

Strategies to Support Multilingual Learners (ML)

The strategies outlined in this document synthesize research related to equitable instruction and universal design for learning (UDL) for multilingual learners and any students working on learning the language of the curriculum.

G Grow literacy skills through oracy (speaking & listening) opportunities

- **Provide opportunities (structured and unstructured)** for learners to meaningfully build and extend oral language skills. Structured opportunities include reciprocal teaching protocols, collaborative learning structures, academic discussion using talk moves.
- **Provide language supports** to help learners express understanding and ideas (e.g., sentence frames, language models to repeat for learners at the beginning stages of language proficiency, home language connections, models to use question stems to start responses.)
- **Model and promote positive interactions and respect** for varying perspectives and ways of thinking to ensure a safe space for learners to practice their new language.

L Leverage linguistic & cultural assets

- **Help MLs compare and contrast languages** (e.g., sounds and grammar) to build metalinguistic awareness.
- **Create translanguaging spaces** to encourage MLs to access all their languages to maximize how they communicate in social and instructional settings. When home language is used for meaning-making, support output in the new language.
- **Make and invite students to make personal connections** to topics and skills to activate background knowledge (e.g., a quick cognate connection, prior learning, home or community practices).

U Use varied, multimodal scaffolds & techniques

- **Represent content in multiple ways** for learners to have access to content; e.g.,
 - non-verbal modes of communication such as movement, real objects, images,
 - models and demonstrations,
 - anchor charts and graphic organizers
- **Provide opportunities for shared skill building** (e.g., shared writing, partner reading).
- **Differentiate the language complexity and precision of supports** to provide enhanced access to content in a new language AND to have learners practice using increasingly complex sentences and precise vocabulary (e.g., 2-3 sentence frames that start differently and use different sentence structures, “Juicy Sentences”).

E Elevate language that is embedded in content

- **Identify the academic language demands** of the content knowledge, skill, and instruction (beyond just content vocabulary, e.g., variety of sentence structures, preposition phrases to add detail, connectors to explain relationships) and **create language expectation(s)** for the lesson.
- **Unpack** (analyze) how language (and features) are used in more complex spoken and written text to create meaning; e.g., close reading, text deconstruction.
- **Focus feedback** on the explicit language expectations only; anticipate student responses and prepare targeted and affirming feedback; avoid error correction unless it influences comprehensibility.
- **Center text to build other language skills** to streamline and deepen learning (e.g., use words from the text to practice phonics skills, support vocabulary building in context, use the text as a mentor for grammar skills & writing tasks).



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Session notes:
