Paraprofessionals: Partners in Access
Supporting English Language Learners with Disabilities
The Bilingual Special Education Specialists
NYC DOE, RSE-TASC
Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center
Division of Specialized Instruction and Student Support

The Big Ideas for today…

What do paraprofessionals need to know about English Language Learners to help them access instruction?

What strategies can paras bring back to the classroom to support ELLs in learning the curriculum?

Foldables! www.dinah.com

Who are your ELLs?
- Newcomers and Foreign-born ELLs
- US-born ELLs (*over 51% in NYC)
- ELLs with strong L1 literacy and academic skills
- SIFE (Interrupted Formal Education)
- Long-Term ELLs: 6+ years of Part 154 services
- Former ELLs (passed NYSESLAT)
- ELLs with Disabilities and Special Needs
  - Rank the order of your ELL population from most to least.

Disproportionality
When certain groups are over-represented or under-represented by race, ethnicity or socio-economic status in special education or gifted and talented programs.

15% All SWDs

25% ELLs + Disabilities

NYS Regulations: Part 200
A Student shall not be eligible for special education if the determinant factor is:

- lack of appropriate instruction
- limited English proficiency.
Assumptions:
• Limited proficiency in English is NOT a disability.
• Special Education is NOT a substitute for Bilingual/ESL education.
• Instruction for Bilingual Students with Disabilities should address the cultural, linguistic and academic needs of the student, as well as the disability.
• Educators can work collaboratively to support the development of English Language proficiency.

Basic Theories of Second Language Acquisition
• Natural order that is the same across cultures and ages
• Developmental in nature with stages and patterns
• We use Social language to communicate informally
• We need Academic language to master schooling
• May take 5-7 years to become proficient in Academic language
• Requires comprehensible input

Stages of Second Language Acquisition
• Entering: (Pre-Production) student is a listener, relies on body language and responds nonverbally
• Emerging (Early Production) responds with key words only, can follow simple, basic commands
• Transitioning (Speech Emergence) simple sentences emerge, limit error correction
• Expanding (Intermediate Fluency) complex, critical and creative thinking in English is evident
• Commanding (Advanced Fluency, Proficient) May take 5-7-10-years, error correction is important

Typical Processes of Second Language Acquisition
• Influence (rules of L1 influence production of L2)
• Code Switching and Code Mixing
• Fossilization
• Fluctuation / Transition (time!)
• Accent (indicates 2 things)
• Mastery of humor and idioms
• Language Loss (due to lack of use or exposure)

3 Things Paras Can Do to Support ELLs with IEPs
• Be Culturally Responsive
• Tap in to Prior Knowledge
• Help Build Vocabulary
What is Culture?

- values, ideas, attitudes, behaviors that
give meaning, security and identity to
a group of people that may be defined
by nationality, race, language, religion,
or socioeconomic status and
shapes how they view the world and
governs their behavior in life.

Family Life and Roles
- Age (children, elders)
- Gender Roles
- Religion, Ethics & Values
- Taboos
- Education (value, focus)
- Work and Achievement

Communication
- Social Interaction
- Space & Gestures
- Nature and Science
- Wealth & Materialism
- Rewards & Privileges
- Ownership

Cultural Conflicts in the Classroom

What is Cultural Competence?

- Teachers who are culturally competent embrace and use students cultural knowledge and identity to engage them in learning that is relevant.

Why does it matter?

- Children and youth of diverse culture and language are disproportionately over identified as having social emotional needs (i.e. emotional disorders)
- Students with diverse cultures and languages are often placed in segregated settings, subject to lower expectations, and excluded from educational opportunities
- Unconscious racial bias, stereotypes, inequitable implementation of discipline policies, and practices that are not culturally responsive contribute to patterns of misidentification and placement for many minority students

What is our Shared Responsibility?

Rather than viewing them as deficits, children’s culture-based communication and behavior is seen as resources from which children’s repertoires of communication and behaviors can be increased to support their functioning in multiple cultural and linguistic communities. (Cheatham, Armstrong & Santos, 2009)

- Support social and emotional development and to provide positive guidance
- Provide physical and emotional security for each child and help each child to know, accept and take pride in him or herself and to develop a sense of independence. (DeHaney, NBDO)
What do Culturally Responsive Teachers do Differently?

- Capitalizes on cultural currency (student strengths, skills, preferences, learning styles)
- Builds confidence and self-esteem by putting emphasis on existing knowledge and competencies
- Uses culturally relevant material that incorporates students daily life, prior knowledge and interests
- Uses Native Language as a bridge by providing opportunities to read, write and communicate in their dominant language
- Provides and teaches students how to use tools and resource materials that enable them to participate and be successful with content
- Promotes equality and appreciation of diversity
- Exposes all students to knowledge about other cultures

A Self-Checklist for Providing a Culturally Responsive Environment

1. Which ones are you already practicing?
   - I know the cultural background of each of my students
   - I integrate literature and resources from my students’ cultures into my lessons
   - I begin each lesson with what students already know from home, community and school
   - I find ways to bridge two languages (social & academic)
   - I consider how students’ frame of reference can interact with classroom norms

Why Activate Prior Knowledge?

- We construct knowledge when we connect new information to knowledge, concepts and experiences we already know.
- Our role is to facilitate students making those connections.

How do you Activate Prior Knowledge?

- Image or Alphabet Brainstorm
- Five Senses Chart (it looks like, sounds like, feels like...)
- Graphic Organizers (concept maps, KWL)
- Anticipation Guide (before and after the lesson)
- Agree/Disagree, True/False, Fact/Fiction, Reality/Myth
- Videos and Pictures
- Cloze Activities
- Show and Tell (realia)
- Use the language of the discipline
- Identify the “Big Picture”
- Explore essential attributes
- Use the native language!!!

3. Build Bigger Vocabularies
How can you help students Build Vocabulary?

Keep the focus on the critical vocabulary. New vocabulary is presented in context. Introduce the word, pronounce it slowly and repeat it frequently. Provide student friendly explanations and real-life examples. Allow students to develop definitions in their own words. Use visual or non-linguistic images. Check for understanding. Ask questions. Help students engage in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Help them identify cognates.

Anita Archer’s Steps to Explicit Vocabulary Instruction
What did we make note of?

• Introduce the word.
• Present a student-friendly explanation.
• Illustrate the word with examples.
• Check students understanding.

Using Graphic Organizers for Word Mapping Strategies
The Frayer Model

• A graphic organizer used to identify and define unfamiliar concepts and vocabulary
• with simple modifications, it can be used multiple ways with students at any level of proficiency
• activates prior knowledge of a topic and builds connections
• capture the word’s essential characteristics
• provide examples and non-examples of the word

Concept Map

In linguistics, cognates are words that have a common etymology, or origin. It is derived from the Latin word *cognatus* (meaning blood relative).

About 40% of English words have a Spanish cognate. CAUTION: False cognates do exist but they are the exception to the rule. (Ex: mano means hand, not man)

Cognates

spanishcognates.org
cognates.org
Vision Trumps Everything
Two systems are involved in learning words:
verbal + non-verbal
linguistic + nonlinguistic
When teaching new words, use images where possible.

What does work for ELLs
• Use visuals.
• Use cognates where available.
• Provide student-friendly definitions.
• Have students develop their own definitions.
• Use lots of contextual information through meaningful text, authentic examples and prior knowledge.
• Create authentic and meaningful opportunities to use the new words in rich oral language.
• Instead of frequently correcting errors of grammar or pronunciation, reaffirm the students’ ideas and model correct usage. Validate their effort.

What does work for SWDs
• Help students become aware of the semantic parts of words (morpheme analysis)
• Teach word parts and meanings (roots, affixes)
• Explicitly teach strategies for forming connections between semantically related terms (mapping)
• Multiple opportunities to learn words through direct instruction (through variety of exposures)
• Explicit strategy instruction (ex: how to use context clues)
• Careful application of technology

Why should we do this?
Research tells us a few important facts about English Language Learners:
Students with the highest levels of first language literacy were those who eventually became the strongest readers in their second language.
Researchers concluded that the single best predictor of second language reading proficiency is first language literacy.
ELLs who were taught using their first language performed significantly better on standardized tests than similar students who were taught only in English.
Valuing the home language and building upon the students’ existing knowledge enhances cognitive and academic development.

Print-Cut-Fold or "Foldable’s"
Three-Dimensional Graphic Organizers
Assemble your pyramid.
Follow the directions printed on the top triangle.
Cut, fold, then glue.

What are your Take-Aways today?
Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right.
~Henry Ford
Please fill out a feedback form!