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7th and 8th grade ESOL Focus

TIP Seminar

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**Children's Literature and Language:
Bilingual Books, Food Stories & Cultural Inquiry**

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Abstract

In this Unit, I'm using bilingual texts, excerpts, and food or other "How to" writings in an inclusive and authentic way. Incorporating Children's literature and various teaching modalities. This unit has four primary goals: developing early literacy skills for World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) level one English language learners (ELLs) and newcomers focusing on improving the four domains of language acquisition; Reading, writing, listening and speaking. Striving for this, all the while, incorporating the street smarts of critical thinking and emotional understanding. Through diverse narratives,

building vocabulary, and cultivating an appreciation of cultural diversity within an English-learning, Spanish-speaking population.

Key words:

Bilingual education, ESOL lesson plans, Emotional literacy, Social-emotional learning, Culturally responsive teaching, Multilingual learners, Children's literature, Cultural identity, Storytelling, Bilingual picture books, Family recipes
Food stories, Translanguaging, Newcomer students, Bilingual classroom strategies, Latinx children's books, Dual language learners, Inclusive literacy instruction for ELLs.

Introduction to Authentic Learning Environments

Creating an authentic learning environment for English Language Learners (ELLs) is a complex and deeply intentional process—one that draws on educational, cultural, psychological, social, and historical perspectives. During our studies in the TIP seminar, I was particularly influenced by Patterson and Shuttleworth's (2019) work, *Teaching Hard History through Children's Literature about Enslavement*. In it, they identify three key categories of literature that shape how we approach historical narratives in the classroom: Selective Tradition Books, Social Conscience Books, and Culturally Conscious Books. These categories have helped me reflect on the messages embedded in the texts I choose, and how they can either obscure or illuminate students' lived realities.

As an educator in the School District of Philadelphia, I see firsthand how our student demographics are shifting. The fastest-growing student population in our district is

English Language Learners. According to district enrollment data, this population has nearly doubled—from 9% in the 2014–2015 school year to 17% in 2022–2023 (Schlesinger, 2023). With this rapid growth comes a renewed responsibility to ensure that learning environments are not only accessible but also affirming, relevant, and real. For me, an authentic learning environment is one that mirrors the lived experiences of students and gives them opportunities to use language in meaningful, real-world contexts.

Educational and Cultural Considerations

From an educational lens, I've found that project-based learning is one of the most effective ways to foster authenticity. When students work on real-life tasks—like writing a recipe in two languages or creating a bilingual family story—they're not just practicing language skills; they're engaging in meaningful communication that connects to their lives. These projects allow ELLs to use reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in context, which supports both language acquisition and academic confidence. Culturally, authenticity begins with representation. I intentionally use literature and materials that reflect my students' heritages, experiences, and voices. Books from Latin America, Asia, and Africa—especially those available in bilingual formats—help my students see their home cultures not as barriers, but as bridges to English learning. These texts become tools of connection and affirmation, helping students feel seen while also expanding their language skills.

Emotional and Social Perspectives

Emotionally, I know that language learning is not just a cognitive task—it's a deeply personal one. Many of my students carry stories of migration, separation, or silence, and

it's vital that our classroom is a place where they feel safe enough to take risks. That's why I design collaborative activities where students can talk, listen, and share in small groups before presenting ideas to the class. These moments create community and reduce the anxiety that so often accompanies language learning.

Socially, authentic learning means honoring students' home languages. I encourage students to use their first language (L1) as a tool—not a crutch—for understanding new English concepts. Translanguaging is a powerful strategy that helps students move between languages to deepen comprehension and express themselves more fully. When students can compare words, sentence structures, or cultural references across languages, they begin to see language not as a barrier, but as a resource.

Unit Content: Creating an Authentic Learning Environment for ELLs

How do I create an authentic learning environment for English Language Learners (ELLs)? How can I implement a teaching approach that accounts for the complex interplay of educational, cultural, emotional, and social factors—rather than reducing students to a single story?

I love teaching ELLs, and I am constantly looking to grow in my use of authentic children's literature and bilingual activities as meaningful teaching and learning tools. I am committed to contributing to positive change and academic achievement, and I continue to welcome the opportunity and the challenge of working as an English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) teacher for the School District of Philadelphia. My love of language and culture, coupled with formal ESOL studies and years of experience working with elementary, middle, and high school students, has shaped my practice and

deeply informed my participation in this semester's Teachers Institute of Philadelphia (TIP) seminar with Dr. Wanda Brooks: *Diverse Children's Literature: Literary Art, Cultural Artifact, and Contested Terrain*.

Throughout the seminar, I was especially moved by the work of Timothy J. Patterson and Jay M. Shuttlesworth (2019), whose article in *Social Studies and the Young Learner* offers a framework for understanding how students make meaning from both narrative and illustration. Their work invites educators to ask not just *what* we are teaching, but *how* students are likely to interpret the material we present: "concerned with the meanings that students are likely to infer from narratives and illustrations..." (Patterson & Shuttlesworth, 2019, p. 15). Looking closely at text through this lens has helped me reflect on the implicit messages our curriculum sends—and how to make space for more culturally conscious and inclusive narratives in my classroom.

Working with students continues to be a source of inspiration. I am excited to implement this unit in my classroom as a way to honor and uplift my students' bilingual abilities—particularly in Spanish—and to provide a platform for their stories, ideas, and personal knowledge through books, recipes, and other "how-to" narratives based on their cultural experiences and interests.

Children's literature is a powerful tool. It offers a unique combination of education, entertainment, emotional connection, and identity affirmation. As an ESOL teacher at Francis Hopkinson School, a Title I K–8 school in the Juniata Park neighborhood of North Philadelphia, I teach in a space shaped by both structural challenges and immense student resilience. One ongoing question I ask myself is: Where do students see

themselves? Where can they hear each other? How do we support them in navigating and honoring both their home language and English?

By integrating high-quality children's literature, I aim to build meaningful foundations for literacy, critical thinking, emotional expression, and social interaction. This curriculum is designed to bring literature to life in my classroom, focusing on all four language domains—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—while remaining aligned with both WIDA and Pennsylvania Core Curriculum standards.

Centering this curriculum around diverse children's literature enables me to foster a classroom culture that values multilingualism, emotional intelligence, and reflective thinking. My hope is that this approach will have a lasting impact on my students' academic growth as well as their confidence and identity development.

At the end of the unit, I plan to gather student feedback and reflect on their responses to the activities. This feedback will guide the continued evolution of the curriculum, ensuring that it remains responsive to the students' lived experiences, linguistic strengths, and voices.

Curriculum Objectives and Possible Structure

My primary goal is to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in developing their literacy skills across all four language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. To do this, I use rich, engaging children's literature that invites students into meaningful dialogue and creative expression.

One key objective of my curriculum is to foster critical thinking, empathy, and self-awareness by inviting students to explore characters' experiences, emotions, and challenges. Literature becomes a mirror for personal reflection and a window into

different lives. As part of building cultural awareness, I am intentional about selecting texts that introduce students to a variety of cultures, traditions, and perspectives—broadening their global understanding and appreciation for diversity.

Equally important in my classroom is emotional literacy. I strive to help my students recognize, name, and process their own emotions while developing empathy toward the emotions and stories of others. We do this through structured discussions, journaling, and group activities grounded in literature and shared storytelling.

The structure of the curriculum is organized around a thematic unit that integrates diverse children's books, bilingual poems, and student-centered recipes. Each week, I plan lessons that blend literacy development with cultural inquiry and emotional exploration. All units are designed to integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking in ways that support both language acquisition and identity affirmation. Through this approach, I aim to create a classroom environment where students not only develop their English proficiency but also see their voices, cultures, and experiences honored and reflected in the curriculum.

Teaching Strategies

In planning this unit, I prioritize differentiated instruction to meet the diverse needs of English Language Learners (ELLs). I aim to incorporate deep dives into sentence structure and word meaning, supported by visuals like images, diagrams, and charts to introduce new vocabulary and concepts. Graphic organizers will help students visualize relationships between ideas and aid comprehension.

Read-alouds and audio materials—such as podcasts, music, and oral storytelling—will enhance listening comprehension. I frequently pair these activities with collaborative

strategies like think-pair-share to give students the opportunity to reflect and process language in an interactive setting. One of the most engaging components of this unit is the hands-on recipe project, which invites students to use procedural language in meaningful, personal contexts.

I plan to establish learning stations that students can rotate through at their own pace. These stations will target various modalities—reading, writing, listening—and accommodate different interests and learning styles. This structure will give students agency while reinforcing content in multiple formats.

Supporting and celebrating students' heritage languages is central to my teaching. I make it a priority to integrate my students' home languages into the curriculum whenever possible. This includes encouraging students to share stories, phrases, and family traditions from their cultural backgrounds. I believe that honoring their linguistic identities fosters pride and enhances learning. When students can make connections between their first language and English, they develop a stronger grasp of both.

I also strive to create a language-rich classroom environment. My classroom will include bilingual posters, diverse book displays, and visible resources in both English and my students' heritage languages. Students are encouraged to express themselves in whichever language they feel most comfortable, especially during brainstorming and collaborative work. I will incorporate translanguaging practices—such as dual-language storytelling and bilingual group projects—to support content comprehension and validate students' full linguistic repertoires.

By combining collaborative learning and differentiated instruction, I hope to cultivate a dynamic and inclusive classroom where language acquisition is both rigorous and joyful.

These strategies not only support ELLs' development across the four language domains but also promote a classroom culture that values identity, creativity, and multiple ways of knowing. Ultimately, this approach strengthens the entire learning community, creating a space where all students can thrive.

Classroom Activities

Where Stories Become Language and Language Becomes Belonging

When I think about my students—seated at their clustered desks, laughing softly in Spanish before morning announcements—I think about how much bravery it takes to show up every day and try again in a language that still feels foreign. So, I design our learning moments like bridges. Each activity is a crossing, inviting students from where they are into something new, without asking them to leave themselves behind.

This unit is rooted in storytelling, food, and emotional connection. And in keeping with what I learned through Dr. Brooks' seminar, I've structured the learning into narrative-rich, culturally affirming activities that invite my students not just to learn English, but to live in it—through their own stories, their own rhythms, their own heritage.

Introduction to Children's Literature: Finding Our Stories

Focus: Story elements, visual literacy, genre exploration, building schema

Narrative Purpose: This first activity is an invitation—to step into stories that reflect our lives, our families, our emotions. We explore characters, settings, and plots, but we also ask: *Whose stories are told? Who is missing? Where do we see ourselves?*

We begin with picture books and short bilingual texts. I introduce the idea of books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990)—a core concept from the

seminar that now shapes every title I choose. Students share a favorite book from home or childhood if they can. We celebrate that stories live in every language.

WEEK 1: Names, Identity, and Personal Stories

Day 1: Exploring Names and Identity

- Content Topic: The power of names and personal identity
- Instructional Goals: Students will explore how names are part of cultural identity and self-worth
- Instructional Strategies: Interactive read-aloud, personal reflection journaling, class discussion
- Resources: “My Name is María Isabel” / “Me llamo María Isabel” by Alma Flor Ada (bilingual editions)
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 1 – Social and Instructional Language
- Bilingual Scaffolds: Spanish-English glossary, name vocabulary cognates (identidad/identity), sentence starters
- Collaborative Tasks: Name stories shared in partners; group “Name Wall” with student-designed name cards
- Formative Checks: Exit slips – “One thing my name means to me...”
- Daily Visuals: Word wall of name-related vocabulary, name chart
- Vocabulary Targets: name, identity, special, meaning, proud
- ELD Strategies: Sentence starters, drawing and labeling, shared writing
- Sentence Frames: “My name is ____ and it means ____.” “I feel ____ about my name because ____.”

Day 2: Character Connection – Maria Isabel’s Conflict

- Content Topic: Conflict and feelings in school settings
- Instructional Goals: Students will identify Maria Isabel's conflict and how it relates to their own experiences
- Instructional Strategies: Close reading, think-pair-share, class role-play
- Resources: Text excerpts, character conflict chart, emotion cards
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 2 – Language of Language Arts
- Bilingual Scaffolds: Cognates: conflicto/conflict, escuela/school, sentence starters: "Maria Isabel felt ____ because ____."
- Collaborative Tasks: Group retelling skits; personal connection journal entries
- Formative Checks: Oral retell with peer support; illustrated conflict map
- Daily Visuals: Emotion word wall, cause-effect chart
- Vocabulary Targets: conflict, teacher, mistake, name, misunderstood
- ELD Strategies: Role-play, bilingual anchor charts, oral rehearsal with sentence frames
- Sentence Frames: "She had a conflict with ____ because ____." "This reminds me of ____."

Day 3: Solution and Self-Advocacy

- Content Topic: Standing up for oneself respectfully
- Instructional Goals: Students will understand how Maria Isabel solved her problem and how they can self-advocate
- Instructional Strategies: Guided writing, dialogue completion, respectful speaking practice
- Resources: Text excerpts, self-advocacy scripts, writing templates

- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 1 – Social and Instructional Language
- Bilingual Scaffolds: Sentence starters: “I can say ____ when ____.” Bilingual dialogue cards
- Collaborative Tasks: Buddy dialogues with sentence frames, writing support partners
- Formative Checks: Peer-read dialogues; writing journals
- Daily Visuals: Respectful language poster, sentence strip board
- Vocabulary Targets: speak, solve, respect, explain, ask
- ELD Strategies: Choral response, partner sentence building, modeled respectful language
- Sentence Frames: “I can say ____ when someone calls me ____.” “I feel ____ when I’m called the wrong name.”

Day 4: Names Across Cultures

- Content Topic: Cultural diversity in naming traditions
- Instructional Goals: Students will compare naming traditions and reflect on their own
- Instructional Strategies: Interactive map activity, class survey, cultural name stories
- Resources: World map, name cards from different cultures, translated text excerpts
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 5 – Social and Cultural Contexts
- Bilingual Scaffolds: Spanish-English naming tradition vocabulary list, cognates (cultura/culture, tradición/tradition)

- Collaborative Tasks: Partner interviews about family name stories; create “Names Around the World” mini-book
- Formative Checks: Illustrated name story with sentence frames
- Daily Visuals: Global name wall, Venn diagram comparing naming traditions
- Vocabulary Targets: culture, tradition, name, meaning, story
- ELD Strategies: Home-language connections, partner interpretation, visual timelines
- Sentence Frames: “In my culture, names mean ____.” “My name story is ____.”

Day 5: Culminating Activity – “My Name” Poems

- Content Topic: Expressing identity through poetry
- Instructional Goals: Students will create a personal poem about their name and identity using descriptive language
- Instructional Strategies: Sentence frame poem scaffolds, shared writing, oral rehearsal
- Resources: Poem template, bilingual adjective bank, art supplies
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 4 – Language of Creative Expression
- Bilingual Scaffolds: Sentence stems, cognate adjective banks (especial/special, fuerte/strong)
- Collaborative Tasks: Buddy editing, gallery walk of final poems
- Formative Checks: Poem sharing circle, peer feedback on visuals and word choice
- Daily Visuals: Word wall with poem language, student samples
- Vocabulary Targets: special, strong, name, proud, belong

- ELD Strategies: Modeled writing, sentence building, visual-poem integration
- Sentence Frames: “My name is ____ and it sounds like ____.” “It makes me feel ____.”

Emotional Literacy Through Poems and Stories

Narrative Framing

Language becomes real when it connects to the heart. Many of my English learners carry emotional experiences that transcend translation—feelings of homesickness, joy, fear, and courage that don’t yet have English words. Our second week is designed to give students that language while affirming that their emotions matter. The use of children’s literature and bilingual poetry helps students process and name emotions while making personal and literary connections.

We draw on titles such as *Don't Be Scared* by Ingo Blum (2022), selections from *The Golden Age of Latin American Poetry* (Stavans, 2008), and our mentor text, *La Mariposa* by Francisco Jiménez (1998). In alignment with social emotional learning (SEL) competencies, students explore feelings through read-alouds, discussions, and the creation of bilingual emotion wheels. Dr. Brooks’ emphasis on student voice and culturally sustaining pedagogy (Patterson & Shuttleworth, 2020) inspired the emotional literacy focus. With activities that include music, rhythm, and oral storytelling, students expand not only their vocabulary but their self-awareness and confidence.

Week 2: Emotions and Relationships Through Literature

Day 1: Exploring Feelings – "Don't Be Scared"

- Topic: Identifying and labeling emotions
- Goal: Identify basic emotions and relate them to personal experiences
- Strategies: Picture walk, read-aloud with gesture cues, partner emotion match
- Resource: *Don't Be Scared* (Blum, 2022)
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 1
- Scaffolds: Spanish-English emotion cards, visuals, sentence frames
- Collaborative Tasks: Partner drawings of personal experiences
- Formative Checks: Emoji exit ticket
- Vocabulary: scared, brave, worry, calm
- ELD Strategies: Sentence repetition, gestures, visual cues
- Sentence Frames: “I feel ____ when ____.” / “Don’t be scared because ____.”

Day 2: Reading for Emotions – *La Mariposa*

- Topic: Empathy and emotional awareness
- Goal: Describe Francisco's emotions and relate to personal experiences
- Strategies: Interactive read-aloud, character feelings map
- Resource: *La Mariposa* (Jiménez, 1998)
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 2
- Scaffolds: Emotion cognates, bilingual sentence frames
- Collaborative Tasks: Partner-created emotion timelines
- Formative Checks: Oral "turn and talk"
- Vocabulary: nervous, confused, excited
- ELD Strategies: Graphic organizers, discussion, role-play
- Sentence Frames: "Francisco felt ____ when ____."

Day 3: Personal Emotional Narratives

- Topic: Personal storytelling using emotion
- Goal: Write about a strong emotional experience with supporting details
- Strategies: Guided journaling, modeling, peer conferencing
- Resources: Bilingual emotion thesaurus, writing frames
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 3
- Scaffolds: Sentence frames, bilingual emotion word list
- Collaborative Tasks: Partner share of emotion storyboards
- Formative Checks: “Today I learned to say ____” slips
- Vocabulary: sad, angry, frightened, happy
- ELD Strategies: Dictation, sentence building, feedback sharing
- Sentence Frames: “One time I felt ____ when ____.”

Day 4: Expressing Emotions Through Dialogue

- Topic: Oral emotional language
- Goal: Practice expressing feelings and offering empathy
- Strategies: Dialogue modeling, role-play, speaking centers
- Resources: Emotion cards, cue visuals
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 1
- Scaffolds: Partner modeling, Spanish translations
- Collaborative Tasks: Group emotional skits
- Formative Checks: Oral responses
- Vocabulary: feel, help, understand
- ELD Strategies: Modeled speech, sentence repetition
- Sentence Frames: “I feel ____ when ____.” / “You can help by ____.”

Day 5: Culminating Emotional Literacy Mini-Books

- Topic: Visual and written storytelling
 - Goal: Create bilingual storybook about a personal emotional experience
 - Strategies: Guided drawing, writing, labeling
 - Resources: Sentence starters, visual word banks
 - WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 4
 - Scaffolds: Partner modeling, dual-language templates
 - Collaborative Tasks: Gallery walk of mini-books
 - Formative Checks: Partner oral summary
 - Vocabulary: excited, nervous, brave, strong
 - ELD Strategies: Artistic expression, oral rehearsal, sentence starters
 - Sentence Frames: “Once I felt ____ when ____.”
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Cultural Inquiry and Community: Celebrating Heritage

Narrative Framing

Week 3 moves into cultural inquiry, using literature and oral storytelling to highlight student heritage and deepen classroom community. This builds directly from the TIP seminar's core ideas—especially Dr. Brooks' emphasis on culturally affirming spaces and “sliding glass doors” (Bishop, 1990). By centering food, rituals, and visual symbols, we allow students to explore identity while strengthening their writing and speaking skills.

Read-alouds like *Plátanos Go with Everything* (Norman, 2023) and *Whoever You Are* (Fox, 2001) provide touchpoints for discussion and comparative analysis. Culminating activities such as the Class Quilt Project and the “Cookbook of Culture” invite students to share their cultural knowledge with pride, fostering belonging and agency.

Week 3: Cultural Inquiry and Community

Day 1: Literature and Food Traditions – *Plátanos Go with Everything*

- Topic: Food as cultural identity
- Goal: Identify cultural elements through storytelling
- Strategies: Read-aloud, group discussion, annotation
- Resource: *Plátanos Go with Everything* (Norman, 2023)

- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 2
- Scaffolds: Vocabulary chart, bilingual visuals
- Collaborative Tasks: Country food posters
- Formative Checks: Annotated notes
- Vocabulary: culture, tradition, home
- Sentence Frames: “In my family, we eat ____.”

Day 2: Poetry and Cultural Imagery

- Topic: Poetry as identity expression
- Goal: Analyze and interpret multicultural poetry
- Strategies: Choral reading, drawing, small group share
- Resource: *Running the Road to ABC* (Lauture, 1996) or *Living Voices* anthology
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 4

- Scaffolds: Side-by-side poems, image prompts
- Collaborative Tasks: Visual poem response
- Formative Checks: Comprehension checklist
- Vocabulary: rhythm, night, path, learn
- Sentence Frames: “This reminds me of ____.”

Day 3: Community and Belonging – *Whoever You Are*

- Topic: What makes a community
- Goal: Discuss differences and commonalities
- Strategies: Read-aloud, compare/contrast, class poem
- Resource: *Whoever You Are* (Fox, 2001)
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 5
- Scaffolds: Sentence stems, visuals

- Collaborative Tasks: Class “We Belong” poem
- Formative Checks: Oral responses
- Vocabulary: belong, different, world
- Sentence Frames: “I belong when ____.”

Day 4: Bilingual Story Reading

- Topic: Cross-language reading
- Goal: Interpret meaning in side-by-side bilingual texts
- Strategies: Partner reading, cognate work, vocabulary sorting
- Resources: *New Penguin Parallel Texts*
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 3
- Scaffolds: Parallel glossaries
- Collaborative Tasks: Word hunts, translations

- Formative Checks: Exit summary
- Vocabulary: character, narrator, event
- Sentence Frames: “In Spanish this is ____.”

Day 5: Class Quilt Project

- Topic: Symbols of identity
- Goal: Represent culture visually and in writing
- Strategies: Visual symbolism lesson, peer collaboration
- Resources: Art supplies, quilt templates
- WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 4
- Scaffolds: Symbol glossary, sentence stems
- Collaborative Tasks: Quilt gallery walk
- Formative Checks: Peer presentation

- Vocabulary: flag, symbol, represent
- Sentence Frames: “This square shows ____.”

Cultural Connections: Recipes, Rituals, and “How-To” Narratives

Focus: Procedural writing, sequencing, bilingual expression, cultural sharing

Narrative Purpose: Our cultures live in the kitchen, in family routines, in everyday knowledge. This activity honors that by asking students to write bilingual “how-to” texts—how to make pupusas, how to braid your sister’s hair, how to celebrate Día de los Reyes. Students may bring in family recipes or use modeled mentor texts. If a student doesn’t have a recipe to share, we offer options from other cultures to ensure inclusivity. Each project becomes part of our class *Cookbook of Culture & Knowledge*. Students beam when they see their name in print—written in two languages.

Week 4: Bilingual Recipes and Procedural Writing – “How-To” and Food Narratives

Day 1: Introduction to Procedural Writing – *Cooking Class Global Feast*

Content Topic: Understanding sequence and instructional language

Instructional Goals: Students will identify and sequence steps in a recipe.

Instructional Strategies: Read-aloud of sample recipe, sequencing cards, guided writing

Resources: Cook, D. F. (2019). *Cooking class global feast*. Storey Publishing; visuals of recipes

WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 2 – Language of Language Arts

Bilingual Scaffolds: Bilingual sequencing words, step labels, Spanish-English cooking

glossary

Collaborative Tasks: Match steps to pictures in small groups; partner discussion of steps

Formative Checks: Sequence strip activity; oral comprehension check

Daily Visuals: Visual recipe steps, bilingual transition words poster

Vocabulary Targets: first, next, then, finally, ingredients, stir, chop, mix

ELD Strategies: Modeled steps, realia (props), visuals for comprehension

Sentence Frames: “First, we ____.” “Next, I will ____.” “Finally, we ____.”

Day 2: Exploring Family Recipes and Food Narratives

Content Topic: Sharing cultural identity through food and storytelling

Instructional Goals: Students will write or orally share about a favorite family food

Instructional Strategies: Story circle, guided writing, shared vocabulary development

Resources: Recipe writing template, student-generated food word bank

WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 1 – Social and Instructional Language

Bilingual Scaffolds: Sentence starters in both languages, bilingual food word chart

Collaborative Tasks: Pair interviews: “What food is special to your family?”

Formative Checks: Oral check-in: “My family makes ____ because ____.”

Daily Visuals: Recipe graphic organizer, home-country food map

Vocabulary Targets: boil, cook, bake, ingredients, memory, flavor, story

ELD Strategies: Shared writing model, oral rehearsal, think-pair-share

Sentence Frames: “My family makes ____.” “It reminds me of ____.” “To make it, you need ____.”

Day 3: Writing Our Bilingual Recipes

Content Topic: Procedural writing in two languages

Instructional Goals: Students will write their own bilingual “how-to” text

Instructional Strategies: Step-by-step writing guide, peer conferences, modeling

Resources: Bilingual recipe template, sample bilingual recipes

WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 3 – Writing

Bilingual Scaffolds: Recipe stem sentences, Spanish-English cooking terms

Collaborative Tasks: Peer recipe editing; buddy translation review

Formative Checks: Checklist of completed steps; sentence frame application

Daily Visuals: Sentence frame posters, bilingual tools/utensil labels

Vocabulary Targets: stir, cook, pour, measure, ingredients, recipe, steps

ELD Strategies: Guided writing, modeled transitions, scaffolding tools

Sentence Frames: “To make ____, first ____.” “Then ____.” “Last, ____.”

Day 4: Visual Literacy – Illustrating Our Recipes

Content Topic: Using visuals and labels to communicate clearly

Instructional Goals: Students will create an illustrated version of their recipe

Instructional Strategies: Mini-lesson on diagrams, modeling illustration and labeling

Resources: Paper, markers, example illustrated recipes

WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 4 – Language of Creative Expression

Bilingual Scaffolds: Labeled images in Spanish and English, vocabulary word bank

Collaborative Tasks: Gallery walk to peer review illustrations

Formative Checks: Label identification and matching, peer feedback

Daily Visuals: Illustrated steps wall, bilingual label reference chart

Vocabulary Targets: picture, draw, label, step, action, ingredient

ELD Strategies: Visual modeling, peer discussion, scaffolded checklist

Sentence Frames: “This picture shows ____.” “Step ____ is when I ____.”

Day 5: Celebration and Sharing – Class “Cookbook” and Presentation

Content Topic: Publishing and presenting bilingual work

Instructional Goals: Students will present their “how-to” in English and Spanish to peers

Instructional Strategies: Rehearsal, public speaking mini-lesson, paired support

Resources: Completed bilingual recipe book, presentation checklist

WIDA Standard: ELD Standard 5 – Speaking and Listening

Bilingual Scaffolds: Presentation cards with sentence frames in both languages

Collaborative Tasks: Peer introductions, buddy support during presentations

Formative Checks: Observation rubric; student self-reflection

Daily Visuals: Word wall of sentence starters, student recipe posters

Vocabulary Targets: present, explain, share, steps, make, tradition

ELD Strategies: Peer rehearsal, guided practice, bilingual support

Sentence Frames: “To make ____, you need ____.” “We eat this for ____.” “In my family, we love ____.”

Student Feedback and Self-Assessment

Assessment also includes listening to students’ reflections. I often ask:

- *What did you like most about this unit?*

- *Which book or activity helped you feel proud?*
- *What was hard? What helped you keep going?*

These conversations are invaluable. They inform how I revise the unit and support students in seeing themselves as active participants in their own learning journey.

A Note on Grading

While I align my assessments to WIDA English Language Development Standards and the Pennsylvania Core Standards, I always return to this truth: grades are not the full story. Growth takes many forms, especially in an ESOL classroom.

A student who starts the year silently drawing their ideas and ends the unit writing a four-sentence story in English has made extraordinary progress. My responsibility is to recognize that growth and celebrate it aloud.

Reflection and Conclusion: Stories as Thresholds of Belonging

As this unit comes to a close, I reflect not only on what my students have learned, but also on how their learning has deepened my own. Teaching this unit has reminded me that literacy is never just about decoding text—it is about making meaning, building identity, and finding one's place in the world. For English learners, especially those new to this country and its dominant language, stories are not just lessons—they are lifelines. Throughout my time in Dr. Wanda Brooks' TIP seminar, *Diverse Children's Literature: Literary Art, Cultural Artifact, and Contested Terrain*, I was challenged to reframe how

I view children's literature—not as neutral or benign, but as a powerful cultural force that shapes how children see themselves and others. In this seminar, I revisited Rudine Sims Bishop's transformative metaphor of books as mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors—a concept that reshaped how I choose texts and structure classroom experiences. In Bishop's (1990) words, "When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part" (p. ix). This truth stayed with me throughout the semester. I looked around my classroom and asked: *Where are the mirrors? Where are the windows? Who is being invited in—and who is left at the door?*

This curriculum—centered around bilingual books, food stories, poetry, and cultural inquiry—is my response. It is a deliberate effort to open more doors for my students. Many of them come to school tentative and quiet, their stories buried under the weight of translation and trauma. But through picture books that reflect their language, poetry that echoes their emotions, and storytelling that centers their lived experience, I watched those doors slowly swing open.

I remember one student who began the unit barely speaking English. By the end, she stood before the class and read her bilingual "how-to" story—*how to make tamales with her grandmother*—with a proud smile and confident voice. That moment wasn't just about sequencing or vocabulary. It was about being seen. It was about being heard. That is what authentic, inclusive literacy instruction can do.

This curriculum is still a work in progress—because my students are in progress. They come with layered histories, transnational lives, and more brilliance than any assessment

could measure. They deserve a curriculum that honors those complexities. They deserve stories that reflect their realities and invite them to imagine new ones.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Brooks and my peers in the TIP seminar, whose scholarship, insights, and personal reflections pushed me to ask more complex questions and build a more intentional unit. Works like Patterson and Shuttleworth's (2020) framework for teaching "hard histories" through children's literature encouraged me to consider how narrative itself shapes identity and understanding.

Texts such as *La Mariposa* (Jiménez, 1998), *Don't Be Scared* (Blum, 2020), and *My Name is María Isabel* (Ada, 1993) are no longer just classroom resources to me—they are invitations. Invitations to healing, to dialogue, and to self-expression.

As I continue to refine this curriculum, I will remain committed to student-centered feedback and culturally sustaining practices. And I will hold onto this core belief: when students can see themselves in their learning, they begin to shape their own stories. And when we open the sliding glass door of language, we give them room to step forward with pride.

Resources

Ada, A. F. (1993). *Me llamo María Isabel*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Ada, A. F., & Thompson, K. D. (1993). *My name is María Isabel*. Aladdin Paperbacks.

Ada, A. F., Zubizarreta, R. (Trans.), & Garza, F. (Illus.). (1999). *The lizard and the sun* = *La lagartija y el sol*. Dragonfly Books.

Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3).

Blum, I. (2021). *Don't be scared! = ¡No tengas miedo!: A dual language book*.

PlanetOh Concepts Verlag.

Boatright, M. D. (2010). Graphic journeys: Graphic novels' representations of immigrant experiences. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53(6), 468–476.

<https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.53.6.3>

Connors, S. P. (2015). Expanding students' analytical frameworks through the study of graphic novels. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 41(1), 32–40.

Cook, D. F. (2019). *Cooking class global feast: 44 recipes that celebrate the world's cultures*. Storey Publishing.

Dahl, R. (1988). *Matilda*. Puffin Books.

Dean, J. (2019). *Dominican Republic: All around the world*. Pogo Books.

Dever, M. T., Sorenson, B., & Brodrick, J. (2005). Using picture books as a vehicle to teach young children about social justice. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 18(1), 18–21.

Flores, A. (Ed.). (1987). *Spanish stories: A dual-language book*. Dover Publications.

Fox, M., & Staub, L. (Illus.). (1999). *Whoever you are*. Scholastic Inc.

Gonzalez, M. (Ed.). (2020). *The golden age of Latin American poetry* (J. Smith, Trans.). Penguin Books.

Greco, G. (2023). *Spanish and English short stories for fun and easy language learning: The dual-language storybook*. GO Publishing.

Jiménez, F., & Silva, S. (Illus.). (2015). *La mariposa*. Chronicle Books.

Lauture, D., & Ruffins, R. (Illus.). (1996). *Running the road to ABC*. Scholastic Inc.

Méndez, Y. S., & Kim, J. (Illus.). (2019). *Where are you from?* HarperCollins.

- Muñoz, I. (2005). *Es mío = It's mine*. Scholastic Inc.
- Norman, L., & Palacios, S. (Illus.). (2023). *Plátanos go with everything*. HarperCollins.
- Patterson, T. J., & Shuttleworth, J. M. (2020). Teaching hard history through children's literature about enslavement. *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, 32(3), 14–19.
- Reyes, R. (2020). The song of the soul. In M. Gonzalez (Ed.), *The golden age of Latin American poetry* (J. Smith, Trans., pp. 150–155). Penguin Books.
- Resnick, S. (Ed. & Trans.). (1996). *Spanish-American poetry: A dual-language anthology*. Dover Publications.
- Schlesinger, M., & Erdem, E. (2023, August). *English learner (EL) home language and enrollment trends in the School District of Philadelphia: 2014–15 to 2022–23*. School District of Philadelphia, Office of Research and Evaluation.
<https://www.philasd.org/research/>
- Witherspoon, J. (2012). *English comes alive! Dynamic brain-building ways to teach ESL and EFL*. Synapse Books.
- Wood, J. R. (2006). *Living voices: Multicultural poetry in the middle school classroom*. National Council of Teachers of English.

Annotated List of Materials

Children's Literature

- Ada, A. F. (2002).** *I love Saturdays y domingos*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. *A bilingual picture book celebrating family traditions and cultural identity across two languages. This book is used in Week 1 to support emotional literacy and cultural affirmation.*
- de Anda, D. (2009).** *Let's talk about your feelings / Hablemos de nuestros sentimientos*. Parenting Press.

This bilingual book introduces feelings vocabulary with simple text and illustrations. It is used during Week 1 to build emotional literacy and oral language skills.

Mora, P. (1996). *Gracias / Thanks*. Lee & Low Books.

A poetic bilingual text that encourages children to express gratitude. It is used during Week 2 as a mentor text for language development and reflective writing.

Tonatiuh, D. (2015). *Funny bones: Posada and his Day of the Dead calaveras*. Abrams Books.

A culturally rich book that introduces Mexican traditions and art. This book supports Week 3 discussions on cultural storytelling and artistic expression.

Ruurs, M. (2006). *My librarian is a camel: How books are brought to children around the world*. Boyds Mills Press.

Used during Week 2 for community inquiry. This nonfiction text provides a global view of how communities value books and learning.

Alvarez, L. (2021). *Where do you come from?* Roaring Brook Press.

A lyrical exploration of identity and heritage, ideal for Week 2 activities on self-discovery and narrative writing.

Multimedia and Visual Supports

- **Emotion Card Sets (Bilingual)** – Printable or laminated visuals showing a range of feelings in English and Spanish. Used in Week 1 to help students express emotions and learn vocabulary.
- **Recipe Photo Cards** – Realistic images of food and cooking actions. Used during Week 4 for procedural writing and oral language scaffolding.
- **“Cooking with Kids” short videos (PBS LearningMedia)** – Age-appropriate, bilingual cooking clips that model sequencing and language for “how-to” lessons.

Annotated list of Materials and Teacher Resources

Use bilingual stories and poems to model narrative structure.

Incorporate vocabulary games and word exploration from texts.

Support speaking through think-pair-share and read-aloud reflection.

WIDA Can Do Descriptors (K–5) – Used to align lesson scaffolds to students’ language proficiency levels. Supports differentiation throughout the unit.

Graphic Organizers – Including Venn diagrams, story maps, and sequencing charts. Integrated across Weeks 1–4 to help students organize thoughts visually.

Bilingual Word Walls – Rotating thematic vocabulary in both English and Spanish, added weekly to support academic and social language.

Classroom Supplies

Chart paper and sentence strip pocket charts

Markers, colored pencils, glue sticks, and visual labels

Journals or writing booklets (for weekly reflections, recipes, and family stories)

Multilingual labels for classroom materials to support print-rich environments

Digital Tools

Seesaw or Flipgrid (optional) – For recording bilingual oral responses and digital storytelling

Google Slides – Used by the teacher to present mentor texts, vocabulary, and scaffolded examples

Padlet (optional) – Used for community sharing of family food stories in Week 4

Appendix

PA Standards Alignment Grades 6-8

Unit Focus:

- Bilingual children’s literature
- Food stories and procedural writing
- Emotional literacy and vocabulary building
- Cultural awareness through storytelling

- Targeted to WIDA Level 1 newcomers
- Focused on four domains: reading, writing, listening, speaking

Aligned Standards:

1. E06.A-K.1.1.1 – Quote accurately from a text.
2. E06.A-K.1.1.2 – Determine theme or central idea of a text.
3. E06.A-K.1.1.3 – Describe plot development and character responses.
4. E06.A-V.4.1.1 – Determine meaning of words using context clues.
5. E06.B-K.1.1.1 – Cite evidence in informational text.
6. E06.B-C.2.1.1 – Analyze how an author develops a point of view.
7. E06.B-C.3.1.1 – Trace and evaluate an argument and claims.
8. E06.C.1.3.1 – Write narratives using descriptive details.
9. E06.C.1.2.1 – Write informative/explanatory texts clearly.
10. E06.C.1.1.1 – Write arguments to support claims.
11. E06.D.1.1.1 – Demonstrate command of English grammar.
12. E06.D.1.2.1 – Use punctuation correctly in writing.
13. E06.D.1.2.2 – Spell grade-appropriate words correctly.
14. E06.D.2.1.1 – Use knowledge of language and its conventions.
15. PA ELD Standard 1 – Social and Instructional Language

Implementation Notes:

Integrate culturally relevant prompts and text selections.

Use dual-language recipes and ‘how-to’ texts to build sequencing and comprehension.

Align rubric expectations with ELD level descriptors from PDE.

WIDA ELD Standards Alignment Grades 6-8

Unit Focus:

- Bilingual children's literature
- Food stories and procedural writing
- Emotional literacy and vocabulary building
- Cultural awareness through storytelling
- Targeted to WIDA Level 1 newcomers
- Focused on four domains: reading, writing, listening, speaking

Aligned Standards:

1. Standard 1: Social and Instructional Language
2. Standard 2: Language of Language Arts
3. Standard 3: Language of Mathematics
4. Standard 4: Language of Science
5. Standard 5: Language of Social Studies
6. Key Language Use: Narrate – Retell events and personal stories.
7. Key Language Use: Inform – Provide factual details and descriptions.
8. Key Language Use: Explain – Clarify ideas, reasons, or processes.
9. Key Language Use: Argue – Present and support opinions or viewpoints.
10. Language Expectations: Identify topic and details (Listening & Reading)
11. Language Expectations: Use sequencing words (Writing & Speaking)
12. Language Expectations: Participate in discussions using appropriate register
13. Can Do Descriptor: Ask and answer WH- questions about familiar topics

14. Can Do Descriptor: Use high-frequency words and phrases in writing

15. Can Do Descriptor: Recount personal experiences orally and in writing

Implementation Notes:

Scaffold story writing using sentence frames.

Embed oral storytelling and heritage language in retelling activities.

Pair texts with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic support (songs, charts, recipes).

CCSS ELA Literacy Alignment Grades 6-8

Unit Focus:

- Bilingual children's literature
- Food stories and procedural writing
- Emotional literacy and vocabulary building
- Cultural awareness through storytelling
- Targeted to WIDA Level 1 newcomers
- Focused on four domains: reading, writing, listening, speaking

Aligned Standards:

1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1 – Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text

says explicitly.

2. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2 – Determine a theme or central idea and summarize the text.

3. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3 – Describe how a story plot unfolds and how characters develop respond.

4. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as used in a text.
5. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5 – Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, or section fits into the structure.
6. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6 – Explain how an author develops the point of view.
7. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.7 – Compare and contrast texts to their multimedia versions.
8. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.9 – Compare texts from different genres on similar themes.
9. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.1 – Cite textual evidence to support analysis of informational texts.
10. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases in context.
11. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts with supporting details.
12. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences.
13. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4 – Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to the task.
14. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.5 – Use guidance from peers and adults to strengthen writing.
15. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1 – Engage in collaborative discussions with diverse partners.