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## Effective Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of ‘Superdiverse’ Multi-language Learners in Early Childhood Classrooms

**Abstract.** The challenges of multilingual/multicultural education in our contemporary world are innumerable; therefore, there is an indispensable need for further inquiries and future research studies to propose in order to improve the quality of education in ‘superdiverse’ classrooms around the world. Since this field is still unexplored and in the need for immediate improvement, the author aims to widen one’s repertoire of effective teaching practices by sharing some of the author’s experiences as an English as a New Language teacher in New York City, in order to provide the best education possible for multilingual/multicultural learners in ‘superdiverse’ early childhood classrooms of today and in the upcoming future.

**Резюме.** Виклики багатомовної/мультикультурної освіти в нашому сучасному світі незліченні; тому існує необхідність подальших досліджень, щоб покращити якість освіти по всьому світу. Оскільки ця сфера все ще не досліджена і потребує негайного вдосконалення, автор прагне розширити свій репертуар ефективної практики викладання, поділившись досвідом автора як вчителя англійської мови як нової мови в Нью-Йорку.

**Rezümé.** A mai világban a többnyelvű/multikulturális oktatás kihívásai szerteágazóak; ezért elengedhetetlen szükség van további vizsgálatokra és kutatási javaslatokra, amelyek elsősorban az oktatás minőségének javítását szolgálják. Mivel ez a terület még korántsem teljesen feltárt, a szerző célja a hatékony tanítási gyakorlatok repertoárjának szélesítése, a szerzői tapasztalatok bemutatása, melyeket New Yorkban, angolnyelv-tanárként szerzett, hogy a többnyelvű/multikulturális tanulók számára elérhető legjobb oktatást tudjuk biztosítani.

### 1. Introduction

Due to the influx of immigrants entering new educational systems around the world, the number of students who speak a native language other than the host country’s primary language has grown dramatically in the past decade or so. Berliner & Biddle (1995) in the 1990s predicted that in the United States of America the demographic growth will account for about 40% of the school-age population by 2040. Today, thirty years after Berlinger & Biddle’s statement, there are 23% of students in the public school systems coming from immigrant households, according to the Center for Immigration Studies<sup>1</sup>, which percentage has more than doubled in the past 25 years compared to the 11% registered in the 1990s

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for Immigration Studies is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit research organization founded in 1985. It is devoted exclusively to research and policy analysis of the economic, social, demographic, fiscal, and other impacts of immigration on the United States.

(Camarota, Griffith & Zeigler, 2017). The reality behind the increasing number of multicultural, multilingual student population dictates that educators around the world must prepare to interact and work with students who do not share the same language, culture, or national origin (Crandall, Jaramillo, Olsen & Peyton, 2001) as the majority of the students.

The increased diversity ('superdiversity') in the classrooms has prompted much attention to the challenges of educating multilingual, multicultural students in the classroom. Meeting all the needs of these 'superdiverse' communities by using pedagogy that is sensitive and responsive to the developmental and educational needs of these young children from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds is quite a challenge at times for educators across the board. Learning and implementing new teaching practices and effective strategies designed to respond to each student as an individual by sharing and reflecting on one's expanded repertoire, is the currently recommended way to face this urgent call for finding a solution for the challenging epidemic of today's growing diversity (Saravia-Shore, 1995). It is self-evident that there is no "One-Size-Fits-All" solution on the field; therefore, we need to voluntarily share and exchange effective strategies and teaching practices that works for our unique classrooms across the teaching continuum in order to create the process of optimal learning for every child in our varied multilingual, multicultural classrooms.

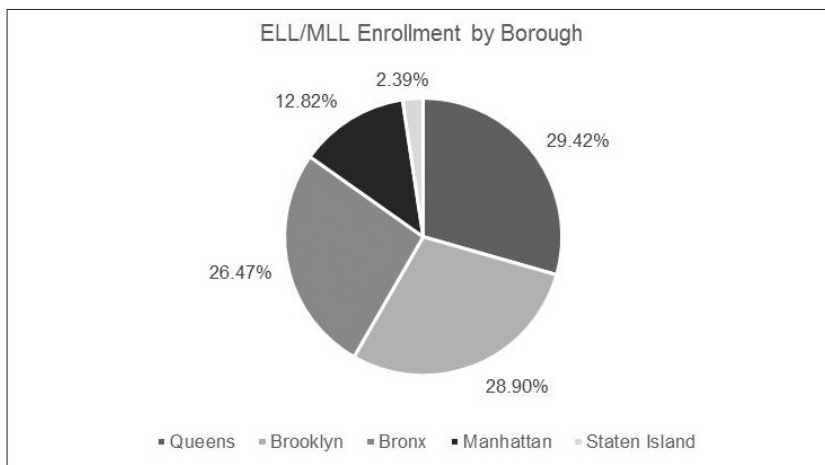
As a result of the five interculturally challenging problem areas previously defined by Csillik (2019), such as, (1) methodological and theoretical issues and problem areas, (2) teacher related issues and problem areas, (3) language learner related issues and problem areas, (4) curriculum related issues and problem areas, and, (5) assessment related issues and problem areas, on one hand, the author will recommend a selection of the most effective strategies that educators working in 'superdiverse' early childhood communities could apply in their teaching practices, for example, the current 'State of the Art' in code-switching (Csillik & Golubeva, 2017), or as it is nowadays called 'translanguaging practices' (Golubeva & Csillik, 2018; Csillik & Golubeva, 2019 in press). On the other hand, the author will further introduce strategies from her own teaching experience to successfully meet the learning needs of multi-language learners in these 'superdiverse' educational settings. Furthermore, the author will also mention additional tips from the practices of other educators from the field to overcome the challenges previously mentioned and to teach effectively in a 'superdiverse' multilingual, multicultural classroom including all language learners.

## ***2. 'Superdiversity' in New York City***

The NYC Department of Education (NYCDOE) is responsible to operate one of the largest educational institutions in the United States of America known as the New York City public school system, which is a great example of 'superdiversity' due to the high influx of English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multi-Language

Learners (MLLs) enrolled each year. In the 2015-2016 school year 150,741 ELLs/MLLs were registered in the five boroughs<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. ELL/MLL Enrollment by Borough (2015-2016)**



Source: *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (p.6).

Of the 150,741 ELLs/MLLs who enrolled in the NYC public schools at some point during the 2015-2016 school year, the largest amount of ELLs/MLLs were registered in Queens with 44,352 students (29.42%). Brooklyn had the second largest ELL/MLL population at 43,559 (28.90%), while the Bronx followed with 39,894 ELLs/MLLs (26.47%). Manhattan's and Staten Island's ELL/MLL populations were comparatively smaller but still sizeable with 19,326 (12.82%) and 3,610 students (2.39%).<sup>3</sup>

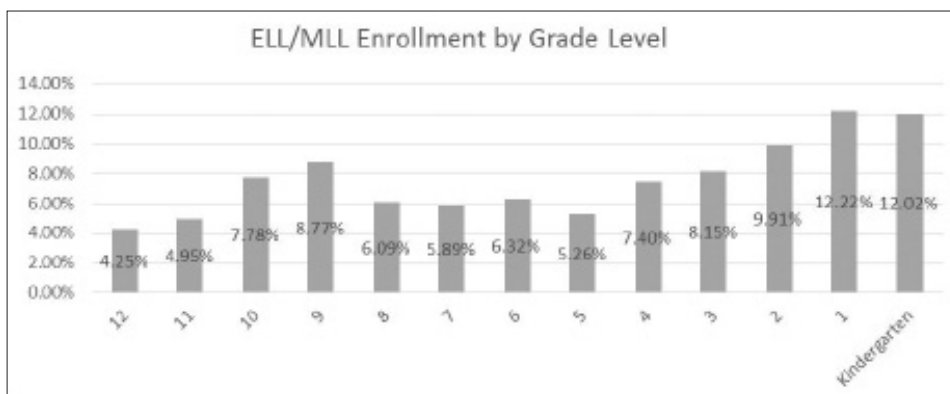
During the 2015-2016 school year, a little over half (55.95%) of all ELLs/MLLs (84,336 students) were enrolled in elementary school grades. Kindergarten and first grade had the highest numbers of ELLs/MLLs (18,120 and 18,418 students) followed by second grade ELLs/MLLs (14,937) while overall there were fewer ELLs/MLLs in the upper elementary school grades (12,283 in third-, 11,149 in fourth-, 9,429 in fifth grade). The number of ELLs/MLLs attended middle school was relatively less compared to the elementary school grades (9,523 in sixth-, 8,876 in seventh-, and 9,181 in eighth grade). As stu-

<sup>2</sup> *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS)

<sup>3</sup> *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS)

dents became proficient in English and pass the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), used as a yearly measurement to track the level of English language development, they were considered as former ELLs/MLLs. Over a quarter of all ELLs/MLLs (25.76%) were in high school grades (38,825 students). Ninth grade showed the highest concentration with 13,216 ELLs/MLLs, potentially signaling a major entry point for newly arrived ELLs/MLLs followed by grade ten (11,735), eleven (7,464) and twelve (6,410)<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. ELL/MLL Enrollment by Grades (2015-2016)**

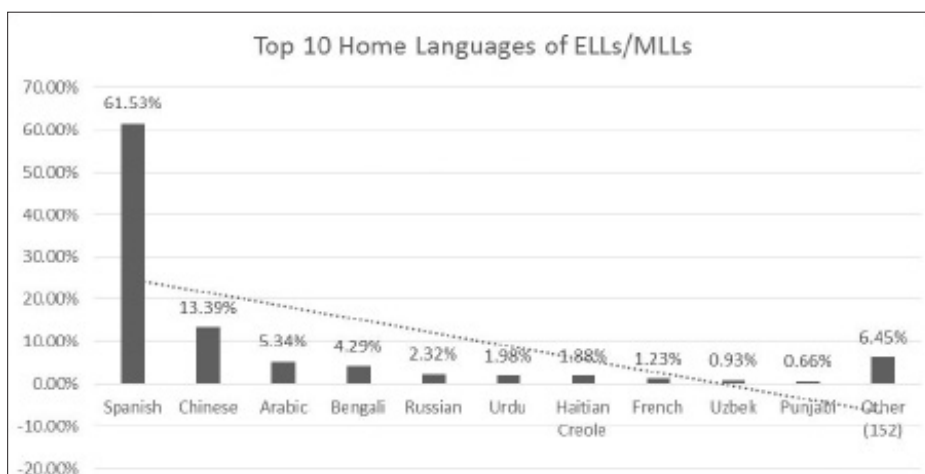


Source: *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (p.7).

The 150,741 ELL/MLL students enrolled from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in New York City in the 2015-2016 school year were indicated to speak 162 different languages other than English at home. The ten most frequently spoken languages at home were Spanish (92,746), Chinese (20,191), Arabic (8,053), Bengali (6,465), Russian (3,496), Urdu (2,983), Haitian Creole (2,838), French (1,855), Uzbek (1,404), Punjabi (990) and Other (152 not specified languages) (9720)<sup>5</sup> (Figure 3).

<sup>4</sup> *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS)

<sup>5</sup> *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS)

**Figure 3. Top 10 Home Languages of ELLs/MLLs (2015-2016)**

Source: *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (p.19).

The top places of birth for ELLs/MLLs from Spanish-speaking homes were the United States of America (57.81%) followed by the Dominican Republic (27.26%), Ecuador (3.76%), Honduras (2.38%), and Mexico (2%). Unlike Spanish-speaking homes, students' places of birth in Chinese-speaking homes were mostly from two countries: the United States of America at 51.94% and China at 45.46%. In Arabic-speaking homes a contradiction was noted compared to the Spanish-speaking and Chinese-speaking homes. The United States of America did not make up the majority of Arabic speakers born in New York City. It was found that the top places of birth were Yemen (50.59%). Secondly came the United States of America (29.95%) followed by Egypt (11.28%), Morocco (1.25%), and Saudi Arabia (1.07%). In Bengali-speaking homes also was found that the United States of America did not make up the majority of Bengali speakers. Students in Bengali-speaking homes were similar to students from Chinese-speaking homes that they were born in two countries: in Bangladesh at 71.28% and in the United States of America at 27.46%. Russian-speaking homes were quite similar to the Spanish speaking homes. The United States of America (33.07%) did make up the majority of Russian speakers followed by Uzbekistan (30.32%), the Russian Federation (15.76%), Ukraine (7.35%), and Kazakhstan (2.60%). Other included 152 different, low-incident language speaking students whose home language is not reported as any of the top 10 home languages mentioned above.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS) (pp.22-26)

The situation in superdiversity in multilingual, multicultural classrooms drives teachers to develop and implement effective strategies and teaching practices in order to meet the learning needs of multi-language learners in high-demand. Hereinafter, some of these strategies that are currently implemented and successfully used (based on the author's twelve years of everyday teaching experience and practice as an English as a New Language teacher in New York City) are presented and further discussed below.

### ***3. Effective Strategies and Teaching Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of 'Superdiverse' Multi-Language Learners***

The author identifies the ten most essential effective strategies and teaching practices to meet the learning needs of superdiverse ELL/MLL students in a multilingual, multicultural classroom as follows: (1) Identification and Program Placement, (2) Know your Students, Cultural Awareness, Creating a Welcoming Environment, (3) Building and Activating Background Knowledge, (4) Using Scaffolding Strategies in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), (5) Cooperative Learning Groups and Peer Tutoring, (6) Vocabulary Unpacked: Building Vocabulary through Authentic and Meaningful Experiences with Words, (7) Teaching Academic Language, (8) 'Translanguaging' Practices, (9) Family Involvement, and, last but not least, (10) Using Alternate Forms of Assessment.

#### **3.1 Identification and Program Placement**

Upon enrolling the child in a multilingual, multicultural educational setting it is highly recommended that both the parents or guardians and the child getting enrolled at the time are interviewed by a trained pedagogogue and asked to fill out a Home Language Identification Survey (HLIS) form to determine the primary language of the home of the child. If a language other than English is indicated to be communicated at home, it is recommended that the child should be administered a certain type of Identification Test for English Language Learners. This test should be designed to determine the child's English language proficiency. Students who score below a determined level on this assessment are advised to be identified as ELLs/MLLs, and, therefore, should be entitled to receive English Language Learning (ELL) programs and services. Students who are identified as ELLs/MLLs are advised also to be administered a certain type of Home Language Proficiency Test to determine the child's literacy skills in the primary language. Students who end up to be identified as ELLs/MLLs should be entitled to receive ELL programs and services based on their parent or guardian's choice of preferred program. The three ELL programs and services currently introduced to the majority of ELLs/MLLs in New York City are as follows.

### BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs are offered to students of the same primary language to learn to speak, understand, read, and write in English while continuing to learn academic content in their primary language. The students' primary language is used to help them progress academically in all content areas while they acquire English. The goal of a TBE Program is to provide students with the opportunity to transition to a monolingual English classroom setting without additional supports once they reach proficiency. Even though the amount of English instruction students receive will increase over time; in a TBE program, there should always be a primary language instruction/support allowing students the opportunity to develop bilingually.

### BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Dual Language (DL) programs seek to offer students the opportunity to become bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural while improving the students' academic ability. In the majority of dual language programs, the students receive half of their instruction in their primary or home language, and the remainder of their instruction in the target language, the language that they are learning. The goal of these programs is for students to develop literacy and proficiency in English and in the primary or in the target language.

*One-Way Dual Language Program:* In the one-way Dual Language program model, students who come from the same primary language and or background have the opportunity to be bilingual or multilingual. The teacher or teachers provide instruction in both English and the primary or home language simultaneously.

*Two Way Dual Language Program:* The two-way Dual Language program includes both native English speakers and ELLs/MLLs. The teacher or teachers provide instruction in both English and in the primary language.

### ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Instruction in the English as a New Language (ENL) program, formerly known as English as a Second Language (ESL) program, emphasizes English language acquisition. In an ENL program, language arts and content-area instruction are taught in English using specific ENL instructional strategies. Some content area classes are integrated ENL classes. Students receive core content area and English language development instruction, including the use of the primary language as support and appropriate ELL instructional supports to enrich comprehension in two ways: (1) Integrated ENL classes are taught by a teacher du-

ally certified in the content area and ENL or are co-taught by a certified content area teacher and a certified ENL teacher. (2) In a Stand-alone ENL class, students receive English language development instruction taught by an ENL teacher in order to acquire the English language needed for success in core content areas. This program typically serves ELL/MLL students from many different primary language backgrounds whose only common language is English and therefore cannot participate in a bilingual program.

After ELL/MLL students are identified, the level of English and other language(s) the students are familiar with are measured, and the ELL/MLL students have already been placed into a multilingual, multicultural program, teachers are recommended to build cultural awareness in the classroom, to create a welcoming environment for new students, and to get to know who their students are (where they come from, what they bring to the classroom, what skills/former education they have, what interests they might have, etc.).

### **3.2 Know your Students, Cultural Awareness, Creating a Welcoming Environment**

#### **KNOWING YOUR STUDENTS**

It is always beneficial to take time to figure out who the students are in the multilingual, multicultural classroom. Observing them, completing surveys or polls, asking questions about their traditions, culture, language and communication experiences, their strengths and weaknesses are just some examples that can help teachers better understand their students.

The following categories are commonly used in New York City to categorize ELLs/MLLs based on their academics and their process of learning the English language<sup>7</sup>: (1) Newcomer ELLs/MLLs who receive 0 to 3 years of ELL service, through either ENL and/or bilingual education programs (e.g. DL and TBE), (2) Developing ELLs/MLLs who receive 4 to 6 years of ELL service, through either ENL or bilingual education programs, (3) Long-term ELLs/MLLs who have received more than 6 years of ELL service and have yet to pass the NYSESLAT, and, therefore, are still entitled to ELL services, (4) Students with interrupted/inconsistent formal education (SIFE) are those ELLs/MLLs who have attended schools in the United States for less than a year and who (upon initial enrollment) are two or more years below grade level in literacy in their primary language and/or two or more years below grade level in mathematics due to inconsistent or interrupted education prior to arriving at the United States, (5) Special Education ELLs/MLLs, who

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<sup>7</sup> *English Language Learner Demographics Report for the 2015-16 School Year*, NYC DOE, Division of English Language Learners and Student Support (DELLSS) (p.36, p.38, p.40)

served by an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) where eligibility is determined by an IEP team in what language the special education service is being delivered.

### BUILDING CULTURAL AWARENESS

One of the most problematic areas that ELL/MLL students in a multilingual, multicultural classroom might face is cultural differences and to be aware of these differences. It is extremely difficult for these students to read and understand non-verbal clues (eye contact, body language, postures, gestures, and facial expressions) of the target culture and various other cultures represented in the same classroom. In some cultures keeping eye-contact might show disrespect, and it is known as impolite to hold; therefore, students might not understand the new cultural demand of the teacher and other language learners, such as, to look into the speaker's eyes when communicating with one another. For them, it shows the sign of trustworthiness, sincerity and interest. It can be confusing to learn that some non-verbal clues mean the opposite in other cultures that students might have encountered before in their whole entire life. Head movements to indicate "Yes" or "No" is also tricky since it is not universal. Therefore, it is easy to misunderstand. Saying "Thank you" and "Please" does not exist universally in every culture, they are not commonly used by many cultures, therefore, it has to be modeled and taught.

Interpreting different gestures, such as, winking, rolling the eyes, looking upward, smiling, or raising the eyebrows also might vary from culture to culture. In many cultures "*thumb up*", "*kiss your brain*", "*sit criss-cross applesauce*" is never introduced or used in school at any time; therefore, language learners might stare at the teacher not knowing what is expected from them to do. Also, the physical distance during conversation and personal space differ from culture to culture. Some cultures require more space or distance than others; so, it should not be surprising if language learners move away or closer to one another depending where they came from.

Physical contact during conversation such as touching the hand or arm might be acceptable and showing involvement, interest and openness for some students, meanwhile, in other cultures it is completely unacceptable. Showing affection towards each other or the teacher (cuddling, kissing) might also vary from culture to culture. It is not easy to navigate amongst the labyrinth of these non-verbal cues all at once.

Many times language learners acquire these non-verbal clues of the target culture from movies, TV series, and different media sites on the Internet. They might form their own opinion about their own and about other cultures' traditions, customs and values through the values and beliefs of their family or culture they were born into. Many times this happens way before they arrive in the multilingual, multicultural classroom. Students might have already learned hidden agendas and have biases about these target cultures or about other cultures represented

in the classroom; tension and conflict with others in a close community might occur. Children might pick up and start using cultural/ethnic terms to name their own or others' ethnic and cultural groups that not be pleasant for all other children without fully understanding what they really mean, they baffle or confuse them, such as, why one refers to herself a "Latina" and other female students might say a "Columbian" or a "Mexican" when they refer to themselves or others.

Learning the culture of the target language by learning to read and understand the non-verbal cues can reinforce students' understanding of the world around them and cultivate cultural awareness towards others. Therefore, educators have to be the advocates of all cultures to promote an accepting and culturally responsive welcoming environment where every child feels safe, appreciated, and respected as equal members of the given community. Teachers should talk about the similarities and differences of different languages, cultures (music, traditions, household customs, religious views, etc.), and everyday experiences to familiarize students with each other's cultural background.

#### CREATING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

It is always welcoming to show one's own special spirit of adventure by learning and using some words of the low-incident languages, such as, greetings, requests for help, terms of comfort and encouragement, etc. Hanging welcoming signs around the classroom in different languages represented in the classroom, translating the subjects in the flow of the day, so, different language speaking students can follow the routine of the day, or, labeling objects in different languages around the classroom to create a culturally responsive, print-rich environment are just some of the creative ideas teachers might like and are willing to follow.

It is always welcoming to invite speakers to the class who speak the children's home languages or volunteers to help to translate letters, forms, and other ongoing written communications into the child's primary language. Vigilance is required from all teachers at all times during teaching in a multilingual/multicultural classroom to ensure that the need to allow all different languages in the classroom is balanced with the ultimate goal of the need to learn the *Lingua Franca*.

Teachers can further support language learners if they encourage them to bring in culture related materials from community newspapers, projects they have worked on in their primary language, providing multilingual reading materials, if available, from community libraries, give permission to produce projects and assignments in their primary language makes students feel valued and welcomed in the new environment.

Dr. Rebecca Powell frames around eight elements the culturally and linguistically responsive learning environment (Hollie, 2012:140-141) must have in order to make students feel comfortable in the classroom:

- (1). Print-Rich Environment (e.g. signs, symbols, characters, word walls, charts, posters)
- (2). Learning Centers (e.g. cultural center, listening center)
- (3). Culturally Colorful (e.g. bright, dynamic, lively, inviting colors to make a difference)
- (4). Arranged Optimally (e.g. collaborative table groups)
- (5). Multiple Libraries (organized by genre, authors, or topics; colorful and inviting)
- (6). Use of Technology (e.g. Smartboard, Smart table, computers, tablets, CD player, etc.)
- (7). Relevant Bulletin Boards (e.g. cultural, student work, content specific, current unit)
- (8). Display Student Works and Images of Students (coziness, warm feeling, ownership)

Stephen Krashen (2002:22-23) pointed out that the more comfortable ELLs/MLLs feel in the classroom the faster they will learn a new language:

*“Positive attitudes toward the classroom and the teacher may also be manifestations of self-confidence and/or integrative motivation, and for this reason may also relate to acquisition.”*

### **3.3 Building and Activating Background Knowledge**

Recognize the unique perspectives, knowledge, experiences, competencies, and skills that ELLs/MLLs contribute to the classroom is essential. All students, regardless of their background experiences, bring a wealth of knowledge to learning. As Cummins (2009:1) stated:

*“Activation of prior knowledge enables teachers to validate ESL students’ background experiences and affirm their cultural knowledge. Inviting students to contribute what they already know to the class discussion communicates to students that the cultural and linguistic knowledge they are bringing into the classroom is valuable.”*

Activating students’ prior knowledge through the use of ‘schema’ theory (the mental frameworks that organize our knowledge and assumptions are used for interpreting and processing new information and influences) helps students integrate new knowledge with their own experiences (represented by the constructivist theory) not only builds a strong foundation for future learning, but it also gives an opportunity to correct any previous misperceptions.

Background knowledge is stored in our memory as an “I” event, one in which the student was directly and personally involved in. *“I remember better, if I do it”*; therefore, creating opportunities for various experiences for students in the classroom is crucial.

“*Relevance makes it stick*”, students tend to learn more effectively when they already know something about a content area and when concepts in that area mean something to them, and to their particular background or culture. Students usually need a minimum of four exposures to new content, no more than 2 days apart, that elaborate on concepts and ideas but not venture into new ideas.

The following wide variety of learning activities that, on one hand, help to reflect the students’ cultural diversity and the capacity for multiple intelligences, and, on the other hand, help to build and activate background knowledge is fundamental to adapt in a multilingual, multicultural classroom:

- (1). Graphic organizers: K-W-L chart<sup>8</sup>, Five Senses Chart, Concept Map, Venn-diagram, T-Chart<sup>9</sup>, Story Map, etc.
- (2). Clarify language: Sentence Starters, Cloze Activities (Monster Cloze, Vanishing Cloze), Jumbled Sentences, Text Reconstruction, etc.
- (3). Visuals: videos, pictures, real objects (realia), drawings, charts, diagrams, posters, etc.
- (4). Reader’s Theater: dramatizing or acting out songs and plays, storytelling
- (5). Brainstorming/Discussion: Brain Dump (Webbing), Image or Alphabet Brainstorm
- (6). Provide direct experiences: field trips, guest speakers, schoolwide events, etc.
- (7). Make personal cultural connections: involve community members, family members and a variety of rich cultural resources (cultural objects, magazines, newspapers, books, etc.)
- (8). Make cross-curricular connections
- (9). Use primary language (e.g. label the objects in the classroom or the flow of the day in different languages)

### **3.4 Using Scaffolding Strategies in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

In the ‘*scaffolding metaphor*’ a framework is built up from wooden or metal poles and boards to support construction on buildings (a lot are seen in New York

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<sup>8</sup> A KWL table, or KWL chart, is a graphical organizer designed to help in learning. The letters KWL are an acronym, for what students already know, want to know, and ultimately learn. A KWL table is typically divided into three columns titled Know, Want to know, and Learned. The KWL chart or table is a form of instructional reading strategy that is used to guide students taking them through the idea and the text. It is a part of the constructivist teaching method where students move away from what are considered traditional methods of teaching and learning. In this particular methodology the students are given the space to learn by constructing their own learning pace and their own style of understanding a given topic or idea.

<sup>9</sup> A T-Chart is a graphic organizer that allows students to organize thoughts or ideas into two categories. It is shaped like an uppercase T. Students place the name of each category at the top of the chart. Below the line, students place ideas or lists of objects that fit that category.

City), as work is completed, the scaffold is removed piece by piece until the structure can stand on its own.

In Leo van Lier's (1991) work, following Vygotsky's principals, learning does not happen solely in the mind, but in a broader sphere known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), or the distance between the individual's current and potential capabilities. Jerome Bruner (1978) suggested that scaffold should work in the ZPD enabling students to work just beyond their current capacities with the support of a teacher and/or collaboration with peers (Table 1).

**Table 1. Four Types of Scaffolding Interactions in the ZPD**

Assistance from a peer expert or teacher	Collaboration with an equal peer	Collaboration with a less capable peer	Use of internal resources
The learner receives guidance, advice, or modeling from the teacher or a more capable peer.	The learner works together with the teacher or student of the same capabilities to construct meaning together,	The learner assists lower-level learners, which provides the opportunity to articulate, refine and expand the learner's own knowledge.	The learner works independently, relying on their own internalized practices, strategies, inner speech and other resources.

Source: Walqui, A. & Strom, K., QTEL, WESTED in partnership with NYC DELLSS: *Scaffolding* (p.3). Retrieved November 5, 2018 from [http://whenl.weebly.com/uploads/4/9/5/2/49524833/scaffolding\\_for\\_ells.pdf](http://whenl.weebly.com/uploads/4/9/5/2/49524833/scaffolding_for_ells.pdf)

The teacher provides enough support to move students from one level of understanding to a higher level of understanding (just like the support construction on buildings), assistance is decreased as students are able to access content concepts independently (just like the scaffold is removed once the structure can stand alone). Fisher & Frey (2014:17) showed how scaffolding gradually increases student independence through the gradual release of teacher's responsibility and through the framework's recursive structure, in which teachers might vary four instructional phases. So, student's responsibility over their academic and language learning can be optimized, such as, (1) Modeling/"I do it" (Teacher Responsibility), (2) Guided Instruction/ "We do it" (Teacher Responsibility), (3) Productive Group Work/"We do it together" (Student Responsibility), (4) Independent Learning/"You do it" (Student Responsibility). Teachers are highly encouraged to use the following four scaffolding strategies in the ZPD when working with ELLs/MLLs:

- (1.) Class routines and rules (e.g. repetition to enforce routines consistently and predictably)
- (2.) Contextualization (e.g. total physical response, manipulatives, visuals, graphic organizers, technology, etc.)
- (3.) Modeling (e.g. questioning techniques, think aloud, real-life examples, extended wait time, etc.)
- (4.) Differentiation (e.g. multiplicities and/or multiple entry points)

*Class routines and rules*

Establishing classroom routines not only helps teachers organize the course, but it also facilitates learning and motivates students. In addition, for many ELLs/MLLs the classroom can be a new and oftentimes a frightening experience. An interesting regular activity that they do in class will help them get used to the learning context (e.g. morning greetings, homework turn-ins, sourcebook free-writing, problem of the day (Math), classroom jobs, notebook organization, line-up routines, handing in/out things, warm-up exercises, class signals for bathroom, water, transitions, students' attention, etc.).

*Contextualization*

Visuals, teaching aids, and pictures are the most highly effective teaching strategies for multicultural, multilingual students. Through pictures, teachers display visual stimuli that can be universally understood by all students (Curtis & Bailey, 2001). Visuals can be used in any content area when teaching about concepts. Pictures, cartoons, maps, graphs, charts, diagrams, videos, and other multimedia resources enhance learning by accommodating visual learners by helping to reinforce key ideas when presenting information in alternative formats (Carrier, 2005). Real objects and hands-on materials, such as flashcards, games, hand-outs, that students can manipulate stimuli a variety of senses and help to make learning more meaningful, especially for diverse students who tend to be tactile, kinesthetic learners (Bruno, 1982; Curtin, 2006). Drawings, posters, graphic organizers (Story Map, Double Entry, Venn-Diagram, Timelines), storyboards, and autophotography can also increase motivation and help students to express their thoughts through non-verbal means of expression (Morrán-Ender & Ender, 1995, Crandall, Jaramillo, Olsen & Payton, 2001). Provide students with Total Physical Response (TPR) activities and experiences; “acting out” and using your body opportunities while making use of all the senses of the ELL/MLL students.

*Modeling*

Modeling is a powerful tool in the learning process. It provides numerous opportunities for students to ask questions, such as, discussion board. While modeling teachers are advised to use Higher-Order-Thinking (HOT) questions to classify, describe, evaluate, explain, generalize, infer, predict, and/or recall information (Gibbons, 1991). Also, providing real-life examples that students can connect to as well as media-based examples (advertisements, videos, cartoons, etc.) reaches out to all diverse students. Think-Alouds should be deliberately and systematically planned (Gibson, 2002) during modeling, as well as, allowing students enough wait-time or extended processing time when asking for a response since ELLs/MLLs interpreting information, making meaning of it, and formulating a response at the same time usually takes time.

### *Differentiation*

Teachers in multilingual, multicultural classes focus on three type of questions: what, how, and why (What to differentiate?, How to differentiate?, and Why to differentiate?). From the point of view of the *what*, content, process, product, and the affect or learning environment can be differentiated. From the point of view of the *how*, student readiness (small group), interest, and learning profile can be differentiated. From the point of view of the *why*, teachers can differentiate to support access to learning, to increase motivation and engagement, to improve the efficiency of learning, to appropriately challenge learning, and to provide an opportunity to express learning (Tomlinson, 2014).

Differentiation is providing multiple entry points to scaffold the content as a means of targeting learners' needs and providing below level texts (or primary language texts) as a support (not substitute) for understanding the grade-level text. However, it is not watering down, or simplifying the content, or substituting grade-level texts for below-level texts (DELLSS, July 2017: *ELL Teacher Summer Institute Professional Development*).

Teachers need to strategically provide multiple entry points (several pathways for students to arrive at to the product at their readiness) and high quality supports and extensions into the curricula, so all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher order thinking-skills in their products. Teachers have a good understanding of the students' ability levels with respect to the lesson and have designed the entry points to meet those needs (Garcia, 2009). What this means is that some children might be able to to use the language of instruction fully without any further adaptation, while others might need to use their first language or the mixture of the two languages (primarily and target), and others might only be able to draw a picture. The teacher not only allows for students to show their understanding differently, but also differentiates instruction.

Differentiated small group instruction is an excellent way to enhance all students' growth provides the teacher a simple and direct way to reteach, review, provide focused and supervised practice, clarify misunderstandings, extend student proficiency, or, use it as a formative assessment. For students, it gives an opportunity to increase participation, engagement and focus, and to create relationships between group participants. It is an "opt-in" opportunity where students can sign-up for group work in the spare of the moment (Doubet & Hockett, 2018).

### **3.5 Cooperative Learning Groups, Peer Tutoring**

Grouping students from different cultural backgrounds into heterogeneous groups and instructing them to collaborate and cooperate with one another on activities and problem-solving tasks has been found to promote inter-ethnic friendships, develop cross-cultural understandings, and build teamwork while also enhancing literacy and language acquisition among linguistically diverse students (Crandall,

1999; Crandall, Jaramillo, Olsen & Peyton, 2001; Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Snowman & Biehler, 2003). Cooperative learning groups assist in developing intellectual autonomy (Crandall, 1999) and social-emotional well-being of the participating individuals. They are unique opportunities for positive social interactions, and interpersonal communication between students from different backgrounds in diverse classrooms. They promote real dialogue, mutual understanding, and positive learning outcomes (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1994; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). There are many specific cooperative learning activities or methods that have been employed with success, such as, Turn and Talk, Think-Pair-Share, Round Robin, Shared Research, Team Talk, Roundtable, or, Double “Jigsaw” Method (A unit of materials are divided between a number of groups of the class and each group becomes an expert on their own particular topic. After each group sharing their topic with the whole class and the component parts are put together like a jigsaw puzzle the unit is completed), etc. Therefore, teachers in multilingual, multicultural classrooms need to provide regular opportunities for ELLs/MLLs to interact with their peers through some of these above mentioned activities.

Pairing up students of different abilities and backgrounds has been found extremely effective in multicultural, multilingual classrooms; some students simply learn better and participate more actively in smaller groups rather than in the class as a whole. They become teachers and resources for one another, often relating to each other better than they would to the teacher (Kline, 1995). Peer tutoring further promotes communication, motivates students, and help learners attain higher levels of achievement while developing friendships between students from different backgrounds (Saravia-Shore & Garcia, 1995; Snowman & Biehler, 2003).

Working with a so called “*buddy*” has several benefits for young learners: As they interact, converse, listen, and share ideas, there is an immediate feedback, clarification, and modification. For the tutor, it enhances the development of leadership and interpersonal skills, for the peer, it boosts self-confidence, and self-esteem while facilitating a new appreciation and understanding of others who may be different (Webb, 1988). Peer tutoring can be implemented in any subject area and it is more fun than working alone (Carbo & Kapinus, 1995), so be aware that students may get off-task and spend more time socializing than working (Vaughn, Bos & Schumm, 2003). Providing peer feedback opportunities on major projects, such as peer editing, peer revising, peer assessment, peer reflection is also a fundamental strategy when working with ELLs/MLLs. Partner picking strategies, like clock buddies<sup>10</sup> or bread and butter partners, milk and cookie partners, salt and

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<sup>10</sup> A quick and easy way to create pairs for partnered activities to avoid the problem of kids always having the same partners. Each student is required to name 12 classmates on each hour’s slot of the clock and when the teacher calls out an hour from the clock, e.g. “Get together with your 11 o’clock buddy.” Students can quickly partner up and start to pair-work immediately.

pepper partners, peanut butter and jelly partners, etc. help these students to spice up their list of friends from time to time.

### **3.6 Vocabulary Unpacked: Building Vocabulary through Authentic and Meaningful Experiences with Words**

Vocabulary consists of the words ELLs/MLLs understand when they hear or read them (receptive vocabulary) and words they speak or write (expressive vocabulary). ELLs/MLLs build vocabulary by picking up words that they read or hear through direct instruction from teachers or other professionals. In general, most children begin first grade with about 6,000 words of spoken vocabulary and they will learn 3,000 more words per year till they reach third grade. However, not all words have equal importance in language instruction which leads educators wonder if they picked the right words to teach.

Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2002) tried to answer the “How do teachers know which word they need to teach?” dilemma by creating three tiers of vocabulary words for teaching and assessing word knowledge. A word’s frequency of use, complexity, and meaning determines into which tier the word will fall. Those with mature vocabularies and age-appropriate literacy skills understand and use words from all three tiers. However, newcomer ELLs/MLLs are most comfortable with Tier 1 words. According to Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2013) words are categorized into the following tiers: Tier 1 (Basic Vocabulary), Tier 2 (High Frequency/Multiple Meaning Words), and Tier 3 (Subject Related Words).

Tier 1 consists of the most basic words, everyday words familiar to most students primarily learned through conversation and social interaction. These words rarely require direct instruction and typically do not have multiple meanings. Sight words, nouns, verbs, adjectives, and early reading words occur at this level. Examples of tier one words are: *book, girl, sad, run, dog, and orange*. There about 8,000 word families in English included in tier one.

On the other hand, Tier 2 consists of high-utility academic vocabulary found in many content texts, cross-curricular terms. That is, these words occur often in mature language situations such as adult conversations and literature, and therefore strongly influence speaking and reading. Tier two words are the most important words for direct instruction because they are good indicators of a student’s progress through school. Examples of tier two words are: *masterpiece, fortunate, industrious, measure, and benevolent*. There are about 7,000 word families in English in tier two.

Moreover, Tier 3 consists of low-frequency words that occur as academic vocabulary in specific domains. Domains include subjects in school (Math, Science, Social Studies, etc.), hobbies, occupations, geographic regions, technology, weather, etc. These words are usually learned when a specific need arises, such as learning about the amino acid during a chemistry lesson. Examples of tier three

words are: *economics, isotope, asphalt, Revolutionary War, and metamorphosis*. The remaining 400,000 words in English fall in this tier.

What does vocabulary instruction look like in a multilingual, multicultural classroom where the majority of students have English limited proficiency? In a multilingual, multicultural classroom there are many opportunities to teach and build vocabulary throughout the day. Teachers can use various opportunities from extended instruction (explicit teaching) to embedded instruction (implicit teaching) to teach new vocabulary words (Tier 1, 2, & 3) through authentic and meaningful experiences (Table 2).

**Table 2. Explicit and Implicit Teaching of Vocabulary**

<b>EXTENDED INSTRUCTION</b> (Explicit Teaching)	<b>EMBEDDED INSTRUCTION</b> (Implicit Teaching)
Use illustrations and synonyms/antonyms to explain meaning	Define the word in the situation
Provide word definition	Use gestures to demonstrate the word
Provide the Home Language definition and the cognate status	Use illustrations from the text to explain the word
Repeat the sentence from the text that uses the word	Provide examples using context that is familiar to students
Provide further examples	
Ask students to talk about the word and give their own example	

*Source: NYC DELLSS: ELL Teacher Summer Institute Professional Development, (July 2017)*

Practice proves that ELL/MLL students need at least four exposures at a time to acquire new content vocabulary. Some of the effective teaching practices that work to build vocabulary of ELLs/MLLs are as follows:

- (1.) present key vocabulary and new vocabulary prior to a new topic, unit, or lesson, and then continuously present these words throughout the unit
- (2.) limit the number of words given (little at a time) since too many words given at a time might overwhelm ELLs/MLLs
- (3.) relate the new vocabulary word to real life by giving real-life examples and/or situations
- (4.) allow more “wait time” to answer questions about the new word to clarify meaning and support understanding
- (5.) use more prompting (ELLs/MLLs can often find the answer easier and comprehend better)
- (6.) take advantage of students’ primary language if the language shares cognates with English
- (7.) constantly use simple assessments, like thumbs up/down, “yes/no” questions

- (8.) use questioning techniques (Do you understand the word?, What part of the word/Which word do/don't you understand?)

Some of the following activities and strategies can support vocabulary building in the multilingual, multicultural classroom, such as, visual cues and physical gestures and signals, sentence starters and formulaic expressions (to help to start and link ideas with other peers), point to words and pictures, “draw” the word, flash cards, word lists, cut and paste activities, diagrams, charts, labels, pop-up and tab books, google images, teacher tube, real objects to show the students what things are like, “act out” activities (TPR-Total Physical Response), ask simple questions using new vocabulary words, computer games (such as, Starfall ([www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)), Brainpop (<https://ell.brainpop.com>), etc.), word banks and word-picture matches, picture dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, picture books with labels inside the books, introduce the new words in the primary language first, and repeat the new words over and over again.

### **3.7 Teaching Academic Language**

#### **WHAT IS ACADEMIC LANGUAGE**

Academic Language (AL) is defined as language used in school, in written communications, in public presentations, and in formal settings (Snow & Uccelli, 2009). Academic Language is a second language for all students not just for ELLs/MLLs. Academic English is not a natural language that we acquire through extensive listening and social interaction, therefore academic English (including vocabulary, syntax, morphology, and grammar) must be explicitly taught, not just caught (Kinsella, 2005). Adapted from Lesaux, Marietta & Phillips Galloway (2014) the different definitions of AL currently in use are as follows: (1) the written language of school text, (2) the oral language used in classrooms and professional education, (3) the language of academic assessments, (4) the oral and written language of the content areas, (5) the language associated with prestige and power.

#### **BUILDING ACADEMIC LANGUAGE**

When teaching academic vocabulary comprehensively, the vocabulary to learn is embedded in the authentic contexts in which these words are used. In embedded instruction, students are given access to world meanings through on-the-spot child-friendly definitions of the target words. Different types of visuals and verbal support is given to the students to help them make sense of the content and to develop general academic and domain-specific vocabulary knowledge. Academic Language differs across content areas, therefore, academic vocabulary includes various content related vocabulary and high frequency academic words (e.g. Bloom's verbs). Students who master AL are more likely to be successful in academic and professional settings compared to students who do not learn AL. These students may struggle academically and be at a higher risk of dropping

out of school (Zwiers, 2008). The following steps show how exactly academic language with ELLs/MLLs is built in the multilingual, multicultural classroom:

- (1.) Start with a meaty text (high utility academic words + big idea).
- (2.) Target depth of word knowledge and awareness of AL features through multiple, planned opportunities to discuss the words, their meaning, and concepts.
- (3.) Promote continued AL learning by teaching strategies that can be applied recursively when encountering new texts.
- (4.) Reinforce language development and critical thinking through writing, debating, and continued reading.

#### HOW TO SELECT ACADEMIC WORDS TO TEACH

August *et al.* (2014) defines how to select academic words to teach by the following three criteria:

- (1.) *Frequency*: Select words that are considered frequently encountered academic words (e.g. Coxhead academic word list)
- (2.) *Importance to text/unit*: Select words that are critical for answering text dependent questions as well as words that contribute to the understanding of the unit
- (3.) *Conceptual unity*: Select words that are not easily imaginable, that are abstract, and/or have a high degree of relatedness.

### 3.8 ‘Translanguaging’ Practices

Allowing “translanguaging” (García & Wei, 2014) as a pedagogical practice in the classroom to be able to choose the language in which language learners can convey the meaning in the most accurate way mostly in the form of speaking and writing makes students comfortable from the very beginning of their learning of the lingua franca. Translanguaging, or, “code-switching” (as the phenomena was previously referred to), is

*“the act of using different languages interchangeably, in order to overcome language constraints, to deliver verbal utterances or written statements effectively, and, to ultimately achieve successful communication”* (Csillik & Golubeva, 2017:14).

Encouraging students to use their primary language with peers during work time, in groups, or, during independent work time in writing assignments, responses to literature, or during free writing, helps them claim some ownership in the educational process, show complete understanding of the subject area, and express individuality. Furthermore, by using the primary language, language learners show their options and preferences to convey their personal identity, their

belonging to a social group or minority (Golubeva & Csillik, 2018; Csillik & Golubeva, 2019 in press).

Not only language learners can use translanguaging in the classroom, but, the teachers of the multilingual, multicultural classroom as well. By using translanguaging practices in the multilingual, multicultural classroom, teachers make students feel comfortable and welcomed increasing these students' social-emotional well-being. This is especially beneficial in the case of newcomer students who are transitioning from one culture to another in a very short period of time and translanguaging practices provide them with a link to "home", which is extremely comforting at first in an environment where newcomer students might face the 'cultural shock' of the new environment (Golubeva & Csillik, 2018; Csillik & Golubeva, 2019 in press).

### **3.9 Family Involvement**

Building partnership with families of diverse population starts with communication. Remember that a welcoming smile is a language common to everyone. Teachers must show that they value and respect all languages and cultures in the multilingual, multicultural classroom and that they are eager to communicate with all families equally. Many times it is not easy to find a way to speak and write to families in their low-incident home language(s), therefore, teachers need to find innovative ways, such as, making connections with other community members who speak the same low-incident primary language as the child's family the teacher cares for.

Many times teachers rely on voluntary translators (family members, close friends, classmates' parents, etc.), or if available, on over-the-phone translation services. Google Translator is a useful tool to help teachers and families communicate with one another; however, it should not be the first choice of the teacher since many times depending on the context the translation is not profoundly accurate (Csillik, 2019). Avoiding the use of educational jargon or acronyms which may be unfamiliar to parents, or the use of cursive writing which may not be taught in other countries are vital effective practices in teaching ELLs/MLLs. Teachers should show respect to all families by presuming that care-givers are intelligent and loving, never make the mistake of assuming that care-givers lacking of fluency in the lingua franca means that they are ignorant, uncaring, or incapable in any way.

It is important for multilingual, multicultural ELL/MLL students to see more multicultural parents working in the school they are enrolled at because they serve as role models of commitment, involvement and accomplishment. Invite parents to eat breakfast or lunch with their child, invite parents to share their expertise in the class, invite parents to volunteer in the school community (Become a Class Parent, Assist with Extracurricular Activities such as Drama Clubs, Hobby Clubs, etc.) or participate in school-wide activities (Multicultural Dance Festival, Diversity Week, Heritage Day, Award Ceremonies, Movie Nights, Bake Sale, Meet &

Greet your Teachers Night, Fundraiser Activities, etc.) are some of the effective strategies how teachers could involve the families of ELLs/MLLs in the educational journey of their child.

### **3.10 Using Alternate Forms of Assessment**

Teaching and assessments are linked together in any educational setting, so they are connected in the multilingual, multicultural classrooms as well. The lack of culturally authentic resources in multilingual, multicultural classrooms goes hand-in-hand with the lack of culturally authentic assessments. It is currently one of the mostly debated challenges that have not yet been resolved. As curriculum documents would need to include cultural content, assessment documents should do accordingly as well. However, today there is a very low proof of the two being connected.

Initial assessments of the target language for placing the newcomer students are mostly well-known and widely practiced in multilingual, multicultural classes. However, it is very time consuming for teachers to administer these initial placement tests since they can not predict the arrival of each newcomer child. Therefore, mostly it is carried out individually and not in groups which takes time. Also, it is problematic to find an in-depth placement assessment of the child's primary language in low-incident languages which might be beneficial for finding accurate recommendation for later instruction and the right placement for the students. With an existing in-depth assessment in the child's primary language it would be easier to determine what kind of support the student would need in the classroom.

On-going-assessments (formative and summative) in the classroom are also challenging due to the different cultural and former educational background of the various student body the multilingual, multicultural classes might have. Students previously educated in other countries might not know what is expected from them to do on the different kind of assessments, e. g. fill-in-the-blank tests, or multiple-choice questions tests. It must be clearly demonstrated and shown these students the task they are required to do before they can do it independently. Should teachers working in multilingual, multicultural classrooms translate all classroom assessments to the child's primary language? How many different languages should these teachers need to translate to? How can they find the time to do the extra translating when their planning time is already limited? These are just some of the questions that are emerging these days and teachers are waiting for to be answered.

Asking new-comer language learners to read aloud unfamiliar texts and words is a challenging pronunciation task and not the best way to assess these students in the multilingual, multicultural class since they cannot focus on comprehension and pronunciation at the same time. They might feel uncomfortable, shy and embarrassed to speak up in front of a mainly native-speaker audience. Better to let these students read silently and give them the opportunity to refer back to the text when answering comprehension questions.

Standardized testing is an overall criticized issue of multi-language learners. Most language learners need minimum three to five years to become academically proficient in the language of instruction. Immigrant children who are also adjusting to the new cultural environment, and/or, missed previous education in their country of origin might need more time and more support than their multilingual, multicultural peers. As a result, for these students to participate in standardized testing after giving only a year/one-time exemption, if it is given at all, is unfair and wrong. Many times these students have no chance of passing these standardized tests due to the lack of acquiring the necessary academic language and the target language of immersion classrooms in the new environment.

Also, apart from Spanish and Chinese, in many educational settings there is no translated version of content area subjects (e.g. Mathematics, Science, Social Studies) in the low-incident languages or opportunity for students to use oral translators of these low-incident languages due to the uniqueness of their languages while taking the content area standardized tests.

There is an indispensable need for a variety of accepted innovative alternative assessment methods to effectively and accurately evaluate the progress of multicultural, multilingual students in the classrooms. Using alternate forms of assessments should be considered and developed since ELLs/MLLs not only could demonstrate cognitive understanding without heavily relying on the language, but it would be congruent with their tactile/kinesthetic mode of learning (Kline, 1995).

Finally, here are some innovative ideas for assessments in the multilingual, multicultural classrooms: the use of projects, exhibitions, journals, demonstrations, observations, graphic organizers, videos or multimedia formats, or portfolios. A collection of student work samples that provides a means of self-expression, holds the student accountable as a learner for thoughtful decision making, and helps to gain self-understanding. These assessments allow students to showcase their work and share their cultural heritage while nurturing their sense of accomplishment.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The empirical study introduced in this paper was aimed to reveal how to improve teaching methods and strategies of everyday teaching practices, tools to assess the development of multi-language learners in early-childhood programs; and, to point out that more research to develop teaching approaches that could work in 'superdiverse' classrooms where students speak multiple languages and represent various cultures is desperately needed.

*"We are all the same; we are all different"* (Derman-Sparks & Olsen Edwards, 2010:67) propagate the principle of anti-bias education that highlights the need on the teachers' part to address the existing linguistic and cultural differences in the classrooms. Low-incident language speaking children might be in a vulnerable position in a multilingual/multicultural classroom, therefore, the author hopes to

contribute to turnkey new practices and strategies in “superdiverse” early childhood classrooms in order to support the needs of Multi-Language Learners.

The ten effective practices presented in this paper, such as, identification and program placement, know your student, build and activate background knowledge, use scaffolding strategies in the ZPD, use cooperative learning groups and peer tutoring, build vocabulary and academic language, use translanguaging practices, involve family members in their child’s educational experience and use alternate assessments are just some of the teaching practices and strategies the author currently takes part in her every day teaching of Multi-Language Learners that teachers in need of new ideas might want to implement in their own classrooms to support all multilingual/multicultural learners.

There is no “one-size-fits-all” learning environment to support multilingual/multicultural learners; therefore, every teacher is encouraged to take risks and try what works the best for the given multilingual/multicultural population he/she works with, to self-reflect regularly and express thoughts and feelings about what have worked in the past with the given population, what have not worked in the past and needs to be changed, and, what they are willing to try next to support all language learners in the classroom. Promoting an anti-bias environment which accepts all learners regardless of their cultural, educational, and social-emotional background, in which, students are able to take risks in recognizing their own thinking and feeling of differences and their recognition of the variation in people, viewpoints, and other cultures together with the values, beliefs and behaviors they embody should be the mission of every educator on the field.

Undoubtedly, there is a lot to do in the future to develop a more knowledgeable, culturally responsive world for ‘superdiverse’ multi-language learners in early childhood educational settings. What language teachers need to do now for creating intercultural dimensions in their classrooms is not acquiring more knowledge of other cultures or countries, but, a wide range of knowledgeable skills and teaching strategies they could use in the multilingual/multicultural classrooms during their every day teaching.

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