

Instructional Sample Practice for a Kindergarten Thematic Unit Aligned to the Next Generation Learning Standards

Sentences or words underlined constitute hyperlinks. Sentences and words in bold are classroom activities that thread oral language, metalinguistic development, and flexible groupings throughout this unit.



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity





Spotlight

This Instructional Sample describes an integrated thematic unit of study for a Kindergarten classroom centered on the ocean and ocean animals. Oral language development, language awareness, and flexible groupings were essential in this classroom as the teacher organized and implemented a developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate curriculum. This Instructional Sample is meant to be a tool for observation and reflection for teachers and those who support early childhood teachers working with Multilingual Learners (MLs)¹ to help build understanding and experience with instruction aligned to [The Next Generation ELA Standards for New York State \(NGLS\)](#) as well as the [Lifelong Practices for Readers and Writers](#). This Instructional Sample highlights oral language through conversations that take place within flexible student groupings. The unit incorporates activities that target language awareness to support the gradual and dynamic development of linguistic knowledge within and across languages.

While there are many more engagements of key importance at the Kindergarten level (see resources at the end of this document), a carefully planned thematic study offers children opportunities to go beyond learning facts. They can study environmental issues, learn how to take action in the world, critically examine how texts are written, and explore ways in which authors present their own perspective. A research study through a theme can support and enhance children's understandings of the world while they develop their emerging literacy abilities. Understanding demands deep knowledge, as well as opportunities to make predictions, observe, experiment, ask questions, manipulate the physical environment, make generalizations, and hypothesize. Teachers can capitalize on the sociocultural and linguistic knowledge children bring with them from home, in particular their home language, which is a tool for thinking, expressing, and learning. Language development certainly stems from active engagement and their desire to learn about the world.

¹ Under CR Part 154, "English Language Learners" are defined as students who, by reason of foreign birth or ancestry, speak or understand a language other than English and speak or understand little or no English, and require support in order to become proficient in English.

In addition, a **Multilingual Learner (ML) definition was included to the Reopening Guidance in August:** All students who speak or are learning one or more language(s) other than English, including: 1) current ELLs, 2) students who were once ELLs but have exited out ELL status, 3) students who were never ELLs but are heritage speakers of a language other than English, and 4) World Languages students.

These abbreviations are used in this document and also in NYSED guidance and other public materials.

The Importance of Thematic Units in Early Childhood Settings

Young children need contextualized lessons where there are opportunities to engage in inquiry and participate in conversations, in both English and in their home language(s), that are authentic and purposeful through experiences and interactions with peers and teachers. A developmentally appropriate thematic study allows the children the opportunity to develop ways of thinking, talking, reading, writing, and drawing like scientists, historians, or geographers. In addition, a thematic study can support the development of the children's deep commitments toward caring for the world. A developmentally appropriate thematic study for MLs allows them to use their full linguistic repertoires and encourages teachers to engage the students in activities that include the four language modalities: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.

The activities described in this Instructional Sample are not meant to be prescriptive, but rather, should be taken as possibilities where MLs increase their understanding of a particular content area while increasing the development of the language of instruction. This sample starts with a roadmap (Table 1) with the intention of orienting the reader as to how this thematic unit developed. Even though this unit describes an English as a New Language (ENL) classroom with ELLs with different home languages, all teachers of MLs will find modifications that they can integrate in their classroom settings. We follow with a description of the stance Mr. Aguilar, the Kindergarten teacher in this classroom, has with regards to three important practices in the education of MLs, which are: oral language development, metalinguistic awareness, and flexible grouping.

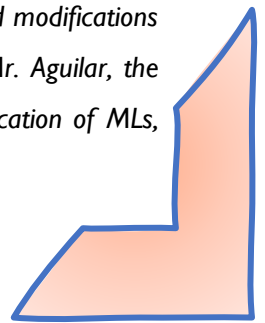


Table 1: Roadmap of the Instructional Thematic Unit for Kindergarten on the Ocean

Development of the Unit	Classroom Practices	Suggestions for Modifications by All Teachers of MLs
<i>Considering the possible thematic studies</i>	<i>Brainstorming about topics that can be developed into a thematic unit of study (oral language development).</i>	<i>Teachers of MLs can brainstorm with their students as described, creating a space where their home languages are valued and are used as a resource for content and language development.</i>
<i>Home/school connections</i>	<i>Fostering deep collaboration between parents and teachers. Parents support learning through individual interactions (oral language development).</i>	<i>Teachers of MLs can support home-school connections and encourage parents to support children's learning in their home language.</i>
<i>Launching the thematic unit</i> <i>Setting up the Classroom Environment</i>	<i>Tapping on and building background knowledge about the topic of study (the ocean). Whole group instruction and conversations with partners (oral language development).</i> <i>Teachers find resources and artifacts that support the theme and content.</i>	<i>Teachers of MLs can build background knowledge as described, including hands-on activities and demonstrations such as a virtual field trip or a video clip and a reading in their home language.</i> <i>Teachers of MLs look for resources and artifacts in English and in the students' home languages.</i>
<i>Read-alouds and multimodal experiences with texts</i>	<i>Exploring the content and language of the texts. Inviting each child into the learning experience. Whole group instruction. Launching the thematic unit using read-alouds (oral language development).</i> <i>Language awareness using three words: ocean, water, and wave.</i>	<i>Teachers of MLs can read a book in the target language or in the home language(s), if possible. Teachers of MLs can partner students with a bilingual classmate. Teachers of MLs can , show pictures, videos, or play an audiotape related to the topic or key vocabulary words.</i>
<i>Shared reading: analyzing key concepts of print</i>	<i>Exposure to whole group reading and exploration of key concepts of print. Whole group instruction, strategically and intentionally organized (oral language development and language awareness).</i>	<i>Teachers of MLs can read a poem or other type of text for shared reading in the target language or in the home language(s), if possible. In order to ensure comprehension, teachers of MLs can utilize visuals, realia, drama, and the home language.</i>

Language experience approach and interactive writing	Exposure to writing around content at the student's zone of proximal development. Whole group instruction (oral language development and language awareness).	Teachers of MLs engage the students in these activities utilizing the target language or the home language(s), if possible. Comprehension is ensured by providing opportunities for the children to hear or express understanding in their home language.
Demonstrating to students the research process: describing physical characteristics of animals	Small groups research questions on a particular animal. Students are organized by interest and by language (heterogeneous groups). The groups research about an animal that lives in the ocean or whose life is connected to the ocean (heterogeneous groups). The teacher worked on introducing the Physical Characteristics of Pelicans (language awareness, oral language development).	Children can label their drawings in more than one language. Children can conduct research in more than one language. Children can participate in groups with peers who speak their home language.
Language awareness: comparing how Albanian, Bengali, English, and Spanish look and sound	Comparing how key words look alike across languages. Exploring how languages sound. Exploring English compound words about the ocean.	Teachers of MLs can encourage the analysis of a language other than English as well as English in their classrooms.
Engaging the students in writing about nonfiction	In small groups based on their research groups, students will use a combination of drawing and labeling to support their research (heterogeneous groups).	Teachers of MLs can encourage labeling in more than one language and consider flexible groupings for students.
Taking dictation of students' writing and supporting individual writers to develop letter/sound correspondence	Whole group, small group, and individual students are offered opportunities to develop language awareness around concepts of print.	All students benefit from engaging in metalinguistic awareness within a language and across languages.
Structured self-selected work time	Working in centers and providing an opportunity to utilize open-ended materials to create final products for the celebration of learning to share with authentic audiences. Small group work based on interests (heterogeneous groups).	Teachers of MLs can encourage their students to speak, write, and interact in more than one language.

<i>Celebration of learning</i>	<i>Concluding the thematic unit of study and sharing with parents through oral presentations (heterogeneous groups, oral language development).</i>	<i>Teachers of MLs are available to facilitate conversations in the target language to students working in small groups. Teachers of MLs can remind students that it is okay to speak in the home language as they create their final products for the celebration of learning.</i> <i>Students are reminded of the languages audiences might speak and should prepare presentations in the appropriate language(s).</i>
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Overall Description of the Classroom Setting

This thematic study was carried out in a stand-alone ENL² Kindergarten classroom where all 24 children were ELLs. Their home languages were Spanish (70% of the class), Albanian (20%), and Bengali (10%). About 70% of the students in this class were born in the United States. The students spoke their home languages with their families but were also exposed to English at home and in their communities.

The teacher, Mr. Aguilar, holds an New York State certification in Early Childhood Education and in ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages). Mr. Aguilar speaks some Spanish, having lived in Perú for one year. His teacher assistant, Ms. Bautista, immigrated from the Philippines. She speaks Tagalog and English. Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista are keenly aware of the importance of providing socio-emotional support for all children and families while ensuring that all the students are academically challenged in school.

Mr. Aguilar believes that integrated studies around a theme allow students to engage in a topic of study over time. This approach offers opportunities to bring the outside world into the classroom. He knows that young children bring fascinating questions and wonderings about the world into the classroom. Mr. Aguilar is committed to nurturing their curiosity by inviting them to pursue their own questions by engaging them in a thematic study around a broad question that can, in turn, invite new questions.

Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista capitalize on the knowledge the children's families hold about the different thematic studies in which they engage the children throughout the year. They invite the parents to talk in their classrooms, they ask the parents to talk in their home language and encourage the parents to support the content studied in class via materials such as books, websites, and YouTube videos. They understand there is great value in parents having these conversations with their children at home. When necessary, the teachers utilize a digital translation tool to ensure they provide access to meaning, as well as gestures, visuals, and artifacts.

Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista also interact with parents through applications that promote on going communication with parents, such as [Class Dojo](#), [Remind](#), [WhatsApp](#), or [Bloomz](#). They formed a classroom chat where parents and the teachers can communicate with each other. They use this chat to provide information about the units that are being developed and to invite parents to share their knowledge with their children regarding a certain aspect of the thematic study. Sometimes they pose a question about the theme in order to invite families to engage in additional open-ended conversations with their children. They also suggest types of books parents might ask for at the local library.

² A stand-alone ENL classroom refers to a setting where the teacher is responsible for the instruction of all academic subjects to ELLs.

Brief Description of Mr. Aguilar's Stance Toward Oral Language Development, Language Awareness, and Flexible Grouping

For Mr. Aguilar, oral language is the engine that propels learning. Oral language is embedded in interactions with peers and adults where young children explore concepts and ideas and take risks. For Mr. Aguilar, this means that the speaking and listening standards are placed at the center of his teaching and that the children's home languages are critical. Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista are deeply aware that oral language development is considered a precursor to becoming a strong reader and a writer. These two teachers understand that the complexity of the texts children listen to is tightly connected to their oral language development. In Mr. Aguilar's class, the students' oral language develops because they participate in rich conversations about content that they studied over time. In this classroom, oral language also develops within the context of daily life. In Mr. Aguilar's class, these conversations take place through the daily routines, greetings, the noticing of texts from the environment (stop sign, supermarket name, bathroom sign, etc.), a discussion about classroom procedures, and most importantly, during play. Oral language is also featured when Mr. Aguilar capitalizes on the richness of oral traditions the children and their families bring to the class. In these, Kindergarten children can learn (and share) nursery rhymes, riddles, songs, folktales, and oral stories.

Mr. Aguilar believes that children's oral language develops further when they hear beautifully crafted language through daily read-alouds³ and shared reading experiences⁴ (fiction and nonfiction) and have ample opportunities to talk about these. Mr. Aguilar also knows that when students have opportunities to discuss complex texts capitalizing on their entire linguistic repertoire, there is an abundance of opportunities to engage in meaningful and deep conversations about the content and language. Oral language experiences (access to complex conversations) around content that matters is critical for young multilingual Kindergarteners' cognitive development. Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista understand that as students engage with texts, they can make connections to their prior knowledge, and they can predict, confirm, disconfirm, pose questions, infer, etc. In Mr. Aguilar's and Ms. Bautista's class, oral language is utilized to think about language, to discuss texts, to share one's piece, to receive feedback,

³ Read-alouds are a teaching practice whereby the teacher reads a text (e.g., story, poem) to the whole class. Students are therefore exposed to fluency, voice, and intonation. The teacher also uses this teaching practice to show how she is thinking and processing information in order to demonstrate that readers are always actively engaged with the text. These are known as Think-alouds. The teacher can also use this time to ask questions and know how and what the students are understanding. A more detailed description of the advantages of Read-alouds can be found under Resources at the end of this document.

⁴ Shared reading offers children the opportunity to actively participate in a reading event with the support of a more experienced and fluent reader. Shared reading is interactive. In shared reading, the children have access to an enlarged text displayed on the board or a chart paper. More detailed information about shared reading can be found at the end of this document.

to pose questions and wonderings, to critique, and to imagine. In addition, students also engage in authors' dramatization, first by dictating their own stories to Mr. Aguilar or Ms. Bautista, and then by dramatizing it with the help of some classmates who act as the actors of the story the child wrote. This multimodal integration of the author's chair offers the child/author opportunities to become familiar with making a narrative and becoming aware of the audience's needs (Paley, 2004).

In Mr. Aguilar's and Ms. Bautista's class, young children also engage in developmentally appropriate conversations that lead to developing their multilingual language awareness. This means that students become conscious of the way languages look and sound, increasing their sensitivity to the languages that surround them. The purpose of engaging young students in language awareness activities is not for them to learn a language, but for them to become aware or conscious about the forms and functions of language. Language awareness activities in Mr. Aguilar's class entailed looking and listening to words that were part of this unit in the different students' home languages. For example: ocean, water, and wave were compared to the Spanish: océano, agua, ola; to the Bengali: মহাসাগর Mahāsāgara, পানি Pāni, তরঙ্গ, Taraṅga; and to the Albanian: oqean, ujë, valë. At this point, it is important to discuss the role of translanguaging in the pedagogies created for MLs.

Translanguaging is a pedagogical practice that brings together the students' entire linguistic repertoire (home and new languages) in ways that create spaces for deeper and more complex thinking. Translanguaging requires the creation of spaces where learning is intentional, strategic, agentic, and thoughtfully carried out (Fu, Hasjioannou, & Zhou, 2019; Espinosa & Lerner-Quam, 2019). In this instructional practice, you will notice the intentionality that teachers bring to the teaching of MLs in order to foster the oral communication that takes place in flexible and dynamic partnerships. Metalinguistic awareness in particular is made possible when teachers have opened a translanguaging space (Velasco & Fialais, 2016).

Mr. Aguilar believes firmly that bilingual Kindergarten children benefit from grouping arrangements that are flexible, strategic, intentional, and carefully orchestrated. Often, the highest- quality discussions and work occur once teachers teach children how to conduct themselves in groups. Mr. Aguilar understands that it is critical for teachers to discuss expectations about what needs to happen while the children participate in small groups. No longer is it acceptable to maintain rigid groups established by levels. It is best for the grouping of students to remain flexible, based on purpose and need.

When grouping students, Mr. Aguilar pays attention to language proficiency, content area knowledge, and early literacy abilities while ensuring that these are flexible and dynamic groupings. At times, stronger students might need to be working together (and pushing each other), thus allowing the teacher to work with other students, while at other times, heterogeneous grouping made sense. At times,

the Kindergarten children might be grouped by home language, while at other times the languages spoken in a group might vary. During whole group instruction, Mr. Aguilar might strategically establish who sits next to whom. This way, everyone can more fully participate in “turn and talk.” A small group might be established to preview a story or to preview vocabulary pertaining to a particular thematic study. At times, it might make sense that the students are grouped by interest; for example, students might have the opportunity to focus on a topic within a larger thematic study. The teacher might decide to start the work with partners, so young bilingual children can develop experiences as co-learners. The purpose of small grouping is to encourage more active engagement of all children, which can lead them to deeper understandings, to clarify ideas, to elaborate, to compare and contrast, and to develop a sense that what they have to say matters.

In what follows, we present key components of a developmentally appropriate thematic study that Mr. Aguilar developed for his Kindergarten children. The purpose of this illustrative example is to highlight for the reader how the NGLS can be integrated in a thematic study that integrates oral language development, metalinguistic awareness, and flexible grouping specifically for MLs.

An Integrated, Developmentally Appropriate Thematic Study in a Multilingual Kindergarten Class

“If a child is to keep alive [their] inborn sense of wonder, [the child] needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in... In nature, nothing exists alone.”

— Rachel Carson

Considering the Possible Thematic Studies

Mr. Aguilar used the observations he had made of the children and his knowledge of the availability of materials when selecting a theme that integrated speaking, listening, writing, and reading across the content areas. Mr. Aguilar understood the importance of demonstrating how to engage in the different

TEACHERS OF MLs CAN BUILD BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE AS DESCRIBED, INCLUDING HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS SUCH AS A VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP, VIDEO CLIP, OR A READING IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGE.

TEACHERS OF MLs CAN BRAINSTORM WITH THEIR STUDENTS AS DESCRIBED, CREATING A SPACE WHERE THEIR HOME LANGUAGES ARE VALUED AND ARE USED AS A RESOURCE FOR CONTENT AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT.

components of the thematic research study, so he took the time to model for the children how he documented his learning while engaging the entire class in the research experience. When appropriate, he created opportunities for the students to research their own topic of interest within a broader thematic

study. The following were some possibilities the teachers and the children discussed in order to decide on a topic:

- Life in the Woods (northeast United States)
- Life in the Ocean
- Life in the Pond
- Farm Animals
- Insects
- Reptiles and Amphibians
- Birds
- Fish
- Mammals

Any other thematic study *Connecting with Parents via Apps*

Once the students and Mr. Aguilar decided they wanted to explore the ocean and some of its creatures, Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista used the application “Class Dojo” to let the parents⁵ know about the theme the class is studying. In their message, the teachers asked the parents to talk with their children about the ocean, as well as watch videos, take them to the library, and revisit family photographs if they have gone to the beach. He believed that there was tremendous value in the conversation’s parents had at home with their children regardless of the language in which these took place.

TEACHERS OF MLs CAN SUPPORT HOME
SCHOOL CONNECTIONS AND
ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO SUPPORT
CHILDREN’S LEARNING IN THEIR HOME
LANGUAGE.

Mr. Aguilar’s focus was on providing the parents with information about what their children were learning, and also encouraging richer opportunities for conversation. Mr. Aguilar sent the parents links to videos about ocean animals in the languages spoken at each students’ home so that the children and parents could watch and talk about them. He also asked the parents to take their children to the library to look for a book about an ocean animal. The idea was that the children had opportunities to extend the learning that is happening in the classroom by having rich conversations at home too. Throughout the unit, the children were asked to share with their parents their research topics (a specific ocean animal) and to ask their parents to help them learn one more fact about them.

⁵ *Home/School Connections need to be built as partnerships built on trust. A more detailed description of the advantages of Home/School Connections can be found under Resources at the end of this document.*

Launching the Thematic Unit About the Ocean

The thematic study Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista planned about the ocean involved large group lessons as well as small group research projects about individual ocean animals. For Mr. Aguilar, the guiding questions for this thematic unit were: What is the ocean? How many oceans are there? Where are they? What are the animals of the ocean? How do we take care of them? He and Ms. Bautista started setting up the classroom to support the development of this unit.

Setting up the Classroom Environment

In order to set an environment that invited the children to be immersed in the ocean study, Mr. Aguilar did the following:

- Utilize the wall space to place photographs and text about the theme under study.
- Gather books, magazines, objects, diagrams, and maps about the theme (if available, include materials in languages other than English).
- Gather relevant artifacts.
- If the children are going to work in small research groups, it is important that the teachers organize the materials according to subtopic, e.g., whales, seals, turtles, etc.
- Send a letter to the parents in their home languages to share with the parents the content of the study, and ask them for relevant items (readings, objects) they might have at home. Invite parents to translate words or a brief document.
- Gather photographs relevant to the theme.
- Find developmentally and linguistically appropriate websites.
- Plan a field trip or virtual experiences,⁶ if possible.
- Invite a guest speaker.

Over time, as the class developed materials about the ocean study, he posted these up on the classroom walls.

⁶ A virtual field trip enables learners to visit and explore destinations that are relevant to course concepts and aligned with course learning objective. The virtual field trip brings real-life experience to the application and understanding of course concepts https://secure.onlinelearningconsortium.org/effective_practices/virtual-field-trips-online-learning-experience). To see a couple of examples for virtual trips, please visit: <https://www.weareteachers.com/best-virtual-field-trips/>

Additional Books and Materials for the Students in Albanian, Bengali, and Spanish

Both teachers searched for appropriate websites, videos, and realia in the languages other than English that the students spoke at home. The teachers found a video about the oceans in [Bengali](#), one about the [beaches in Albanian](#), and a [Spanish language video](#) on marine animals

They also found some books the students could read and look at in Albanian and Spanish. The teachers also asked parents for artifacts they might have, such as seashells, rocks, and most importantly, pictures of their children at the beach, if available.



Launching the Thematic Unit About the Ocean Using Read-Alouds

Mr. Aguilar began this study with a read-aloud about the ocean, the National Geographic book titled *First Big Book of the Ocean* by Catherine Hughes (2013). He began by asking the students to share what they know about the ocean. Next, he asked the children to describe what they saw on the book's cover page, and he invited the children to share in their home language what they noticed. Next he read the title, the name of the author and illustrator, and did a picture book walk, taking the time to describe some pages. He knew these were important ways to help the children develop oral language. He then read the book with intonation and fluency. This book presents a good introduction to the study of the ocean by saying:



Seen from space, Earth looks like a big blue marble. Almost three-quarters of the planet is covered by one big ocean. Parts of this one, single ocean have been given names: Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean, and Arctic Ocean. All of the parts are interconnected. A map at the back of the book shows where each part of the oceans is located.

In order to emphasize the development of oral language, the teachers also incorporated [a song about the oceans](#). The beginning of the song emphasized what the book stated.

About seventy percent of the water in the world is ocean water

And its divided into five parts from biggest to smallest:

Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern, Arctic.

- ***K Life Science 1-1: Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.***
- ***K Life Science 4-1: Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.***

As the unit continued, Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista fostered conversations about what the students were learning about the ocean. These conversations took place in different group settings and languages: by interests when the students were working in centers; in English when the students were interacting amongst each other; and by home language when students shared the same language. The teachers emphasized that they were interested in what they had to say, even if they didn't know how to say it in English yet. He insisted that it was acceptable to speak in their home language and that a peer or teacher would support them in translating. Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista used a New Language Arts Progressions (NLAP) Bilingual Common Core Progressions ([BCCP](#)) Kindergarten Speaking and Listening template to encourage the students to share conversations with diverse partners.

LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS AND WRITERS:

STUDENTS SHOULD ALSO READ FULL-LENGTH AND SHORTER TEXTS FROM A VARIETY OF CULTURES AND VIEWPOINTS BOTH IN PRINT AND IN DIGITAL MEDIA.

HOME LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRESSIONS (ELA/NLA)

Grade Kindergarten: Speaking and Listening 1

Common Core Anchor Standard (SL.K.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				MAIN ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Prepare and Participate in Conversations, Expressing Their Point of View Clearly and Persuasively</i>	
Common Core Kindergarten Standard (SL.K.1): Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>kindergarten topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups. a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion). b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges. c. Seek to understand and communicate with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.				GRADE LEVEL ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Participate in Collaborative Conversations, Follow Rules of Discussion and Continue Conversation through Multiple Exchanges</i>	
5 Levels of Literacy Development	Entering (Beginner)	Emerging (Low Intermediate)	Transitioning (High Intermediate)	Expanding (Advanced)	Commanding (Proficient)
When developing home language literacy, using grade level texts and appropriate supports, students are able to:					
RECEPTIVE	Oracy and Literacy Links	Use <i>illustrated, preidentified words and phrases</i> and an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart</i> to identify rules and points of discussions during collaborative conversations in <i>partnerships and/or teacher-led small groups</i> .	Use <i>illustrated phrases and short sentences from a bank</i> and an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart</i> to identify rules and points of discussions during collaborative conversations in <i>partnerships and/or small groups</i> .	Use <i>illustrated sentences from a bank</i> and an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart</i> to identify rules and points of discussions during collaborative conversations in <i>partnership, small group or whole class settings</i> .	Use an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart, after teacher modeling</i> , to identify rules and points of discussions during collaborative conversations in <i>partnership, small group or whole class settings</i> .
		Use <i>illustrated, preidentified words and phrases</i> and an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart</i> to participate in collaborative conversations in <i>partnerships and/or teacher-led small groups</i> .	Use <i>illustrated phrases and short sentences from a bank</i> and an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart</i> to participate in collaborative conversations in <i>partnerships and/or small groups</i> .	Use <i>illustrated sentences and an illustrated discussion-rules chart</i> to participate in collaborative conversations in <i>partnership, small group or whole class settings</i> .	Use an <i>illustrated discussion-rules chart, after teacher modeling</i> , to participate in collaborative conversations in <i>partnership, small group or whole class settings</i> .

Read-Alouds and Multimodal Experiences with Texts

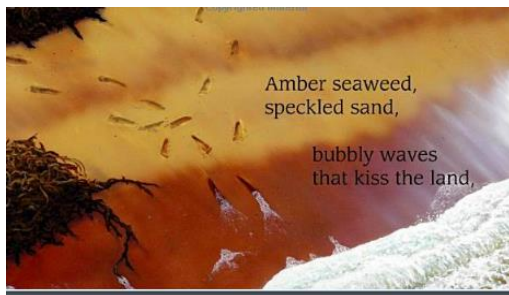
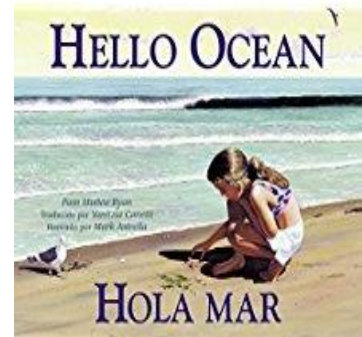
Before reading a second book about the ocean (*Hello Ocean, Hola Mar*, by Pam Muñoz Ryan, 2003), Mr. Aguilar began by exploring the book the way he had done with the first one: analyzing the cover, title, author, and illustrator. **He then asked the students to close their eyes while he played an audiotape with the sounds of ocean.** He asked the children to open their eyes and share what they heard and if those sounds reminded of something they know. He waited for the children to share their comments orally. Next, he put on a 30-second [video of ocean waves](#) and asked the children if they had ever seen these. By noticing these sounds and images, Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista encouraged oral conversations since they described what they saw and heard. Mr. Aguilar wrote the words ocean, water, and waves on the board. He accompanied these words with a picture. He pointed to these words as he reviewed them. He followed by asking the children to stand up and move their bodies as a wave would move. He reminded them of what they saw in the video. He then engaged in an interactive read-aloud of *Hello Ocean, Hola Mar* (Muñoz Ryan, 2003). This book presents descriptive language in English and Spanish about the ocean. As he read it, he emphasized the directionality that he was following as he read:

I see the ocean/ Yo veo el océano

Gray, green, blue/ Gris, verde, azul

A chameleon always changing hues/ Como un camaleón siempre cambiando de matices

He stopped at a couple particular pages to help the children notice key details of these illustrations, and he used a template from the New Language Arts Progressions ([BCCP](#)) as a guideline to encourage his students to make connections between the text and the illustrations. The students noticed how the text and the colors matched what the author was describing.



NEW LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRESSIONS (ESL/New Language)

Grade Kindergarten: Reading for Information 7

Common Core Anchor Standard (RI.7): Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.				MAIN ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Synthesize and Evaluate Content Presented in Various Formats</i>		
Common Core Grade Kindergarten Standard (RI.K.7): With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear (e.g., what person, place, thing or idea in the text an illustration depicts).				GRADE LEVEL ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Make Connections between Illustrations and Text</i>		
5 Levels of Language Development	Entering (Beginner)	Emerging (Low Intermediate)	Transitioning (High Intermediate)	Expanding (Advanced)	Commanding (Proficient)	
When acquiring a new language, using grade level texts and appropriate supports, students are able to:						
RECEPTIVE	Oracy and Literacy Links	Organize <i>illustrated, pretaught words on a story board</i> to identify the relationship between illustrations and text, during/after a teacher read aloud, shared reading or independent reading time	Organize <i>illustrated, preidentified words on a story board</i> to identify the relationship between illustrations and text, during/after a teacher read aloud, shared reading or independent reading time	Organize <i>illustrated phrases and short sentences from a bank on a story board</i> to identify the relationship between illustrations and text, during/after a teacher read aloud, shared reading or independent reading time	Organize <i>illustrated sentences from a bank on a story board</i> to identify the relationship between illustrations and text, during/after a teacher read aloud, shared reading or independent reading time	
		Use <i>illustrated, pretaught words</i> to describe the relationship between illustrations and text, when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/ writing	Use <i>illustrated, preidentified words</i> to describe the relationship between illustrations and text, when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing	Use <i>illustrated, phrases and short sentences from a bank</i> to describe the relationship between illustrations and text, when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing	Use <i>illustrated sentences from a bank</i> to describe the relationship between illustrations and text, when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/ writing	Use <i>illustrated sentences</i> to describe the relationship between illustrations and text, when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing
		in the <i>new and/or the home language.</i>	in the <i>new and/or the home language.</i>	in the <i>new and, occasionally, in the home language.</i>	in the <i>new language.</i>	in the <i>new language.</i>

Draft

NLAP Reading for Information (RI)
RI.7: RI.K.7

engage^{ny} 1

This section of the unit addressed the following standards:

- *K Speaking and Listening 1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse peers and adults in small and large groups and during play.*
- *K Speaking and Listening 1a: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions, including listening to others, taking turns, and staying on topic.*
- *K Speaking and Listening 3: Develop and answer questions to clarify what the speaker says.*
- *K Speaking and Listening 5: Create and/or utilize existing visual displays to support descriptions.*
- *K Speaking and Listening 5c: Use words to identify and describe the world, making connections between words and their use (e.a., places at home that are colorful).*

Language Awareness Using the Three Key Words

Mr. Aguilar incorporated a language awareness instructional practice by using the words that he had previously presented: ocean, water, and wave. These words were then compared to Spanish (océano, agua, ola); Bengali (মহাসাগর Mahāsāgara, পানি Pāni, তরঙ্গ Taraṅga); and Albanian (oqean, ujë, valë). Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista used a digital translator to consult with parents in the class about how to say and write these words. Mr. Aguilar also drew a visual next to these words.

LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS AND WRITERS:

THINK, WRITE, SPEAK, AND LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND.

In small groups, one student was asked to say one of these words in the language of his/her choice, and the rest of the small group had to ‘guess’ the language to which word corresponded. Finally, by pointing to one of the words, Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista encouraged the students to say in what language it was written and explain how did they knew. The purpose of this exercise was to develop a conscious perception and sensitivity to the students’ languages, which are each a part of the classroom even if they are not the language of instruction. The students were able to focus on the similarity of some words (i.e., ocean/océano/oqean) and notice how Bengali stands out as being so different. The children also noticed how in Albanian, some of the words have “dots” on top of them.

The instructional practice addressed the following standards:

- *K Reading 5: Identify literary and informational texts. (RI&RL)*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1e: Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1a: Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1b: Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.*

Conversations Around the Read-Aloud

Talking About the Ocean

Mr. Aguilar gave the students large piece of chart paper and asked them to draw what they had learned about the ocean. The groups comprised four students each. Students were grouped by how well they work together. As they drew, they talked about what they had learned and what they would draw. They negotiated the space that each would use. For students who needed support, the teachers provided support through sentence frames in English or in the home language, such as:

- I like _____.
- I want to draw _____ because _____.
- I like _____ (e.g., whales, sharks, seals, etc.) because _____.
- The ocean has _____ (e.g., water, fish, sand, shells, etc.).
- My favorite ocean animal is _____.
- My favorite ocean animal is _____ because _____.

Shared Reading: Analyzing Key Concepts of Print

For the next segment, Mr. Aguilar used an excerpt from the book *Hello Ocean* by Pam Muñoz Ryan that he read earlier to his class. This segment was introduced as part of Shared Reading time. The students listened as Mr. Aguilar read it, and this was followed by choral reading. Mr. Aguilar took this opportunity to work on concepts of print.

I see the ocean

Gray, green, blue

A chameleon always changing hue.

Mr. Aguilar asked the students to identify the following:

- What letters are capital letters? (I, G, A)
- What letters go down? (g, y)
- What letters go up? (l, t, b, l, h)
- What are the two words that rhyme? (hue and blue)
- How many syllables does chameleon have? (4)
- How many words are they in this Shared Reading? (12)

LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS AND WRITERS:

MAKE CONNECTIONS (TO SELF, OTHER TEXTS, IDEAS, CULTURES, ERAS, ETC.).

The instructional practice addressed the following standards:

- *K Language 5: Explore and discuss word relationships and word meanings.*
- *K Language 5c: Use words to identify and describe the world, making connections between words and their use (e.g., places at home that are colorful).*

Language Experience Approach and Interactive Writing

The Language Experience Approach ⁷ means that Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista took dictation of what the students shared by writing it on the smartboard. He took these notes by creating a class web⁸ about what the children knew about the ocean. When the teachers took

TEACHERS OF MLs ENGAGE THE CHILDREN UTILIZING THE TARGET LANGUAGE. COMPREHENSION IS ENSURED BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CHILDREN TO HEAR OR EXPRESS UNDERSTANDING IN THEIR HOME LANGUAGE. TEACHERS OF MLs USE SCAFFOLDS, SUCH AS SENTENCE FRAMES, GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS, OR VISUALS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION.

dictation from the children, for instance, they wrote slowly, modeling how to write each letter and making their thinking of letter-sound correspondence explicit and visible. They also modeled for the children how writers re-read their work in order to ensure they are saying it clearly.

The instructional practice addressed the following standard:

- *K Writing 6: Develop questions and participate in shared research and exploration to answer questions and to build and share knowledge.*

Getting Ready to Engage in Research About Animals and the Ocean

As the unit continued to be developed, Mr. Aguilar also gathered books, audio books, and digital books in the languages spoken by the students about different creatures that either live in the ocean or depend on it for their survival. Students could choose to research turtles, sharks, whales, seals, pelicans, crabs, dolphins, octopuses, manta rays, penguins, lobsters, or squids. Mr. Aguilar selected a nonfiction

⁷ The Language Experience Approach is a literacy practice that integrates all components of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students and teacher generate the text and dictate it to the teacher. It is often based on an experience the class had. A more detailed description of the advantages of The Language Experience Approach can be found under Resources at the end of this document.

⁸ A class web is a graphic organizer that connect concepts and ideas.

book about pelicans in order to model for the students how to find out information about a particular animal, as well as provide strategies about how to read nonfiction texts.

Demonstrating the Research Process to the Children: Describing Physical Characteristics of Animals that Live in the Ocean or Depend on the Ocean

Mr. Aguilar read *Pelicans: Amazing Pictures and Facts About Pelicans* by Breanne Sartori (2015), and he also found a website in Spanish that presented information about this bird: [La Chachipedia - El Pelicano](#).

Mr. Aguilar asked the students to sit in specific places based on cross-language proficiency⁹. That is, students who had more control over English were paired with students who required more support. As usual in this classroom, translations and conversations took place in these small groups. Next, Mr. Aguilar reminded the children that when one reads a nonfiction text, the illustrations are very important because they add to what the author says. While holding the book, the teacher showed the children the table of contents and the page numbers.

Mr. Aguilar explained to the children that they would be reading the book to learn about the physical characteristics of pelicans; or, what pelicans look like. He asked questions such as:

- “Have you ever seen one of these birds?”
- Where have you seen it?
- What do you notice about the bird in these pictures?
- What does the bird look like? What else do you notice?”

In order to help his ELLs understand what is meant by physical characteristics, Mr. Aguilar invited a child to come up front. He asked the other children to describe what the child looked like. While the children described the child, the teacher drew images on the whiteboard of what the students were describing and labeled the images. Then she heled the child in front to read and sound out what was on the whiteboard, so that the children could recognize letter/sound correspondence.

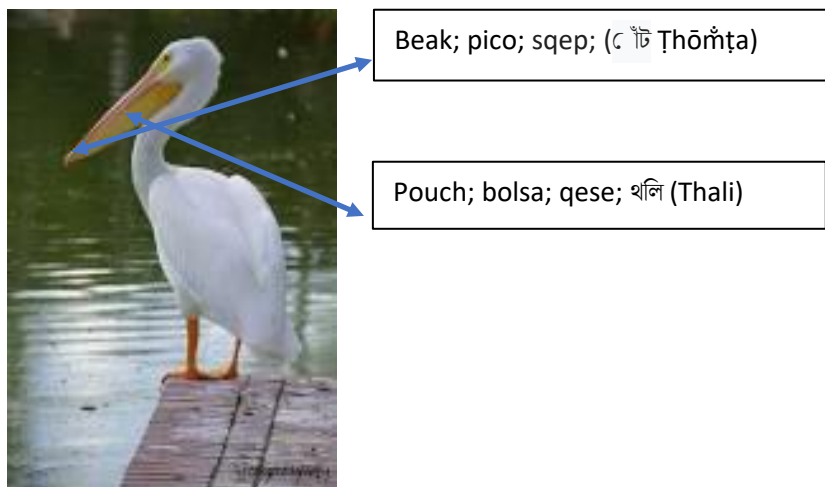
⁹ A child’s proficiency level determines the minutes of ELL services (class time) that he or she will receive each week. The Linguistic Demands identify the words, phrases, and forms of language that students will need to understand and use in order to meet the standards for each proficiency level.

The instructional practice addressed the following standards:

- *K Reading 5: Identify literary and informational texts. (RI&RL)*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1c: Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.*
- *K Reading Foundational Skills 1d: Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.*
- *K Reading 8: Identify specific information to support ideas in a text. (RI&RL)*
- *K Reading 7: Describe the relationship between illustrations and the text. (RI&RL)*

Introducing the Physical Characteristics of Pelicans

Mr. Aguilar used the Elmo machine to display the pictures on the smartboard and used different texts to support his study of pelicans. He explained how the pelican's pouch can be larger than its stomach, and that they use their beaks to fish and then tilt their heads so that the water can come out. He looked for the words "beak" and "pouch" in Albanian, Bengali, and Spanish and incorporated them into his labeling of physical characteristics.



By having labels for the main body parts of the pelican, the students were able to engage in a language awareness activity by comparing how the four languages look and sound.

Shared Reading

In this activity, the students and the teacher read from the same text. The teacher modeled first, and the students engaged in choral reading. The shared reading was about the pelican. Given that the students had been exposed to the words for “beak” and “pouch” in Spanish, Bengali, and Albanian, the teacher incorporated the word pouch, in different languages, into the shared reading

Pelicans

(From: *Poems for Boys and Girls*)

I've swallowed a crab!

He's stuck in my pouch! (bolsa; qese; থলি [Thali])

He just won't go down!

He's pinching me! Ouch!

Engaging in Their Own Research

The students chose animals they to study and were grouped according to their interests. Their first task was to describe the physical characteristics of the animals of their choice. Mr. Aguilar distributed folders with handouts and books that had been collected for each animal.

In the following days, Mr. Aguilar continued to model other questions for the children to research about their animals. He

LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS AND WRITERS:

SELF-SELECT TEXTS BASED ON INTEREST

READ FOR MULTIPLE PURPOSES, INCLUDING FOR LEARNING
AND FOR PLEASURE.

TEACHERS OF MLs CAN ENCOURAGE
THE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGES OTHER
THAN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH IN
THEIR CLASSROOMS. LOOK FOR
PATTERNS, COGNATES, AND
STRUCTURES.

studied the pelican while the children studied the ocean animals their small group selected. Mr. Aguilar designed the same handout for each question to be studied on a different day. While he only chose to provide handouts written in English, he asked the parents to support their children in finding facts and information about their animals in their home languages. Below are some questions they studied. The questions can be shared with parents in their home language.

- What do they eat?
- How are they born?
- What kind of animal is your animal? Why?
- How do they protect themselves?
- Who is their predator?

- What is the life cycle of this animal?

Below is an example of a handout Mr. Aguilar created and what one of the students found out about seahorses. The student had dictated her findings to Ms. Bautista:

Animal: seahorse

What are the physical characteristics of my animal?



Don't have scales. Fish have scales.

They are called seahorses because they have a snout, like horses.

They swim up and down, fish don't swim like that.

Each child completed a handout. For ELLs, teachers can provide scaffolds with sentence starters, a bank of words to use to complete the sentence, and home language supports. Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista encouraged the children to dictate to them, as well as use constructive spelling and to add rich details to their illustrations.

When the children were done, they were asked to come to the carpet to share their work with a partner. He also selected a few children to share with the large group. He ensured that someone could translate for a child who might choose to share in their home language. The teachers also asked the children to share their knowledge about the ocean animal with their parents.

The following standards were addressed:

- *K Writing 2: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, oral expression, and/or emergent writing to name a familiar topic and supply information.*
- *K Writing 6: Develop questions and participate in shared research and exploration to answer questions and to build and share knowledge.*
- *K Speaking and Listening 5: Create and/or utilize existing visual displays to support descriptions.*

Mr. Aguilar found the following BCCP Speaking and Listening Standard 5 beneficial:

NEW LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRESSIONS (ESL/New Language)

Grade Kindergarten: Speaking and Listening 5

Common Core Anchor Standard (SL.5): Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.		MAIN ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Make Strategic Use of Media and Visual Information to Enhance and Support Presentations</i>				
Common Core Kindergarten Standard (SL.K.5): Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.		GRADE LEVEL ACADEMIC DEMAND <i>Add Drawings to Provide Additional Details</i>				
5 Levels of Language Development		Entering (Beginner)	Emerging (Low Intermediate)	Transitioning (High Intermediate)	Expanding (Advanced)	Commanding (Proficient)
When acquiring a new language, using grade level texts and appropriate supports, students are able to:						
RECEPTIVE	Oracy and Literacy Links	Organize <i>preidentified</i> illustrations on a partially completed graphic organizer that provides additional details to descriptions, with <i>prompting and support</i> , as text is read aloud, in partnership and/or teacher-led small groups	Organize <i>preidentified</i> illustrations on a graphic organizer that provides additional details to descriptions, with <i>prompting and support</i> , as text is read aloud, in partnership and/or teacher-led small groups	Organize <i>multiple</i> illustrations on a graphic organizer that provides additional details to descriptions, with <i>prompting and support</i> , as text is read aloud, in partnership and/or teacher-led small groups	Organize <i>multiple</i> illustrations on a graphic organizer that provides additional details to descriptions, after <i>teacher modeling</i> , as text is read aloud, in partnership and/or teacher-led small groups	Organize <i>multiple</i> illustrations, independently, on a graphic organizer that provides additional details to descriptions, as text is read aloud, in partnership and/or teacher-led small groups
		Use <i>preidentified</i> illustrations to provide additional details, with <i>teacher support</i> , when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing	Use <i>preidentified</i> illustrations to provide additional details, with <i>teacher support</i> , when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing	Use <i>illustrations</i> to provide additional details, with <i>teacher support</i> , when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing	Use <i>multiple illustrations</i> to provide additional details, with <i>teacher support</i> , when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing	Use <i>multiple illustrations</i> to provide additional details, independently, when speaking, dictating to a teacher and/or drawing/writing
PRODUCTIVE		in the new and/or the home language.	in the new and/or the home language.	in the new and, occasionally, in the home language.	in the new language.	in the new language.

Draft

NLAP Speaking and Listening (SL)
SL.5: SL.K.5

engage^{ny} 1

Language Awareness Focusing on Compound Words

As the class started engaging in their own research, Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista noticed that some of the children were interested in the compound words they were encountering as they researched their ocean animal. Words such as seahorse, sea turtle, hammerhead shark, seaweed, and bluefish kept coming up. The teachers took the time to examine these words with the children. They asked them, “Why do you think that there are horses and seahorses? Turtles and sea turtles? Weeds and sea weeds?” Students reached the conclusion that these words make it easy to differentiate between the two. Other compound words are descriptive: bluefish and hammerhead shark, for instance, tell us what these creatures look like. Mr. Aguilar did not expect that the children would independently read these compound words. He engaged the children in this activity with the purpose of further developing their language awareness in English.

The section of the unit addressed the following standards:

- *K Writing 2: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, oral expression, and/or emergent writing to name a familiar topic and supply information.*
- *K Writing 6: Develop questions and participate in shared research and exploration to answer questions and to build and share knowledge.*
- *K Writing 7: Recall and represent relevant information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question in a variety of ways (e.g., drawing, oral expression, and/or emergent writing)*

Structured Self-Selected Work Time Center Time

Mr. Aguilar structured several centers for students to decide how to spend their time as part of their self-selected work time¹⁰ or *center time*. Mr. Aguilar knows that working in centers contextualizes conversations in which children can talk to each other about their interests and the class project in any language.

¹⁰ *Self-selected time can also be center time. It offers young Kindergarten children the opportunity to work with materials in multimodal ways. It needs to be intentionally and purposely planned.*

Protecting Our Oceans Center

Mr. Aguilar knew it was important for the children to study aspects of the ecology of the ocean environment. For this purpose, he prepared a center that focused on environmental issues and the ocean. For instance, the students and the teachers discussed the effects of plastic drinking straws on ocean animals. In this center, the students could visit websites such as [Strawless Ocean](#) and [National Geographic](#).

Once the class had studied about what they could do as citizens to minimize the use of plastic straws, he set up a writing center and invited children to write letters and draw pictures reminding others of their thoughts about the issue.

TEACHERS OF MLs CAN ASK CHILDREN TO LABEL THEIR DRAWINGS IN MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE. CHILDREN CAN CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MORE THAN ONE LANGUAGE AND PARTICIPATE IN GROUPS WITH PEERS THAT CAN SPEAK THEIR HOME LANGUAGE.

Exploring and Classifying Center

During *center time*, students had opportunities to classify shells, observe a crab with magnifying glasses, draw, and explore different specimens. In order to enhance the children's experiences with the manipulatives, Mr. Aguilar also read books such as *What Lives in a Shell* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld (2015) in small groups during *center time*. For ELLs, it is important to scaffold vocabulary and use visuals to support comprehension. He made this book available in the science area, along with other books in the students' home languages for the children to revisit as they continued to explore the collection of shells. During *center time*, students talked and shared their ideas.



Creating Their Own Project Center

One of the centers offered construction paper, glue, scissors, and markers for children to create dioramas, murals, posters, and books about their animal. The students used these creations in their final presentations.

Celebration of Learning

The class culminated the thematic study by presenting the information the children learned in their small group research studies to their classmates, other classes, parents, and administrators. This was an opportunity to make their learning public, to share it for an authentic reason, to celebrate it, etc. This was also an important instance for the children to consider their audience and, when necessary, plan

presentations in the parents' home language too. Once the work for the final presentation was ready, the children and the teacher prepared the environment for an *ocean exhibit*. The teacher reminded the children that invitations in English and, if possible, in the parents' home language, would need to be sent home. For this purpose, he recruited some parent volunteers. The children also needed to practice their presentations about their animal. Opportunities to receive feedback from peers were also prepared so that the teacher was not the only one providing feedback, and so the children could learn to critique each other's work.

LIFELONG PRACTICES FOR READERS AND WRITERS

STRENGTHEN WRITING BY PLANNING, REVISING, EDITING, OR TRYING A NEW APPROACH.

Even though they all wrote in English, Mr. Aguilar reminded them that they would need to be sensitive about which language it made sense to use to present to a particular small group of visitors, as the best choice would be to present in the language(s) spoken by the audience. He reminded them that in each group there were children who speak Spanish, English, Bengali, and Albanian. The classroom was arranged as a museum with stations (visual constructions and written work) according to small group research projects to which parents, administrators, other classes came and listened to the children present. If a parent spoke Bengali, the children who spoke the same language would be able to present in that language. In this manner, more authentic opportunities were created for the children to share their knowledge in their home language and the new language.

Even though Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista oversee an ENL class for ELLs, they incorporate the home languages of their students for two reasons. The first one is to create a community of learners where differences are celebrated. Second, different languages become a source of teaching and learning, as the language awareness activities described in this sample demonstrate.

The celebration of learning aimed to create opportunities for the children to prepare their work to be shared with a larger audience, to genuinely share their learning, and provide authentic spaces for the sustainment of the children's oral language development and learning. The final engagements in the integrated thematic study addressed the following standards:

- *K Speaking and Listening 5: Create and/or utilize existing visual displays to support descriptions.*
- *K Speaking and Listening 1a: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions, including listening to others, taking turns, and staying on topic.*

Table 2: Summary of the Strategies Mr. Aguilar and Ms. Bautista Used to Increase the Understanding, Engagement, and Participation of All Students

Oral Language Development, Metalinguistic Awareness, and Flexible Groupings These instructional strategies are meant to overlap. For instance, students working in a small group can use oral language to discuss word choices, translate words, and gain metalinguistic knowledge.		
Oral Language	Language Awareness	Flexible Groupings
Built background knowledge in all students and structured conversations in order to provide help to make connections with their schema. Asked open key questions throughout the thematic study in order to deepen understandings. Encouraged peer discussion of texts in different genres (nonfiction, poetry). Provided opportunities to share learning with authentic audiences (celebration of learning). Used sentence starters in all languages present in class when students needed support.	Encouraged the use and understanding of words across languages spoken in the class. Encouraged attention to compound words in English and the other home languages in order to develop language awareness.	Students were grouped based on: • Cross-linguistic language proficiency • Home language proficiency • Choice of research animal • Particular abilities and interests of students

Resources

Reading Aloud and Multimodal Experiences with Texts

When adults share books with young children, they engage in one of the most meaningful literacy events in a child's day. Reading aloud is a complex event that involves not just reading and listening, but

also looking, thinking, and talking as books are shared—children and teachers making meaning together from all the rich material found in picture books (Katie Wood Ray, 2008, *Already Ready*, p. 127).

Reading aloud is, without doubt, a very important teaching time. This is a time when children hear beautifully crafted language and meet new characters as they enter the world of the story. It also has the potential of bringing the classroom community together through this shared reading experience. Read-aloud time needs to happen daily. Through read-alouds, talking about books, and sketching and writing about books, children learn that there is never only one interpretation about a text. The choice of books selected for a read-aloud matters. It depends on the school's curriculum, but most importantly on who the students are, what their experiences are like, and what their needs are. The teacher needs to know about children's books and do their best to stay updated with the most recent and relevant texts.

Teachers can organize a read-aloud in a variety of ways: by theme, by author, by genre, by crafting technique, perspective, by language, etc. The collection of books used for this Unit for the read-aloud has been organized around the themes of acceptance, self-expression, differences, and uniqueness. We consider this to be an important topic for Kindergarten children. It is a topic that not only can support the teacher's development of the classroom community, but also provide opportunities for children to receive affirmations with regards to their own uniqueness, as well as differences. Through carefully crafted read-aloud experiences, the teacher provides an opportunity to examine this theme using both literary and informational texts.

Shared Reading

“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or duty. It should be offered to them as a precious gift.” - Kate DiCamillo

In shared reading, the children have an opportunity to actively participate in a reading event with the support of a more experienced reader. Shared reading is interactive. The teachers read a big book or a text that is enlarged and all the children can see. In a shared reading event, children can fully participate regardless of the level of reading. It is a safe way to begin to develop as a reader. In shared reading, the teacher demonstrates strategies used by effective and efficient readers, who predict, confirm, disconfirm, and think about what the text says. A shared reading experience can also invite children to learn and examine concepts and features of print.

The purpose for the selection of the text is important. It can be an opportunity to immerse children in rich, literary language. It can provide every student access to interesting, lively, and attractive texts. The teacher models reading in a natural and expressive voice, accompanied by appropriate pacing.

A shared reading experience exposes children to the language and structure of a song, a story, a rhyme, a chant, a poem, etc. This material is often easy and predictable. The language should have rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. It can be above the reading level of the child, since the child is not reading alone.

During a shared reading occasion, the learners have opportunities to connect to their own background knowledge while practicing reading with a more capable reader, who models reading with fluency and expression. The children read the text with support on multiple occasions. The focus is on enjoyment, and approximations are accepted and encouraged. Everyone can see the text. Reading strategies are experienced in a supportive context. When appropriate, the teacher makes relevant connections to phonemic awareness and spelling. A shared reading event provides opportunities to model one-to-one matching between spoken and written words. In addition, opportunities for practice are provided (small books, either commercial or teacher-made).

Language Experience Approach and Interactive Writing

“It is a powerful experience for children to see their own words written down.”

The Language Experience Approach is a literacy approach that integrates all components of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students and teacher generate the text. It is often based on an experience the class has had, e.g., a read-aloud, a field trip, a visitor, etc. The students dictate the text to the teacher, who demonstrates explicitly the moves he/she makes as he/she writes it, e.g., after a period comes a capital letter; the word “mother” has the “th” sound; at the end of a sentence, you need a period, etc. The teacher also models how to organize the information the students dictate. This process allows students the opportunity to experience that, when one writes, one needs to consider the audience, who often did not share the same experience about which the children and teacher are writing (Dorr, 2011).

The power of the Language Experience Approach is that the teacher is working with words the children know and use. Therefore, the text will be at their reading level. Once composed, the class can read the text together. The teacher can point to words, helping the children make letter-sound correspondence connections and notice the spacing between words, as well as make predictions with a focus on meaning. The text can also become a reading assignment the children can share with others at home. This way, the experience and the text can be revisited with an authentic audience.

Interactive writing is also a collaborative writing experience. In interactive writing, the children also get to hold the pen (marker). The teacher might start the message, then ask the children to think about what else can be written. The teacher also asks a child to come up to the board to write an entire

word, phrase, or just a letter that continues the message the teacher initiated. It could be, for example, that the teacher writes the same message each day: Today is... .

Interactive writing can be utilized as a daily routine. The children and teacher discuss aspects of writing that occur in the context of a shared message. The message can also be about a field trip, a read - aloud, a thank-you note to a speaker, etc. The purpose is to make visible to the whole class how writing works while giving children opportunities to actively participate in a very supportive environment. In addition, children can learn that writers keep an audience in mind when composing a message. In order to prepare an interactive lesson that truly challenges children to the next level, the teacher needs to know the children's literacy and language development.

Self-Selected Work Time Rigor and developmentally appropriate practice can peacefully coexist in the same space with best practices that serve the needs and interests of young children ([NAEYC. Helping Others Understand Academic Rigor](#)).

Self-selected work time offers young Kindergarten children the opportunity to explore, experiment, read, dance, paint, build, create, and dramatize. Yet, for it to be fully productive, it needs to be intentionally and purposely planned. Self-selected work time offers the teacher an opportunity to observe and interact with children in ways that allow the teacher to gain deeper understandings about the child's strengths, interactions with others, preferences, and areas of need. While there is ample research regarding the impact of play and brain development, we know that it is through a time of the day, like Choice Time, that children develop self-regulation, problem solve, and engage in conflict resolution. Self-selected work time allows teachers the opportunity to see the whole child: socio-emotional, physical development, and cognitive development. In Choice Time, the role of the teacher is crucial. The teacher provides materials, resources, and ideas. The teacher also mediates, scaffolds, facilitates, assists engages in conversations, provides access to the new language in meaningful and relevant ways, challenges, collaborates, enriches, extends, and assists. In other words, the role of the teacher requires flexibility and availability. Keen observation is essential. It provides ample opportunities to differentiate "instruction," and thus can provide access to multiple entry points for learning.

When multilingual Kindergarten children are afforded the opportunity to have a choice, then they can experience continuity between their preschool experiences and their new Kindergarten experiences. If young children are asked to sit still for long periods of time completing worksheets, the children (and teachers) miss opportunities to ask questions that lead to higher order thinking. Children can gain access to content-specific vocabulary. Play and exploration allow children to engage in trial and error. Choice Time requires the availability of open-ended materials. Play is tightly connected to creativity. Well-

designed Choice Time allows children the opportunity to further develop creativity, problem-solving, and social skills.

Self-selected work time also offers multilingual children opportunities to read and write for authentic and purposeful reasons. Children can sign up and read the chart that allows them to select the activities available during Choice Time. The teacher can make the dramatic area into a dentist office, a supermarket, a veterinary office, a doctor's office, a museum, etc. Writing and reading tools appropriate to these options need to be added in order to enhance the level and sophistication of the play. During this time children can also prepare a play for a classroom story.

Self-selected time can also be organized around centers. In the case of the ocean study described earlier, the teacher can create centers such as a sand table where the children can explore the texture of sand (dry, wet). At another center, the teacher could create a matching game and/or a memory game with ocean animal words and pictures. The painting area could suggest paintings about the ocean or an ocean animal. This could be an opportunity to introduce the children to a famous painter. If the teacher has access to crabs, the children could observe them with magnifying glasses and draw them in a science notebook. There could be a listening center where the children listen to story or a nonfiction text in their home language(s) that has a connection to the ocean. The teacher could recruit parents to record the text in the children's home language. Through a thematic study, the possibilities to develop linguistically, culturally, and developmentally appropriate *center time* are innumerable.

Purposeful and well-designed Choice Time helps teachers educate children to be the kind of thinker and learner the 21st century needs.

Home and School Connection

"Parents are their child's first teachers."

How can schools create spaces for more authentic partnerships with parents? How can schools, parents, and community organizations create a relationship of respect and dialogue? This is particularly important for bilingual and multilingual young children. It matters that the school creates invitations where parents feel welcome because their voice matters. The perspective educators' hold of parents and their communities matters. All parents bring with them funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992, Gonzalez, et al., 2008). The school administration and teachers need to spend time learning what these are. The engagements the school offers need to hold a culturally responsive and sustaining perspective. All parents want to help their children learn and want to be involved in their child's education.

How the schools open its doors to diversity can make a difference. It matters that schools pay attention to how welcoming the physical environment of the school is. Does it mirror the languages, cultures, and backgrounds of the children's families? Do they see mirrors of themselves when they enter the building? Does the building offer print in the languages the parents speak so that they can navigate it with ease in order to, for example, find out where the principal's office is? Is there someone in a position of power or support who speaks their language? If not, what kind of arrangements were made so all parents can share their insights, concerns, questions, etc.? Are meetings held in most of the school's spoken languages? Is translation available? Are the school documents that are sent home translated? In taking all these steps, a perspective of strength is critical. When parents are heard, there ample opportunities for the school to partner with them as advocates committed to offering bilingual children quality education.

There are ways the Kindergarten teachers can encourage further collaboration. At a school in the Bronx, the teachers write a note in a notebook about the children's learning for the week. The parents respond with a note in the same notebook about the child's learning at home. The parents' comments often include comments the child makes about school. Over time, this notebook offers teachers and parents a longer view of the child. Teachers can send home a parent questionnaire where they ask parents to share about their children's preferences, favorite books, strengths, goals for the year, etc. A classroom newsletter can also be sent home informing parents of classroom happenings, such as thematic studies, field trips, guest speakers, etc. For parents of MLs, always provide these resources and others in the language they understand.

Outside or inside the classroom, there can be a bulletin board in the languages the parents speak where parents can access information about nearby educational experiences for the children,, such as museums, parks, how to get a library card, etc. The teacher can also post information about tips for reading with children and ways to engage children in conversations that lead them to richer dialogue.

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