

## **Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Diversity Through Children's Literature**

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### **Abstract**

This unit, Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Diversity Through Children's Literature, is designed for kindergarten through second-grade English Learners (ELs). It explores how culturally responsive children's literature can support language development, affirm student identity, and foster classroom engagement. Drawing on theories of culturally responsive pedagogy and second language acquisition, the unit invites students to explore their own stories, family traditions, and sense of belonging through shared reading, discussion, and creative expression.

While several texts were introduced during the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) seminar, others were selected independently to complement the unit's themes of identity, inclusion, and cultural connection. Together, these picture books serve as springboards for scaffolded learning activities across all four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students engage in read-aloud, journaling, oral storytelling, and visual arts projects that help deepen both language proficiency and self-awareness.

The unit also emphasizes family involvement, home-school connections, and accessibility for multilingual learners with disabilities. Aligned with Pennsylvania Core Standards, WIDA ELD Standards, and TESOL goals, this 4–5-week curriculum includes lesson plans, rubrics, and reflection tools. Ultimately, this unit positions literature as a bridge not only to academic success, but also to identity, pride, and community for English Learners.

### **Key Words**

Multilingual Learner, English as a Second Language (ESL), Identity, Diversity, Family Heritage, Storytelling, Home-School Connections, Social-Emotional Learning, Belonging, Culture

### **Unit Content**

Teaching is more than delivering academic standards—it is about creating a classroom where all students are seen, valued, and empowered to share their stories. For English Learners (ELs), who must navigate new academic expectations while preserving their home languages and cultures, this sense of affirmation is especially critical. As an ESL teacher in Philadelphia, I serve students who speak Arabic, Spanish, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Russian, Uzbek, and Ukrainian. These learners arrive with rich cultural identities, yet the texts they encounter often fail to reflect the fullness of their lived experiences.

During the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) seminar on children’s literature, I was introduced to frameworks and research that transformed my understanding of identity-affirming teaching. Rudine Sims Bishop’s (1990) seminal metaphor of books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors made me reflect deeply on the limitations of the literature in my own classroom. Most books offered windows into dominant cultural narratives but rarely served as mirrors for my multilingual learners.

Several key texts from the seminar further illuminated the consequences of this imbalance. In “It Might Be Different from What We Think” (Reid et al., 2021), the authors show how linguistically diverse picture books open space for rich discussions about identity, language, and belonging. Similarly, Paciga’s (2020) Content Analysis of Newbery Medal-Winning Titles revealed how mainstream literary recognition often overlooks culturally and linguistically diverse stories. These insights were echoed in Rodríguez and Kim’s (2020) study, “In Search of Mirrors”, which used Asian Critical Race Theory to analyze the scarcity and superficiality of Asian American representation in picture books from 2007 to 2017. Their work reinforces the urgency of placing truly representative literature in front of all students—not only for Asian American readers, but for every child who has yet to see their story reflected on the page.

This unit is a response to those findings. It integrates culturally responsive texts—some introduced during the TIP seminar, others selected independently—to help students explore themes such as naming, family legacy, immigration, courage, and intergenerational connection. Each book serves as a thematic anchor for a week of instruction and offers opportunities for rich, scaffolded practice in all four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

For many ELs, the disconnect between home and school cultures can result in disengagement or feelings of invisibility. Research shows that when students do not see their cultures, languages, and experiences reflected in the curriculum, they may struggle to engage or feel a sense of belonging in school (Gay, 2010;

Rodríguez & Kim, 2020). This unit seeks to bridge that gap. By honoring students' identities and equipping them with tools to express their stories in English, it repositions them as authors, artists, and leaders in a diverse learning community. In doing so, we foster not only academic growth, but also confidence, pride, and a deeper sense of belonging.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

This unit is grounded in an integrated framework that draws on culturally responsive pedagogy, second language acquisition theory, and social-emotional learning. These foundational theories shape the instructional strategies, text selection, and classroom practices embedded throughout the unit.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy — Gay & Ladson-Billings**

At the core of this unit is the belief that curriculum should reflect and build upon the cultural assets' students bring to school. Geneva Gay (2010) and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) describe culturally responsive teaching not as a single strategy, but as an orientation that recognizes, respects, and incorporates students' cultural backgrounds into all aspects of instruction. This includes validating students' identities, languages, and traditions within the curriculum. The unit embodies this philosophy by using stories and activities that center students' names, families, migration journeys, and cultural practices. Projects such as “My Name Story,” “Family Memory Writing,” and “I Am a Dreamer” allow students to explore and share personal narratives that are often overlooked in traditional curricula.

### **Rudine Sims Bishop – Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors**

Bishop's (1990) widely recognized metaphor frames literature as a powerful vehicle for identity and empathy. Books can act as mirrors (reflecting the reader's own experience), windows (offering insight into others' lives), and sliding glass doors (inviting readers into new experiences). This concept underscores the importance of diverse children's literature, especially for ELs who often do not see themselves represented. The mentor texts in this unit were selected with this framework in mind, offering opportunities for all students—especially ELs—to see their own lives reflected and valued in classroom materials.

### **Jim Cummins – BICS and CALP**

Jim Cummins (1979) distinguished between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). While many ELs acquire conversational English relatively quickly, academic language development often takes years and requires explicit support. This unit intentionally addresses both. Interactive read-aloud and discussions support BICS development, while structured writing tasks, vocabulary scaffolds, and story analysis activities help build CALP. Graphic organizers, sentence frames, and modeled writing tasks are included to help students move from surface-level communication to more complex academic expression.

### **Stephen Krashen – Input Hypothesis**

Krashen’s (1982) Input Hypothesis emphasizes the importance of providing comprehensible input that is slightly beyond a learner’s current language level ( $i+1$ ). In this unit, mentor texts are carefully selected to challenge students without overwhelming them. Scaffolds such as picture walks, vocabulary previews, and guided questioning ensure that students are supported as they engage with complex language and ideas. Multimodal strategies—such as drawing, acting out scenes, and using visual cues—help ELs access the content and expand their expressive language.

### **Lev Vygotsky – Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

Vygotsky (1978) proposed that learning is most effective when instruction targets the Zone of Proximal Development—what a learner can do with guidance but not yet independently. This concept is deeply embedded in the unit’s instructional design. Lessons follow a gradual release model (“I do, we do, you do”) and include opportunities for shared reading, partner talk, and teacher modeling. These strategies help ELs build confidence, take risks, and internalize new language structures with the support of peers and educators.

Together, these theories provide the pedagogical backbone of the unit. By blending culturally responsive teaching with intentional language development strategies, the unit supports ELs academically, linguistically, and emotionally—positioning literature as a bridge to both expression and inclusion.

### **Content Objectives and Standards Alignment**

This unit is designed to support both the academic development and the cultural identity of English Learners in grades K–2. Students will build proficiency across all four language domains—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—while engaging with

literature that reflects diverse cultures, family experiences, and emotional journeys. Aligned with Pennsylvania Core Standards, WIDA ELD Standards, and TESOL goals, the unit helps students grow linguistically, socially, and emotionally.

### **Content Objectives**

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

1. Express aspects of their personal and cultural identity through oral storytelling, drawing, and writing.
2. Use grade-appropriate vocabulary to describe emotions, traditions, and personal experiences.
3. Demonstrate comprehension of read-aloud texts through retelling, group discussions, and visual responses.
4. Participate in structured conversations using sentence frames and language scaffolds.
5. Write short personal narratives or creative texts using modeled structures and collaborative planning.
6. Listen respectfully to peers' stories, offer relevant feedback, and make personal connections.
7. Use multimodal tools—such as illustrations, comic strips, and dramatic play—to share their own narratives in meaningful ways.

These objectives reflect a commitment not only to developing language and literacy skills, but also to fostering students' confidence and voice. They directly support the theoretical foundations of the unit, especially Cummins' emphasis on academic language (CALP), Krashen's input hypothesis, and culturally responsive teaching as described by Gay and Ladson-Billings.

### **Standards Alignment**

#### **Pennsylvania Core Standards (Grades K–2)**

- CC.1.3.K–2.A: Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
- CC.1.4.K–2.M: Write narratives that recount real or imagined experiences.
- CC.1.5.K–2.A: Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults.
- CC.1.5.K–2.D: Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

### **WIDA 2020 English Language Development Standards**

- Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes
- Standard 2: Language for Language Arts
- Standard 5: Language for Social-Emotional Development

WIDA’s Can Do Descriptors are used to differentiate tasks according to students’ current proficiency levels, ensuring equitable access to learning.

### **TESOL Standards**

- Goal 1: Use English to communicate in social settings.
- Goal 2: Use English to achieve academically in all content areas.
- Goal 3: Use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

By aligning high expectations with identity-affirming practices, this unit supports the whole child academically, linguistically, and personally.

### **Teaching Strategies and Implementation Plan**

This unit follows a five-week sequence of thematic learning, with each week centered on one culturally responsive picture book. Although all students engage with the same core text each week, instruction is carefully scaffolded to ensure accessibility for a wide range of English language proficiency levels. Drawing on the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), the unit uses differentiated supports and flexible response options to meet students where they are—and move them forward.

Instruction is structured using the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (“I do, we do, you do”), allowing for explicit modeling, guided practice, and independent work. Strategies align with best practices in English Language Development (ELD), Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

### Weekly Instructional Flow

Day	Focus
Day 1	Pre-reading: background knowledge, vocabulary, connection
Day 2	Interactive read-aloud and comprehension discussion
Day 3	Creative response (drawing, writing or storytelling)
Day 4	Oral presentation, family connection, or creative expression
Day 5 (Optional)	Reflection, journaling, or enrichment activity

### Weekly Themes and Mentor Texts

This unit uses five mentor texts—some introduced during the Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) seminar and others selected independently—to explore themes of identity, family, resilience, and connection. Each book anchors one week of instruction, offering a developmentally appropriate lens into complex emotional and cultural topics.

Texts were chosen not only for their literary quality and cultural responsiveness but also for their accessibility to young multilingual learners. While the books are shared across the class, instruction is differentiated using scaffolds and multimodal supports, ensuring all students engage meaningfully with the content.

Week 1: The Name Jar (Choi, 2001) by Yangsook Choi

**Theme:** Identity, Names, and Belonging

**Language Focus:** Descriptive vocabulary, oral storytelling, sentence structure

This story invites students to reflect on the meaning of their names and the emotions tied to cultural identity and belonging. Activities include drawing and writing personal “name stories,” with optional alternatives for students who may not have a personal naming story (e.g., choosing a name they like or naming a pet or object and explaining why).

Week 2: *Alma and How She Got Her Name* (Martinez-Neal, 2018) by Juana Martinez-Neal

**Theme:** Family Heritage and Storytelling

**Language Focus:** Temporal sequencing, family vocabulary

Students explore family traditions and intergenerational stories. Lessons include family portraits and memory writing. While naming traditions are a focus, the unit acknowledges that cultural emphasis on names varies. Alternatives are offered for students less familiar with or less connected to these traditions.

Week 3: *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018) by Jacqueline Woodson

**Theme:** Courage, Inclusion, and Voice

**Language Focus:** Emotions vocabulary, personal storytelling

This book centers the feelings of being different and finding the courage to share your story. Students write or illustrate a personal “brave moment” and share in a classroom gallery. Those less comfortable with personal stories may describe a character’s bravery or create an imagined narrative to express the theme.

Week 4: *Dreamers* (Morales, 2018) by Yuyi Morales

**Theme:** Immigration, Resilience, and Hopes

**Language Focus:** Past tense, storytelling, reflective language

This autobiographical tale explores the immigrant experience and the hopes carried into new spaces. Activities include “I Am a Dreamer” reflections and a collaborative class book. Bilingual versions and visual storytelling provide scaffolds for comprehension and expression.

Week 5: *Drawn Together* (Lê & Santat, 2018) by Minh Lê & Dan Santat

**Theme:** Generational Connection and Visual Language

**Language Focus:** Visual storytelling, family vocabulary, prepositions

A mostly wordless book, this text highlights cross-generational understanding through art. Students create comic strips to tell a meaningful story—real or imagined—and present their work in a gallery walk. The book’s visual nature supports all language levels and invites creative expression across cultures.



Together, these texts offer mirrors for self-recognition, windows into others' lives, and sliding glass doors to new understanding. They build a foundation for both academic development and personal affirmation in young English Learners.

### **Detailed Lesson Plans for Grades K–2**

This section outlines a five-week unit using children's literature to support language development and affirm cultural identity. Each week is centered on one mentor text and includes activities targeting all four language domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Lessons are scaffolded for multilingual learners and emphasize creativity, reflection, and connection.

Week 1: The Name Jar (Choi, 2001) by Yangsook Choi

Theme: Identity, Names, and Belonging

Language Focus: Descriptive vocabulary, oral storytelling, sentence structure

Core Text: The Name Jar (Choi, 2001) by Yangsook Choi

Cultural Lens: Korean American identity, name assimilation, peer acceptance

#### **Day 1 – Vocabulary & Pre-Reading**

- **Objective:** Build background knowledge and introduce key vocabulary (e.g., jar, name, different, special, choice).
- **Activity:** Picture walk with key vocabulary cards; students discuss their names or nicknames.
- **Support:** Realia (jars, name tags), visuals for vocabulary, sentence frames such as:
  - “My name is \_\_\_\_.”
  - “It is special because \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students unsure about their name's meaning can choose a name they like or invent a name and explain why it is meaningful to them.

#### **Day 2 – Interactive Read-Aloud**

- **Objective:** Connect with characters' feelings and experiences.
- **Activity:** Teacher reads *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001), pausing to ask questions:
  - “Why didn't Unhei share her name at first?”
  - “What did the jar represent?”
- **Support:** Emotion cards; sentence frames such as:
  - “Unhei felt \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”

- “The jar made her feel \_\_\_\_.”

### Day 3 – Writing/Creating “My Name Story”

- **Objective:** Students draw and write about the story behind their name—or create a fictional name story.
- **Activity:** Students create mini booklets titled My Name Story, including drawings and short sentences.
- **Support:** Teacher models her own “name story;” word banks (e.g., family, special, letter, meaning); graphic organizers.
- **Alternatives:** Students without a personal name story may write about:
  - A name they would like to have and why.
  - A family member’s or pet’s name
  - A made-up name with special qualities

### Day 4 – Oral Sharing Circle

- **Objective:** Build oral language and classroom community through storytelling.
- **Activity:** Students share their “name stories” in small groups or with a partner.
- **Support:** Speaking frames:
  - “I chose to write about \_\_\_\_.”
  - “This name is important to me because \_\_\_\_.”
- **Family Extension (Optional):** Students may take home a reflection page to ask family about their name or create a recording of their story at home.

### Day 5 – Reflection & Connection

- **Objective:** Reflect on the power of names and stories.
- **Activity:** Journaling prompt: “One thing I learned about myself or someone else this week...”
- **Support:** Sentence starters, visual supports, bilingual glossary (if applicable).
- **Enrichment:** Create a class “Name Book” or decorate a classroom “Name Wall.”

Week 2: Alma and How She Got Her Name (Martinez-Neal, 2018) by Juana Martinez-Neal

Theme: Family Heritage and Storytelling

Language Focus: Temporal sequencing, family vocabulary

Core Text: *Alma and How She Got Her Name* (Martinez-Neal, 2018) by Juana Martinez-Neal

Cultural Lens: Latinx heritage, intergenerational storytelling, meaning in names.

### Day 1 – Vocabulary & Pre-Reading

- **Objective:** Introduce key vocabulary related to heritage (e.g., ancestor, memory, tradition, family).
- **Activity:** Students draw and label a family portrait (real or imagined). Discussion: “Who is important in your life?”
- **Support:** Visuals, bilingual labels, real photos of families (diverse examples), sentence frames:
  - “In my family, we have \_\_\_\_.”
  - “This is my \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students unfamiliar with their family history can describe someone they admire (real or fictional) or draw a family they imagine.

### Day 2 – Read-Aloud & Mapping

- **Objective:** Understand how Alma’s name connects to her ancestors and family legacy.
- **Activity:** Teacher reads *Alma*, pausing to discuss how each part of Alma’s name tells a story.
  - Guided discussion: “What do you notice about Alma’s name?” “How does her story connect to her family?”
- **Support:** Use a “Name Map” template to show connections between the student and family members (or role models).
- **Differentiation:** Students may use visuals only or describe connections orally with sentence stems.

### Day 3 – Family Memory Writing

- **Objective:** Practice writing about a meaningful family story, memory, or tradition.
- **Activity:** Students complete sentence starters and drawings to create a “Family Memory Page.”
  - Prompts: “In my family, we always \_\_\_\_.” “I remember when \_\_\_\_.”

- **Support:** Model a teacher memory, provide picture cues, and include word banks for food, holidays, and people.
- **Alternatives:** If a student is unsure about a family memory, they may write about a favorite time with a friend, a classroom memory, or an imagined family celebration.

#### Day 4 – Family Sharing Circle

- **Objective:** Build confidence and community through storytelling and listening.
- **Activity:** Students present their memory pages to a partner, small group, or class.
- **Support:** Speaking stems:
  - “This is a memory about \_\_\_\_.”
  - “I chose this because \_\_\_\_.”
- **Family Extension (Optional):** Invite family members to listen to stories or send in a photo or artifact related to the theme of heritage.

#### Day 5 – Reflection & Connection

- **Objective:** Reflect on the importance of family and shared stories.
- **Activity:** Journaling prompt: “One thing I learned about my family or a friend’s family this week...”
- **Support:** Sentence starters, optional audio responses for emerging writers.
- **Enrichment:** Students add their memory pages to a class “Heritage Book” or create a bulletin board of family drawings with labels in English and home languages.

Week 3: The Day You Begin (Woodson, 2018) by Jacqueline Woodson

Theme: Courage, Inclusion, and Voice

Language Focus: Emotions vocabulary, personal storytelling, sequencing

Core Text: The Day You Begin (Woodson, 2018) by Jacqueline Woodson

Cultural Lens: Navigating difference, finding connection, building empathy

#### Day 1 – Feelings Vocabulary & Personal Connection

- **Objective:** Introduce vocabulary for describing emotions (e.g., brave, nervous, proud, lonely, hopeful).
- **Activity:** Students draw a moment when they felt “different” and label it with emotion words.

- **Support:** Emotions chart with visuals; sentence frames such as:
  - “I felt \_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_.”
  - “A time I was brave was \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students who prefer not to share personal stories may describe how a fictional character might feel in a new situation.

## Day 2 – Interactive Read-Aloud & Reflection

- **Objective:** Connect personally with the text and discuss how the characters navigate new experiences.
- **Activity:** Teacher reads *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018), pausing to model emotional inferences and ask:
  - “What does the character feel here?”
  - “When have you felt like that?”
- **Support:** Partner discussion using sentence starters:
  - “This reminds me of \_\_\_\_.”
  - “I felt \_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_.”
- **UDL Option:** Students can draw or act out a scene instead of speaking, if needed.

## Day 3 – Brave Moment Narrative

- **Objective:** Write or tell a story about a personal moment of courage or inclusion.
- **Activity:** Students draw and write a short story using sequencing prompts:
  - “First... Then... Finally...”
- **Support:** Teacher modeling, shared writing, sequencing graphic organizer, vocabulary bank.
- **Alternatives:** For students not ready to share a personal brave moment, offer a fictional prompt: “Create a story about a character who tries something new and feels brave.”

## Day 4 – Story Sharing & Creative Expression

- **Objective:** Share “brave moment” stories through oral language, art, or performance while fostering empathy and inclusion.
- **Activity:** Students choose how they want to share their story:
  - Share aloud in a small Story Circle
  - Partner Pair-Share using visuals and sentence frames.
  - Create a puppet show, comic strip, or dramatic reenactment of their brave moment.

- Record an audio version using classroom devices (optional)
- **Support:** Sentence starters:
  - “I want to tell you about a time I was brave...”
  - “This story is about \_\_\_\_.”

Peer feedback slips with prompts: “I liked how you \_\_\_\_.” / “That reminded me of \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students may choose non-verbal or visual formats (drawing, acting, comic) instead of presenting aloud. Teachers circulate to support students based on comfort and language level.

### Day 5 – Reflection & Connection

- **Objective:** Reflect on the power of voice, storytelling, and inclusion.
- **Activity:** Journal response or class discussion:
  - “How can we make our classroom a place where everyone feels they belong?”
- **Support:** Sentence starters, visuals, group brainstorming chart.
- **Enrichment:** Create a class “Bravery Quilt” with paper squares representing each student’s story.

Week 4: Dreamers (Morales, 2018) by Yuyi Morales

Theme: Immigration, Resilience, and Hopes

Language Focus: Past tense, storytelling, reflective language

Core Text: Dreamers (Morales, 2018) by Yuyi Morales

Cultural Lens: Immigrant experience, family bonds, libraries as gateways to belonging

### Day 1 – Activating Background Knowledge & Vocabulary

- **Objective:** Build background knowledge around immigration and introduce key vocabulary (e.g., immigrant, journey, dream, hope).
- **Activity:** Use a KWL chart (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I Learned) to explore students’ understanding of moving to a new place.
- **Support:** Picture cards, bilingual vocabulary support, visuals of different journeys (maps, suitcases, modes of travel), sentence frames:
  - “Some people move because \_\_\_\_.”
  - “If I moved to a new place, I might feel \_\_\_\_.”

- **Differentiation:** Students with personal immigration experiences may share them if comfortable; others may imagine moving or relate through a storybook character.

## Day 2 – Visual Analysis & Read-Aloud

- **Objective:** Explore how visuals tell a story and analyze the emotions and symbols in Dreamers (Morales, 2018).
- **Activity:** Teacher conducts a visual “read-aloud,” pausing to discuss illustrations, colors, and symbolic images (e.g., wings, books, doors). Students respond to questions like:
  - “What do you think the colors are telling us?”
  - “How is the mother feeling here?”
- **Support:** Emotion cards, visual prompts, sentence starters:
  - “I think she feels \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
  - “The picture shows \_\_\_\_, so I think \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students may choose to respond through drawing or verbal discussion instead of writing.

## Day 3 – “I Am a Dreamer” Project

- **Objective:** Reflect on personal hopes or dreams and express them through writing and illustration.
- **Activity:** Students complete an “I Am a Dreamer” mini-poster or booklet. Prompts: “One day, I hope to \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
  - Students draw themselves achieving that dream.
- **Support:** Teacher models a personal dream; use of vocabulary banks and sentence frames; multilingual labeling encouraged.
- **Differentiation:** Students may dictate their responses, label drawings, or use picture cutouts to express dreams nonverbally.

## Day 4 – Class Book & Presentation

- **Objective:** Build collective classroom identity and celebrate student voices through published work.
- **Activity:** Each student presents their “I Am a Dreamer” page to the class or a small group. Pages are compiled into a class book titled We Are Dreamers (Morales, 2018).
- **Support:** Sentence starters for presentation:

- “My dream is to \_\_\_\_.”
- “I chose this dream because \_\_\_\_.”
- Optional peer-response slips: “I liked your dream because \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students may present in pairs, record audio versions, or choose not to present aloud and instead contribute to the class book privately.

## Day 5 – Reflection & Celebration

- **Objective:** Reflect on resilience, identity, and how our dreams shape our future.
- **Activity:** Whole-class circle or journaling prompt: “What did this book teach us about courage or hope?”  
Optional: Celebrate with a classroom “Dream Wall” display or family sharing gallery.
- **Support:** Visual sentence starters and multilingual supports available.
- **Enrichment:** Invite families to share stories of their own dreams or immigration journeys (in person or via audio).

## Week 5: Drawn Together (Lê & Santat, 2018) by Minh Lê & Dan Santat

- Theme: Cross-Generational Communication and Visual Language  
Language Focus: Visual storytelling, family vocabulary, spatial/prepositional language  
Core Text: Drawn Together (Lê & Santat, 2018) by Minh Lê & Dan Santat  
Cultural Lens: Intergenerational and cross-linguistic relationships; art as a universal language

## Day 1 – Exploring Communication Across Languages

- **Objective:** Reflect on how people connect when they do not speak the same language.
- **Activity:** Class discussion: “Have you ever tried to talk to someone who didn’t speak your language?” followed by drawing or journaling about the experience.
- **Support:** Use real family photos, sentence starters:
  - “I felt \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
  - “We tried to talk by \_\_\_\_.”
 Picture cues and home-language scaffolds available.
- **Differentiation:** Students may write, draw, or act out their responses.

## Day 2 – Wordless Read-Aloud and Inference



- **Objective:** Infer meaning and emotions from illustrations and body language in a wordless picture book.
- **Activity:** Teacher presents *Drawn Together* (Lê & Santat, 2018) as a wordless read-aloud, pausing to ask:
  - “What do you think is happening here?”
  - “How are the characters feeling without using words?”
- **Support:** Emotion cards, visual thinking routines (e.g., “I see, I think, I wonder”), sentence frames:
  - “I think he feels \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
  - “This picture shows \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Responses may be verbal, drawn, labeled, or acted out in pairs.

### Day 3 – Comic Strip Creation

- **Objective:** Express a meaningful memory or story visually using sequential art.
- **Activity:** Students create a 4-panel comic strip about:
  - A special moment with a family member or friend
  - An imagined story where characters connect across language or culture.
- **Support:** Templates with blank panels; model a class example; visual word banks (e.g., hug, talk, art, help)
- **Differentiation:** Students may use pictures only, label key actions, or write short captions with support.

### Day 4 – Gallery Walk & Sharing

- **Objective:** Practice oral presentation and celebrate creative storytelling.
- **Activity:** Students present their comics in a gallery walk. They may stand by their work or let peers circulate and leave feedback using structured slips.
- **Support:** Speaking frames:
  - “My comic is about \_\_\_\_.”
  - “I drew this because \_\_\_\_.”
    - Peer feedback slips: “I liked how you \_\_\_\_.” / “Your story made me think about \_\_\_\_.”
- **Differentiation:** Students who prefer not to present aloud may share in pairs, record a video/audio explanation, or display work silently.

### Day 5 – Reflection and Closing Celebration

- **Objective:** Reflect on the power of communication, creativity, and connection.

- **Activity:** Students complete one of the following prompts:
  - “One thing I learned this week was \_\_\_\_.”
  - “Art can help us \_\_\_\_.”
  - “Even when we don’t share a language, we can still \_\_\_\_.”
- **Support:** Sentence starters, visuals, and optional home-language integration.
- **Enrichment:** Host a classroom highlight or create a digital portfolio of the week's artwork to share with families.

## Assessment Tools and Rubrics

### Pre-Assessment

- **Purpose:** To gauge students’ language proficiency, comfort level with identity- and culture-based content, and background knowledge relevant to unit themes.
- **Format Options (student choice encouraged):**
  - **Option A: Family & Identity Focus**
    - Oral interview prompts:
      - “What do you know about your name or family history?”
      - “What is a tradition your family has?”
    - Drawing or labeling: “My family” or “A memory I like.”
  - **Option B: Personal Interests Focus (Alternative for students unsure or uncomfortable)**
    - Oral interview prompts:
      - “What is something you are good at or enjoy doing?”
      - “What is a place or thing that’s special to you?”
    - Drawing prompt: “What makes me unique?” or “Something I like about myself.”
- **Support:**
  - Sentence frames:
    - “I like \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
    - “I am special because \_\_\_\_.”
  - Visuals and multilingual vocabulary support
  - Option to respond through drawing, speaking, or labeling.
- **Rationale for Flexibility:**

Not all students have access to detailed family histories or may feel comfortable discussing them. These alternatives ensure all learners can engage in self-

expression and language development in ways that feel safe, affirming, and developmentally appropriate.

### **Formative Assessments (ongoing)**

- Sentence frame completions during lessons
- Participation in discussions (partner talks, turn-and-talks)
- Story maps and visual organizers
- Exit tickets: “One thing I learned about myself/others today...”
- Teacher observations and anecdotal notes

### **Summative Assessments**

#### **Personal Narrative Rubric (Grades 1&2)**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Emerging (1)</b>	<b>Developing (2)</b>	<b>Proficient (3)</b>	<b>Advanced (4)</b>
<b>Content</b>	Story unclear	Basic sequence	Clear and personal	Engaging and reflective
<b>Vocabulary Use</b>	Limited or off-topic	Some relevant words	Grade-level appropriate.	Strong, expressive
<b>Sentence Structure</b>	Fragments	Some complete	Mostly complete	Complex and varied
<b>Illustrations</b>	Absent or unclear	Basic drawing	Supports story	Enhances meaning
<b>Oral Sharing</b>	Mumbled, quiet	Audible, limited vocab	Clear, confident	Expressive and fluid

## Self and Peer Assessment Tools

- “I Can” reflection sheets:
  - “I can write about a memory.”
  - “I can talk about a book we read.”
  - “I can listen when others speak.”
- Smiley-face participation chart for student self-assessment
- Peer feedback slips:
  - “I liked how you...”
  - “I connected with your story because...”

## Portfolio Collections

Each student will maintain a portfolio with:

- Writing samples from each week
- Illustrations or comics tied to identity.
- Oral story recordings (optional via Seesaw or other tools)
- Reflections or exit tickets.

This portfolio will be used to track student growth in language use, narrative structure, and identity expression over time.

## Modifications for Multilingual Learners with Disabilities

This unit is designed with inclusion at its core. In recognition of the diverse needs within the ELL population including those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or other learning differences it integrates supports aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and culturally responsive special education practices.

## Instructional Modifications

To ensure accessibility and equity, the following supports may be used based on students' needs:

- **Visual supports** (images, icons, graphic organizers) to aid comprehension of texts and vocabulary.
- **Modified texts** or leveled reading materials for students with decoding difficulties

- **Alternative formats** of response (oral dictation, drawing, labeling instead of full sentences)
- **Task chunking** and simplified step-by-step instructions with visuals.
- **Repetition and rephrasing** of directions in both English and the student's home language where possible.
- **Use of bilingual dictionaries, glossaries, or digital translators** for key concepts

### **Language and Communication Supports**

- **Sentence starters and frames** modeled and practiced before independent work.
- **AAC tools or symbol-based visuals** for students with limited expressive language
- **Visual schedules and behavior cues** to support task transitions.
- **Pairing with a language buddy** for collaborative work

### **Collaborative Teaching & Planning**

- **Co-teaching or push-in support** with a special education teacher when possible
- **Weekly collaboration** with IEP teams and specialists to adapt lesson materials.
- **Embedded IEP goal opportunities**, such as practicing turn-taking or sequencing during partner work

### **Assessment Modifications**

- **Extended time** on writing tasks or presentations
- **Option for oral retelling** or dictated stories instead of written narratives.
- **Simplified rubrics** with fewer criteria or visual indicators
- **Yes/no or multiple-choice questions** with picture support for comprehension checks.

### **Home-School Connection for Students with Disabilities**

- Encourage families to share strengths, interests, and communication preferences.
  - Provide multilingual instructions for take-home activities.
  - Use tech tools like Talking Points or ClassDojo for two-way communication in the family's preferred language.

### Expected Student Outcomes

Implementing this unit is expected to result in both academic and socio-emotional growth for English Learners in grades K–2. Through scaffolded instruction, diverse texts, and creative expression, students will:

#### Academic Outcomes

- **Increase language proficiency** across listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains.
- **Improve narrative writing skills**, using temporal words, descriptive vocabulary, and sentence frames.
- **Demonstrate comprehension** of mentor texts through discussion, visual responses, and retelling.
- **Expand vocabulary**, particularly words related to identity, emotions, and family.
- **Participate in structured oral discussions** using academic sentence starters and peer feedback protocols.

#### Socio-Emotional Outcomes

- **Build confidence in self-expression** through writing, drawing, and storytelling.
- **Develop empathy** by reading stories of others who feel different, displaced, or brave.
- **Feel pride and ownership** over their name, language, culture, and personal history.
- **Experience belonging and validation** in a classroom that affirms their lived experiences.

#### Conclusion

This unit represents my commitment to creating a classroom where English Learners are not only taught the language, but are empowered to share their voices, cultures, and dreams. By anchoring instruction in diverse, identity-affirming texts, this unit goes beyond language acquisition to foster pride, belonging, and connection.

Through scaffolded reading, oral discussion, creative writing, and visual storytelling, students engage with rich themes such as naming, immigration, courage, and intergenerational love. Each lesson offers opportunities to strengthen academic skills while affirming personal and cultural identity. As students move through this unit, they

will see themselves not just as English learners, but as storytellers, artists, and valued contributors to a diverse learning community.

This work has been deeply informed by the TIP seminar on children’s literature and by the powerful theories of Bishop, Cummins, Krashen, Gay, and others. It has also been shaped by the everyday brilliance of my students, who inspire me to teach in ways that reflect their identities, honor their experiences, and expand their opportunities.

By implementing this unit, I will take a step toward making my classroom a place of justice and joy, a space where language is not a barrier but a bridge to expression, learning, and human connection.

### **Teaching Strategies**

This unit uses a blend of culturally responsive teaching, language development strategies, and multimodal scaffolds to support English Learners (ELs) in expressing their identities while building academic language skills. Rooted in research and theory—particularly the work of Gay (2010), Ladson-Billings (1995), Cummins (1979), Krashen (1982), Bishop (1990), and Vygotsky (1978)—these strategies aim to engage students socially, emotionally, and linguistically.

At the heart of the instructional approach is the belief that ELs thrive when their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences are valued and represented. Students bring funds of knowledge into the classroom—names, stories, languages, and traditions—that are not only worthy of inclusion but essential to equitable instruction. As Geneva Gay (2010) argues, culturally responsive pedagogy goes beyond celebration; it must be embedded in curriculum design and daily instruction.

The unit incorporates high-leverage teaching strategies that foster engagement and language acquisition through identity-affirming practices:

- **Read-Aloud with Culturally Relevant Texts:** Each week begins with a mentor text that acts as a mirror or window (Bishop, 1990). The read-aloud is interactive, including visual thinking strategies, comprehension questioning, and emotion-mapping.
- **Oral Language Development:** Structured partner talk, Think-Pair-Share, retelling activities, and storytelling circles support students’ development of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and academic language (CALP), as

defined by Cummins (1979). Sentence stems, word banks, and oral rehearsal precede all writing tasks.

- **Scaffolded Writing Activities:** Narrative and reflective writing tasks are scaffolded through gradual release of responsibility: “I do, we do, you do.” Graphic organizers, modeled writing, and visual planning tools support students at varying proficiency levels.
- **Visual and Multimodal Supports:** Visual aids such as anchor charts, story maps, and bilingual labels are present throughout. Students can express understanding through drawing, comic strips, oral recordings, or dramatizations, aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.
- **Home and Community Connections:** Students are encouraged to bring in stories from their families, interview relatives, or reflect on personal traditions. This strengthens the connection between home and school and affirms students’ multilingual and multicultural identities.
- **Collaborative and Social Learning:** Group activities such as shared storytelling, class books, and gallery walks provide opportunities for social interaction, peer modeling, and respectful listening. These moments build community and reinforce speaking and listening standards.
- **Differentiation Across Language Levels:** All lessons are differentiated using WIDA Can Do Descriptors. Students may write, draw, dictate, or use sentence frames depending on their English proficiency. Teachers provide targeted small group support and flexible response options.
- **Emphasis on Emotional Safety and Belonging:** The unit is designed to create a space where students feel safe sharing their stories—or choosing not to. Alternative prompts are always available for students who do not feel comfortable with personal narrative work.

By combining identity-affirming literature with targeted supports for language and literacy, these strategies enable students to grow not just as readers and writers, but as confident participants in a diverse learning community. This teaching plan ensures that students are seen, heard, and empowered to tell their stories—in English and beyond.

### **Classroom Activities**

This section presents three fully developed lesson plans from the unit *Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Diversity Through Children’s Literature*. These model lessons are designed to be immediately usable by educators across the School District of Philadelphia and beyond. They draw from the unit’s broader instructional framework, which integrates



culturally responsive teaching, language development strategies, and scaffolded support for English Learners at various proficiency levels.

Each lesson includes:

- Specific objectives
- Alignment with district, state, and national standards
- Materials needed for successful implementation
- Assessment tools

References to instructional theories and strategies

- A detailed, narrative-style sequence of teaching steps

### **Lesson Plan 1: My Name Story**

Unit Title: Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Diversity Through Children's Literature  
Week 1, Day 3

Mentor Text: *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001) by Yangsook Choi

#### **Lesson Objective**

Students will be able to explore the personal significance of their names (or an imagined name) and express that meaning through writing, drawing, and oral storytelling. This lesson supports identity development and language growth through narrative writing and structured oral sharing.

#### **Timeline for Completion**

This lesson takes place over one class period (approximately 45–60 minutes), with optional time on the following day for extended sharing or publishing.

#### **Materials Needed**

- A teacher copy of *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001)
- Student writing booklets or folded paper titled *My Name Story*

- Crayons or colored pencils  
Word bank or sentence frames displayed on chart paper
- Name chart with example:  
“My name is \_\_\_\_\_. It is special because \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Optional: family interview page (home extension), alternative prompts, and name tags

### **Standards Addressed**

#### **Pennsylvania Core Standards (Grade 1–2):**

- **CC.1.4.1.M / 2.M:** Write narratives to recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events.
- **CC.1.5.1. A / 2.A:** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners.
- **CC.1.3.1. A / 2.A:** Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

#### **TESOL Standards:**

- **Goal 1:** Use English to communicate in social settings
- **Goal 2:** Use English to achieve academically in all content areas.

#### **WIDA 2020:**

- Language for Language Arts
- Language for Social and Instructional Purposes

#### **Teaching Strategies Referenced**

- Culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995)
- Use of identity-affirming literature as “mirrors and windows” (Bishop, 1990)
- Scaffolding within students’ Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978)

- Use of sentence frames and visuals for language support (Krashen, 1982; Cummins, 1979)

### **Evaluative Tool**

Students will be assessed through a rubric measuring:

- Clarity and creativity in written/drawn response
- Use of vocabulary and sentence structure (with or without support)
- Participation in oral sharing (or alternative expressive format)

A modified rubric allows for multimodal expression (drawing, dictation, acting) for emerging language learners.

### **Lesson Narrative (Step-by-Step Guide)**

The lesson begins with a brief review of *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001), focusing on how the main character, Unhei, feels about her name and how her classmates respond. The teacher prompts students to recall how Unhei's feelings change and what her name means to her and her family. This discussion activates schema and reinforces that names can carry powerful personal, cultural, or emotional meaning.

Next, the teacher introduces the *My Name Story* booklet. She models the activity by sharing her own name story or a simplified example using visuals and oral storytelling. For example: "My name is Ms. Metwaly. I was named after my grandfather. My family says my name means 'leader.' That makes me feel proud." As she models, she writes and draws simple illustrations.

Students are then invited to complete their own *My Name Story*. Those who do not know their name story or prefer not to share a personal one are offered flexible prompts such as:

- Invent a name for a superhero version of yourself
- Choose a name you like and explain why
- Write about a family member or pet's name.

Students write at their own level, with access to sentence starters, vocabulary word banks, and drawing materials. The teacher circulates, conferencing with students and supporting language needs.

Once writing and drawing are complete, students are given the option to share their stories with a partner, in a small group, or privately with the teacher. A few volunteers may present to the class. Peers are taught to respond respectfully using structured phrases like: “Thank you for sharing,” or “That was interesting because \_\_\_\_.”

To close the lesson, the class gathers and reflects: “What did we learn about names today?” The teacher highlights the diversity in stories and encourages pride in both similarities and differences. Students are invited to take their stories home and ask family members if they'd like to add more.

### **Lesson Plan 2: Brave Moment Narrative**

Unit Title: Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Diversity Through Children’s Literature  
Week 3, Day 3

Mentor Text: *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018) by Jacqueline Woodson

#### **Lesson Objective**

Students will reflect on a moment when they showed bravery, inclusion, or courage, and express that moment through writing, drawing, or storytelling. The lesson promotes oral and written narrative development while creating a space for self-expression and connection.

#### **Timeline for Completion**

This lesson spans one class session (45–60 minutes), with an optional follow-up period for publishing or sharing.

#### **Materials Needed**

- Class copy of *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018)
- Brave Moment Story template (or folded mini booklet)

- Anchor chart: sequencing words (First, Then, Next, Finally)
- Word bank: emotions, actions, and setting vocabulary
- Sample teacher model of a brave moment
- Drawing materials (crayons, markers)
- Sentence starters displayed or handed out.

### **Standards Addressed**

#### **Pennsylvania Core Standards (Grade 1–2):**

- **CC.1.4.1.M / 2.M:** Write narratives that recount well-elaborated events including details and temporal words.
- **CC.1.4.1. N / 2.N:** Establish a situation and sequence of events using temporal words.
- **CC.1.5.1. A / 2.A:** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners.

#### **TESOL Standards:**

- **Goal 1:** Use English to communicate in social settings
- **Goal 2:** Use English to achieve academically in content areas

#### **WIDA 2020:**

- Language for Language Art
- Language for Social and Instructional Purposes

### **Teaching Strategies Referenced**

- Scaffolded narrative writing (I do–We do–You do)  
Culturally responsive teaching to value student voice (Gay, 2010)  
Emotional literacy development and personal connection  
Sentence frames and graphic organizers for language support (Krashen, Cummins)
- Multiple modalities for expression (drawing, dictation, storytelling)

### **Evaluative Tool**

Students are assessed on:

- Story sequencing (beginning, middle, end)
- Use of vocabulary and sentence starters
- Participation in oral sharing (or expressive alternative)
- Creativity and personal voice in storytelling

Assessment is flexible: students may receive credit for drawn, dictated, or orally shared stories using visuals or peer support.

### **Lesson Narrative (Step-by-Step Guide)**

The teacher begins by revisiting *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018), reminding students of the central theme: finding the courage to speak when you feel different or alone. The teacher reads a key passage and facilitates a short discussion: “What does it feel like to do something brave?” Students brainstorm examples: speaking in a new language, helping someone, or standing up for themselves.

Next, the teacher models a short “brave moment” narrative using an anchor chart and visual storytelling. Example: “One time I was afraid to speak in front of a big group. First, I felt scared. Then, I took a deep breath. Next, I talked slowly. Finally, I finished and felt proud.” As the teacher models, she labels each step and includes a simple drawing.

Students are then invited to think about a time they were brave. If they can’t recall a real event, they are encouraged to invent a brave character or write about someone they admire.

Using the Brave Moment Story template or a folded mini-book, students begin writing or drawing. They are guided by sentence starters such as:

- “First, I \_\_\_\_.”
- “Then, I \_\_\_\_.”
- “I felt \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”

Visual aids, peer support, and one-on-one conferencing are provided. Students can work independently or with a partner, and they are encouraged to illustrate their story.

Once students finish their stories, they have multiple options to share:

- Read aloud to a partner
- Present to the group
- Share a drawing with a few spoken sentences
- Use voice recording tools or teacher dictation.

To close, the teacher leads a class reflection circle: “What can we learn from each other’s brave moments?” A class anchor chart titled Ways to Be Brave is created using student contributions. Students may post their stories on a bravery wall or add them to their student portfolios.

### **Lesson Plan 3: I Am a Dreamer**

Unit Title: Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Diversity Through Children’s Literature

Week 4, Day 3

Mentor Text: Dreamers (Morales, 2018) by Yuyi Morales

#### **Lesson Objective**

Students will explore the theme of dreaming and resilience through personal or imaginative reflection. They will create a visual and written piece that shares a hope or goal for the future, connecting their identity to a forward-looking vision.

### **Timeline for Completion**

This lesson takes approximately 45–60 minutes, with optional time on Day 4 to finalize or present.

### **Materials Needed**

- Class copy of *Dreamers* (Morales, 2018) by Yuyi Morales
- Chart paper with key vocabulary: dream, hope, journey, goal, future.
- “I Am a Dreamer” mini-booklet or poster template.
- Drawing materials (crayons, colored pencils, markers)
- Sentence starters:
  - “One day, I want to \_\_\_\_.”
  - “I dream of \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
- Teacher’s model dream page

Optional: Audio read-aloud version of *Dreamers* (Morales, 2018) in Spanish and English

### **Standards Addressed**

#### **Pennsylvania Core Standards (Grade 1–2):**

- **CC.1.4.1.M / 2.M:** Write narratives or reflective texts about personal goals or ideas.
- **CC.1.5.1. D / 2.D:** Share stories, thoughts, and ideas clearly.
- **CC.1.4.1. T / 2.T:** Use a variety of details and content to convey meaning.

#### **TESOL Standards:**

- **Goal 1:** Use English to communicate in personal and imaginative ways
- **Goal 2:** Use English to achieve academic goals in ELA.

#### **WIDA 2020:**



- Language for Language Arts
- Language for Social-Emotional Development

### **Teaching Strategies Referenced**

- Use of mentor texts to inspire personal narratives (Gay, Bishop)
- Scaffolded language production with visuals and sentence frames
- Emotional engagement through self-reflection
- Art and storytelling as inclusive, multimodal expression
- Use of Vygotsky’s ZPD and gradual release (modeling → independent expression)

### **Evaluative Tool**

Students will be evaluated on:

- Clarity and creativity in expressing a dream or goal.
- Use of vocabulary and sentence structures (with or without scaffolds)
- Visual design and/or illustration supporting the written message
- Willingness to share or contribute to the class “Dreamers (Morales, 2018)” display.

Assessments are flexible. Students may use drawing, labeling, dictation, or oral recording to meet objectives based on language level and preference.

### **Lesson Narrative (Step-by-Step Guide)**

The lesson begins with a re-read or picture walk through *Dreamers* (Morales, 2018), focusing on the journey of the narrator and the message of resilience and hope. The teacher prompts discussion: “What does it mean to dream? Why do people move to new places with hope?” Students share examples of things they hope for—big or small.

The teacher models a personal “dream” on chart paper using visuals, a sentence starter, and a drawing. Example: “One day, I want to help children become great teachers like my students.” She draws a picture of herself teaching.

Students are then introduced to their own “I Am a Dreamer” pages. They choose one dream—something they wish for in the future. This could be academic (e.g., learning to read well), personal (e.g., traveling to see family), or creative (e.g., becoming a soccer player or scientist).

Students use the sentence starters and word bank to write about their dream. They then draw a picture showing what that dream looks like. Students are encouraged to include details—who they’re with, what tools they use, and where the dream takes place.

Emerging writers may use illustrations with labels, dictate their responses to the teacher, or record their ideas orally. Partners can help translate ideas or collaborate on shared dreams.

When finished, students are invited to add their page to the class “We Are Dreamers (Morales, 2018)” book or display wall. Volunteers may present their dream aloud using sentence frames, or students can participate in a quiet gallery walk, reading each other’s work and leaving compliments on sticky notes.

To close the lesson, the class reflects: “What do our dreams tell us about who we are and who we want to be?” The teacher emphasizes that every student’s dream matters and reminds them that dreaming is a kind of courage.

The lessons were chosen to reflect the unit’s central themes—identity, courage, and hope—and to provide flexible, inclusive entry points for all students. Teachers may adapt these models for different grade levels, language levels, and classroom contexts. Together, these lessons demonstrate how culturally responsive literature can be used not only to build literacy, but to honor student voices and foster a deeper sense of belonging.

### 1. The Name Jar (Choi, 2001) by Yangsook Choi

This picture book tells the story of Unhei, a Korean girl who struggles with whether to keep her name after moving to the United States. It serves as the Week 1 anchor text and introduces students to the theme of name identity, cultural pride, and peer acceptance. It provides a rich entry point into oral storytelling and personal narratives for English Learners.

2. *Alma and How She Got Her Name* (Martinez-Neal, 2018) by Juana Martinez-Neal

Used in Week 2, this bilingual story explores Latinx heritage and family naming traditions. It deepens students' understanding of intergenerational storytelling and supports vocabulary development around family, emotions, and memory.

3. *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018) by Jacqueline Woodson

This text is the Week 3 anchor, offering space for students to explore feelings of difference and inclusion. It supports social-emotional development and helps students reflect on moments of bravery and connection, serving as the foundation for their “brave moment” narrative writing.

4. *Dreamers* (Morales, 2018) by Yuyi Morales

This beautifully illustrated story of immigration and resilience forms the basis for Week 4. The book inspires reflection and goal setting as students write about their hopes for the future in the “I Am a Dreamer” activity. It also allows for bilingual engagement and discussion of immigrant journeys.

5. *Drawn Together* (Lê & Santat, 2018) by Minh Lê and Dan Santat

This nearly wordless picture book, used in Week 5, is a powerful tool for visual storytelling. It portrays a relationship between a grandson and grandfather who speak different languages but connect through art. The book encourages multimodal expression for English Learners and supports the use of visual language across proficiency levels.

## 6. StoryCorps “Great Questions List”

Website: <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions>

This online tool offers excellent family interview prompts that can be used for home connection activities, particularly during Weeks 2 and 4. Students may select questions to ask family members about names, traditions, or dreams and then bring those stories into the classroom.

## 7. WIDA Can Do Descriptors (K–2)

Website: <https://wida.wisc.edu>

This resource provides teachers with grade-level expectations for what English Learners

can do at each stage of language development. It will guide differentiation and assessment throughout the unit to ensure tasks are aligned with students' current English proficiency.

## **8. Facing History & Ourselves: Identity Teaching Resources**

Website: <https://facinghistory.org>

This educational organization provides age-appropriate identity teaching resources that help build inclusive classrooms. While many tools are geared toward older students, simple reflection activities and community-building strategies can be adapted for K–2 learners as extensions or supports during discussions.

## **Resources**

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Standards Alignment

This unit addresses a range of academic standards at the district, state, and national levels. Below is a list of key standards met through the unit’s instructional design, along with a brief explanation of how each is addressed.

#### School District of Philadelphia (SDP) ELA Standards (Grades K–2)

These align closely with Pennsylvania Core Standards.

- **Oral Language and Listening:**

Students engage in structured conversations using sentence frames, partner sharing, and storytelling circles (e.g., My Name Story, Brave Moment Narrative).

- **Reading Comprehension:**

Students listen to and analyze mentor texts such as *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001) and *Dreamers* (Morales, 2018) using read-aloud, visual questioning, and character discussions.

**Writing Development:**

- Students write short narratives with support, including sequencing words and vocabulary banks (e.g., “I Am a Dreamer” project).

#### Pennsylvania Core Standards (Grades K–2)

**CC.1.3. K–2. A:**

Identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

→ Applied in story mapping and comprehension discussions during read-aloud.

**CC.1.4. K–2.M/N:**

Write narratives that recount well-elaborated events using temporal words.

→ Applied in narrative tasks like Brave Moment and Name Story writing.

**CC.1.5. K–2. A:**

Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults.

→ Applied through partner storytelling, group sharing, and oral presentations.

**CC.1.5. K–2. D:**

Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

→ Embedded in weekly storytelling, reflection, and identity presentations.

**TESOL English Language Proficiency Standards****Goal 1:**

English Learners communicate for social and instructional purposes.

→ Through classroom discussions, personal reflections, and identity-based storytelling.

**Goal 2:**

English Learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in language arts.

→ Through structured reading and writing aligned with grade-level content and themes.

**Goal 3:**

English Learners use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

→ Emphasized the unit's focus on cultural pride, storytelling, and inclusive language practices.

**WIDA 2020 ELD Standards****Standard 1: Language for Social and Instructional Purposes**

→ Built into daily partner work, sentence starters, and class discussions.

**Standard 2: Language for Language Arts**

→ Applied in reading comprehension, writing prompts, and book response activities.

**Standard 3: Language for Social-Emotional Development**

→ Embedded in lessons exploring identity, bravery, and self-expression (e.g., *The Day You Begin* (Woodson, 2018)).

**Appendix B: Supplemental Materials**

Below are supplemental materials referenced in the unit's lesson plans and activities. These materials support English Learners by providing scaffolds for writing, oral expression, and content comprehension. All materials listed are teacher-created unless otherwise noted.

**Sentence Frames and Word Banks**

Used throughout the unit to support oral language and writing tasks.

**Examples:**

- “My name is \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”
- “First, I \_\_\_\_, then I \_\_\_\_.”
- “I felt \_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_.”
- “One day, I hope to \_\_\_\_.”

These frames are posted visibly in the classroom and provided on handouts during writing activities like *My Name Story*, *Brave Moment*, and *I Am a Dreamer*.

**Brave Moment Story Template**

A four-panel narrative worksheet labeled:

**“First” – “Then” – “Next” – “Finally”**

Used in Week 3 for students to draw and/or write about a time they were brave. Includes visual cues and emotion word bank.

**3. I Am a Dreamer Poster Template**

Students complete a sentence:

“I dream of \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.”



Then illustrate their dream in the space below. Used during Week 4’s lesson on Dreamers (Morales, 2018). This poster is included in a class book or wall display.

#### **4. Family Interview Page**

Optional take-home activity in Week 2 and Week 4.

Prompts include:

- “Who named you and why?”
- “What does your name mean?”
- “What is one dream you have for the future?”

Students return with stories to share in class. Interview pages are available in English with space for translation into the home language.

#### **5. Visual Anchor Charts (teacher-created)**

Charts used throughout the unit to reinforce academic and social-emotional concepts:

- **Feelings Word Chart** (e.g., happy, nervous, proud, scared)
- **Sequencing Words** (First, Next, Then, Finally)
- **Identity Web** (center: “Me,” branches for “Name,” “Family,” “Culture,” “Dreams”)
- **Story Elements Poster** (Characters, Setting, Problem, Solution)

These are created collaboratively with students and used as reference throughout the unit.

#### **6. Graphic Organizers**

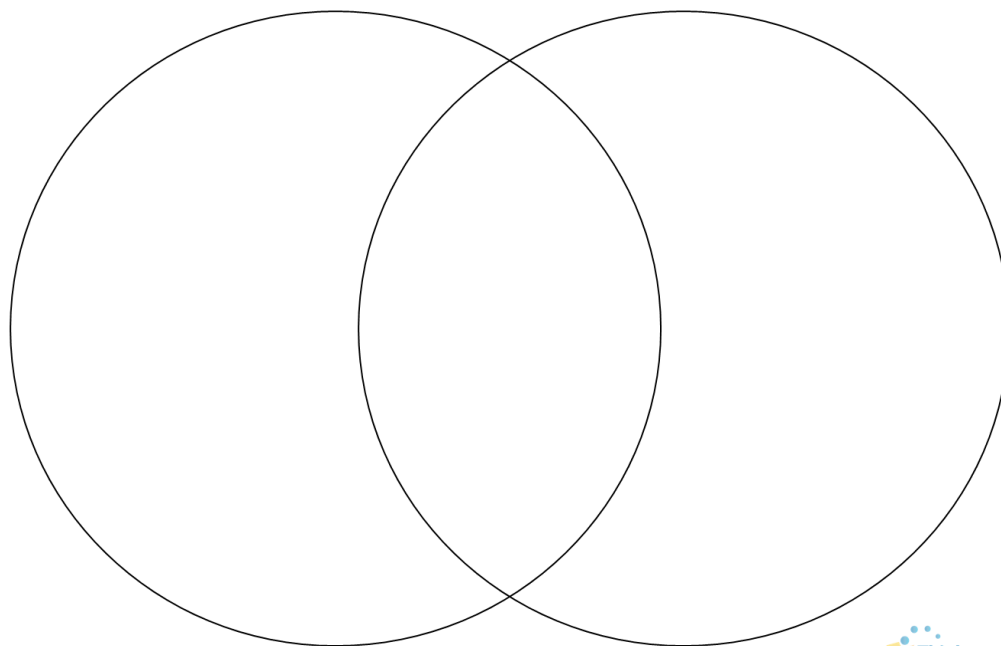
- **Name Map** – For exploring family stories or traditions behind names.
- **Story Map** – For character, setting, beginning-middle-end retells.
- **Venn Diagram** – Compare/contrast characters in texts (e.g., Unhei and Alma)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

**Venn Diagram**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Class/Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

### Story Map

Title

Setting (Where, When, Time, Place)

Characters

Plot/Problem

Event

Event

Event

Solution

## **All About My Name/ My Pet's Name**

**What is your name or your pet's name?**

**Who gave you your name or your pet this name?**

**What does your name mean or what does your pet's name mean? Or (What do you think it means)**

**How do you feel about your name/ how do you feel about your pet's name?**

**Is there a special story about your name or your pet's name? If not, there is no story about my name.**

**Draw something that reminds you of your name or your pet's name! (If you cannot think of any you can draw something that is special about you.)**