Growing

Language

& Literacy

STRATEGIES FOR SECONDARY
MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

Andrea Honigsfeld

This book is dedicated to every educator who encounters multilingual learners and offers them love, care, engagement, and support every day!

As with all my publications, I am also dedicating this book to my immediate family: My husband Howard, and my three boys, Benjamin, Jacob, and Noah, who continue to grow their many languages and literacies!

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Supporting STARTING Level Multilingual Learners

Meet *Starting* Level Secondary Multilingual Learners

> **However tall the mountain is, there is a road to the top of it.**
>
> **—AFGHAN PROVERB**

Meet two students, Amanita and Fayeq, who are at the starting level of their English language acquisition. Although they represent different cultural, linguistic, and academic experiences and they attend different schools at different grade levels, they share at least one common characteristic: they are both just beginning to learn English as a new language. As you read their stories, look for cultural, linguistic, and academic assets they possess and consider how you would build upon them. Notice if you have had students with similar backgrounds and responses to being new to secondary school in your context. Stop and reflect on what you would do to help these students get started with English while fully affirming their rich cultural and linguistic heritages, experiences, and identities. How would you welcome them to your classroom so they could be seen, heard, and valued rather than feel discouraged? How would you introduce new concepts and academic skills in a language yet to be acquired without overwhelming them?

Amanita

Amanita is a thoughtful, reserved ninth grader, born in Senegal as the oldest of four children. She was educated primarily in French, the official language of Senegal, and completed her preprimary and elementary levels of education and two years of her lower secondary grades (which was no longer compulsory, but her parents insisted). She especially enjoyed her geography classes and learning about different countries around the world as well as ways to protect the environment. Her family members speak Fula among themselves, but everyone in her extended community tends to be communicative in Wolof, too.

When they first arrived in the United States, they lived in a small one-bedroom rental in Little Senegal in New York City and immediately connected with other Senegalese families in the neighborhood. Amanita was asked to look after her younger sisters and little brother a lot, so she did not have much time to make new friends, but she did not really mind. She preferred to read and listen to music, especially to Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus.

For many generations, Amanita's ancestors, including her great grandparents, were nomadic people. Amanita's grandparents settled down in Podor, the northernmost town of Senegal, and a generation later, her parents ventured into America to have a better education and an opportunity for a professional future for their children. Amanita's mother has quickly established herself as a sought-after hairdresser while her father has been doing several odd jobs, including driving a taxi, volunteering as an interpreter at the Harlem Hospital, and helping out at the local mosque. Her family takes great pride in their traditions, customs, and religion and often cooks *thieboudienne* ("rice with fish") using an old family recipe to re-create the flavors of their homeland.

Amanita's younger siblings all entered the local elementary school together, so she felt relieved that they were safe and had each other and she no longer had to look over them. She had been yearning for more independence, yet she almost immediately became overwhelmed by the size of her new school, the buzz in the hallways, and the complicated schedule she was expected to follow. Just about everything felt so . . . different. Her guidance counselor sensed the tension in her when they first met and sought out another Senegalese student in her grade to connect with Amanita, and whenever possible, she aligned their schedules. Amanita started receiving stand-alone English as a new language (ENL) classes with other newcomers and was placed in an integrated English language arts class with two teachers. The rest of the school day often felt like a blur to her at first, so much moving around from class to class and teacher to teacher, but the frequent check-ins with her French-speaking science teacher helped her get through the toughest parts of the first few weeks. By the end of October, she began to follow along her math and science classes with a bit more confidence, but social studies continued to remain a daily challenge.

> → **STOP AND REFLECT** ←
> What were Amanita's greatest assets as a newcomer to the United States? What could you attribute her progress to? What would you do to further support her acclimation to her new environment and raise her confidence and success in all her courses?

Fayeq

Fayeq is a seventeen-year-old young man from Afghanistan whose family suffered greatly for decades through political and economic hardships. Some of his extended family members are unaccounted for, but most of the family fled to Turkey, seeking asylum or what the Turkish government calls "conditional refugee" status, designed for those needing international protection. Along with his father, mother, and two siblings, Fayeq was evacuated to the United States in the summer of 2021 under the Operation Allies Welcome program and got resettled in Virginia. The family needed a lot of support and guidance in understanding their rights, getting food and housing, accessing health services, enrolling the children in school, and exploring job opportunities for the adults.

Although Fayeq did quite well in school in Herat, his life had been in turmoil for some time, and he had not been able to focus on his education for several weeks before leaving Afghanistan in a hurry. Facebook was his main source of reading and accessing news about his homeland and some friends who were still there.

Fayeq's father has often reminded him to live up to his name, which means "outstanding" or "distinguished," and said that he has great hopes and high expectations for his only son. Fayeq's counselor explained to his parents that since he entered the U.S. school system in Virginia in eleventh grade, he had a reduced credit requirement to graduate, and the local school district's newcomer center would be the best place for him to start out. The center is specially designed to welcome secondary students like him and support them with the vast educational and cultural adjustments they need to make when they first arrive in the United States.

When Fayeq began his new school year in mid-September with minimal delay, he felt that things might start calming down a bit around him. But he misses riding his bike around the Old City of Herat. He understands some everyday English and can maintain a brief conversation with classmates and teachers, but he most appreciates having access to sports activities during and after his school day. His soccer coach has been looking out for him from day one, but it is even more important to him that his teammates have taken him right in, which has eased his frustration with school. He knows he will need to work hard to reach his goals: he is determined to graduate from high school with a standard diploma and seek further education in engineering.

> → STOP AND REFLECT ←
> **Why is it important to understand the complex experiences that Fayeq brings to school? In what ways should Fayeq's teachers respond to the trauma that he has lived through? What assets can his teachers tap into? What would you do to help him thrive in the newcomer center and beyond?**

Look Beyond the Label

As the label suggests, starting level students are uniquely positioned to begin a new journey, which is likely to be both exhilarating and—at times—exhausting for students and teachers alike! When starting level secondary students enter the U.S. school system and are assessed for language proficiency, they may produce minimal, formulaic language ("Thank you," "Hello") in English or nothing at all, and they may not recognize what is being spoken or read to them. They may be able to identify many written words that are internationally known and frequently appear as part of the environmental print (for example, a stop sign; some brand names with logos, such as Coca-Cola, Nike, and Microsoft; and names of common tech tools or apps, like iPad, Instagram, and Twitter). These students have vast life and language experiences connected to their birth countries and home cultures, so welcoming them as resources and valued members in their new school and classroom community is vital for them not only to survive but to thrive.

Let's also recognize that starting level students come with a wide range of educational background experiences; they may be "at all different ages and with many unique needs, including having experienced gaps in formal schooling (SLIFE students), having fled dangerous situations (refugees and others), having disabilities, and being in the U.S. without parents (unaccompanied minors)" (Umansky et al. 2018, 24). Some might carry years of trauma and unimaginable tragedies; others might have arrived as academically accomplished teenagers having had a variety of advanced learning opportunities as well as high levels of understanding and skills in some core content areas such as math and science. Many are already bilingual, biliterate, or bidialectal, while some might even be multilingual. They all bring their hopes and dreams, fears and inhibitions, unique talents and interests, spirit, and resiliency with them. While researching how to facilitate meaning making for refugee-background youth (RBY), Carrie Symons and Yue Bian (2022) remind us of the need for "researchers, practitioners, and community organizations to work together to design educational experiences and environments that are affirming and responsive to RBY's unique assets, forms of knowledge, approaches to meaning-making, and learning needs" (2). I would argue that same urgency applies to welcoming all newcomers.

Since many starting level students—though not all of them—are recent arrivals, they are likely to benefit from consistent, predictable routines and structures in your classroom. With careful scaffolding, ample visual support, and attention to creating a context for learning and building background knowledge (that either they possess or you purposefully build about everyday topics or academic content), they can gain an overall understanding of what you present in your class. They begin to use words, phrases, and short sentences that they may have memorized as a chunk of language

(e.g., "Can you help me, please?" "Can I use the bathroom?") with increasing confidence. They are just starting to develop foundational language and literacy skills in English, hence the name *starting.*

Elizabeth Choi and her colleagues welcome newcomers in their middle school with a friendly document using lots of home language support. See Figure 1–1 for the cover page of their welcome kit, which includes words in Spanish, Korean, and Japanese while also teaching some necessary English words.

Some students may start out on the same level for the four key language domains, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing; others may have some receptive—also referred to as interpretive—skills gained through some prior experience with English or familiarity with popular songs, movies, or video games. Yet others might have had limited or no prior exposure to either formal or informal English. Soon enough, you can observe that most newcomers are beginning to understand and process what is happening around them and what is being spoken or read to them. Make sure you not only attend to all four language domains but add visual access points and invite visual representations. Notice how their interpretive skills (especially listening) tend to develop more rapidly than the productive—also referred to as expressive—language skills (speaking and writing). The trajectory of certain literacy skills is also predictable: figuring out the English alphabet if their home language uses a different orthography may come earlier than developing reading comprehension skills, yet rich visual support will help them understand the gist of your lessons. Similarly, you should expect students to use shorter verbal expressions and visual note-taking and multimodal, multilingual communication before they write in English with cohesion or fluency.

Many of your starting level secondary students will demonstrate accelerated growth and relatively fast advancement to the next level, called emerging (see Chapter 2), whereas others will need additional time to show the progress they are making because of multiple interconnected academic, linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional reasons. Keep the following mantra in mind: "*lower is faster, higher is slower*" (Sahakyan 2013, 2). This research-informed principle suggests that multilingual learners in lower grades and those who are at lower proficiency levels (starting and emerging, and even developing) tend to acquire language at faster rates, whereas those in higher grades or at higher proficiency levels (such as developing and expanding levels or above) will experience a slower rate of growth. Patience and perseverance—yours and theirs—are much-needed resources.

As you can see in Figure 1–2, the starting level of language proficiency has many other labels, depending on the theoretical framework you refer to, the state or country you live in, or the language development standards you use. Keep in mind that the descriptions for each category by the various professional organizations will be rather similar but might not completely overlap.

Welcome to Farragut Middle School!

This paper contains important information that will help you be successful.

Este documento contiene información importante que le ayudará a tener éxito.

이 백서에는 성공하는 데 도움이 되는 중요한 정보가 포함되어 있습니다.

このペーパーには、成功に役立つ重要な情報が含まれています。

Your Grade	Your Pod	Homeroom Teacher: Room:
Student Number (ID)		Chromebook Username: Password:
Lunch Time	Lunch Code	Bus Number: AM Pick-up: PM Pick-up:

Helpful Phrases in English

Good morning	I don't understand.
Buenos días 좋은 아침 おはよう	No entiendo. 모르겠어요 理解できない
Please show me.	I need help.
Por favor, muéstrame 보여주세요 を見せて下さい	Necesito ayuda. 도움이 필요해 私は助けが必要です
Thank you	May I use the restroom?
Gracias 고맙습니다 ありがとうございました	¿Puedo usar el baño? 화장실 사용해도 되겠습니까? お手洗いを使ってもいいですか？

Figure 1–1 Welcome Kit

Other Labels for Starting Level		
TESOL	**Hill and Miller (2014)**	**WIDA**
Starting	Preproduction	Entering

ELPA (2016)	**New York**	**California**	**Texas**
Emerging	Entering	Emerging	Beginner

Figure 1–2

Consider What the Research Says

The stage of language acquisition referred to as *starting* in this book was first described as *preproduction* by Krashen and Terrell (1983). The preproduction stage (sometimes also referred to as the silent period) may last up to six months, and it is often characterized by—as its name suggests—accumulating receptive language skills but not yet producing any or much language in spoken or written form. Not all starting level students may need several months to advance to the next level, so be prepared for vast individual variances. As beautifully stated by Ohta (2001), the "seemingly silent learner is neither passive nor disengaged but is involved in an intrapersonal interactive process" (12). The heart and mind are never silent! You might wonder what you can do about this. Advancing through the first stage of language development is a complex process, so I invite you to embrace your role as a linguistic and cultural mediator and language facilitator: you can mediate the intrapersonal linguistic process by providing multidimensional modes of communication and learning opportunities while honoring the learners' private speech, including internal thoughts and (*seemingly*) silent participation in learning. Figure 1–3 shows how one newcomer demonstrated his understanding visually. When secondary ELL teacher Andrea Bitner asked her beginners to write down what they knew about ants, they offered a few words. Then one student came up to the whiteboard and produced a complex drawing, revealing his knowledge and understanding of ant colonies.
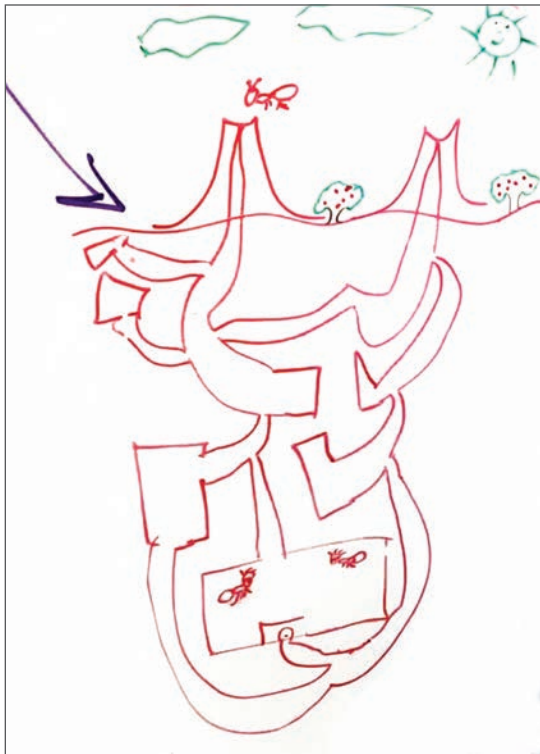
Figure 1–3 Starting Level Student Demonstrating Complex Understanding

Research has also well documented that starting level students' home languages and identities are critical resources. Gholdy Muhammad's (2020) passionate call to educators to fully embrace a historically responsive literacy is also applicable to multilingual starting level students: let's commit to exploring and building on the histories, cultures, identities, literacies, and language practices of students so they can all develop a strong sense of belonging.

An important finding from research on bilingualism is relevant for all MLs, especially for those who do not yet communicate in English. Christensen (2010) suggests that "by bringing students' languages from their homes into the classroom, we validate their culture and their history as topics worthy of study" (33). Other research shows that students authentically engage in multilingual practices for both social and academic purposes and both individually and collaboratively (French 2018).

More recently, Mandy Stewart and her colleagues (2021) researched disciplinary literacy and multilingualism in the high school context and concluded that "in place of official bilingual education programs that cannot account for all languages in a diverse environment, a more practical approach might be to apply a translingual literacy lens" (182), which includes understanding how multilingualism works and opening a learning space up to multilingual engagement. The best part: you don't have to be multilingual as an educator to do this (although you might find it affirming and exciting to dabble in multiple languages and let your students teach you some important phrases).

An important research-informed practice is to create a supportive environment for all students by valuing not just bilingualism in an individual person but plurilingualism in the community (Dover and Rodríguez-Valls 2022). My call to action to you is to make all students' linguistic heritages and language practices visible and valued. When students' home languages are used and affirmed in school, their emer-

gent bilingual and bicultural identities are also affirmed, and the bridge to learning English is established. Among many others, Fred Genesee (2023), Valentina Gonzalez (2022), and Elsa Billings and Aída Walqui (2021) firmly advocate for recognizing multilingual learners' home languages as valuable resources. I invite you to support English acquisition through your students' home language use by exploring connections (including cognates and other similarities) between students' home languages and English; comparing how certain grammatical structures work in English versus in the home language (e.g., Spanish places the adjectives after, not before, the nouns), thus raising metalinguistic awareness; letting students choose whether to complete some tasks such as a prewriting activity in English or in the home language; and creating bilingual peer bridges for in-class discussions.

Most recently, Kristen McInerney (2023), professor of curriculum and pedagogy at George Washington University, has reported that through home language use during peer-to-peer interaction, newcomers "explained, clarified confusion, took the initiative of helping others, called and texted peers to get them into virtual classes, and made friends while helping each other out" (22); thus they began to participate in academic and social encounters while building a sense of community.

Understand Starting Level Learners

Most starting level secondary students are newcomers to the United States. Many students have grown up in complex cultural and linguistic contexts provided by their parents and extended family members. They might have had exposure to some U.S. cultural and linguistic experiences through social media or pop culture. With this in mind, let's look at what positive expectations you can have for starting level students or, as aptly put by WIDA (2020), what these students *can do*. These accomplishments are not expected on the very first day or even in the first weeks; some will develop over the course of many days, weeks, or even months. Also keep in mind that the actual list of what students can do is much longer and much more elaborate than any book could capture, so enjoy this journey of exploration with your starting level students.

When it comes to *listening*, you can expect students to begin to show evidence of comprehending English by doing the following:

→ responding with gestures rather than words (nodding, shaking their heads, making hand gestures)

→ responding nonverbally to simple, frequently used classroom commands ("Come here!")

→ identifying classmates and teachers by their names

→ becoming familiar with the sounds and rhythms of the English language

→ recognize everyday classroom language (words and short phrases) associated with daily routines, and directions given by teachers (*open your books*, *agenda, do now, exit slip, homework*)

→ recognizing and responding to formulaic language ("Hello," "Thank you," "How are you?")

Regarding *speaking* skills, you will notice that students initially respond and communicate nonverbally by nodding, gesturing, or choosing to communicate in their home language. They will incrementally expand their English-speaking skills by doing the following:

→ offering one-word answers such as "Yes" and "No"

→ code switching or translanguaging (using their home language intertwined with some English words) for communication in response to English prompts (see more discussion of translanguaging in Chapter 2)

→ repeating words and phrases commonly used by others in familiar settings ("I forgot my homework")

→ calling their teachers and classmates by name

→ using formulaic language ("I don't understand," "Can you help me, please?")

In Jennifer Edwards' classes, students regularly interact with each other to make sense of visually presented material (see Figure 1–4).

When it comes to *reading*, some students are likely to be nonreaders in English, whereas others will readily build on and transfer their literacy skills from their home languages. At this stage, I would anticipate them to develop some foundational skills such as the following:

→ reading environmental print (exit sign, classroom labels, anchor chart headings)

→ relying on visual literacy skills or visual support for understanding what others read aloud or present verbally to them

Figure 1–4   Students Make Sense of a Graph Together

→ recognizing the letters of the English alphabet (when coming from a different writing system)

→ making letter-sound connections

→ recognizing high-frequency words

→ enjoying visually rich presentations that are well supported with other nonverbal cues

→ using bilingual dictionaries to look up words

Finally, in the area of *writing,* students may begin to do the following:

→ form letters of the English alphabet (when coming from a different writing system)

→ print frequently used words including their names or headings for student work

→ copy words or longer texts

→ draw sketches or diagrams using their home language and literacy skills

→ create illustrations or other graphic representations of their ideas with word labels in English or both of their languages

→ write in their home language and add labels or key words in English

Consider your expectations for starting level students. Secondary students are resourceful, which is a really good thing: they need to use all the resources available in their home languages, accessible through their in-school and out-of-school support systems, and manageable through the power of their own resilience and determination. They also need meaningful exposure to English to begin to comprehend and respond to what you're presenting or exploring in your classroom. They are most likely to succeed and progress when support is given in *multiple* ways, in *multiple* languages, and through *multiple* modalities. For example, I would engage Amanita from the beginning of the chapter in all the languages available to her. She will build English language skills through accessing her prior knowledge, engaging in teacher-guided and peer-supported short yet rigorous explorations, and participating in purposeful small- and large-group discussions that may include French and English language use. She can use simple sentences to explain what she has read with the help of sentence starters and patterned language. She can also count on getting emotional support from other Senegalese students through an after-school culture club. To support Fayeq, I would create a range of meaningful, interactive, visually supported learning opportunities as well as ways for him to express his ideas through sketching. Although he might not be able to use English at the eleventh-grade level, I would challenge him cognitively and give him every chance to think at grade level as he encountered complex content through visuals, digital media, multilingual resources, and peer interactions.

Begin Here with Starting Level Students

Starting level students will be best supported through teaching techniques that are multidimensional linguistically, culturally, and academically. For example, students will access learning activities that allow them to be fully engaged by listening to others (both teachers and peers) discuss something they can start to figure out, make sense of, and relate to. They can also watch and listen to digital recordings that are carefully *created* (you make it) or *curated* (you find it) to make sure the students can access them and simultaneously process the visual and verbal inputs (see more on technology integration later in the chapter). When it comes to contributing to class, multidimensionality means that you find ways for students to participate without being pressured to use English, such as expressing themselves in their home language or another language they are communicative in by working with language partners, nonverbally using TPR (total physical response), visually, artistically, or through movement. If they are literate in a language other than English, encouraging students to use that language is critical for academic, cultural, social-emotional, and linguistic development.

When you have students at the starting level in your class, make sure that they feel welcome and included in the classroom and school community. Three practices to implement are (1) establishing a support system, (2) using what is familiar to your new students as a primary source of—and essential link to—learning, and (3) building basic comprehension and communicative language in English.

Establish a Support System

When you have a new student in your class, regardless of the age or background, that student is likely to face some challenges as they begin to adjust to the new school and classroom environment, accept the changes in routines, understand the social and academic expectations, adhere to the written and unwritten rules of being a student, make new friends, and build trust in relationships with both peers and adults. When your new student is a multilingual learner, the situation may be exacerbated by cultural and linguistic differences, so an important first step is to help the student develop a sense of belonging by creating a safe and welcoming environment.

Based on her research with secondary-age newcomers, Lisa Auslander (2022) reported that "students described collaboration as one of their lifelines, because it allowed them to be part of a larger community of learners, to feel a sense of belonging, and to encourage a willingness to take risks" (4). Students can build relationships one classmate at a time in a more systematic way if you assign various roles to a number of peers in your classroom:

→ A *language partner* will do just what the name suggests: use all of the available languages and linguistic resources such as code switching and translanguaging to communicate essential information.

→ A *literacy partner* will read with the classmate and share their writing with the multilingual student while also offering encouragement for home language use.

→ A *study partner* will review and practice in-class and homework assignments.

→ A *writing partner* will discuss the prompt, brainstorm ideas, draft through translanguaging, sketchnote together, write collaboratively, offer peer feedback to early drafts, and help with revising and editing.

Experienced international educator Alycia Owen suggests that you set up peer-led school tours that include introductions to key personnel such as the guidance

counsinsg, principal, nurse, librarian, and coaches as well as peer support for using a printed schedule showing class rotations and navigating special events like assemblies and extracurricular activities such as clubs and sports. High school ELL teacher Yuriko Gray helps her newcomers acclimate to school while also building community through role-playing (see Figure 1–5).

It is helpful if the partner system includes students who speak the same language as your newcomer, but it may not be possible in many classrooms. It is always a good idea to ask students to volunteer to be a buddy and to select ones who are known to be patient, empathetic, and more than willing to take risks and learn from their peers. Also, remember to regularly check in with the partners and change them up so more students have the opportunity to help. Based on the class dynamics, you may want to create a system that includes all your students or rotate the partners to expand the opportunities for positive student-to-student interactions across cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Partnering MLs with others is a strong way to build peer acceptance and leadership skills among the more proficient students in the class while enhancing a positive class culture where everyone can thrive. Just imagine the many ways students can contribute to peer learning experiences. For example, "collaborative posters can be a productive way for students to demonstrate leadership in working with a group, apply artistic skills, discuss ideas in the home language and present ways that ideas connect visually" (Auslander 2022, 3–4).

Capitalize on Familiarity

More than any other group of MLs, starting level students need to feel that they belong and can learn English while their home cultures and languages are also affirmed. Imagine that you are an adolescent. You are trying to figure out who you are in this world and define your identity, but then you move to a place where not too many people understand your inner struggles, know the joys, hopes, and dreams you have grown up with, share the customs and holidays that your family cherishes, or enjoy the food that nourished you. How would you adjust to a new environment?

One powerful way you can welcome newcomers is by making them feel a strong sense of belonging and incorporating resources into your teaching that will be familiar to them. Start by learning to say all your students' names correctly and finding out the meaning or significance of their names. This reminds me of so many literary works (or relevant excerpts from them) you can explore with your students: *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri (2003), *My Name Is Jorge: On Both Sides of the River*, by Jane Medina (1999), *Darius the Great Is Not Okay*, by Adib Khorram (2019), *Don't Ask Me Where I Am From*, by Jennifer Leon (2020), just to

Role-Playing Practice Script	
ROLES	**LINES**
New Student	Hi. I am new here.
Student 1	Hello. I can help you. What is your name?
New Student	My name is _____.
Student 2	Excuse me. Please spell your name for me.
New Student	A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I-J-K-L-M-N-O-P-Q-R-S-T-U-V-W-X-Y-Z.
Student 1	Thank you. My name is _____. Nice to meet you.
Student 2	My name is _____. Good to meet you.
New Student	I need help. I want to go to class.
Student 3	Do you have a program? It looks like this.
New Student	Yes.
Student 4	Do you want help with your program?
New Student	Yes, please help me.
Students 3 & 4	OK. Show us your program.
New Student	Here is my program.
Student 1	First period is from 8:15 to 9 o'clock.
	Look at my clock and I will show you 8:15.
Student 2	Second period is from 9:03 to 9:48.
	Look at my clock and I will show you 9:03.
Student 3	Third period is from 9:51 to 10:36.
	Look at my clock and I will show you 9:51.
Student 4	Fourth period is from 10:39 to 11:24.
	Look at my clock and I will show you 10:39

Figure 1–5

name a few. Most recently I read *Silk Tether* by Minal Khan (2016), in which she reflects on the importance of one's name:

> *What's in a name? Everything, I thought. It is a birth-given label, like a barcode on every book that, though we may like it or not, distinguishes us. It gives us security. We are living in a globalized world now, where people take on multiple identities as easily as trying out new outfits. Our name is now the only real, permanent truth to us. (ebook, Chapter 8)*

→ Learn some key phrases such as "Welcome," "Glad to see you," and "I am your math [science/social studies/language arts] teacher" in your new student's home language. Better yet, continue to learn phrases from your student by inviting them to be your teacher.

→ Create a word wall that has some welcoming words or content-specific key concepts in every language represented in your classroom.

→ Use images (photos, sketchnotes, diagrams, videos) that your starting level students can recognize when you illustrate key concepts.

→ Integrate starting level students into small-group discussion tasks by using "themes and essential questions to leverage students' prior knowledge and experience" (Auslander 2022, 2).

→ When establishing classroom routines and procedures, incorporate print and visual cues and digital reminders.

→ Teach words and phrases directly related to the class and school environment. Thorpe (2017) also suggests to "use the students' immediate surroundings to expand their vocabulary" (18).

Moll and his colleagues' (1992) seminal work focuses on recognizing that all students come to school with tremendous knowledge derived from home- and community-based shared experiences that are often unrelated to the taught curriculum and skills needed for academic success. Moll calls this *funds of knowledge*. When the knowledge students accumulate at home or through their vast out-of-school experiences is connected to who they are, the term used is *funds of identity*. Esteban-Guitart and Moll

(2014) suggest that "funds of knowledge—bodies of knowledge and skills that are essential for the well-being of an entire household—become funds of identity when people actively use them to define themselves" (31). When we recognize students' funds of knowledge, we encourage them to feel valued by connecting their learning with the cultural knowledge they bring to school. Funds of knowledge and funds of identity are rich "tool kits" (73) created from the students' lived experiences.

When a newcomer enters your classroom, embrace what they know and who they are and consider them as a major source of information as well as a way to bridge to the curriculum, the new culture, and the language they are about to acquire (Helman et al. 2016; Salva 2017; Samway, Pease-Alvarez, and Alvarez 2020). Consider all the ways you can help your MLs see aspects of their out-of-school cultural and linguistic experiences reflected in the school environment and the learning activities. Some of these suggestions impact the larger school community, so your role might be to advocate on behalf of MLs to ensure the school does the following:

→ Place signs around the building welcoming students and families in all the languages spoken in the community.

→ Prepare infographics, information booklets, or English Language Development (ELD) handbooks, in all the languages spoken in the community.

→ Make sure school staff feel comfortable greeting and interacting with adults who do not speak English well, using cues and resources that illustrate frequently communicated processes.

→ Make online resources on the school or district website and digital media available in languages other than English.

→ Make interpreters available on site or on call as needed to support family meetings.

→ Have student ambassadors who welcome new students into the school community, offer tours of the building, and join the new students at recess and other unstructured times.

→ Let students tell their personal stories, make connections to text—both fiction and nonfiction—and make sense of their way of life at home.

Middle and high school emergent bilingual specialist Michelle Preng works with interpreters to hold learning events for newcomer families. Students and

Figure 1–6 Family Members Learning Together

caregivers learn how to access and utilize the school's learning management system and how to help support their students from home (see Figure 1–6).

Newcomers benefit from a positive welcoming experience within the first few weeks of their arrival, including individual meetings with a designated guidance counselor and family liaison and attending a new student orientation for students and their caregivers. A newcomer kit or welcome kit may also be a helpful resource with some key information (Colorín Colorado n.d.). A kit might include guidance regarding

→ how to navigate the school: a colorful map that shows where to find some key places (bathrooms, nurse's room, cafeteria)

→ how to find the various classrooms: classroom location and teacher's name and phone number or email

→ routines regarding arrival and dismissal—especially if busing is involved and MLs need to find their way to the correct school bus

→ routines and expectations about lunch time

→ a list of key community-based organizations and resources such as names and numbers of other families who have volunteered to offer help

→ a basic English dictionary of key words, phrases, and sentences translated into the student's home language

→ information for parents in languages they understand

See Figure 1–7 for an excerpt from the newcomer welcome packet that Pam Schwallier, director of EL and bilingual programs at West Ottawa Public Schools, created.