative essay or the formality of a lab report. Provide and analyze mentor texts from that genre, highlighting the specific vocabulary and organizational features. Use a "writing-to-learn" approach by having students write short, low-stakes pieces in a variety of genres. As they become more comfortable, scaffold them into longer, more formal writing. For example, before writing a full lab report, have them simply write a sentence describing the results of an experiment.

Cited Research for Multilingual Learner Education (FAQs)

August, D., & Shanahan, T. (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.

Digital Promise. (2023). *Key practices for teaching academic language*. Digital Promise.

Edutopia. (2025). *Strategies for teaching multilingual learners*. Edutopia.

Ferris, D. R. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language writing*. University of Michigan Press.

García, O. (2019). Translanguaging. In B. E. G. O'Connor et al. (Eds.), *Oxford research encyclopedia of education*. Oxford University Press.

García, O., & Li, W. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Longman.

Okunuki, M., & Kashimura, H. (2025). *A meta-analysis on student engagement in second language learning*. MDPI.

Reyes, S. A. (2012). The transfer of literacy skills from Spanish to English. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *55*(5), 419–429.

Tomlinson, C. A. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: Responding to the needs of all learners*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

University of Minnesota. (2024). *Writing instruction for multilingual learners*. University of Minnesota.