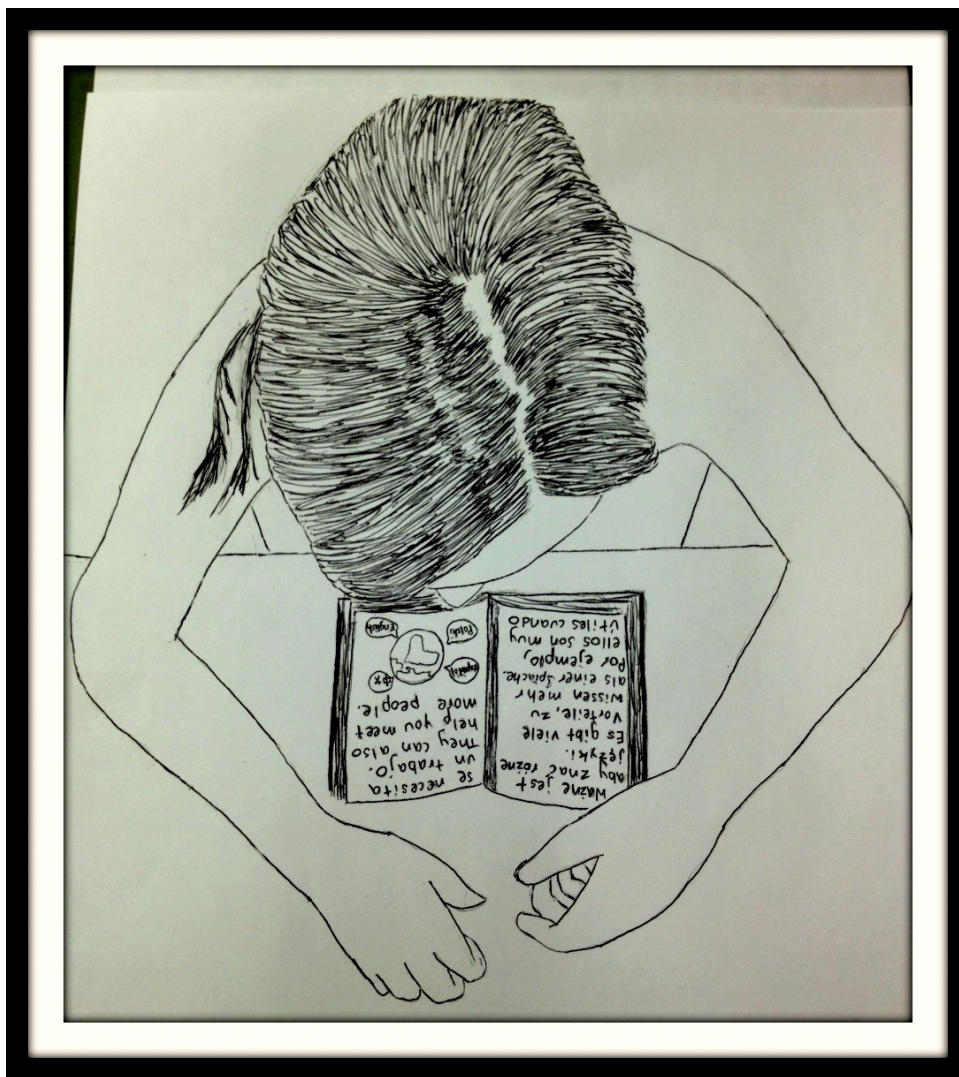


TRANSLANGUAGING: A CUNY-NYSIEB GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS



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EMERGENT BILINGUALS

This guide was developed by CUNY-NYSIEB, a collaborative project of the Research Institute for the Study of Language in Urban Society (RISLUS) and the Ph.D. Program in Urban Education at the Graduate Center, The City University of New York, and funded by the New York State Education Department. The guide was written under the direction of CUNY-NYSIEB's Project Director, Nelson Flores, and the Principal Investigators of the project: Ricardo Otheguy, Ofelia García and Kate Menken. For more information about CUNY-NYSIEB, visit www.cuny-nysieb.org.

Published in 2012 by CUNY-NYSIEB, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, 365 Fifth Avenue, NY, NY 10016. www.nysieb@gmail.com.

This guide was revised in 2013 to include the Appendix. Reprinted in March 2013.

Build Background with Preview-View-Review

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students’ reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students’ content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Using multiple languages to build background on a topic deepens EBLs’ and bilingual students’ understanding of the concepts and information, helping them meet the related content-area standards.

Building background using multiple languages also helps EBLs and bilingual students prepare for reading, writing, and speaking about different topics and themes. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Standards 7 and 9 can be met by using multiple forms of

What is it?

As all good builders know, constructing something on an unstable base is likely to result in a collapse—the same is true for constructing meaning. If students do not have a strong foundation, or background on a topic, then all subsequent meaning they try to construct, and all knowledge we try to build in our students, will be shaky.

For EBLs to build a strong foundation, they must do so in the language they feel most comfortable using. For many of them, that is the home language. Building background with home language support simply means using students’ languages to help prepare them for success in both content and language learning in English.

Freeman and Freeman (2009) discuss the strategy Preview-View-Review, which is a useful strategy for including both English and students’ home languages when building background and reading texts/introducing new topics. The strategy has students:

- **Preview** the topic/text in their *home language*
This includes brainstorming, making connections, and sharing prior knowledge on the topic/text you are about to cover.
- **View** the topic/text in *English*
Here, students are presented with the lesson/content topic in English. The presentation of content can include a traditional mini-lesson, a hands-on activity, watching a video clip or listening to audio, or reading a text either independently, in partnerships/groups, or aloud as a whole class.

- **Review** the
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K	W	L
Students brainstorm what they already know in their home languages and/or English.	Students ask questions and write down what they’d like to know about the topic in their home languages and/or English.	After they “view” the new topic, students write down what they learned about it in their home languages and/or English.

Translanguagi

1. **Think about the most important background information students will need in order to understand new content.**

It is crucial to think about what background knowledge students must have in order to understand and retain new information. You can then think about what “bridges” you can create between students’ own background knowledge and the new content. You might consider:

- What do students already know about this topic? How can I get them to tap into this knowledge?
- What is the “big picture” of this unit/topic? How can I help students to see this “big picture” early in the learning process?
- How does what I’m teaching connect to my students’ lives? What kinds of activities, readings, or media would help me make those connections?

2. **Preview the text/topic in students’ home languages.**

Here are some ways you can use students’ home languages to build background around a new text/topic:

media (home language audio/video, texts, and discussions) to help students preview the ideas they will encounter within the unit. This will help them to better understand the topic/theme they will be learning about in class.

Writing: Research to Build and Present

Knowledge: Standard 9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

When students preview a topic by reading a text, they can refer back to that text to analyze what they learn within the unit of study.

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

When students preview a topic using their home languages, they are communicating purposefully about academic content. This helps them express their ideas in the home language, as well as in English.

- **Home-language conversations and brainstorms**
 - **With peers:** Students can share their own background knowledge on a topic by discussing it with their peers in their home languages. If you teach in a bilingual program, you can also do whole-class brainstorms in a home language.
 - **With a staff member:** You can also draw upon staff members in the building who speak a particular home language, and ask them to talk briefly with your EBLs about an upcoming key topic.
 - **With family members:** Another way you can encourage students to preview new texts or topics in a home language is to involve students' families. You can send out an email or newsletter to parents and families *before* starting a new unit of study, asking them to talk with their children about a particular topic in the home language. This will help students to develop some schema for what they will be learning in class. Some topics are easier to do this for than others – complex topics that families have never studied or US-centric topics like US history might be difficult or impossible for families to discuss at home. However, if you include links to online media in the home language, or send home articles/texts in the home language that relate the upcoming unit of study, families can watch, listen and/or read, and then discuss together.
- **K-W-L charts and Anticipation Guides**

These strategies are familiar territory for many teachers, but using them with students' home languages might not be as common.

 - ***K-W-L Charts***

This graphic organizer helps students to organize what they know and what they want to know (and later what they've learned) about a topic. For bilingual students, having them use their home languages to brainstorm their existing background knowledge, as well as formulate “wonderings” about a topic, will better prepare them to encounter new information. You can set up your K-W-L chart like this:
 - ***Anticipation Guides***

These guides help students to preview important ideas, topics, or themes they will encounter in a unit. EBLs can fill out Anticipation Guides in their home languages, formulating their own opinions and building background about the “big picture” ideas within a new unit of study. For example:

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Why?
A debatable statement about the topic students will learn about in the unit/lesson	Students check the box that represents their opinion on the statement.		Students explain why that is their opinion in the home language and/or English.

Multilingual & Multicultural Resources that Build Background

Within this guide, there are many different multilingual and multicultural resources you can use to build students’ background knowledge. For example:

- EBLs can read about a new content-area topic in the home language before learning/reading about it about it in English. For more information about obtaining home language texts, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*.

- EBLs can use the Internet to access background information in their home language (including media) about an upcoming topic/text. For more information about multilingual Internet resources, see *Resources: Internet as Multilingual Resource*.

- EBLs can listen to audio and music that prepares them for a new topic/text. For more information about home language audio, see *Resources: Listening Centers*.

- You can tap into what EBLs already know about a topic by making multicultural connections. For more ideas for making your classroom multicultural, see *Environment: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment*.

- Reading texts in students’ home languages about topics they will encounter in English
Giving EBLs readings in their home languages can better prepare them for the content they will learn in English. In future lessons, they can draw on what they read in the home language, making it easier for them to contribute to class conversations and retain new content and language. For more on including multilingual texts in your classroom, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*.
 - Using media like audio and video in students’ home languages
Using media to build background can be especially helpful for EBLs because these methods are not text-based. Listening to a podcast about a new topic or watching a short video about ideas within a new unit can help prepare students to encounter new information conceptually, even if they struggle with literacy. For more on utilizing the Internet and Listening Centers, see *Resources: Internet as Multilingual Resource* and *Resources: Listening Centers*.
3. **View in English, making connections to the preview in the home language**
As you teach the new content, be sure to reference the background information that students built through the use of their home languages. This will be an important way for you to explicitly connect the background knowledge they developed *before* learning with the new content itself. There are many easy ways to systematically connect students’ background information to new content while still using home languages as support. You can:
- Refer to past home language conversations and brainstorms as you teach new content. Keeping visuals of whole-class brainstorms in your classroom is a great way to keep that background knowledge fresh in students’ minds. Making explicit connections between what students discussed in their home language and new content they are learning in English is key to helping EBLs understand and retain new information.
 - Keep a whole-class K-W-L chart up on chart paper in your classroom. Refer to the “K” when tapping in to students’ background knowledge and to the “W” when you encounter new information that helps to answer students’ questions. You and your students can update the “L” portion of the chart as questions are answered and new content is learned. If the “K” and the “W” are done in students’ home languages, doing the “L” in English will help them to see connections between both their background knowledge and new content and between their multiple languages.
 - Revisit home language texts, audio, and/or video as you encounter relevant content. Because you’ve already used texts, audio, and/or video to build background about new content, revisiting these resources as you come across those topics in more detail can help students tap back into their background knowledge. Unless you teach in a bilingual program, the new content you’re teaching will be in English. Reminding students of the background they built in

their home languages as they learn new content in English will aid in comprehension and retention. It will also help EBLs to better contribute to class conversations in English.

4. **Review back in students' home languages.**

Here, you have students review in their home languages the new topic or text that they just learned or read about in English. You can have students use their home language with a partner, a staff member who shares the students' home languages, or family members to:

- Discuss and negotiate what they learned/read
- Synthesize and summarize what they learned/read
- Clarify and question what they learned/read

Emergent Bilinguals

Too often, the students who most lack background knowledge needed to understand a new text/content-area topic are also those that lack literacy in both English and a home language (i.e. **SIFE students**). For these students it is essential to first activate what they know (even if it is a loose connection to the new topic), so they are able to connect new information to existing knowledge.

Because of low literacy in both English and a home language, non-text sources are most beneficial for building background. For example, you can:

- Have students listen to or watch **media** (i.e.: video, audio) that relates to the new content-area topic.

- Have students listen to a text read to them in a **Listening Center**. You could also read to the student yourself OR have a partner or staff member **read aloud** to the student.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

- Approximately once a month, a 4th grade self-contained ESL teacher sent an email to students' families (and send home a hard-copy version) explaining what new units of study the class was about to start in each subject area. She translated these important communications into Spanish herself, and had someone in the school help with the languages of her other students: Haitian Creole and Korean. In the emails, she explained how she would like the families to prepare their children for the upcoming topics of study by previewing the topics in the home language. At the beginning of the year, the teacher had explained to families that this was a critical way for them to support their child's education, and as the school year progressed, family participation increased greatly with these home language preview activities.

Sometimes she asked them to talk with their child in the home language about a particular topic to help build background knowledge; other times she included links to websites where they could watch something together as a family and then talk about it in the home language. For one of the math units of study on fractions, she included in the email some examples the families could talk about with their children to help them understand the concepts. Since the teacher knew that a number of parents were unfamiliar with the fraction concepts themselves, she shared a link to a video illustrating how to add and subtract fractions:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52ZIXsFJULI>

The video is narrated in English, but the math concepts are clearly demonstrated in a visual way. She asked families to watch the video with their children, and talk in the home language about what the person in the video did to add the fractions. When the teacher began the math lessons on adding and subtracting fractions, she showed the class this same video, and asked them what they had talked about with their families. This connected the English lesson to the home language preview that most families had done. As students learned more about adding and subtracting fractions, part of their homework was to "teach" their families what they had learned. This provided a way for students to review the concepts in the home language.

- In December, a 1st grade general education teacher launched a science unit of study, Weather and Seasons, with a focus on winter. She planned to read aloud a number of Big Books, trade books, and children's literature related to winter to deepen

students' understanding of the New York science standards for this unit. The teacher had several EBLs who spoke Spanish, so she looked for winter books that had bilingual versions. She decided to use one of these books to start the unit:



She had a mother of one of her EBLs create an audio recording of a Spanish-version book. As the class started this unit of study, the teacher had her EBLs listen to the Spanish text at the listening center several times, and encouraged them to talk about the book together in Spanish. Later, she gathered the whole class on the rug to read aloud the English version of the same text. Her EBLs were very engaged during the read aloud because they were familiar with the text, and were anticipating what was going to come next. They were also more willing to share their ideas orally in English, since they had a better understanding of the book.

Middle / Secondary Grades

- A 10th grade self-contained ESL class started each day with a quote. The teacher knew that students would have to analyze quotes as a part of the English Regents they would take the following year. Exposing students to many different quotes would give them the background and skills needed for the exam. The quote was always in English, but the teacher had students negotiate and discuss the quote with partners who spoke the same home language. The teacher set up the daily activity as follows:
 - 1) Students read the quote aloud 2-3 times. The teacher helped with the pronunciation of any unknown words.
 - 2) In pairs, students discussed the following questions in their home language:
 - What does the quote mean, in your own words?
 - Translate the quote into your home language. Can it be translated easily? Why or why not?
 - Make a connection to the quote. Does it relate to your life? Something we've read as a class? A movie or TV show you've seen? Something you've seen in the news or in society?
 - 3) The pairs would share out their thoughts and ideas in English. If students struggled to communicate their ideas in English, the teacher and more proficient students would help them clear up confusion and/or translate.
- A 9th grade Living Environment teacher wanted to prepare his EBLs for a unit on evolution. He used Google Translate to put together an Anticipation Guide in both Spanish and English for students to do in their groups. Some of the statements were:
 - Los humanos y algunos monos son 99% genéticamente idénticos. (*Humans and some monkeys are 99% genetically identical.*)
 - Todavía hay unos pocos dinosaurios que viven en el mundo. (*There are still some dinosaurs living in the world.*)
 - Las aves y los dinosaurios son de la misma familia. (*Birds and dinosaurs are in the same family.*)

Students read the statements in their groups and discussed whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, recording their opinions on the Anticipation Guide in either Spanish or English. After working in groups, all students shared out their opinions on the statements in English.

- A 6th grade math teacher used video to build students' background for a unit on geometry. The teacher showed a BrainPOP video in French that illustrated how different geometric shapes exist in the real world (www.brainpop.fr). After watching the French video, the teacher gave students a brief introduction to different shapes they would be exploring in the unit. Then students talked with their partners in French and brainstormed different places they'd seen each shape in their own neighborhoods. At the end of the class, students shared out their ideas in English. The teacher recorded all answers on chart paper, which she hung in the classroom and referenced throughout the unit.
- In preparation for reading *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare, a 9th grade general education ELA teacher had students think about the effect of the supernatural on individuals. After explaining what she meant by supernatural, the teacher asked students to turn and talk to a partner about any stories they knew that involved the supernatural. EBLs sat with partners who shared their home language, so conversations began right away—the students all had stories to tell! After having a few pairs share out their stories in English, the teacher gave students a short reading on Santeria, a Caribbean religion many of her students knew. The reading was in English with a side-by-side translation into both Spanish and Haitian Creole. The teacher had students read the text together, pausing from time to time to discuss and negotiate what they read in either Spanish, Haitian Creole or English. The lesson culminated with students previewing lines from the play, which the class began reading later that week.
- Before presenting a lesson on the DREAM Act as a part of a unit on modern immigration, an 11th grade US History teacher wanted students to inquire into their current understandings of the topic, as well as any questions they wanted to have answered. The teacher started by showing a short video from the Spanish TV channel Univision about the DREAM Act. Using some information from the clip, students filled out the first two columns of the K-W-L Chart in Spanish. After filling out the chart, the teacher presented students with a short mini-lesson about the DREAM Act and a newspaper article in English that outlined the opposing sides of the debate. After the lesson and the reading, students went back to their charts and filled out the last column in Spanish, including their opinions on the DREAM Act and its connection to their own lives.

<p style="text-align: center;">K</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What do I already KNOW about this topic?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">W</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What do I WANT to know about this topic?</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What have I LEARNED about this topic?</i></p>
<p>Una ley que daría derechos a los hijos de inmigrantes ilegales <i>(A law that would give rights to the kids of illegal immigrants)</i></p> <p>Si los jovenes van a la universidad, pueden quedarse en los Estados Unidos por seis años <i>(If the kids go to college, they can stay in the US for six years)</i></p>	<p>¿Por qué estos jovenes tienen que entrar en el ejército para quedarse aquí? <i>(Why do these kids have to go in to the military to stay here?)</i></p>	<p>Creo que el gobierno debería aprobar el DREAM Act, porque no es justo que los niños tengan que pagar por las decisiones de sus padres <i>(I think the government should pass the DREAM Act because it's not fair that kids have to pay for their parents' decisions.)</i></p>

Multilingual Research

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Using multiple languages to research a topic deepens bilingual students' understanding of the concepts and information, helping them meet the related [content-area standards](#).

Multilingual research also allows bilingual students to take advantage of their full linguistic repertoire to meet the following anchor standards in Reading and Writing. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9

What is it?

One of the advantages of knowing multiple languages is that you can use all of them to acquire information. When you have bilingual students research a topic using their *entire* linguistic repertoire, you help them see the real-life value of being multilingual in our globalized world. Students as young as Kindergartners can do multilingual research – the level of complexity simply increases as students progress through the grades. Through multilingual research, bilingual students can develop their reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills in both languages.

Conducting multilingual research can mean:

- Reading texts in English and/or the home language, such as books, magazines, newspapers, and online texts (See *Resources: Multilingual Texts*)
- Listening to texts in English and/or the home language (See *Resources: Listening Center*)
- Watching media in English and/or the home language (See: *Resources: Internet as a Multilingual Resource*)
- Interviewing speakers of the home language and speakers of English
- Taking notes in English and/or the home language
- Presenting the research orally or in writing in a particular language, or a combination of languages, depending on the audience.

Emergent bilinguals who aren't literate in their home language can still conduct multilingual research by listening to home language texts, watching media in the home language, and conducting oral interviews in the home language. Emergent bilinguals who have some reading ability in their home language can read some home language texts to complement their research in English.

Translanguaging How-To

1. Create opportunities for bilingual students to conduct multilingual research

- **Provide bilingual students with multilingual resources**
To make this kind of research work, your EBLs need access to multilingual resources. See the *Resources* section for ways to find multilingual texts, websites in the home language, and resources for listening to home language texts or media.
- **Create opportunities for bilingual students to conduct interviews in the home language as well as in English**
Whenever possible, find ways for your students to learn about a topic by interviewing people who have “expert knowledge.” Bilingual students can take advantage of their developing bilingualism to interview people who speak their home language as well as people who speak English. This provides an authentic way for your bilingual students to use both of their languages as a vehicle for research. It also builds their listening skills in both languages, a

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Standard 9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

critical skill identified in the Common Core State Standards.

2. **Decide what language(s) bilingual students should use to take notes**
Bilingual classrooms

There are two options for note-taking:

- **Notes in only one language:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, but take all of their notes in just one language. This is an option if you have allocated one particular language to writing instruction during this unit of study.
- **Notes in English & home language:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, and take notes in the language of the source, or the language other than the source-language. This is a good way for EBLs in a bilingual program to see the practical function of having proficiency in multiple languages, and helps bilingual students continue to develop their writing ability in *both* languages.

General Education and ESL classrooms

There are two options for note-taking:

- **Notes in English:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, but take all of their notes in English. This is necessary for students who are not literate in the home language, since they are only able to write in English.
- **Notes in English & home language:** Have bilingual students use multilingual sources for their research, and take notes in the language of the source, or the language other than the source-language. This is a good option for bilingual students who have some level of literacy in both English and the home language because it gives them an authentic purpose for writing in both languages. This provides a way for your students to develop their writing ability in *both* languages.

3. **Decide what language(s) bilingual students should use to create a written product**

Bilingual classrooms

The written product your bilingual students create can be in just one language (the home language or English), or a purposeful combination of both languages:

- **Writing in just one language:** This is an option if you have allocated one particular language to writing instruction during this unit of study.
- **Writing in both languages:** Have your students think about the audience that will be reading what they write. Is that audience bilingual? If so, they can write certain parts of their research in the home language, and other parts in English. There are many ways each language can play a role in their writing. For example, you can ask them to write an informational essay in English, accompanied by a visual display with labels and explanations in the home language. Or, you can have students write a bilingual informational book along with a bilingual glossary of key words.

General Education and ESL Classrooms

The written product your EBLs create can be in English or in a combination of English and the home language:

- **Writing in English:** You may want your students to take their multilingual notes and use them to write a text in English. This means

Getting Families & Communities Involved

Think about what knowledge your bilingual students' families might have about a topic your class is going to research. Have your bilingual students interview a family member using the home language as part of their research. This validates the importance of the home language and the different types of knowledge and experiences families have, regardless of their level of formal education.

Depending on the research topic, English-speakers can interview their families in English, or they can partner up with a bilingual student to collaboratively interview the bilingual student's family member.

You can also consider who students could interview in their communities using the home language or English.

students would translate the ideas from the home language notes into English. Bilingual students are used to flexibly moving from one language to another, so translating ideas from home language notes continues to build this mental dexterity and helps them think critically about how to express the same idea in different languages. This is a cognitively demanding task that will help students compare and contrast the structure of English with the structure of the home language. Younger students or those in the early stages of language proficiency will need your help to translate certain vocabulary words. You can type words from their home language notes into a translation website like Google Translate to see what the words are in English. Older students or those with more advanced proficiency can do this translation work on their own using bilingual dictionaries or translation websites.

- **Writing in a combination of English & home language:** Another option is to have your EBLs create part of their research project in the home language, and another part in English. For example, they could write a report in the home language and create a visual display with summaries and labels in English. Or, they could write an informational book in the home language and label photographs, diagrams, or illustrations in English. This is particularly helpful for EBLs with lower English proficiency levels because they can more fully express what they've learned by writing in the home language, while creating another written product in English that matches their English proficiency level.

4. **Decide what language(s) bilingual students should use to share their research** Bilingual Classrooms:

- Depending on the language allocation for your program, you may want your students to use a particular language for their sharing.
- If some of your EBLs have a beginning English proficiency level, you can use the strategies suggested below for general education and ESL classrooms.

General Education and ESL Classrooms:

- EBLs with beginning proficiency levels in English should use the home language to orally share what they learned from their research. When sharing, they can also include some English vocabulary words they have learned. When possible, have another student translate into English what the student has shared, or do it yourself if you speak that language.
- Bilingual students with higher English proficiency levels can share what they learned in English. They can also teach the class how to say certain key vocabulary words in their home language, based on what they learned from their multilingual research.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

- A 3rd grade English-French dual language bilingual class researched a country of their choice as part of an integrated unit combining Social Studies (world communities), Reading (nonfiction), and Writing (informational essays). Students researched their country using information from websites written in French as well as English. They also read trade books about the country. Some of these texts were in English, and others were in French, depending on

the country they chose and the books the teacher was able to find.

Students took notes in both languages, depending on what they were reading. They also used Google Translate to help them understand new vocabulary they were encountering in either English or French.

When they began drafting their informational essays, they wrote them in French and then translated them into English to have a bilingual end product. For most writing units students created separate English and French pieces of writing, but in this case there was a specific purpose for creating a bilingual essay: the culminating event was a grade-wide multicultural celebration where both English-speaking and French-speaking families would be attending. Having a bilingual informational essay meant that *all* families could read the students' writing in whichever language they preferred. Students also created a visual display to accompany their essays (Figure 1).

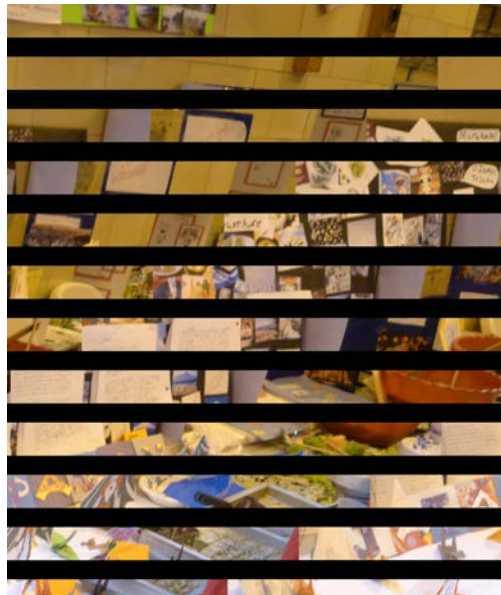
Another reason to have students create a bilingual text was to provide an opportunity for them to think critically about how sentences are structured in each language. Students had to compare and contrast English and French syntax. This was a powerful language learning experience for students.

Pairing up Bilingual students with English-speakers

Multilingual research doesn't need to be something bilingual students do in isolation. If they are partnered or grouped with English-speakers, they can still conduct research using both languages, and then share back with their partner or group what they have learned from the home language sources.

This positions students' bilingualism as an asset, since they are the ones who possess the ability to make sense of the information in a home language source. The knowledge bilingual students share from the home language sources can be compiled with the other information gathered in English.

Figure 1



Middle/Secondary Grades

- A 7th grade ESL teacher created an interview project as a part of a unit on Neighborhoods and Communities. Students had to interview two different people in their neighborhood to inquire into the resources and knowledge available in their own communities. Students developed interview questions in their home languages, but translated them into English for those community members who did not speak that language. Students were then given tape recorders and recorded the interviews they conducted. Students took notes in either English or their home languages, depending on the language spoken by the interviewee. Students also transcribed (and, when needed, translated) parts of the interview from their recordings, honing their listening skills as they synthesized the most important aspects of each interview.

The final product was an informative report about how students could use members of their communities as funds of knowledge. Students presented written reports of their findings in English, as well as posters featuring bilingual versions of their interview questions, interview transcriptions, and pictures with bilingual captions. The community members interviewed, as well as students' families, were invited to the school for the presentation. The bilingual nature of the project made it possible for all audience members to feel involved and engaged in the presentations.

- A 10th grade general education English teacher and Global History teacher combined a content-area unit on wars with a study of war literature. Because the teachers had many EBLs in their classes, they decided to make the research multilingual. The two teachers organized a series of multilingual resources that students would read throughout the unit. The history teacher covered the historical and primary source readings in her class and the English teacher read pieces of war literature in hers. Both teachers drew from multiple sources—written text, first person accounts, music, and video—to give a well-rounded, multilingual picture of how war affects different individuals.

Each day, students were presented with several research sources they could choose from. Students could pick sources in English or in their home languages. As students recorded their research, they took notes in English, using Google Translate as well as bilingual dictionaries when needed. This enabled all students to share their research notes and helped EBLs practice synthesizing texts in multiple languages into English.

The end product of the unit, a report on how war affects individuals across different societies, was written and presented to the class in English. In addition, students created visuals and multimedia in their home languages to supplement their reports and further support the class's understanding of war's effects on individuals.

Comparing Multilingual Texts on the Same Content-Area Topic

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

When students compare more than one text on the same topic, it helps them to understand and analyze that topic. It also helps them meet a variety of reading standards. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Reading: Key Ideas and Details: Standard 2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

If you have students determine common central ideas and themes across multiple texts, their understanding of those ideas and themes might be deeper

Reading: Craft and Structure: Standard 6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Reading: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

What is it?

Having students compare texts in both English and a home language on one content-area topic has many benefits. First, it gives bilingual students multiple entry points into the content. By drawing on all of their languages, bilingual students can fully understand the complexity of a topic. Second, it helps these students make comparisons between their languages, cultivating both their linguistic awareness and their ability to fully use all of their languages. Comparison can be done in discussion and/or in writing, depending on your purposes. Comparing in discussion provides opportunities for students to hone listening and speaking skills, serving as a scaffold or starting place for writing.

Students can compare texts in two different ways:

- Compare a text English and the **same text** translated into a home language
- Compare two **different texts about the same topic or theme**, one in English and one in a home language

When students compare multilingual texts around one content-area topic, the goal is for them to compare both language **and** content. By having students compare multilingual texts, you are teaching them how different languages can provide different insights into one topic. You can set up opportunities for students to compare multilingual texts around one topic in several ways:

- **Jigsaw readings that encourage comparison**
You can group students by language and have them read different multilingual texts around one topic. Students can start by reading a text in their home language with their groups. The groups can discuss and negotiate the reading around guiding questions or prompts in their home language. You can then jigsaw the groups so that all members of the new groups have read different multilingual texts, but have discussed the same questions or prompts. Students can share out their thinking with their group in English, encouraging all students to compare both the content and the language of what they read.
- **Use multilingual texts that emphasize different perspectives**
All content areas encourage students to look at problems or concepts from different perspectives. By reading about a content-area topic in different languages, students are encouraged to add a linguistic and cultural perspective to their analysis of that topic. When learning about a topic that can be seen from different perspectives, you can provide readings that emphasize how speakers of different languages (and members of different cultures) might understand and view a content-area topic differently. For example, if students in a Social Studies class are studying the immigration debate, you could ask them to compare how the NY Times, The Daily News, and El Diario report on immigration. You could facilitate a discussion about how each news source characterizes and uses language to discuss and analyze the issue of immigration. Here, comparing multilingual texts helps students to think deeply about issues of **social justice** that affect their lives. By focusing on how *language* can reveal these differences in perspective, students get a clear picture of how language is more than just something people speak—it is tied to larger political and social issues in the United States and around the world.

Emergent Bilinguals

Students who struggle to read texts in English and in a home language (including SIFE and LTEL students) can compare non-print texts around one content-area topic. They can compare:

- **Two listening passages**, one in English one in a home language

- A **listening passage** in English and a **video clip/song** in a home language

- **Two video clips**, one in English and one in a home language

- **Two songs**, one in English and one in a home language

If you want these students to write their comparisons, pair them with students who speak the same home language and have them dictate their answers to their partners.

- **Use different multilingual texts to analyze one topic**

Reading multilingual texts around one topic can foster critical thinking. For example, Kleyn and Adelman Reyes (2010) use the example of a common unit taught in social studies classes in upper elementary and secondary Social Studies classes – the Vietnam War. One of the activities they recommend is supplementing a traditional, textbook-driven unit includes bringing in alternate sources of information that express views other than those found in the textbook. When reading these sources, they suggest that teachers encourage students to “note discrepancies in the various sources of information” and “pose problems through both writing and discussion...produce a classroom-made book on the Vietnam War as seen from multiple perspectives” (50).

By encouraging students to read multiple texts around one topic, we are encouraging them to see a historical event from multiple perspectives. You can encourage **translanguaging** here by including *multilingual* texts into this inquiry. How might an account from a Vietnamese person *written in Vietnamese* help students pose problems and note discrepancies across different sources of information? How might a member of a different linguistic group living in the US have viewed the war? Having students read multilingual versions of historical accounts would help them to write about and discuss how the language plays a role in perspective and critical thinking about US history.

- **Use multilingual student writing to compare language and content knowledge**

You can use your own students’ writing to help them compare and analyze content-area topics. If students are able to write in multiple languages, you automatically have multilingual texts to compare! Give students a prompt or a topic to write about, encourage them to write in both English and their home languages, and then facilitate a comparison of both the language and content of the writing. You can do this by partnering students who have written in different languages about the same topic or by presenting two pieces of multilingual student writing for a whole-class discussion and comparison. This can help students to become more aware of the various languages in their classroom. It can also illustrate how one topic can be written about and discussed in a variety of ways.

Translanguaging How-To:

1. **Create opportunities for students to compare multilingual texts around content-area topics**

When examining your curriculum, think about the topics that lend themselves to comparison.

- What different **points of view** are present within this topic? How can I use multilingual texts to help me highlight these points of view?
- What different **arguments** are present within this topic? How can I use multilingual texts to help me present these arguments?

Once you have thought about the scope of the topic, you can start looking for or creating multilingual texts that help students understand the various perspectives and arguments present within the topic (see *Resources: Multilingual Texts* for more on how to find/create multilingual texts). You can use multilingual translations of one text, various multilingual readings around one topic, or even students’ own multilingual writing to make these comparisons.

2. **Strategically plan comparisons within your units and lessons.**

Look at your content and language goals to strategically plan the kinds of comparisons you want students to make.

- If you want students to use multilingual texts to compare content, they can:
 - Analyze different points of view present in one content-area topic
 - Compare different arguments within one topic
 - Synthesize multiple texts into one argument, thesis, or summary about a topic
- If you want students to use multilingual texts to compare language, they can:
 - Find and compare vocabulary, including cognates
 - Analyze and discuss word choices and word meanings
 - Translate a text from one language into another (home language to English or vice versa)

3. Teach students strategies for comparing multilingual texts

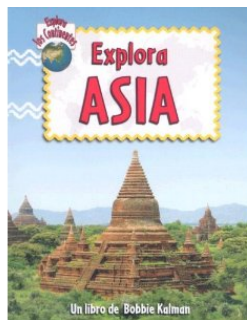
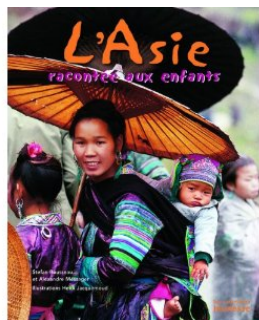
Although your students speak multiple languages, they may not know how to compare multilingual texts around one content topic. Because languages are so often separated in schools, students need explicit instruction and strategies for comparing and discussing texts in their multiple languages. Here are some possible strategies:

- If you jigsaw your multilingual readings, try having students analyze the texts around the **same discussion questions or prompts**. This aligns students' discussions of the different texts, helping them to compare these texts more easily when they come together in mixed groups. The questions and discussions can be in either English or the home language, no matter what languages the texts are written in.
- If you are using multilingual texts to help students compare different perspectives, include **point of view writing** in your teaching of this topic. Having students **re-present** the text in their own words, while maintaining the points of views present in the text, helps scaffold their ability to compare the different arguments and perspectives present in the topic.
- Help students compare multilingual texts and make connections by using **graphic organizers**. You can use Venn diagrams, Compare/Contrast matrices, and other organizers that encourage students to think about how multiple texts can inform one thesis/opinion about a topic.
- If you compare students' multilingual writing around one content-area topic, **model** comparisons of both the language and the content of the writing. You can make transparencies of the two pieces of writing you are comparing and project them in the classroom. If you have a Smartboard, you can scan students' pieces of writing and project them that way. Working with either a projector or a Smartboard, **think aloud, model questions, and annotate/gloss the texts** to illustrate how students should compare writing in different languages.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

- **Jigsaw readings that encourage comparison**
To begin a 3rd grade social studies unit on Asia, an ESL teacher found texts about the continent in her BILINGUALS' home languages, Spanish and French, to supplement the English texts she already had.



To launch the unit of study, during a Reading Workshop the teacher grouped students by home language (French, Spanish, or English), and gave each group an informational text about Asia in that language. She asked students to read their text independently (or with a partner, in the cases where students did not have strong literacy skills in the home language *or* in English). While reading, students took notes in a T-chart to record details they were learning about:

Geography of Asia	Asian Culture

At the end of the Reading Workshop, the teacher did a jigsaw share where each group had representatives from each home language. In English, students took turns sharing with their group what they had learned from their respective texts about geography and culture in Asia.

Middle / Secondary Grades

- Use multilingual student writing to compare language and content**
 A 6th grade Spanish NLA teacher wanted to teach students a lesson on using descriptive language as a part of a unit on memoir. Because she was working closely with the ELA teacher, both teachers had students write briefly on the prompt, “What is your happiest memory?” After students had written their responses, both teachers collected their students’ writing. For a lesson the next day, the NLA teacher chose a student’s writing in Spanish from the NLA class and a students’ writing in English from the ELA class. She put two documents side by side on her Smartboard. The class read both documents, discussing how both students used descriptive language to describe their happiest memories. The teacher then asked students to compare the placement of adjectives in Spanish vs. English. She had students circle nouns and adjectives in different colors on the Smartboard, illustrating the differences in placement. The teacher then returned students’ writing from the day before and had them revise based on the day’s lesson.
- Jigsaw readings that encourage comparison**
 A 9th grade ESL teacher taught a unit on identity, using multilingual texts to help students form a thesis about what factors influence individuals’ sense of self. Because her students spoke a variety of languages, she decided she would jigsaw

home language readings around the topic of the environment's effects on individuals' identities. She created groups of students who shared a home language (Russian, Polish) and gave each group a reading in that language around the topic. Students in all groups had to answer the same three discussion questions. As students read their text together, they had conversations in both English and their home language around those questions: They recorded their answers in either English or their home language. Next, the groups were split up so that one "expert" from each home language group formed a new, heterogeneous group. Students shared their answers to the three discussion questions in English. This share-out enabled students to see multiple ways in which different environments influenced individuals' identity.

In a subsequent lesson, the teacher took excerpts from two of the jigsawed home language readings and put them side by side on the Smartboard, with an English translation underneath each one. The teacher had a student who spoke each home language read the excerpt aloud, encouraging students to listen for words that sounded similar to English or to their own home language. The teacher then had students pick out written words that resembled or started with the same letters as those in English or their own home language. After discussing some of the linguistic similarities and differences, the teacher had the students compare and contrast the environment's effects on the individuals in each reading.

- **Use multilingual texts that emphasize different perspectives**

A 10th grade bilingual Spanish Global History teacher taught a unit on the Age of Exploration. Though the curriculum included a discussion of the Spanish conquests of Mexico and Central America, the teacher wanted students to see the complex perspectives present in the topic more clearly. First, the teacher had all students read a short introduction to the Spanish conquest of the Yucatán peninsula, which was written side-by-side in both English and Spanish. Students were introduced to both the Spanish conquistadores and the Mayan people who lived in the Yucatán at the time of the conquest. After reading about the story of the conquest, students wrote diary entries in the point of view of either a conquistador or a Maya in **Spanish**. They also had to summarize and present the story of the conquest in **English** from a "neutral" perspective. When students read their writing, they were able to analyze the different perspectives and motivations of the two groups, as well as discuss the ways in which each group used language to communicate their feelings about the conquest. This led into a larger discussion about the connection between language and power, and how many indigenous languages are eliminated and replaced by the language of the colonizer (i.e.: in the Yucatán, Maya was replaced with Spanish).

- **Use different multilingual texts to analyze one topic**

A 9th grade Living Environment class was learning about environmental conservation. The teacher grouped students by home language (Spanish, French, and Arabic) and gave each group a reading about how different countries have enacted policies that help their citizens to conserve and live "greener" lives. These readings, about four different countries represented in the classroom, were written in students' home languages. After reading, the students filled out the Compare/Contrast Matrix for the country featured in their text (Figure 1). Next, the teacher had groups share out their work in English, which she recorded on a larger version of the Matrix she created on chart paper. As each group shared, the other groups listened and took notes on the country being discussed. After the whole Matrix was filled out, students wrote paragraphs answering the question, "In what ways can individuals help to conserve the environment?"

Figure 1

	Dominican Republic	Senegal	Yemen	United States
Environmental Problem				
Conservation Efforts				
Effects of Efforts on the Problem				

Multilingual Reading and Responses

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' reading and listening ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Having students read and respond to multilingual texts helps them to build their overall literacy. When they read and respond to what they read (in either writing or discussion), they are meeting standards across many different strands of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Reading:

Reading any text helps students meet the following anchor standards. Depending on the text and your purposes, refer to individual standards within the anchor standards:

- [Key Ideas and Details](#)
- [Craft and Structure](#)
- [Integration of Knowledge and Ideas](#)

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standards 1, 2, and 3

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Write informative or explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and

What is it?

Getting students to respond to what they read—in discussion, in writing, on exams—is often a challenge. For EBLs, this can be an even greater challenge if students do not comprehend what they read. Because EBLs are often given readings solely in English, they are only able to respond at lower cognitive levels. They might be able to recall information or understand the basic idea of the text, but they cannot interact with the text in a way that matches their cognitive ability.

When we think more flexibly about how EBLs can respond to what they read, we can begin to see what these students truly understand. When the pressure of getting the language “right” is alleviated, and when EBLs utilize their entire linguistic repertoire, they will be able to illustrate their understanding of what they read more successfully.

Translanguaging How-To

1. Provide multilingual texts for students to read.

In order to successfully respond to what they read, students should be exposed to multilingual texts around one topic. For information about finding/creating multilingual texts, see *Resources: Multilingual Texts*.

2. Create opportunities for students to use translanguaging when responding to what they read.

To encourage students to use all of their languages when responding to what they read, you can try the following strategies:

Respond in Writing:

• Respond to reading in English *and* the home language

Depending on the purpose, students can respond to prompts, summarize what they read, and “converse” about what they read with you or their classmates in both English and their home languages. Here are a few specific ways that EBLs can use both English and their home languages. They can:

- Write a sentence in English that summarizes the idea they want to express, followed by a more elaborate written response in the home language.
- Copy a portion of the text in English that they are referring to (the text evidence), and write their thoughts about that text in the home language. If possible, they can include a short summary in English.
- Include sketches as part of their responses to illustrate what happened in the text, and label it in English. If they are literate in the home language, they can write more about it in the home language. Though this strategy may be more appropriate for primary grade students, it can also be used with SIFE students or other students who struggle with literacy in both English and a home language.

• Read in English and annotate in the home language

information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

You can help students meet these standards by varying the kind of writing students use to respond to what they read. You can have students prepare arguments (Standard 1), write explanatory responses (Standard 2) or create narratives (Standard 3) to respond to what they read in a range of text types.

Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Standard 1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

When students respond to what they read in discussion, they build their academic language and have authentic conversations about texts.

As students read a text in English, they can annotate and mark up the text in a home language. Students can ask questions, summarize, and respond to what they read in English by annotating in the home language. The result is a perfect example of translanguaging – students using all of their linguistic tools to make meaning as they read.

- **Read in English and respond in the home language *only***
There may be times when it makes the most sense for students to read in English and respond *fully* in the home language. That means that students write a response (a summary, a traditional essay, a piece of genre writing, etc.) to the English text in the home language *only*. This builds students ability to write academically about what they read in their home language.
- **Respond using multilingual graphic organizers**
There are many graphic organizers that students can use to respond to their reading in different ways. To encourage translanguaging here, you can have students read in English and respond via graphic organizers in either English or the home language (for examples of translanguaging with graphic organizers, see *Reading and Content: Build Background with Preview-View-Review*).

Respond in Discussion:

Discussion is a powerful way for students to respond to what they read, even if they are not yet able to do so in writing. It also helps students to hone their **speaking** and **listening** skills in both English and their home languages.

- **Use sentence prompts in either English or a home language**
Getting students to talk about what they read can be difficult, especially if they don't feel comfortable speaking English. With sentence prompts in English or in a home language, students can have conversations about what they read in a more structured way. You can hang a poster with multilingual sentence prompts in your classroom and/or give students a list of prompts to keep and refer to as they have class discussions about what they read.
- **Work with partners or groups to respond to what they read**
See *Collaborative Work: Reading & Writing Partners and Multilingual Reading Groups* for more information about this idea.
- **Read in English and discuss in the home language *only***
After students have read a text in English, they can discuss what they read *fully* in the home language. This home language discussion can occur in reading partnerships or groups where all students speak the same home language, or as a whole class if you speak students' home languages. Having students discuss, analyze, and negotiate the English text using the home language encourages them to have academic conversations in that home language.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

- **Respond to reading in both English and the home language**
A 2nd grade self-contained ESL teacher wanted her EBLs to create the same type of reading responses as students with high levels of English proficiency. She showed them how they could respond in English to the fullest extent possible, and then add on to that response in the home language. She modeled these possibilities whenever she introduced a new type of reading response. For example, she

Emergent Bilinguals

For EBLs who struggle with literacy in both English and their home language (including SIFE students and LTELs), it may be difficult for them to read and/or respond to what they read. However, these students often have a great deal to offer to a conversation about a text. To include these students in both reading and responding to texts, you can:

Use Read-Alouds

Though we usually think about read-alouds in an elementary grade context, it is very useful for students at all levels. Students who struggle to read independently can listen to a text read aloud in either English or the home language (by you or by another student), following along with the written text. Students can then respond to what they hear in discussion. You can use their contributions in discussion as a scaffold for responding in writing.

Use Audio Recordings of Text

Have students sit in the listening center and follow along with the text as they hear it read to them. This is especially powerful if you have them listening to the same text that the rest of the class is reading independently. You can even give these students the text and the recording to do *before* a class discussion or activity takes place. This way those students can contribute to the reading conversation or activity in a meaningful way.

encouraged her EBLs with beginning English proficiency levels to sketch something to illustrate their response, label it with basic words they knew in English (or words from the text in English), and then write about the sketch in the home language.

- **Respond using multilingual graphic organizers**

When a 3rd grade class was working on identifying the main idea and details in an informational text, the teacher wanted her EBLs to see how they could use a combination of English and the home language to fill in a “Boxes and Bullets” graphic organizer:

Main Idea

(Often written in English by copying key words from a text. EBLs can also write the main idea in the home language.)

- **Detail**

(Often written in English, either by copying a key word, phrase, or sentence from the English text, or by paraphrasing the key information in their own words. EBLs can then elaborate on each detail by writing in the home language, and by including a sketch to illustrate.)

- **Detail**

- **Detail**

The teacher modeled how they could find clues about the main idea of an informational text by looking at the headings, the first sentence of a section, or the last sentence of a section. As students learned how to identify the main idea, the teacher modeled how they could take English words from the text to write the main idea in English.

Middle / Secondary Grades

- **Respond using multilingual graphic organizers**

A 10th grade bilingual chemistry teacher had his students respond to textbook readings using a series of graphic organizers. The textbooks they read were in both English and Spanish, and the teacher always encouraged students to respond in either or both languages. For example, the teacher had students respond to a reading on conductivity using a **Framer Model** (for more on these graphic organizers, see *Vocabulary: Four Box & Framer Model*). They did this in both English and Spanish so that they could better understand the concept (Figure 1).

- **Use sentence prompts in either English or a home language**

An 8th grade ESL math teacher wanted her students to illustrate their understandings in group and whole-class discussions. Her students, who spoke Spanish, often had conversations about the work, but the teacher wanted to make these conversations more “academic.” She also wanted students to use more academic language to share their thinking in English. She created a classroom poster that listed the prompts and gave students copies of the list to keep in their binders (Figure 2). The prompts were in English with side-by-side translations in students’ home languages. In groups, students could use the home language prompts to discuss their work. When time came to share out their work with the

whole class, however, students used the English prompts. This structure helped students develop their academic language in both English and their home languages.

- **Respond to reading in both English and/or their home languages**

A 9th grade ELA teacher had her students use the double-entry journal format to respond to what they read. Because she wanted her students to work on both developing their reading skills in English and developing their ability to think about and interact with what they read, she had them respond in both English and their home languages (Figure 3). On one side of the double entry journal, students cited text evidence that they wanted to respond to. On the other side, students wrote a short summary of what they read in English, and then elaborated on their summary with more in-depth responses in their home language. This helped the teacher to evaluate several things: students’ reading comprehension in English, their ability to summarize in English, their ability to communicate ideas in their home language, and the depth of their interactions with and analysis of what they read.

Figure 1

Book Definition Transferring energy from one substance to another	Facts/Characteristics Qué tan bien una corriente puede viajar a través de una sustancia (How well a current can travel through a substance)
Examples Cobre (Copper)	Non-Examples Agua (Water) Vidrio (Glass)

Figure 2

I still don't get...	Todavía no sé...
Can you show how you...?	¿Puede demostrar cómo...?
I figured out...	Me di cuenta que...

Figure 3

Text	Response
Text Evidence #1 (English)	Summary #1 (English) Response #1 (Home Language):
Text Evidence #2	Summary #2 Response #2
Text Evidence #3	Summary #3 Response #3

Translanguaging with Interactive Writing

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Using translanguaging strategies with interactive writing helps EBLs develop their ability to correctly use Standard English grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. This addresses the following anchor standards for Language.

Translanguaging with interactive writing also helps EBLs learn how to write different types of texts in English. This addresses the following anchor standards for Writing.

Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard 2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use:

What is it?

Interactive writing was originally created as a strategy to use with primary grade students to support them as they learned *how* to write. However, it can easily be adapted for use with EBLs in grades K-8 who are leaning *how to write in English*.

With interactive writing, you jointly write a short text WITH your EBLs, word by word. Generally the content of the text comes from what the students say. The written text could be as short as a few words (i.e., labeling something) or as long as a few sentences. You take the responsibility for writing the words that are too difficult for your EBLs to spell on their own, and you call on EBLs to write the words (or parts of words) that they know how to spell in English. In this way you and your students interactively create a text that is more complex than their current writing ability in English.

To keep this activity fast-paced, it's important to balance how much you have EBLs write, versus how much you write. Based on your EBLs' ages and English proficiency levels, their contribution to the written text could be:

- Writing certain **letters** for a word, based on the sounds they hear. You write the rest of the word.
- Writing the **high frequency words** they know how to spell. You write the other high frequency words your EBLs haven't learned yet.
- Writing the **vocabulary words** they know how to spell. You write the vocabulary words that are too complex for your EBLs to write.
- Adding appropriate **punctuation** that they are familiar with. You add new types of punctuation.

The higher a student's proficiency level and writing ability in English, the more complex words/letters they will be able to contribute to the text.

Interactive writing is a powerful strategy to use with EBLs because it helps develop:

- **Phonics skills:** EBLs are able to apply the phonics skills they've learned to spell certain words, and they learn new phonics skills as you model how to spell new words.
- **Sentence structure:** As your EBLs share what sentence(s) they want to write, you can help them use correct sentence structure. You can also model ways to make the sentence more complex.
- **Conventions:** EBLs learn the conventions of English or the other language as you help them add punctuation to the text you're writing together.

Translanguaging How-To

1. Form a group for the interactive writing

You can do interactive writing with the whole class, a small group of EBLs, or one-on-one with an EBL (see sidebar). It depends on which students you feel would benefit from this kind of writing support. In primary grade classrooms where *all* students are learning how to write, this can be very effective for the

Standard 6

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Resources

For more information on interactive writing:

McCarrier, Andrea, Gay Su Pinnell, and Irene Fountas. 1999. *Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together, K-2*. Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH

Celic, Christina. 2009. *English Language Learners Day by Day, K-6: A Complete Guide to*

whole group. Upper elementary and middle school teachers may want to do interactive writing with a small group of EBLs, or individually with an EBL, while the rest of the class is working on a writing task.

2. Orally share ideas for the text using the home language and/or English

Have EBLs use their home language and/or English to share their ideas for the content of the writing. This works well if you can have another student translate, or if you have some understanding of the home language. If translation is not an option, you can ask your EBLs to act out or draw their ideas while explaining them in the home language, and then you provide the words in English for what it seems they are trying to express.

The interactive writing text should mirror the kind of writing the rest of the class is working on. Whatever the class is writing, you use interactive writing to help certain EBLs create a short text in that genre, or about that topic. For example, if the task is for students to summarize what they learned from a science experiment, then you would use interactive writing to create a short summary with your EBLs. If the task is to fill in a cause-effect graphic organizer, you could use interactive writing to help your EBLs add one or two causes and effects to the chart.

3. Write the text word by word

You will want to write some of the words, and have your EBLs write other words (or parts of words) that they already know how to spell. This is a great opportunity to differentiate instruction.

- **Beginning EBLs:** You can call on EBLs with more beginning English proficiency levels to contribute the spelling of basic high frequency words, basic vocabulary words, or word parts (beginning sounds, ending sounds) they have learned.
- **Intermediate and Advanced EBLs:** You can call on EBLs with increasingly more advanced English proficiency levels to contribute the spelling of more complex high frequency words, vocabulary words, and word parts (prefixes, suffixes, etc.).

For example, a 7th grade teacher had students summarize what they learned from a science experiment about water displacement. Based on students' oral input and the teacher's guidance, the short summary they decided to write was:

We used water displacement to find the volume of an object.

The text is highlighted to show which parts the teacher decided to have different EBLs contribute: yellow for beginning EBLs, and blue for intermediate to advanced EBLs. This sentence had a range of high frequency words and vocabulary words, so different EBLs were able to help write different parts. The teacher can write others, just to keep the activity moving along. Of course, there is no right or wrong way to decide which parts you call on students to spell, and which parts you write yourself, as long as it is developmentally appropriate for their English proficiency level and writing ability.

4. Refer to home language and English phonics charts

If your EBLs have some familiarity with phonics in the home language, you can help them make connections to English phonics. To do this, have an alphabet

Literacy, Content-area, and Language Instruction.
Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH

Resources: Home language phonics charts

To find alphabet charts in your EBLs' home languages, you can do a Google search: **"image: alphabet chart (name of language)"**

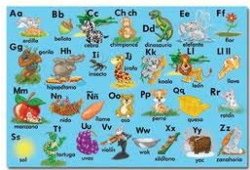
Examples of Arabic alphabet charts

The Arabic alphabet حروف الهجاء العربية

Arabic	Translit	Name	Arabic	Translit	Name
ا	ā	Alif	د	d	Dād
ب	b	Bā	ط	t	Tā
ت	t	Tā	ظ	ḏ	Ḍhā
ث	th	Thā	ع	ʿ	'Ayn
ج	j	Jīm	غ	gh	Ghaym
ح	h	Hā	ف	f	Fā
خ	kh	Khā	ق	k	Kāf
د	d	Dāl	ك	k	Kāf
ذ	ḏ	Ḍāl	ل	l	Lām
ر	r	Rā	م	m	Mīm
ز	z	Zāy	ن	n	Nūn
س	s	Sīn	ه	h	Hā
ش	sh	Shīn	و	w(u)	Wāw
ص	ṣ	Sād	ي	y(i)	Yā



Example of a Spanish alphabet chart



Example of a Japanese alphabet chart

Hiragana				Katakana					
あ	い	う	え	お	ア	イ	ウ	エ	オ
か	き	く	け	こ	カ	キ	ク	ケ	コ
さ	し	す	せ	そ	サ	シ	ス	セ	ソ
た	ち	つ	て	と	タ	チ	ツ	テ	ト
な	に	ぬ	ね	の	ナ	ニ	ヌ	ネ	ノ
は	ひ	ふ	へ	ほ	ハ	ヒ	フ	ヘ	ホ
ま	み	む	め	も	マ	ミ	ム	メ	モ
や	ゆ	よ			ヤ	ユ	ヨ		
ら	り	る	れ	ろ	ラ	リ	ル	レ	ロ
わ					ワ				ヲ
ん					ン				

Example of a French alphabet chart

chart and/or phonics charts in English as well as in your EBLs' home language (see sidebar). Whenever you ask your EBLs to contribute a word (or part of a word) to the text, you can ask them what letters make the sounds they hear in that word. Point out those letters on the English alphabet or phonics chart, and then point to the home language charts to see if the same letter(s) or characters represent that sound. Students may see that different letters are used in the home language, or that the sound isn't used in their home language. This helps EBLs see which phonics skills transfer between the two languages, and which ones are different.

If you don't speak your EBLs' home language, it's helpful to find an alphabet chart that indicates what phonetic sound each letter or character makes. This is particularly helpful for languages that use scripts other than the Roman alphabet. For example, the Arabic alphabet chart and the Japanese chart in the sidebar indicate the corresponding sound. So, you can see which are similar sounds to certain English letters, and point out these similarities to your emergent bilinguals. Making these connections when developing English writing skills develops students' metalinguistic awareness, and can lead to language inquiry in intermediate and middle school grades.

Also, if you have your EBLs orally share the spelling for words they are going to write, you can also have them say the names of the letters in their home language. Then you can point to those letters on the English alphabet chart and teach them how to say the names of those letters in English.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels
Elementary / Middle Grades

- In a 4th grade self-contained ESL classroom, the teacher had a group of six beginning EBLs at the start of the school year. The first writing unit was on Personal Narratives. During independent writing time each day, the teacher would first meet for about 5-7 minutes with this small group of beginning EBLs, two of whom were **SIFE students** who spoke Spanish. As a group, they constructed a short narrative about similar experiences they had on the first day of school in New York City. The students shared in their home language, Spanish, which the teacher understood. The teacher then translated their ideas into short English sentences. On the first day, the text they came up with was:

My mother woke me up. I was happy because it was the first day of school.

None of the students in the group had any knowledge of English. To have her EBLs help her write this text, she had them contribute the spelling of some of the beginning and ending sounds that were the same in both English and Spanish. This helped them begin to see how some phonics skills transferred across languages. She also had an alphabet chart in English and another in Spanish, so she pointed to both as students tried to identify the letters that corresponded with sounds they heard. This was particularly important for her two students whose writing ability in Spanish was significantly below grade level. The highlighted portions of the text show what beginning and ending letters different EBLs in this group contributed:

My mother woke me up. I was happy because it was the



Who should I do interactive writing with?

Whole Group

Bilingual and ESL: Since all of your students are emergent bilinguals, this can be an effective strategy to use with the whole class.

General Education: You can use this strategy with your whole class if you teach young students who are all learning how to write, or if you have a large number of emergent bilinguals in your classroom. Older students who are proficient in English still benefit from interactive writing if you incorporate some words with complex spelling, prefixes, suffixes, etc.

Small Group

Bilingual and ESL: Even though all of your students are EBLs, they all have different needs with writing. You may want to pull a small group of **SIFE students** who need more intensive support to learn sound-symbol correspondence. You can also pull small groups of EBLs who are at earlier stages of English language acquisition while the rest of the class is writing independently.

General Education: If you work with older students who already know how to write, and you have a small group of EBLs in your class, you can just use interactive writing with your EBLs.

One-on-One

Bilingual and ESL: As students are writing independently (during a Writing Workshop or during a content-area activity) you can briefly use interactive writing with individual EBLs to help them put down on paper the

first day of school.

The teacher had students orally share the spelling of these parts of the sentence, and she wrote down what they said. She wrote the other parts. During the activity, students copied the text on their own papers. This kept the 4th graders engaged and made it a more cognitively challenging activity than simply watching others write the text on chart paper.

Figure 2 shows how one of the EBLs in this group copied the interactive writing text on his own paper. Figure 3 shows a personal narrative he drafted in Spanish during this same unit of study. In both writing samples there is irregular spacing between words, a sign that he is still developing beginning concepts with word separation. This was something the teacher worked on with him through interactive writing over the course of the year.

Figure 2

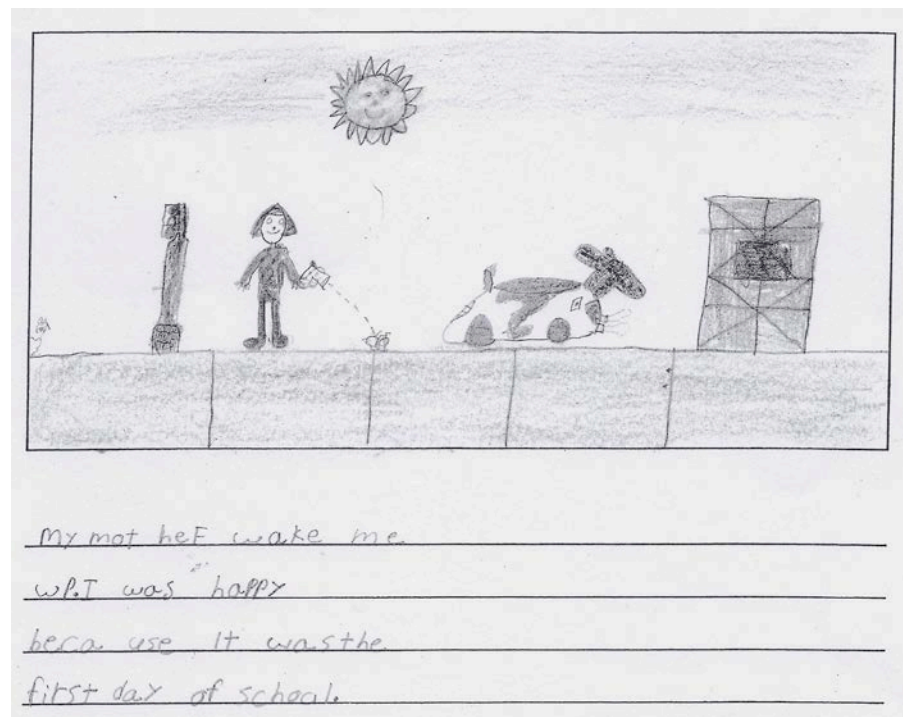


Figure 3

idea they want to express.

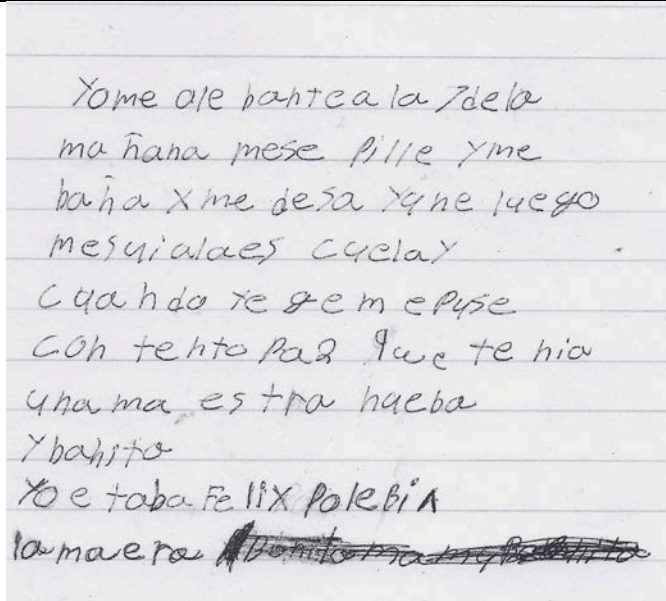
General Education: If you have just one EBL in your classroom, this can be a wonderful strategy to use during a writing conference to support their writing development, instead of following a traditional conference structure.

Logistics for Grades K-1 vs. Grades 2- 8

In Kindergarten and 1st grade, students physically come up to the board or chart paper to write portions of the text with the guidance of the teacher, while the rest of the class watches. This is a way for students to learn how to turn oral language into written language.

In subsequent grades, once students understand *how* to write, they are simply learning *how to write in English*. At this point, you can **have each student write the text on their own paper** as you write it in a place they can all see.

To do this, when you have students share how to spell certain words, they can just share the spelling orally instead of physically coming up to the chart paper to write the word. Once the student shares orally, you can write it on your enlarged version, and have each individual student write it on their own paper. This keeps each student engaged in an age-appropriate way.



Text:

Yo me levantaba a las 7 de la mañana. Me cepillé y me bañé, y me desayuné. Luego me fui a la escuela y cuando llegué me puse contento porque tenía una maestra nueva y bonita.

Yo estaba feliz porque vi a la maestra.

Translation:

I got up at 7 in the morning. I brushed my teeth, I took a bath, and I had breakfast. Then I went to school and when I got there I was happy because I had a new, pretty teacher. I was happy because I saw my teacher.

Translanguaging with “Language Experience Approach”

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students’ writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students’ content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards

Using translanguaging strategies with the Language Experience Approach helps EBLs develop their ability to correctly use standard English grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. This addresses the following anchor standards for Language.

Translanguaging with the Language Experience Approach also helps EBLs learn how to write different types of texts in English. This addresses the following anchor standards for Writing.

Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard

1
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Language: Conventions of Standard English: Standard

2
Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Standard 6

What is it?

Many teachers use the Language Experience Approach with emerging writers.

Traditionally, this strategy is set up in the following way:

1. Students have some kind of shared experience—a class trip, a universal experience, a class project, a text they’ve all read or listened to, etc. The experiences shared by students can be informational, persuasive/opinion-based, or narrative.
2. Either in small groups or as a whole class, the teacher elicits a group of students’ or an individual student’s account of this experience.
3. The individual student or the group of students dictates the experience to the teacher, who scribes word for word. The teacher makes no corrections or edits to the experience, acting solely as scribe.
4. The teacher reads the experience back to the student(s), who can then make changes/additions.
5. The teacher uses the student(s)’ experience as a text through which he/she can teach both language and content (i.e.: if the experience lacks descriptive language, the teacher might elect to use that text as a model and have students add descriptive language).

You can easily add **translanguaging** to the Language Experience Approach by expanding your use of the strategy.

You can add translanguaging to the **dictating/scribing stage** by:

- Having students use all of their languages to recount an experience. This means that students can draw on their home languages, as well as English, to tell you about the experiences.
- Having students partner and take on the roles of both speakers and scribes, enabling them to hone their reading, writing, and listening skills as well as gain a higher level of linguistic awareness. You can partner students who share the same home language or those who do not, depending on your teaching goal.

You can add translanguaging to what you do **with** students’ experiences by:

- Explicitly teaching the similarities and differences between English and students’ home languages.
- Translating or have students translate their experiences from one language into another.
- Using students’ experiences as a linguistic scaffold for a piece of independent writing.

Translanguaging How-To

1. **Set up opportunities for students to draw on their home languages, as well as English, to tell you their experiences.**
When you add translanguaging to the Language Experience Approach, you must

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

think flexibly about how students will use their languages to talk about their experiences. To truly encourage translanguaging, you must allow students to draw from the full range of their linguistic repertoire. This could mean:

- **Encouraging students use their entire linguistic repertoire**
 - As students dictate their experiences to you, encourage them to use their languages fluidly, drawing on their home languages when speaking in English (or vice versa). If you do not speak your students' home languages, you can use Google Translate or other Internet resources as you scribe (see *Resources: Internet as Multilingual Resource*).
- **Using your multilingual students as experts.**
 - If you do not speak your students' home languages, you can use your students' own linguistic knowledge to help you scribe their experiences. For example, if a student is telling you about an experience in English but switches into a home language to talk about a specific part of the experience and can't translate it, ask other students who share that home language for help.

2. Strategically partner students so that they can use the Language Experience Approach together.

Having students partner and take on the roles of both storytellers and scribes helps them to hone their reading, writing, and listening skills in both English and their home languages (for more on this idea, see *Collaborative Work: Multilingual Writing Partners*). You can pair students in different ways, depending on your own teaching goals. For example:

- Pairing students who **share a home language** can enable both students to develop their writing skills in both English and their home language.
- Pairing students with **different proficiencies** can scaffold the less proficient writer's ability to write independently and see connections between the spoken and written word in either language.

3. Strategically use students' stories as translanguaging tools.

The stories students tell through the Language Experience Approach can be used to many different ends. Teachers use the strategy to teach skills like grammar, word choice, and transitions. As teachers of EBLs, you can use this strategy to help students develop their writing in both English and their home languages. You can do this by:

- **Explicitly teaching the similarities and differences between English and students' home languages.**

You can teach linguistic awareness by drawing students' attention to similarities and differences between English and their home languages. You can focus on:

 - Word use and vocabulary (*See Vocabulary: Cognate Charts and Vocabulary: Vocabulary Inquiry Across Languages*)
 - Scripts
 - Syntax and word order (*See Syntax: Sentence-building*)
- **Translating or have students translate their experiences from one language into another.**

If you teach bilingually, you can have students dictate their experiences

Social Justice with the Language Experience Approach

EBLs bring a myriad of experiences and stories with them into the classroom. When using the LEA, you can tap into these experiences, making your classroom oriented towards social justice. Especially in the middle and secondary grades, the LEA can be used to explore complex and even controversial topics that are relevant to EBLs' lives, such as:

- Immigration
- Discrimination (racism, linguisticism)
- English-only policies vs. Bilingual education

Cultural Relevance with the Language Experience Approach

You can also tie the LEA to culturally relevant practices like:

- Community Studies
- Neighborhood Walks
- Writing Identity Texts

For more on these ideas, see *Resources: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment* and *Resources: Community Study*.

Emergent Bilinguals

The Language Experience Approach can be one of the most useful strategies to use with some EBLs, and particularly with **SIFE** students. Because SIFE students struggle with writing in both English *and* their home languages, using their spoken language is a great way to help them see connections between the spoken and the written word.

- If you are not able to work one-on-one with these students, you can partner them with other students who share their home language. These students can scribe their experiences and you can sit with them later to discuss connections between their dictated experience and its written version.

- You can utilize Listening Centers as a way of "reversing" the Language Experience

to you in their home languages. You can then use those accounts as texts that you and your students can translate into English (or vice versa). When translating, you can draw students' attention to similarities and differences between English and their home languages (see above).

If you do not speak your students' home languages, you can partner students together who speak the same language and have them work together to translate their own experiences. The result will be side-by-side translations of their accounts in English and their home languages. You can then have students use these texts to report on similarities and differences between English and the home language.

- **Using students' stories as a scaffold for a piece of independent writing.**

All EBLs have stories to tell, but may not be able to put these stories in writing, especially in English. You can use the Language Experience Approach to help scaffold the writing process for your students. If students dictate their stories to you or to another student, drawing on all of their languages, you can use that scribed experience as a first draft of a piece of independent writing in English. Students can edit, revise, and further develop their experience, using the scribed version as a base. Getting EBLs' stories on paper first, while helping them to see connections between spoken and written English, can help them to successfully create a piece of independent writing.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

- **Student partners take on the roles of both speakers and scribes.**

In a 2nd grade ESL classroom, students took a trip to the Brooklyn Bridge as part of their study of New York City in social studies. After they returned, the teacher had home language partners collaboratively come up with a description of what they had seen and learned. The partners discussed what they wanted to write in both English and the home language, moving fluidly between the two depending on what they wanted to express. The partners decided sentence by sentence what they wanted to write. If they came up with an idea in the home language, they talked together to decide how to best write that idea in English. The student with the stronger English proficiency level acted as the scribe for this activity. The teacher then brought the whole class together and had partners share their writing with the class. The teacher used students' ideas to create a whole-class shared writing piece that summarized their learning about New York City.

- **Teach the similarities and differences between English and students' home languages.**

A Kindergarten teacher asked students to tell her what they had learned about the parts of a plant, during their science unit of study on Trees through the Seasons. The teacher recorded their ideas using a patterned sentence: Plants have _____. She also added a picture after each sentence the students came up with. After she wrote the first sentence "Plants have leaves," the teacher asked students if the word *plants* sounded like a word in their home language. Some of the EBLs who spoke Spanish and Portuguese recognized the cognate. The teacher had students share what the word was in their home languages, and pointed out that all of the words start with the same sound, and the same letter: *p*.

Approach. Have EBLs sit in a Listening Center and listen to a short, simple story in either English or their home language. Have them write down the words and parts of the story they recognize and then, later, help them to write down the words they may have missed (see *Resources: Listening Centers*).

- You can record the shared writing text so that students can listen to it while following along with the text, helping them read what they dictated orally. You can have students do this repeatedly, so that they can clearly see connections between their oral dictation and the written text.

LEA at Different Grade Levels

Traditionally, the Language Experience Approach is used with emerging writers at the elementary level. However, there are many benefits to incorporating this strategy at the middle and secondary level. The LEA can also be used outside of the ELA classroom at these levels. You can easily use this strategy to help students develop their writing across all content areas. Using this strategy in the content areas helps students develop the many different kinds of writing they are expected to do at the higher grade levels. For some ideas, see [Middle & Secondary Ideas for Implementation](#).

Middle / Secondary Grades

- **Translate students' stories from one language into another.**
An 11th grade bilingual ELA teacher was preparing her students for the Regents exam. The class was working on the Critical Lens essay. Here, students had to analyze a quote and use it as a “lens” for analyzing two pieces of literature. The teacher used the Language Experience Approach to help students see connections between their home language and English. After a whole-class discussion of a practice quote, she had students in class use their home language, Spanish, to talk through their ideas about how the quote could connect to literature they read that year. As students spoke, she scribed their connections onto chart paper. After students edited the scribed account, the teacher facilitated a whole-class translation of their connections. The resulting translation was placed next to the Spanish version so that students could see the languages side by side. For homework, students wrote their own Critical Lens essay in English using the same quote used in class.
- **Student partners take on the roles of both speakers and scribes.**
A 9th grade ESL class took a trip to Ellis Island as a part of a unit on immigration. To get students to write about their experiences on the trip, the teacher partnered students according to their home languages. Students dictated/scribed one another's accounts in English, with the storyteller switching back to the home language if needed. Together the partners would work through any difficulties, translating the home language into English. After students dictated their accounts of the trip, the partners would read the written experience together, using their home languages to edit and revise. Students later read their responses aloud to the class in English.
- **Using students' experiences as a linguistic scaffold for a piece of independent writing**
A 7th grade general education science teacher wanted to incorporate students' cultures into a unit on the human body. To begin a lesson on modern antibiotics, the teacher asked students to turn and talk about traditional cures for illnesses in their cultures. Students conversed in either English or the home language (French, Polish, Urdu), depending on who they were next to (students were not necessarily seated next to someone who spoke the same home language). After students shared with one another, the teacher asked one student to talk with the class about a cure from his country, Senegal. The student, who had been in the United States for two years, shared how healers in Senegal used medicinal plants to cure things like burns and sores. The student also talked about gri-gris, traditional pouches worn around the neck that were supposed to ward against sickness and bad luck. Several other students from West African countries jumped in and told the teacher that they knew about gri-gris too. As he shared, he moved between English and his home language, French, which other French-speaking students helped to translate for the teacher and the rest of the class. Once the student had talked about a few traditional cures in Senegal, the teacher gave him the following sentence prompt and had him formulate a summary about traditional cures in his home country:

In _____, they use _____ to cure _____.
They use this because...

The student dictated his summary in English, but asked other students to help

him in French when he got stuck. The teacher scribed his summary and had the student read it back to him. The teacher then had students write their own summaries about a traditional cure in their cultures or families, using the same sentence prompt. Students shared out their summaries with one another and with the whole class. Afterwards, the teacher had students read a short text about how antibiotics are used to treat certain illnesses. At the end of class, students wrote 1-paragraph summaries of the lesson in English, using the sentence prompt they started with, but focusing on the cures they read about in the lesson. For example, one summary began:

In the United States, they use penicillin to cure certain bacterial infections. They use this because it stops bacteria from growing by interacting with it. That makes the bacteria change, which makes it die or stop attacking the human body.

Translanguaging with Independent Writing

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

When EBLs write using both their home language and English, they can more fully express their ideas and their understanding of how to write different types of texts. It also further develops their home language literacy. This addresses the following anchor standards for Writing.

EBLs can also use both their home language and English to create an oral product, combined with media or a visual display. This targets the following speaking and listening standard.

Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

What is it?

Writing is a part of students' work across all subject areas, especially with the new emphasis the Common Core State Standards place on writing. When bilingual students create written products, you can have them strategically draw upon their entire linguistic repertoire. There are multiple reasons to do this: it scaffolds your bilingual students' ability to write in English, it strengthens their writing abilities in the home language, and it provides a way for them to more fully express their ideas and their identities.

- **Translanguaging with a written product**

If your bilingual students have some writing ability in the home language, you can have them use both languages in their writing, instead of "forcing" them to write something only in English (or only in the home language, for bilingual programs). This translanguaging can happen whenever students write independently – in a Writing Workshop, a Reading Workshop, Math, Science, or Social Studies.

- **Create an accompanying oral product**

The Common Core State Standards standards also emphasize having students use language to express their knowledge and ideas orally. You can have bilingual students create an oral product to accompany their writing, such as oral presentations with a visual or media display, audio recordings, media recordings, or a performance. Creating an oral product is particularly helpful for students who are not literate in their home language because they can write in English to the best of their ability, and then create an oral product in the home language to accompany it that more fully expresses their knowledge and ideas.

There are different ways bilingual students can create written products in both English and the home language:

- **Create one product in the home language, and a separate product in English**

All Programs:

You can have bilingual students create a *bilingual text*, translated from one language to the next. Students begin by writing in their stronger language, and then work with a peer or adult to translate it into the other language. Cummins refers to this as an "identity text" (2005), and has documented how powerful it is with bilingual students. See *Environment: A Culturally Relevant Learning Environment* for details about identity texts.

Bilingual Classrooms:

Translanguaging is a great option for students in bilingual programs because it enables them to develop their writing ability in both languages, and use both languages in a meaningful way. This works particularly well for a Writing Workshop unit, where there is time for your bilingual students to create a writing piece in each language. For a shorter content-area task, you may want to have bilingual students primarily create a written product in the language you are using for instruction.

General Education & ESL Classrooms:

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Standard 5

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

When writing, you can first have your EBLs complete the writing task in their home language, which lets them fully express their ideas and learning. Then, you can help your EBLs respond to the same writing task in English. The end result is that EBLs have something written in the home language, as well as something written in English. The home language writing has provided them with an opportunity to more fully respond to the writing task, to continue developing their literacy skills in the home language, and to be engaged in a rigorous cognitive task. These skills transfer to English as their proficiency in the language develops. The English writing has provided students with an opportunity to continue developing their proficiency and writing ability with the language. You can also have your EBLs create a written product in English, and then accompany it with an oral product in the home language to expand upon the writing. This is particularly helpful for students with lower English proficiency levels. You can also have EBLs do the reverse: write in the home language, and present it orally in English. This works well for students who are literate in their home language.

- **Incorporate English and the home language into *one* written product**
For EBLs with lower English proficiency levels, you can have them respond to the writing or speaking task in the home language, and have them use English to add in words, phrases, or sentences they've learned. Bilingual students with higher English proficiency levels can do the opposite: write in English, and use the home language for any words they don't know.

The end result is *one* written piece that is *multilingual* – the two languages are combined together. Bilingual students are able to use their home language to produce grade-appropriate writing and speaking, and at the same time they are using the English they have learned.

This is particularly helpful for content-area writing tasks where students have a fairly limited amount of time to write or develop an oral presentation. It can also be used as a strategy during a Writing Workshop, giving bilingual students time to focus on developing just *one* writing piece, instead of two.

In bilingual programs, it is very powerful to have students create a product that uses both languages, since the audience is bilingual. Students can creatively use both of their languages so that one part is in English, and another part is in the other language.

Another option is to have bilingual students use both languages in a writing piece for *stylistic reasons*. Many bilingual authors include words, phrases, or sentences in another language at different points as a way to express their voice, to add authenticity, to express an idea that is better communicated in a particular language, or for other specific purposes. You can show students mentor texts where the author combines English and another language in this way, and discuss with students *why* they think the author decided to write those particular words, phrases, or sentences in the other language.

Translanguaging How-To

1. Think about your writing task with a focus on translanguaging

- Do I want my bilingual students to create one product in English, and something separate in the home language to more fully express themselves?
- Do I want my bilingual students to create just one product, and use both of

Native Language Writing:

When we require bilingual students to write only in English, we are silencing a part of their voices that is already present in their minds, but cannot be expressed in written English. Many EBLs and bilingual students are fantastic writers in their home languages. However, when forced to write in English, their writing does not match their cognitive ability. Fu (2009) gives the example of a narrative written by a 7th grade Chinese student during his first year in an American school. When writing in Chinese, the student was a fluent, expressive writer, as shown in this translated excerpt from a narrative he wrote in Chinese about arriving in the United States (29):

I saw the magnificent view of America, but I realized my life in this land had nothing to do with those magnificent lights...I went through all kinds of feelings and thoughts in one day, but I could never forget the American lights.

This can be contrasted with a text he wrote in English:

This morning I mom said go to the uncle home eat lunch. I am very happy.

Fu maintains that if this student were required to write in English only, his writing ability might actually *decline*. His writing simply would not match his cognitive ability. If you allow your EBLs and bilingual students to write in the language they feel most proficient and comfortable, their writing in English will improve and their true writing voices will emerge. You will also get a more complete picture of who your students are as writers—what they can do with written language and what skills they need to improve.

their languages? This is a great option when:

- The audience is bilingual
- Using both languages will help certain students communicate their ideas more fully
- You want students to create a bilingual product, such as an identity text

2. Support your EBLs with lower English proficiency levels as they create a written product in English.

When your EBLs create an oral or written product in English to accompany an oral or written product in the home language, you can provide the following supports:

- **Labeling:** Have them label a visual or media presentation with English vocabulary words, using a bilingual picture dictionary or a word wall for support. The visual could be something they drew related to the writing task, or it could be a photograph, a diagram, a digital presentation, or other form of media.
- **Using sentence frames:** Help them use a sentence frame that relates to the topic, and matches their level of English proficiency. For example, to explain what landforms and bodies of water are in New York, students could use the sentence frame: “New York has _____.” Students with slightly higher proficiency levels could add adjectives to this frame to describe the landforms and bodies of water: “New York has _____.”
- **Referring to model texts:** Help EBLs reference texts in the classroom to add some of that language to their own writing. This could be a text they have read, a model text you have displayed of your own writing, or a shared writing text the class created.

Make sure your EBLs have time to write in the home language when they’ve finished with this more basic writing in English. This will ensure both a growing proficiency with English, and rigorous cognitive engagement with the home language writing.

3. Model for your bilingual students how to move fluidly between their languages when creating a written product.

You can show bilingual students different ways to do this translanguaging when creating *one* piece of writing. Some of these methods include:

- **Labeling:** Have EBLs write in the home language and label any accompanying visuals or media displays in a combination of the home language and English. They can use a bilingual picture dictionary or a word wall as a resource for this labeling.
- **Inserting English words, phrases, or sentences:** For EBLs with beginning English proficiency levels, you can show them how to write or speak in the home language, and translanguaging by using English for any words, phrases, or sentences they have learned. Then, they can move fluidly back to the home language to continue writing or speaking. Bilingual students may also want to insert English words for stylistic purposes.
- **Inserting home language words, phrases, or sentences:** Bilingual students with higher English proficiency levels are able to express

themselves more fully in English. Have them *start* writing or speaking in English, and have them switch to the home language whenever they get stuck on a word or idea. Then, they can use English to continue writing. This is a good strategy to help students when they get stuck, and eliminates the “down time” they spend worrying about unknown words in English. Bilingual students may also want to insert home language words for stylistic purposes.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

A 4th grade teacher created an integrated unit combining Social Studies (Native Americans), Reading (Informational Texts), and Writing (Informational Essays). After comparing and contrasting different Native American groups and indigenous groups in Latin America, students chose one group and wrote an informational essay about how they used natural resources for their survival.

EBLs with lower English proficiency levels wrote their essays in the home language and added in English vocabulary words they had learned throughout the unit. They also added in key sentences from texts they had read about the topic in English. EBLs with higher English proficiency levels wrote their essays in English, and added in words in the home language that they didn’t know how to express in English. During the editing stage, the teacher helped those students translate the home language words to English.

Students wrote each paragraph of their informational essays on a separate page, with space for illustrations. Figure 1 shows one page of the writing created by a beginning EBL from Ecuador. He had been in the United States for only one month at this point. He wrote his essay in Spanish, and included one key sentence in English from a text he read. The English sentence fit in perfectly with the ideas he expressed in Spanish, and it is clear he understood what that sentence meant because he then continued the sentence in Spanish to add on more information. See the translation below Figure 1, with the original English sentence in bold. His informational essay also showed evidence of him applying what was taught in the series of mini-lessons about essay structure.

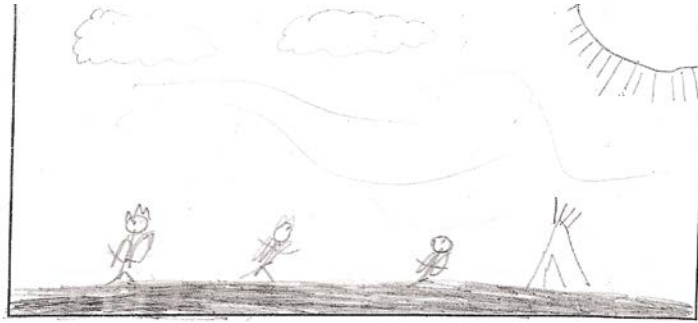
Assessing Home Language Writing

Many general education and ESL teachers hesitate to have their EBLs write in the home language because they can't read their students' writing. Keep in mind that you are still having your EBLs create the English writing you would expect from them for a particular writing task; the only alteration is that you are providing an opportunity for your EBLs to *also* write something in the home language to more fully express their ideas and their learning.

If you can't read a particular language, see if another student or another person in the school community can tell you what the student has written. Remember that you will still have their English writing, like always, to see what they have produced.

If you have an adult look at the home language writing, you can also ask how the writing compares to what is expected of a student that age. Sometimes it is obvious even to a non-speaker of the language. You may notice that the writing lacks the organization, length, or writing conventions that you would expect of your grade. Or, you may be pleased to see that these features are present. Either way, it gives you an idea of what writing abilities your EBLs bring with them, and what you will need to continue developing with them.

Figure 1



Quando los hombre mataron los venados ellos
los llevaron con gando a su casa, despues las
mujeres agarraron la piel del venado y des-
pues ellos hicieron para se piel del venado
for shoes they wore moccasins made out
of deerskin para abrigarse por el frio que
era cuando se le van sus cosas a casa
mas venados para la familia que se a un año

Translation:

When the men killed the deer they carried them home. Afterwards, the women skinned the deer and then they made clothes from the deerskin. **For shoes they wore moccasins made out of deerskin** to keep themselves warm when they went out of their homes to hunt the deer to keep their families warm.

Figure 2 shows the writing this same student was able to produce in English just five months later. During those five months he had been using the translanguaging strategies described in this strategy.

Figure 2

The Day that I Moved

One day in the morning when I was at home I heard my mom call "Bryan, come?" I went to my mom. She said, "What good news?" She said, we are going to New York. I was happy but I was going to leave all my family in Ecuador, but they told me that they were going to be fine.

The next day me and my mom were packing up. It was time to go to sleep. I was thinking how it will be like in New York city. Then it was time for me and my mom went to the airport. And I was scared because in my life I never got to a airport and then

I saw one person has a
Divine child. Then we got
in and then in the airport
they were giving food to
all the people.

finally I got to New York
and day after I got used
to being in New York. Then
my mom said I should go
to school to learn English.
And now I could talk English
and write like story.



EBLs with low levels of home language literacy

Some of your EBLs may not be able to write proficiently in their home language, depending on their age and their previous schooling experiences.

In a bilingual program, you will be developing their literacy skills in both languages. In a general education or ESL classroom, you can take advantage of their **oral language abilities** in the home language as a means to help them write in English. See *Writing & the Content Areas: Interactive Writing* as a strategy that provides excellent support for these EBLs as they learn how to write in English.

- In a 5th grade Self-contained ESL classroom, the September writing unit was on Personal Narratives. There were several beginning EBLs in the class, and the teacher asked them to write a personal narrative in their home languages (Spanish, Chinese). They did this based on what they gleaned from the writing mini-lessons in English, and from what the teacher was able to explain in Spanish or have peers explain in the home language. During independent writing, the teacher met with her beginning EBLs as a small group for a portion of the time. She helped them use a basic sentence frame to create a “personal narrative” about what they saw in the moment when they first arrived at their new school in New York.

Figure 3 shows one girl’s English writing from the unit, where she uses the sentence frame “I see a _____.” to create a series of patterned sentences. She used a bilingual Spanish-English picture dictionary to help her fill in the sentence frame. You can see from her writing that the next step is to teach her to use the article “a” for singular nouns, but not

for plural nouns. The sentence frame is in the present tense since that develops first in English before the past tense.

Figure 4 is the draft of the personal narrative she wrote in Spanish during this unit. It is titled: “Mi Primer día en New York.” (“My First day in New York.”)

Figure 3



Figure 4

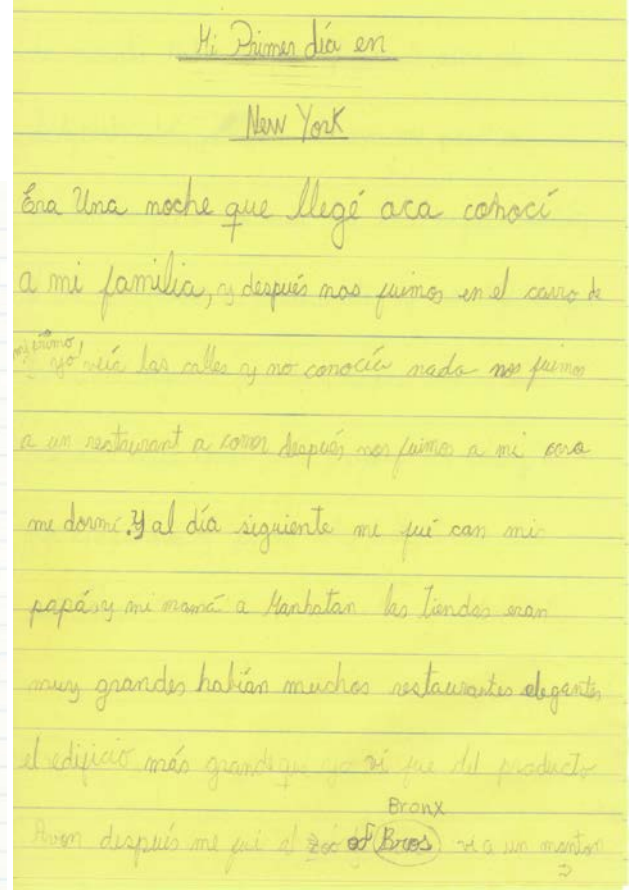


Figure 3 Text: I see a teacher. I see a student. I see a clock. I see a picture. I see a markers. I see a pencil. I see a crayons. I see a scissors.

Figure 5 shows a piece of writing the same girl created in the spring of that school year, after having the support of the translanguaging writing strategies described in this section.

Figure 5

"Good morning mom," "Hi Ghilary" said my cousin, "Hi Mishelle," she is my cousin, she is pregnant. In the afternoon I listen one the voice, I walk to bedroom of my cousin, when I got closer and closer the voices wasn't voices but screams from my cousin who was pregnant, I said to my mom, "Mom, Mom, Mishelle is going to have the baby!", my mom ran, ran and she called the ambulance.

"Mom the ambulance is here," I said, my mom said "OK", Mishelle my mom and my got in the ambulance my cousin shouted and shouted, "OK Mishelle here is the hospital. Mishelle entered in the maternity room.

10 minutes passed, 20 minutes, 1 hours, 2 hours, Finally the doctor said, "The baby was born and it's a boy", my mom called the father of the baby, my aund the grandmother of the baby and everybody, my aunt said, "The baby is so quiet and beautiful",

Figure 5 Text:

"Good morning mom," "Hi Ghilary" said my cousin, "Hi Mishelle," she is my cousin, she is pregnant. In the afternoon I listen one the voice, I walk to bedroom of my cousin, when I got closer and closer the voices wasn't voices but screams from my cousin who was pregnant. I said to my mom "Mom, Mom, Mishelle is going to have the baby!" my mom ran, ran and she called the ambulance.

"Mom the ambulance is here," I said, my mom said, "OK," Mishelle my mom and my got in the ambulance my cousin shouted and shouted, "OK Mishelle here is the hospital. Mishelle entered in the maternity room.

10 minutes passed, 20 minutes, 1 hours, 2 hours, Finally the doctor said, "The baby was born and it's a boy," my mom called the father of the baby, my aund the grandmother of the baby and everybody, my aunt said, "The baby is so quiet and beautiful."

Middle/Secondary Grades

- A 9th grade ELA teacher was concerned when she saw a significant difference in her EBLs' homework turn-in rate vs. the turn-in rate of her other students. The class was working on writing well-developed paragraphs, and each night students had to practice this writing for homework. The next day in class, the teacher picked one students' paragraph to anonymously edit and revise as a whole class. She knew that her EBLs would benefit more from the in-class editing if they did the writing themselves for homework. She spoke to her EBLs and learned that many of them were not comfortable responding to the English prompts in written English. It was apparent that students had a lot to *say* about the topics, but could not express their ideas in writing.

The teacher decided to modify the homework assignments for her EBLs. Instead of requiring them to respond to each prompt in English, she encouraged them to use both o their languages. She told them to write in English until they encountered a word or phrase they did not know how to express. At that point, they could use their home languages and then come back to English when possible. The next day in class, the EBLs would be able to share their own paragraphs, opening up opportunities for the class to help translate, as well as see connections between English and other languages present in the classroom.

The teacher quickly saw an increase in the amount of homework her EBLs were turning in. They were more engaged in the classwork and were more invested in improving their writing. In addition, all members of the class became more linguistically aware, which encouraged authentic conversations about and inquiry into how people use language to communicate in writing.

Translanguaging with Multi-genre Writing

Essential Questions

- *How can we build students' writing ability through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we build students' content knowledge through the use of all of their languages?*
- *How can we provide rigorous cognitive engagement for students?*

Alignment with Common Core State Standards:

Writing in different genres helps students to meet a variety of writing standards. Not only do students get a change to practice writing different text types, but they hone their ability to write with point of view and perspective in mind. Refer to these standards for specific grade-level expectations.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Writing: Text Types and Purposes: Standard 3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 4

What is it?

According to Pauline Gibbons (2009), a genre is a piece of writing that has specific characteristics that set it apart from other genres. For example,

- It has a social purpose (i.e.: it is used to “do something” with language)
- It has a specific overall structure or organization
- It has language features typical of that genre

Multi-genre writing means having students write about content topics or themes in more than one of these genres. For example, instead of simply writing an essay at the end of a unit, students can write an essay *as well as* one or more non-traditional genres that illustrate their understanding of multiple perspectives and ideas within a topic. For EBLs, and for many students who struggle with literacy, formal, more “traditional” responses may not fully illustrate their understanding of a topic. By writing in multiple genres, students can write about their knowledge in different ways, helping you get a better idea of what they know and can do. When you make these multiple genres **multilingual**, you are allowing students to write about their knowledge in the language they feel most comfortable and competent using, as well as encouraging them to explore how language affects point of view and understanding.

Because EBLs, like all students, are at different stages on the literacy spectrum, you might have many different levels of literacy in one classroom. Some students will have a higher level of literacy in English. Others will have strong literacy in their home language, but are in the early stages of developing English literacy. Still others will struggle with literacy in *both* languages. For this reason it is imperative that you think flexibly about how students write about their understanding of content. By allowing EBLs to represent their knowledge in multiple, multilingual genres, you can get a better picture of what they know, as well as scaffold their ability to write more formally in both English and their home languages.

Translanguaging How-To

1. Choose the genres you want students to write to represent their content knowledge.

Multi-genre writing is most successful when the genres authentically fit the content you are teaching. For example, if you are teaching the American Revolution, having students write personal letters, dialogues, and journal entries in the points of view of historical figures is relevant to both the time period and the content. It is important to look closely at your content to see where there are authentic opportunities for using multiple genres. You might ask yourself:

- What genres are relevant to my content-area topics?
- What points of view or perspectives can be represented in these topics?
- What genres do “real people” use to represent their ideas and findings about these topics?
- Of these genres, which ones do I want my students to write for this unit of study/topic? Think about your students – how many genres per unit are appropriate? How much time will you allot to teaching each one?

2. Specifically teach and model each genre.

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing: Standard 5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Emergent Bilinguals

If your EBLs struggle to write in both English and their home languages (i.e.: SIFE and LTEL students), you can modify the multi-genre writing to include:

- Partner Writing

(see *Collaborative Work: Multilingual Writing Partners*)

- The Language Experience Approach

(see *Content-Area & Writing Instruction: Translanguaging with the Language Experience Approach*)

- Interactive Writing

(see *Content-Area & Writing Instruction: Translanguaging with Interactive Writing*)

Because every genre has its own set of rules, students need explicit lessons on how to successfully write each one. Gibbons (2009) describes her **Teaching and Learning Cycle** for scaffolding genre writing:

Stage 1: Building the Field

Help students develop background information about the topic they will write about (see *Reading & Content: Building Background with Home Language Support*).

Stage 2: Modeling the Genre

Show students the various characteristics of the genre itself—purpose, form, language, etc.

Stage 3: Joint Construction

You and your students collaboratively construct a piece of writing in that genre. As you do this, you talk explicitly about both the language and the content of the writing.

Stage 4: Independent Writing

Students write in that genre on their own.

In addition to using the Teaching and Learning Cycle, you might consider the following questions as you plan:

- **What specific features will students need to write successfully in this genre?**

Letters have salutations and closings. Dialogues and interviews have dialogue tags so the reader knows who's speaking. Poems use figurative language and rhyme. Each genre has specific structural and linguistic features that set it apart from other genres. Students need to know these features in order to write in that genre successfully.

- **How “formal” is this genre?**

Different genres have different levels of formality. Teaching students this spectrum of formality (as well as how to vary formality in their own writing) is an important skill. This is especially important for EBLs, some of whom are learning the “rules” of a new society, in addition to the rules of a new language.

- **Who is the audience for this genre?**

Like an explicit discussion of formality, a discussion of audience helps students to think deeply about the language they use in each genre. Students can think authentically about language when they have a real audience in mind—to stick with the American Revolution example, John Adams would write to his wife Abigail in a different way than he would write to members of the Constitutional Convention. Helping students to see these differences will deepen their understanding of both the language and the content topic itself.

3. **Encourage students to use translanguaging as they write in multiple genres.**

Student can easily use translanguaging when writing in multiple genres:

- **Write in English but edit/revise in the home language (or vice versa)**

Depending on your classroom and program goals, students can write in multiple genres in one language. However, you can encourage translanguaging by having students pre-write, edit, and negotiate revisions in their home languages.

- **Use English and the home language in one genre**

Teacher Literature:

If you want to learn more about using genre/multi-genre writing in your classroom, try these professional books:

English Learners, Academic Literacy, and Thinking (Pauline Gibbons) – referenced in this strategy

A Teacher's Guide to the Multigenre Research Project: Everything You Need to Get Started (Melinda Putz)

Blending Genre, Altering Style: Writing Multigenre Papers (Tom Romano)

The Multigenre Research Paper: Voice, Passion, and Discovery in Grades 4-6 (Camille Allen)

Multi-genre Literature

Looking for some good models? The following books can be used in the classroom as examples of authentic multi-genre writing:

Elementary

Concept Books with Facts at the End:

What do you do with a Tail Like This? (Jenkins & Page)

This concept book is written in a question and answer style, and at the end there is detailed information about each animal.

Poetry and Informational Text

Sea Squares (Hulme)

This book is a math-related poem about squaring numbers, using examples of creatures found in the sea. The poem is followed by informational text about each sea animal.

Fiction and Informational Text

The Scrambled States of America (Keller)

This fictional text tells the story of what happens when different states want to change places with each other, and they learn the reality of what it's like to live in a different climate and place. The story is followed by a reference text with facts about each of the 50 states.

Because multi-genre writing encourages authenticity, it is important to keep in mind that people use their languages fluidly in certain genres. When it is relevant to the genre, students can write in both English and their home languages to illustrate their understanding of the content. The following genres could lend themselves to this kind of translanguaging:

- Interview and Dialogue (where the speakers are multilingual)
- Letters, Postcards, or Emails (where the writer and/or the recipient is multilingual)
- Diary entries or monologues (when the writer thinks/writes multilingually)
- Newspaper articles (for a multilingual news source or audience)
- Poems, songs, or raps (which often purposefully mix voices/languages)

As students write in these and other genres, you can facilitate discussions about **how** and **why** people use their languages across different genres and for different purposes. This can encourage a higher level of discussion and critical thinking than usually occurs around writing in school.

- **Translate one genre from the home language to English**

For students who have literacy in their home languages, they can create a piece of genre writing in that language, using the same Teaching & Learning Cycle and keeping in mind the same ideas about each genre. Once they have a draft of that genre, you can work with those students to translate their own writing into English (with the use of Google Translate, bilingual dictionaries/picture dictionaries, partnered work, etc.). It is important that students do not translate the entire piece of writing from one language to the other, word for word. Strategic translation (of certain words, sentences, ideas, etc.) can help students to see connections between their languages, while still developing important genre and general writing knowledge. If you teach in a bilingual program, you can also reverse this process and have students translate genre writing in English into a home language.

Ideas for Implementation Across Grade Levels

Elementary Grades

- In a 1st grade bilingual classroom, the teacher set up multi-genre writing experiences during an integrated unit on Communities. Each week, the teacher lined up different Spanish-speaking guests to visit the classroom so students could interview them about the type of job they had in the community. For each visitor, students wrote a few questions in Spanish that they wanted to ask. After the visitor left, they wrote the answers they had learned, also in Spanish, and created an illustration to represent what they had learned about that type of job. The teacher compiled these question and answer texts each week, turning them into a class book about that particular community job. At the end of the unit they had five of these books as part of the classroom library. In addition to this Spanish writing, students also created an All About Book during the Writing Workshop in English, which they ultimately shared with the entire 1st grade (including students who only speak English). For their All About Book, they chose one type of job they were most interested in, read different books about that job (in Spanish and English), and then wrote their own All About Book in English to share what they learned

The 5,000 Year Old Puzzle: Solving A Mystery (Logan)
This is a fictional account of a historical 1924 archeological expedition to discover a secret tomb in Egypt. The story is told through multiple genres: journal entries, facts, maps, and postcards.

Postcards from Pluto: A Tour of the Solar System (Leedy)
This story about a group of children who take a field trip to outer space is told through the postcards they write about their experiences. Facts about outer space are included in the postcards. There is also a sidebar with dialogue between the characters, which also includes outer space facts.

Informational Texts with Multiple Levels of Information

The Life and Times of the Ant (Micucci)

This “All-About” book delves into the topic of ants using multiple genres: expository text, how-to explanations, timelines, charts, graphs, etc. This text can be a model for students to see how they can convey information about a topic in multiple ways.

Middle/Secondary

Nothing but the Truth

(Avi)

The story of a school prank turned political is told through memo, newspaper articles, diary entries, dialogue, and more.

Tears of a Tiger (Sharon M. Draper)

This is the story of a Andy, whose friend is killed in a drunk driving accident in which Andy was the driver. The story uses many different genres to tell this difficult story.

Monster (Walter Dean Myers)

A mix of diary entries and screenplay tells the story of teen Steve Harmon’s murder trial.

Breathing Under Water (Alex Flinn)

Alternating between 1st person diary entries and 3rd person prose, this book tells the story of an abusive relationship through the eyes of the abuser as he goes

about the job. By using multi-genre writing in the Communities unit, the teacher provided two different ways for students to share their new content-area knowledge. And, there was a purpose for using Spanish and English for each type of writing.

- In a 5th grade general education classroom, the teacher combined a Reading unit on Historical Fiction with a social studies unit on Slavery in the Americas. Students read different pieces of historical fiction centered on this time period. To express their learning, the teacher had students write in two different genres. They wrote journal entries from the point of view of someone from that time period. They also wrote an informational report during the Writing Workshop explaining the causes and effects of slavery in the Americas. Emergent bilinguals had the option to write some of their journal entries in the home language. Some students chose to write from the point of view of Spanish-speaking colonists or slaves brought to Spanish-speaking colonies. In these cases, students wrote the journal entries in Spanish, and translated some of them to English. The teacher supported emergent bilinguals throughout the writing process for the informational report to help them include as much English as possible. For some students, this meant including key words, phrases, or sentences in English from texts they had read about the topic. Other students were able to write the entire report in English.

Middle / Secondary Grades

- A 9th grade bilingual math teacher had students work in pairs to solve several multi-step math problems. After students successfully talked through and solved the problems, the teacher told students they would have to turn their math conversations into “Math Scenes.” Students worked together to re-create their conversations about solving the problem, including any negotiations, disagreements, and “a-ha!” moments they had. Because students spoke the same home language, many students moved fluidly between English and the home language as they had conversations about the math and created their scenes. The teacher encouraged students to include both languages in their Math Scenes. In addition to writing out the dialogue of the scene, the teacher modeled the use of dialogue tags, stage directions, and “at rise” descriptions (descriptions of what is happening as the scene begins). After writing out their scenes, students performed them for the class. Students enjoyed the writing/performing experience and the scenes helped to reinforce their math learning.
- A 7th grade ESL science teacher wanted to bring authentic science writing into his classroom. During a unit on different diseases, he had students keep a “Medical Journal” where they wrote diary entries about the various “cases” they saw. Each time students learned about a new disease, they would write a diary entry in the point of view of a doctor about its symptoms, causes, treatments, and other disease-specific information. Students could write these journal entries in either English or their home languages since, as the teacher told them repeatedly, multilingual doctors speak different languages with their multilingual patients! When discussing the journal entries as a whole class or in small groups, students either translated their entries for the class or spoke about their home language writing in English.

through rehabilitation.

- A 10th grade ELA teacher wanted her students to write about topics they cared about through multi-genre writing. Each student picked a topic that they found interesting or that they connected to. Students picked topics ranging from racism to baseball, from gender to music. The teacher picked five genres to teach her students. Her rationale for the genres were 1) they were authentic genres that students could use outside of school, 2) they lent themselves to many different topics, and 3) they encouraged students to use multiple languages in their writing. The genres were:
 - Newspaper Writing
 - Poetry
 - Interview
 - Letter/Email Writing
 - Personal narrative

For each genre, the teacher followed the Teaching and Learning Cycle, though the “Building the Field” stage was often done through independent research on students’ chosen topics. The class read models of each genre, collaborated to write in that genre, and then wrote in that genre for their own topics. Within the modeling/joint construction stages, the teacher was clear about encouraging students to use translanguaging in authentic ways. For example, a student writing about the topic of immigration interviewed his uncle about his experience coming to America from the Dominican Republic. Because his uncle did not speak English, the student wrote the interview questions in both English and Spanish, conducted the interview in Spanish, and then translated the interview into English.

The resulting products were multi-genre, multilingual inquiries into various topics that interested the students in the class. Students were able to represent their ideas about these topics in a variety of ways and in different languages, which allowed them to fully illustrate their knowledge and depth of thinking.