

Effective Reading Strategies
for Multilingual Learners in the Mainstream Classroom

by
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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Literacy Education

Hamline University
Saint Paul, Minnesota
May 2022

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Description

My capstone project is a website that seeks to provide supportive tools, resources, texts, strategies, and much more for the support of multilingual learner (ML) students.

My guiding questions for this project were: *How can multilingual learners develop strong literacy skills within their mainstream classrooms? What strategies, resources, and instructional models best support them in this learning?*

In order to provide the most user-friendly experience, I divided my website into the four areas that I researched in the second chapter of my capstone paper. The website provides ideas and guidance that could be accessed in a few minutes or could be poured over for a few hours. The website sections will be divided into: Instructional Models, Engagement Strategies, Home Language Scaffolds, and Cultural Considerations, as well as a homepage and about me page. The goal of this website is to provide an introduction to each subtopic, offer suggestions, resources, website links, and examples to spark ideas, and incorporate videos that showcase experts in the field as they discuss topics or model teaching.

One of the most impactful ways to support a teacher is to provide meaningful and applicable strategies that could be integrated into the classroom the next day. It is not my intention to teach my colleagues strategies that would potentially take hours of time to learn and understand, but instead I have provided powerful examples and suggestions that will help reshape teachers' thought processes during crucial instructional decision-making moments. In this way, the practices are woven into daily practice and they help redefine how teachers go about making choices in regards to their MLs. As

teachers stop to consider language and how it plays out in a lesson or unit, they will become more comfortable recognizing where certain linguistic scaffolds would be most appropriate. By using this website, teachers can begin to recognize how certain scaffolds may benefit MLs more than others, and they will begin to embed those scaffolds more naturally on a daily basis. According to the U.S. Department of Education English Learner Toolkit (2016), Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must adequately train teachers to support MLs, especially if the LEA is unable to provide the appropriate number of certified ML teachers. It is encouraged that certified teachers are hired to teach MLs, but if that is not possible, training is required for all teachers. This website will be a perfect starting point for those who are interested in beginning the process of becoming more qualified to adequately meet ML needs.

The day-to-day stress of the education profession is overwhelming and taxing on teachers. Split-second decisions are made throughout the day and recreating the wheel takes time that many of us do not have. The website supports teachers in modifying their strategies and reshaping their approaches and thinking as they pertain to ML support. By doing this, decisions in the classroom will be more proactive rather than reactive. Providing examples and models to guide the instructional practice decisions, teachers feel more capable in their abilities to intentionally and effectively meet the needs of their MLs.

For this website, I considered the needs of administrators, ML teacher leaders, ML program leaders, or any other education professional who might be tasked with the decision making of a ML program. Each school and district has varied needs in regards to the instructional program that they will need to implement for their multilingual students.

Considerations around staffing of the ML program, the language level needs, the total number of students, and the capacity to support high quality instruction. This website focuses primarily on the benefits of a content-driven language program, which includes models such as co-teaching and small group support. Through instructional models that create space for collaboration between teachers, the program will only continue to flourish when added expertise is utilized appropriately. Fenner and Snyder (2017) outlined a similar goal in their guiding principles in their book *Unlocking English Learners' Potential*. They explained that MLs benefit when teachers collaborate to share the expertise that they bring to the table. By sharing expertise, the ML teachers are able to share specific knowledge of language acquisition and strategies to support, while content mainstream teachers can share skills and strategies that support the learning of a particular content. Through this collaborative partnership, both parties benefit from the strengths the other provides, and in doing so create wonderfully supportive learning opportunities for MLs. My website outlines instructional models that help the decision making process, while it simultaneously provides research-based recommendations for a program that supports a collaborative approach to instruction. In this way, ML programs are not only supporting the MLs, but also providing professional development support for mainstream colleagues and their ability to meet the needs of MLs in their homeroom classrooms.

In summation, the four sections of my website were designed to cater to the viewers' needs and their role in a ML program. Effective instructional shifts and programs are developed when educators and administration have a shared vision and understanding of what must be done to support student learning. In this case, my website

should provide a common shared knowledge of recommendations and strategies so that the collaborative work between informed and capable professionals is more aligned.

Audience

The intended audience of this website is broken into two groups. First and foremost, it was developed for instructional planning and collaboration purposes for mainstream teachers. The second intended audience group includes any staff members who make ML programming decisions, such as administration, ML team leaders, ML teachers, or coaches. I chose to break the website into four sections in order to cater to both audiences more appropriately. Both groups serve MLs in different and meaningful ways, but the information that will support their work will differ.

Any education professional will benefit greatly from this website. So often I hear colleagues say that they are not confident in meeting the needs of MLs, typically because they have not had the opportunity to work with MLs, or it has been many years since they previously did. My school is slowly becoming more diverse each year, but it still has a significant majority of White students. My ML roster has nearly doubled in the five years since I started, so the likelihood of teachers working with MLs continues to rise. Therefore, this website will ease minds and build competence and confidence around effective strategies and scaffolds for MLs.

Timeline

The creation of this website took place over the course of the 2022 spring semester. Over the course of the semester, I designed my website thoughtfully and carefully for ease of navigation and use. There are quite a few instructional models, teacher videos, lesson and resource examples incorporated throughout the website. The

bulk of my time was spent on pulling and creating resources, in addition to the construction of the layout. It was my mission to make the website visually appealing and engaging, so regardless if teachers are spending hours exploring or just a few minutes, they will still take away some new learning to enhance their instructional practice in the classroom.

At the completion of the semester, the website was shared with my fellow multilingual teachers in my Professional Learning Community (PLC), homeroom teachers, my administration, and any other staff members that I believe would benefit from this resource. My PLC has integrated time into our meetings that is spent sharing helpful information and resources. This provided me the opportunity to share with my colleagues how they might implement or utilize the website to better their practice and build the capacity of other teachers in our district. Through this implementation plan, a wider audience will be reached and impacted to become better educators and to better serve their MLs.

Assessment

The creation of this project was intended to be used by teachers as a self-study to improve and guide their instructional practice and decision-making as it pertains to MLs. The success of this project will be measured by the increase in engagement and linguistic strategies, targeted and meaningful planning to support MLs, and feedback provided by those educators who access the website to support their work. It is my intention to continually engage colleagues in conversations to see what support they need and guide them to a supportive section of the website. Additionally, this will continue to be used as a support of my PLC team members who are also supporting mainstream teachers and

helping to make ML program decisions. Ideally this website will continue to evolve and support as many education professionals as possible.

MATERIALS

Website Link

- <https://mhebert02.wixsite.com/website>

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