Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages
Strengthening English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners Instruction
Strategy 1-Using Translations as a Support Not a Solution

Dear Educator,

Thank you for downloading this resource. We are thrilled to be sharing this resource to help you with the instruction of the English Language Learners (ELLs) and Multilingual Learners (MLs) in your learning space.

Schools across New York State (NYS) have the great fortune to serve over 260,000 English Language Learners. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) believes that **all teachers are teachers of ELLs & MLs**. NYS educators are charged with ensuring that all students, including ELLs & MLs feel safe/connected/included/ see themselves in their learning environments, have access to grade level content, meet grade-level standards, experience high quality instruction, and use all of their languages in order to learn and express themselves.

This will require educators to shift their thinking **from "I need to translate everything" to "I need to use the most valuable resource as a scaffold for instruction which is my students' home language."** The targeted audience for the Using Translations as a Support Not a Solution resource are all educators from K-12 that work with ELLs & MLs. This resource will help you explore four instructional strategies: Bridging Languages, Using Students' Home Language (L1), Using Cognates, and using Translations. It is highly recommended that educators implement the first three strategies, before using translations for instruction.

YOU MAY:

✓ Share copy of this resource with all educators of ELLs & MLs;
✓ Use it for your own instructional purposes; and
✓ Reference this resource in blog posts, at seminars, professional learning opportunities, workshops, conferences and/or other such venues, and when doing so please give credit to New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the NYS ELL Leadership Council- Strengthening English Language Learners & Multilingual Learners (ELLs & MLs) Instruction.

Special Thanks to Following Authors/Contributors

The Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages and the NYS Education Department;

Alyssa Canonico, Academic Standards Facilitators (East Ramapo Central School District);

Nadia Nashir, Assistant Superintendent Multilingual Education (Buffalo Public Schools);

Madeline Sanchez, Director for ENL, Bilingual Programs and World Languages (Peekskill City School District);

Jill Schilling, District Coordinator for World Languages, ENL and Bilingual Education (Lindenhurst Union Free School District);

Denise Stevenson, Director of ENL and World Languages (Riverhead Central School District);

Priscilla Zarate, ENL and World Languages Coordinator (Islip School District).

Thank you for being an advocate of our ELLs & MLs!

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Strategy 1-Using Translations as a Support Not a Solution: Bridging Languages

Clarifying Misconceptions

Jim Cummins (2010) talks about three interrelated assumptions as "monolingual instructional principles"

Misconception 1

Instruction should be carried out exclusively in the target language without recourse to students' L1 (home language).

Misconception 2

Translation between L1 and L2 (target language) has no place in the teaching of language or literacy.

Misconception 3

Within immersion and bilingual programs, the two languages should be kept rigidly separate.

> "…students' L1 is not the enemy in promoting high levels of L2 proficiency; rather, when students' L1 is invoked as a cognitive and linguistic resource through bilingual instructional strategies, it can function as a steppingstone to scaffold more accomplished performance in the L2" - Jim Cummins

What Can I do Instead?

Bridge Languages

To maximize comprehension and scaffold content and language within the context of the content. Also, to show that all the languages are valued equally, and they may be used to enhance learning.

Bridge Languages in Your Learning Environment

Use various L1 resources to help understanding in L2.

Have students research topics in L1, but, report it in L2.

Encourage students to orally use L1 & L2 to fully express themselves.

In small groups teacher uses L1 after L2 explanation has failed.

Group students with the same L1 for collaborative work.

Group work in L1 to increase student-to-student verbal interaction.

Assign students to write stories with bilingual/multilingual characters who use two or more languages.

Intentionally guide students to use all their linguistic abilities

Label key components of your lesson in multiple languages.

Learn key words in your students' home languages.

Stock your classroom with age-appropriate books and multimedia resources in the languages of your students.

Provide a flexible and comfortable space for students to fully share what they know across all their languages.

Give students of all language abilities their time to shine.

What are the shifts that need to happen for instruction?

Be intentional and specific in delivering the message that all languages are welcomed in the learning space. This can be done by modeling your participation as a language learner by asking the students how things are said in students' languages.

Ensure there is a message of language equity in the learning space, that is, not highlighting the importance of one language over the other. Once students feel that their language and culture is welcomed in the learning space and is being empowered to utilize it, it creates a safe environment for the student and the acquisition of language will occur fluidly.

Model dialects of words used in different countries to validate students' backgrounds and support culturally responsive and sustained practices.

Create a Culturally Responsive-Sustaining learning space

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Strategy 1-Using Translations as a Support Not a Solution: Home Language

What does the Research show?

Research on language acquisition shows it to be beneficial for a student to use their L1 (*home language*). A student's L1 should be used as an effective scaffold in supporting students in learning content and acquiring a new language.

Fact

Meta-analyses have shown that educational programs that systematically incorporate use of ELLs' home language result in levels of academic success.

Fact

Extensive research has found that children who are learning to read in a second language are able to transfer many skills and knowledge from their first language to facilitate their acquisition of reading skills in the second language.

> "The intent of this strategy is not to replace one language with the other. Rather, it is to promote students' abilities to use both languages to support and deepen understandings of subject matter, strengthen academic interactions with their peers in and out of the classroom, and develop their linguistic abilities themselves in the process." -Ofelia Garcia

What Can I do Instead?
Use their Home Language

An ELL/ML most valuable resource is their home language (L1). Their home language (L1) is tightly tied to a student's identity and family.

Home Language(s) During Instruction

To encourage students to see connections between their languages and, thus, to better understand how languages are structured and organized, talk to ELLs/MLs about their home language — ask them:

How is the home language the same and how it is different from English

Are there words in the home language that sound the same and mean the same thing in both languages

Are there words in the home language and English that sound the same but mean different things

As part of phonological and metalinguistic awareness exercises to facilitate reading acquisition, ask students:

To say words that start with the same sound(s) in English or the home language (L1).

How words are changed and formed in the home language (L1)— singular and plural forms, present tense and past tense forms of verbs — to enhance their word knowledge.

Who are new to your class, to read books in their home language to show you what they know about reading?

What are the shifts that need to happen for instruction?

- Teachers recognize the value of using the home language (L1) and the target language (L2) for different purposes and at different times.

- Teachers should view home language (L1) as a communication tool that, like any other tool, can be used judiciously to support ELLs/MLs' learning.

- Use of the home language (L1) and target language (L2) based on cultural practices and perspectives. Implementation and continuity of the use of the L1 and the L2 during instructional practices.

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Strategy 1-Using Translations as a Support Not a Solution: Cognates

Did you know?

Cognate awareness is the ability to use cognates in a home language (L1) to help understand words in a second language.

Fact

Teaching home language speaking ELLs cognate awareness accelerates their English language vocabulary development.

Fact

Many ELLs do not automatically recognize cognates in their second language and need explicit cognate instruction.

Fact

Any teacher can teach cognates; you do not have to speak Spanish.

"What's really important about teaching cognates is, it helps the students who are learning a new language to make connections to their first language, to see that everything is not in a vacuum, but that things are related." – Susan Lafond
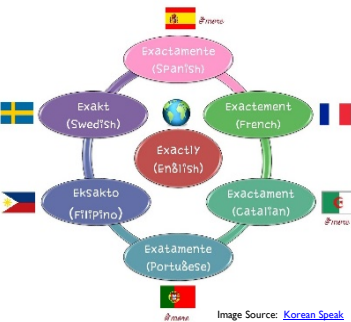
What Can I do Instead?

Use Cognates

Cognates are words in two languages that share a similar meaning, spelling, and pronunciation. For many ELLs/MLs, cognates are an obvious bridge to the English language.

Exactamente (Spanish)
Exakt (Swedish)
Exactement (French)
Exactly (English)
Eksakto (Filipino)
Exactament (Catalan)
Exatamente (Portuguese)

Image Source: Korean Speak

Cognates can be used during instruction

The introduction of the lesson;

The review of instructions/ directions;

Read aloud(s) and guided reading groups;

Writing activities (students can have a reference chart with cognates on which they've helped to create);

Peer engagement activities (i.e., scavenger hunts in a book or around the learning space);

Conversations/discussions/debates.

More specific examples

Present vocabulary and ask students if the word has a cognate, does it mean the same? Or is it a false cognate? Present vocabulary with the cognate in a different color

When you read aloud to your students, ask the home language speakers to raise their hand when they think they hear a cognate. Stop reading and discuss that cognate.

As ELLs read their texts, ask them to find three or four cognates and write them on sticky notes.

Be Careful with False Cognates

Warn students that they might run into some words that are false cognates. These are words that look and sound alike but do not have the same meaning in the target language (L2) and the home language (L1).

What are the shifts that need to happen for instruction?

Teachers need to be intentional in highlighting and pointing out cognates to students or engaging students in conversations to discover cognates. This can be done via modeling *think aloud(s)*, modeling "wonderings" during *read aloud(s)* and creating a space for cognates to live in the instruction, and students to use as a reference.

The teacher needs to open the space for observation and reflection of cognates, so that it is embedded in the makeup of their instruction.

Provide a list of English words with cognates in the students' home languages.

List of Cognates
Glossaries of Cognates- NYU Language RBERN
Cognates List: www.readwritethink.org;
Cognates.org: Most Frequent English Cognates

References:

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Strategy 1-Using Translations as a Support Not a Solution: **Translations**

What Can I do Instead? Use Translations

Is the process of converting the written word from one language into another language in a way that is culturally and linguistically appropriate so it can be understood by its intended audience. (LanguageLine.com)

Translations During Instruction

Translate key components of the lesson, such as the objectives/goals, the directions, and specific tasks. "Students may need the directions spoken to them in their home language for full understanding and for success (Eddington, 2017)."	Translate vocabulary words on your word wall/vocabulary charts. Have the students write the vocabulary words in both their home and target language for deeper understanding. Use visuals, color coding for words in English and in the home language(s)	Understand how "the home language is similar to or different from English… This influence can provide extra support, such as the case of English and Spanish cognates (education and educación) (Colorín Colorado, 2014)."
Know the English proficiency levels and the home language literacy levels for your students. "In upper levels, however, students are expected to understand explanations in English. They should not be encouraged to rely on translation as this will eventually become a habit and they will have less interest in learning the language." (Al-Musawi, 2014).	"Plan carefully and recognize the problems associated with traditional approaches to translation (a solitary, difficult and time-consuming activity using literary texts) and find solutions to these, such as ensuring these tasks are short (not easy), always working in groups, and maintaining the element of a communication gap where possible. (Kaye, British Council)."	Allow students to translate to one another during group or independent work. If possible, paired students that speak the same language. "…Use of translation as a social strategy,… using communication as a powerful tool to learn the new language together…, in which they may collectively support each other in learning the new language (Donato & McCormick, 1994)."
"Use bilingual textbooks, so that even newest learners can pull concepts directly from the text. They learn to analyze cognates, make educated inferences based on phrases and words they already know, access nuanced ideas, and navigate complex grammar and vocabulary from the start (Pillars, 2017)."	Use translations to teach English vocabulary words, idioms, phrases, to check key components of the readings and for listening comprehension (Liao, 2006). Scaffold language (providing extra supports such as realia, graphic organizers, visuals, etc.) (Colorín Colorado, 2014).	"Discuss the differences and similarities during the translation process as it helps learners understand the interaction of the two languages and the problems caused by their L1. It also helps learners appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the L1 and L2, for example in the comparison of idiomatic language such as metaphors (Kaye, British Council)."
Support the content you are teaching by "offering a variety of books, both fiction and nonfiction, in the language(s) spoken by students (Ruvalcaba, 2017)."	Use the Glossaries for ELLs/MLLs Accommodations for INSTRUCTION during the school year. These glossaries may be downloaded, printed and disseminated to educators, parents and ELLs/MLs.	"Translate the classroom routines (including rules and expectations) (Eddington, 2017)."

What Tools Can I Use? ** Please know that none of the translation tools replace learning a language or using a human translator

Google Translate	SpanishDict	iTranslate Converse	Microsoft Translator for Education	Yandex	Lexicool
"**Google's** free service instantly translates words, phrases, and web pages between English and over 100 other languages."	"This tool offers Spanish-to-English dictionary, a **conjugation tool**, a **word-of-the day** feature, **quizzes, grammar lessons**, and more."	"Is a two-way translation device. This App enables natural conversations in 38 languages, and automatically detects the correct language between two selected languages for a fast and accurate translation."	"The Translator for Education site provides free resources, tools, and how-to guides for live captioning and translation in the classroom."	"Free online **translation** from English and other languages. The **translator** works with words, texts, web pages, and text in photos."	"Lexicool offers a directory of "all" the online bilingual and multilingual dictionaries and glossaries freely available on the Internet. It is a resource intended for translators, linguists, language students and all those interested in foreign languages."
http://translate.google.com/	https://www.spanishdict.com/	https://www.itranslate.com/converse	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/translator/education/	https://translate.yandex.com/	https://www.lexicool.com/