Multicultural Literature and the English Language Learner

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• Raúl Quintanilla, who teaches ESL, realized as a child
• “We didn’t have any heroes to identify with. We didn’t have General MacArthur, we didn’t have Roosevelt...We couldn’t identify with them because we were Mexican Americans. People they would consider heroes like Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett were white people. To Texas history or American history they are heroes. But if you look at Northern Mexican history they are not heroes. They are the crooks who kicked people out of areas We didn’t really have anyone to identify with, except for the Cinco de Mayo. We had one person. General Zaragoza...The Mexicans did didn’t want us because were were Chicanos and Americans didn’t want us because they think we’re Mexican.”

• Quintanilla quoted in Quintero
What is MCL?

• 3 types
  – Generic (all, no focus on culture)
  – Culture generic (no specific cultural info)
  – Culture specific (cultural info)

Is it really **multicultural** if it is only based on one culture?
Why You Need it

• Overcome bias – your’s and students’
  – Research on grading by teacher of same color
  – Understand implicit curriculum
• Understand heritage cultures Learning styles
  – Reflect student learning and culture styles
  – Social interactions
  – Thinking schema
• Attain worldview
Why kids need MCL

- **Kids relate to others like themselves**
  - “human beings have always been full of struggle and turbulence, that people have all, at one time or another, felt insignificant, insecure, and afraid.”
- **Kids develop empathy if they are exposed early and often to other viewpoints**
  - Understand and accept diverse cultures when given experience as youngsters (Reef)
- **Self esteem is raised when characters like themselves are present in the lit**
  - Student centered classroom, valuing diversity, fostering interpersonal learning
  - Seeing oneself in the mirror
  - Cultural rights restored or affirmed
  - Respect for all
- **Problem resolution skills modeled in literature**
- **Commonalities can’t be recognized until differences are acknowledged**
- **Mosaic society needs all interwoven into its fabric**
- “Ethnic content…brings academic tasks from the realm of the alien…into the experiential frames of reference of ethnically different youth.” (Gay, 1975)

*Sources: Champion, Reiff, Lewis, Gay*
Benefits of MCL

• Folk Literature
  – Moral values
    • Valued traits
    • Valued behaviors
  – Traditions
    • Rituals
    • Icons of importance
  – Relationships
    • Family
    • Society
    • Nature

• Modern literature
  – Values
  – Relationships
  – Problem solution
  – Vibrant society
  – Universal qualities
  – Identification and Identity
• How to know?
  – Selection aids
    • Journal reviews
    • Amazon reviews (same difference)
    • Authentic websites
    • Award designees
      » Pura Belpré Reforma Américas
      » CSK
      » Mildred Batchelder
    • Publishers
“I really don't like the fake cartoon and illustration in Indian books that are here in the school library. My name is Monica Spencer and my tribe is Navajo, Laguna, Kiaoni and Pueblo, all full blooded. It makes me mad when children make fun of my culture. It makes the kids think we do that when we don't. When the children grow up I don't want them to think that Indians put feathers in their hair and dance around the fire. We don't do that. And I don't think that it is right for the kids to look at the silly things they put in those silly books. One day I saw a kid running around with a feather in their hair and putting their hand to their mouths and making weird noises and I cried when that happened. So what I want you to do is to put those books away and learn about our real history.”

» from http://www.oyate.org/main.html
In a World of Stereotypes
English Language Learners
### Who are the English Language Learners in the United States?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004 Minority Populations</th>
<th>In 2004, 67 percent were non-Hispanic white, 13 percent black, 5 percent Asian and 14 percent Hispanic.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The LEP students in the U.S. speak over 400 languages!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In 2004</td>
<td>5.5 million LEP students</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Factors to Consider
Language Acquisition

- Time Allowed
- Peer or Societal
- Exposure to Language
- Formalized Activities
- Sequencing of Skills
- Basic Processes
- Awareness of “Rules”
- Motivation
- Reward/Punishment
- Transfer

- Unlimited / Limited
- Family / School
- Surrounded / Partial
- Natural / Forced
- Gradual / Onslaught
- Experiment / Immediate
- Natural / Forced
- Basic / Survival
- Positive / Negative
- None / Interference
Comparing Language Acquisition

- **Student’s language proficiency**
  - LEP students
    - Still acquiring basic knowledge while learning to read and write
    - ESL students benefit from English literacy instruction

- **Ability to read and write in L1**
  - Students L1 literate
    - Bring basic knowledge, skills, and attitudes
    - Are able to transfer
    - L1 literacy contributes to L2
Developing ESL Readers & Writers

**ESL Reading**
1. Developmental processes similar in L1 and L2
2. In reading, all learners utilize:
   - English language knowledge
   - Background experiences
   - Print conventions to make sense of written text

**ESL Writing**
1. In writing, all learners utilize:
   - English language knowledge
   - Background experience and world knowledge
   - Understanding of print conventions to put ideas on paper
Distinguishing Between Language Difficulties and Learning Difficulties

- Overrepresentation of culturally diverse students in special education
- “monoglottosis” – tendency of monolinguals to ignore or underestimate influence of language proficiency on individual’s performance
- Cultural and linguistic biases in commonly used tests
The Age Factor

- Immigrant students – ages 8-12 with several years of L1 schooling take 5-7 years to reach academic “norms”
- Immigrant students – ages below 8 take 7-10 years to reach academic “norms”
- Do they have L1 literacy skills?
Language Development Skills

- Communication
- Fluency
- Language Functions
- Patterns/Structures
- Authentic Concepts
- Vocabulary
- Behavior
Double Demands
Acquiring a New Language While Mastering the Old

• Things to Consider:
  ✓ Match Literature and Content Area Instruction
  ✓ Utilize pictures for Effective Instruction
  ✓ Place emphasis on low-level literacy skills
  ✓ Use literature in place of “regular” texts
  ✓ Select words that relate to human motivation (ex: anxious and memory)
  ✓ Engage in discussion of the words frequently
  ✓ Do not drill on lengthy word lists
  ✓ Focus on two-three critical words for several days
  ✓ Utilize short stories, below-grade level books, and personal writing
## The Transition From L1 to L2

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Building on Background Knowledge</th>
<th>Drawing on Personal Experiences</th>
<th>Assisting in Rereading Pivotal Portions of Text</th>
<th>Promoting Extended Discourse – Writing and Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helps contextualize story themes, content, and vocabulary</td>
<td>Sustains motivation and helps students make concrete and conceptual connections to text and content</td>
<td>Assists in providing “comprehensible input” and aides comprehension and connections</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for “instructional conversations” to use language for elaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The CALLA Method
Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach

Content Topics
Academic Language Skills
Language Learning Strategies

- Shows students how to ask and answer higher-level questions
- Allows teacher to monitor student comprehension
- Enables students to utilize graphic organizers
- Provides resources for students to use

- Provides hands-on experiences
- Links lesson topic to prior knowledge
- Enables students to use technical language
- Addresses different learning styles
- Provides a general overview
The SIOP Model

- A means for making grade-level academic content more accessible for ESL students while at the same time promoting English Language Development
- The practice of highlighting key language features and incorporating strategies that make content comprehensible to students.
The SIOP Model

• Lessons Combine Three Knowledge Bases for Student Success:
  – Knowledge of English
  – Knowledge of Content
  – Knowledge of How Academic Tasks are to be Accomplished
MCL and ELL

- Culture represented
- Story represented
- Bilingual in Spanish
- Must be a good story AND be culturally authentic
Literature Activities
Literature Circles and ESL Students

Discussion groups in which students meet regularly to talk and dialog about books. The organization and structure of the circles vary—but most have common threads:

RATIONALE

- Promote a love for literature
- Reflect a constructive model
- Encourage extensive and intensive reading
- Invite natural discussion and oral language development
- Foster interaction, collaboration, and diverse response to text
- Provides opportunities for choice
- Exposes students to multiple perspectives via literature
Interactive Reading for ESL

RATIONALE

• Provides opportunities for comprehension and oral language development

• May be utilized with any age and proficiency level

• Interactive and inclusive

• Assists in developing vocabulary within the academic setting
Cognitive Mapping and ESL

RATIONALE

• Works effectively with beginners intermediate ELLs
• Acts as a scaffold
• Enables use of story grammar and structure
• Encourages recognition of basic story elements
• May act as a springboard for writing
Chunking Technique

**RATIONALE**
- Provides focus for reading
- Assists with organization of ideas
- Builds study skills
- Assists with note taking
- Encourages discussion
- Builds comprehension and vocabulary
In the story, Ba saves a lotus seed and carries it to a new land. The seed is special to her because it helps her remember a special person that she will no longer be able to see. The seed travels on a journey with Ba to her new home. She keeps the seed for many years, but then something happens that makes her think she lost the seed forever. As the story ends, she realizes that the seed has turned into a beautiful flower that she can share.

**Writing Prompts**

**RATIONALE**

- Organization of thoughts
- Provides a focus
- Leads to authentic writing
- Springboard for ideas
- Breaks up assignment into “manageable pieces”
- Enables development of written language
Lesson Preparation

Lesson Components

Language Objectives

Appropriate Content Concepts

Content Objectives

Adaptation of Content
Building Background Knowledge

Supplementary Materials

Meaningful Learning Tasks

Student Interaction

Authentic Assessment Tools
Sources

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Handouts

Multicultural Literature at
http://www.mtsu.edu/~kpatten1/NBCDI/Voices3_2.doc

Lecture at
http://www.mtsu.edu/~kpatten1/NBCDI/Multiculturalell.pdf