


WELCOMING AND AFFIRMING

Linguistic Diversity



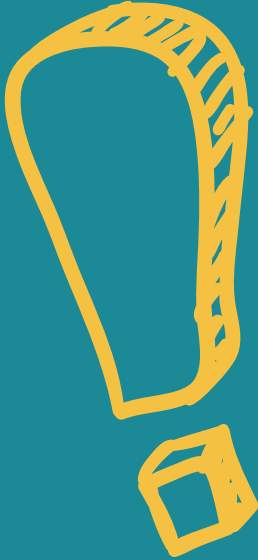
**ACROSS
LEARNING
ENVIRONMENTS**



"What do you want your teacher to know about you?"

- **Swali**

Educational Interpreter



"I want my teacher to know I'm smart in Swahili."

- **Jibu**

ELL Student

Educator Donna M. Neary shares the response of one of her students to an interpreter. EdSurge, September 19, 2022

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN NEW YORK STATE

According to the New York State Education Department (NYSED), 10% of New York State's K-12 public school students (2,512,973) are identified as English language learners (ELLs). Of those 240,035 students, 57% (137,548) are identified as newcomers and 35% (84,919) as developing ELLs. These numbers do not include the growing number of multilingual learners who are not formally designated as ELLs but who have exposure to, speak, or understand an additional language.

In **Buffalo** schools, 18% (5,368) of the students are designated as ELLs. Twenty percent of all ELLs in Buffalo are classified as having a disability (versus 23% of all students).



In **New York City** schools, ELLs constitute 14% (147,185) of the student body. Twenty-four percent of all ELLs are classified as having a disability (versus 18% of all students).

The ELL populations in both New York City and Buffalo schools speak a multitude of languages: 151 languages in New York City and 82 in Buffalo. Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic top the list for New York, while Buffalo's list of most-spoken languages includes Spanish, Arabic, Karen, Somali, Burmese, Swahili, and Bengali.

Note that due to the fact that instruction and assessment have been predominantly in English, ELLs have historically been over-referred to special education services, with few opportunities for ELLs to demonstrate their underlying content knowledge or multilingualism. ELLs are entitled to receive academic interventions when a culturally and linguistically responsive process has been completed by a team of professionals that includes the English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual teacher.

Looking at the picture statewide, we know the following about students identified as ELLs in our classrooms:

- They are predominantly newcomers and developing ELLs.
- They speak multiple other languages at home.
- Approximately 1 of 5 of our ELLs receive special education services.

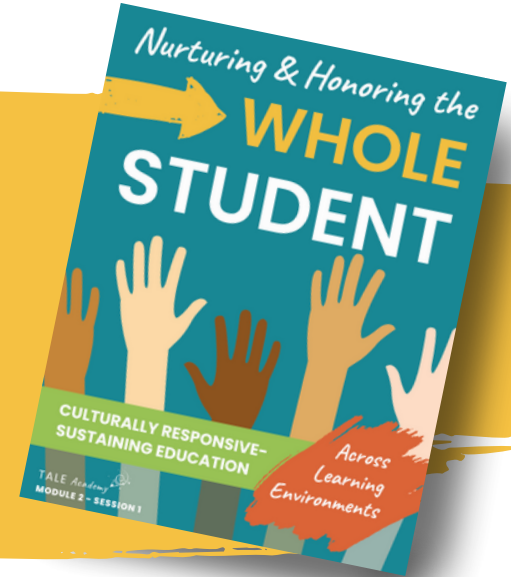
According to NYSED, **newcomers** are "students who have been in our schools for three years or less and are English Language Learners. ELLs in our schools one year or less are exempt from the [NY State English Language Arts Test]" and **developing ELLs** are "students who have received ELL services for 4 to 6 years."



Seeing & Hearing Our English Language Learners

Module 2 of the TALE Academy began with these words:

“To be known is a universal human need. We cannot be fully valued without being known, and we cannot be fully known without being seen and heard as our true, authentic selves.”



Throughout Module 2, we engaged in thinking about culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) and were asked to recognize the significance of our students’ and our own intersectional identities and how intersectionality informs the way that we think, learn, respond, and engage.

In this module, we build on this understanding by developing practices that allow our English language learners (ELLs) to be included in our classrooms, both socially and academically, even when they aren't ready to use English to express what they know. We will shift our mindset by making deliberate attempts to include and honor our students’ linguistic assets at all times. And in future sessions, we will learn about specific strategies we can use in our classrooms.

Brief Refresher: English Language Learner vs. Multilingual Learner

New York State Education Department (NYSED) has distinct definitions for these terms.

English language learners (ELLs) are defined in the Commissioner’s Regulations Part 154 as “students who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak or understand a language other than English and speak or understand little or no English, and require support in order to become proficient in English” and are identified as such using the NYSED-approved identification assessment (currently the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners).

In this module, we will most often use the term English language learner or ELL.

Multilingual learners (MLLs) refers to all students who speak or are learning one or more language(s) other than English, including current ELLs, students who were once ELLs but who have exited out of ELL status, students who were never ELLs but who are heritage speakers of a language other than English, and World Languages students.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: THE ROAD TO PROFICIENCY

Learn how students and families progress through the ELL identification, placement, and proficiency processes.

SCREENING

The district administers the home language questionnaire (HLQ) to find out if the student's home language is other than English. If it is, then an interview in English is conducted with the student and parents/guardians. If the student has disabilities and an IEP, the language placement team reviews the IEP and determines if the student needs accommodations for step 2.

1

INITIAL ELL IDENTIFICATION ASSESSMENT

The student takes the New York State Identification Test for ELLs (NYSITELL) and earns a proficiency score of Entering, Emerging, Transitioning, Expanding, or Commanding. If they score Commanding, they are deemed proficient and do not receive ELL services. If a student scores Expanding or below, the language placement team administers a questionnaire to determine if they have experienced any interruptions or inconsistencies in their formal education to date (known as the SIFE questionnaire). Based on this information, the district notifies the parents of their student's status as an ELL and/or SIFE and then holds a high-quality orientation session with the parents.

2

ELL PROGRAM PLACEMENT

Next, the district places the student in an appropriate program: either bilingual education (BE) or English as a new language (ENL).

3

REVIEW OF ELL IDENTIFICATION DETERMINATION

If a parent or guardian makes the request, a student's identification as an ELL can be reviewed at any time.

4

ELL EXIT CRITERIA

As students gain proficiency, they move toward exiting the ELL program. ELL students take the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) annually to measure their proficiency across the same five levels included in their initial assessment (step 2). Students exit the ELL program when they score Commanding on the test OR (in grades 3-8) score Expanding and score 3 or higher on the state ELA assessment OR (in grades 9-12) score Expanding and score 65 or higher on the state Regents Exam in English.

5

Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success

The New York State Education Department is committed to supporting our ELLs' success by encouraging asset-based principles in their [Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success](#). Their mission for ELLs/MLLs is as follows:

"Attain the highest level of academic success and language proficiency. We strive to ensure that all students' individual educational paths and socio-emotional needs are met in multiple languages leading them to college and career readiness."

1

All teachers are teachers of English language learners and need to plan accordingly.

2

All school boards and district/school leaders are responsible for ensuring that the academic, linguistic, social, and emotional needs of ELLs are addressed.

3

Districts and schools engage all ELLs in instruction that is grade-appropriate, academically rigorous, and aligned with the NYS Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core and P-12 Common Core Learning Standards.

4

Districts and schools recognize that bilingualism and biliteracy are assets and provide opportunities for all students to earn a Seal of Biliteracy upon obtaining a high school diploma.

5

Districts and schools value all parents and families of ELLs as partners in education and effectively involve them in the education of their children.

6

Districts and school communities leverage the expertise of Bilingual, ESL, and Languages Other Than English (LOTE) teachers and support personnel while increasing their professional capacities.

7

Districts and school communities leverage ELLs' home languages, cultural assets, and prior knowledge.

8

Districts and schools use diagnostic tools and formative assessment practices in order to measure ELLs' content knowledge as well as new and home language development to inform instruction.

In this session, we focus on Principle 7.

MINDSET SHIFT *by implementing*

Principle 7

Principle 7 of the Blueprint for ELL/MLL Success forms the foundation for this module. It requires a deliberate mindset shift to question the artificiality of an English-only environment. All students are weaving their linguistic skills – whether dialects, registers, or World Languages – across their learning environments, whether online, on the soccer field, at school, or in the home. Even when teachers do not speak a multilingual learner’s additional language(s), they can still learn more about the linguistic features, common words or phrases, and possible differences with English in order to both honor and support students.

In this module, we will explore how to differentiate lessons and assessments by including practices that honor students’ linguistic diversity. An advantage to working across learning environments is that ELLs may have more access to home language resources, speakers, and models, which can be leveraged for learning.

Old Mindset

REQUIRING ELLS TO USE ENGLISH EXCLUSIVELY

REGARDING THEIR HOME LANGUAGES AS PROBLEMS

DISREGARDING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE GAINED IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGES

CONSIDERING THEIR HOME LANGUAGES TO BE USED ONLY AT HOME

CONSIDERING ELL STUDENTS A SUB-COMMUNITY WITHIN AN ENGLISH SCHOOL

New Mindset

RECOGNIZING MULTILINGUALISM AS AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

REGARDING THEIR HOME LANGUAGES AS INSTRUCTIONAL ASSETS

USING THEIR HOME LANGUAGES TO BRIDGE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE TO NEW KNOWLEDGE

USING THEIR HOME LANGUAGES AND/OR OTHER SCAFFOLDS TO ASSESS STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

USING THEIR HOME LANGUAGES AND COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT TO ENSURE THAT CONTENT IS MEANINGFUL AND COMPREHENSIBLE

ESTABLISHING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

TRANSLANGUAGING PEDAGOGIES

Use students' entire linguistic repertoires as academic resources for meaning-making and learning



[CUNY NYSIEB](#) (NYS Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals) has a useful [publication on translanguaging](#) that provides a framework for understanding the practice:

Translanguaging refers to the language practices of bilingual people...

[and the] flexible use of their linguistic resources to make meaning.

Translanguaging posits that bilinguals have one linguistic repertoire from which they select features strategically

to communicate effectively. ”

This is an important reminder for all educators because sometimes our goals become so content- and language-driven that we forget to recognize and honor what students bring to the learning environment.

EQUITY

ACROSS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



When concerned educational administrators and policymakers asked renowned language researcher [Dr. Jonathan Rosa](#) how best to serve English language learners, he responded:

As a linguistic anthropologist, it is my duty to inform you that language learning has not been a problem for our species historically. And to the extent that it comes to be experienced as a problem, that tells us something very particular about the society in which language learning is taking place and the institutions in that society rather than the learner themselves.

Dr. Rosa believes that educators and schools, as institutions, sometimes experience English language learners as a “problem” by labeling them as “under-resourced, underserved, and/or marginalized learners.” He asks instead:

“What systems produce under-resourced, underserved, and marginalized people? What does this tell us about our society and the institutions that produce and reproduce marginalization? In particular, why do schools respond to English [language] learners by “simply trying to modify the behaviors of the marginalized”?”

Dr. Rosa prompts us to redirect our attention to our schools and educational practices and question how they frame our ELLs. How are ELLs viewed in the school and classroom – as a problem or as an asset? This module will work toward developing a mindset that sees all ELLs as assets and redirecting any talk about “problems” back to our beliefs, instruction, and school policies.

Now It's Your Turn!



After you explore resources on leveraging ELLs' home languages, cultural assets, and prior knowledge, you will complete a brief self-assessment in your workbook to consider your own mindset and experience teaching ELLs.

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About Us

The TALE Academy

The TALE Academy is a series of virtual learning experiences available to all New York State educators and offers a rich array of resources on topics related to teaching across learning environments (TALE). The TALE Academy is built upon the work New York State educators carried out during emergency remote teaching (ERT) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and extends it toward the future. TALE invites educators to think beyond online learning to consider a broader perspective on teaching and learning that encompasses teaching across multiple environments (in-person, remote, and hybrid).

The Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) Project

The TALE Academy is part of a broader New York State Education Department (NYSED) initiative known as Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE). In July 2020, NYSED was awarded funding through the United States Department of Education's Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant to implement TRLE – a three-year project to build the capacity of teachers and educational leaders to effectively implement remote/hybrid learning for all students. Launched in the depths of the pandemic, the first phase of the TRLE project focused on getting resources to the field through partnerships with Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and school districts across the state. The second phase, which began in February 2022, focused on aggregating lessons learned and emerging teaching and learning strategies to address a broader field of practice: teaching across learning environments.

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