

# WHY YOU NEED THIS BOOK TO SUPPORT MLs



Times have changed. In the past, English language development (ELD) teachers tended to physically remove multilingual learners (MLs) from the content or grade-level teachers' classrooms, providing them ELD instruction in a separate location (sometimes a closet, a hallway, or a basement room). Now, many schools, districts, and states have shifted to integrated instructional models in which MLs spend the majority—if not all of—their time with their grade-level peers. In this integrated model, ELD teachers and content teachers collaborate and/or coteach to share the responsibility (and the joy) of teaching both content and academic language to MLs (Staehr Fenner, 2014a).

Research clearly demonstrates the benefits of integrating the instruction of grade-level content and academic language for MLs (August, 2018). At the same time, we also want to acknowledge how much teachers have on their plates these days—content teaching, literacy and language development, and social-emotional support (just to name a few educational priorities). In order to be able to effectively incorporate ML instructional strategies to support content learning and integrate ELD opportunities, content teachers need models, practice, and guidance. Similarly, in order for ELD teachers to be able to share their expertise on language development and scaffolded instruction, they need assistance in how to effectively collaborate with content teachers in support of MLs. It is also critical that they be part of a school culture that values their expertise and that they have the time for effective collaboration to take place (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2022). Based on our work with MLs, our collaboration with ML educators in a wide variety of roles, and our review of research in the field, we have developed a framework for equitable ML education that we present in this chapter.

In this chapter, we will first provide an overview of who MLs are. Next, we will outline the sense of urgency in providing MLs the instruction that they need to be successful in today's challenging classrooms and also be respected and valued on a social-emotional level. The bulk of the chapter will focus on the five core beliefs that frame the content of this book, as well as all of our work with MLs. For each core

belief, we provide a brief research-based rationale for the belief, as well as practical tools for you to use to apply the core belief to your own practice. The chapter ends with the opportunity for you to develop your own core beliefs, create a grade-level team, department, school, or district vision for the equitable education of MLs, and craft your own “elevator speech” to define your role in unlocking MLs’ potential.

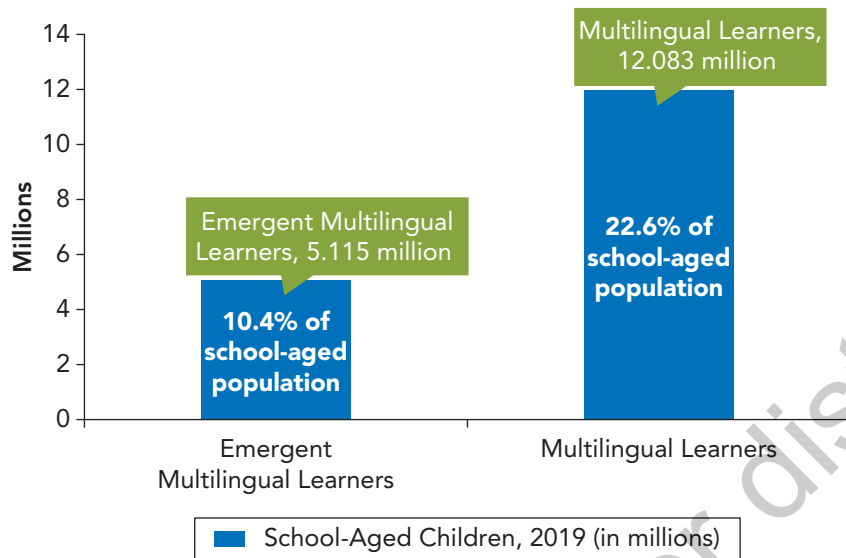
## Who Are MLs?

As we mentioned in the “What’s New in This Edition?” introduction to this book, one shift that we have made in the second edition is using the term multilingual learner to replace English learner. This shift in terminology represents a more assets-based view of students as the term *English learner* “prioritize[s] English as the student’s language, while ignoring the additional language(s) a student may already speak or may be developing” (Columbo et al., 2018). In contrast, the term *ML* brings to the forefront the understanding that regardless of their level of English proficiency, each student (or learner) enters the classroom with valuable cultural and linguistic assets. Several state agencies and national organizations (e.g., National Association of English Learner Program Administrators [NAELPA], TESOL International Association, and WIDA) have adopted the term *ML*.

In discussing terminology, it’s important to note that the term *ML* incorporates a broader group of students than the term *EL*. **MLs are any students whose parents or guardians report speaking one or more language(s) other than or in addition to English in the home. MLs may or may not qualify for ELD services due to their level of English proficiency** (Snyder et al., 2023; Snyder & Staehr Fenner, 2021). In order to distinguish between MLs as a whole and MLs who qualify for ELD services, particularly in the discussion of data on a nationwide level, we use the term *emergent ML*. **Emergent MLs are MLs who qualify for ELD services. The federal government identifies these students using the term *English learners*.** Let’s take a look at what this distinction means in terms of numbers of students. In the 2019–2020 school year, over five million, or more than 10 percent, of the school-aged population was eligible to receive specialized ELD services (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). In that same year, more than twelve million or nearly 23 percent of children ages 5–17 in the United States were identified as MLs, as reported in the U.S. census data. In Figure 1.1 you can see that more than double the number of students who qualified for ELD services are considered to be MLs.

As is often the case when discussing terminology, this shift to the use of *ML* is not without its challenges (Snyder et al., 2023). Dr. Julie Sugarman, senior policy analyst for PreK–12 education at the Migration Policy Institute’s National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, explains, “while it’s helpful to have an overarching term for all students with exposure to or fluency in multiple languages, it’s also really important to remember that students who are identified as English learners with the federal definition have protections and learning needs that states, districts, and schools are legally obligated to manage.” (personal communication, February 13, 2023, as cited in Snyder et al., 2023).

**FIGURE 1.1 POPULATION OF EMERGENT MLs AND ML SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES**



*Sources:* National Center for Education Statistics (2021); U.S. Census Bureau (2019a); U.S. Census Bureau (2019b).

We also agree that while it is critical to use language that fosters an assets-based view of students, it is also essential to make sure that the specific strengths and needs of individual MLs are identified and responded to. In this book, we explore many strategies (e.g., peer learning, academic-language instruction) that are beneficial to MLs regardless of their level of language proficiency in English. However, we also take steps to highlight strategies that are specific to emergent MLs at varying stages of English language development (ELD). We make these distinctions by using the term *emergent ML*, by including English language proficiency (ELP) levels in our scenarios, by incorporating an ML Newcomer Student and SLIFE section at the end of each chapter, and by highlighting ELP levels in our scaffolding framework. With the reflection questions that follow, consider the terminology that is used in your district.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. What terminology does your district use to describe students whose parents or guardians report speaking one or more language(s) other than or in addition to English in the home?
2. What terminology does your district use to describe students who qualify for ELD services based on their level of English proficiency?
3. What procedures does your district have in place to identify the unique strengths and needs of individual MLs?



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The need for assets-based terminology when referring to MLs is just one piece of a broader and urgent appeal to support MLs' equitable and excellent education.

## What Is the Sense of Urgency Around MLs' Equitable and Excellent Education?

Our sense of urgency for this book stems from our work with teachers and MLs across the United States and Canada and our synthesis of current research and practice. Issues of inequitable educational opportunities that have long been present in our schools were brought to the forefront in recent years for MLs, students of color, students receiving special educational services, and students coming from low socioeconomic backgrounds, among others. These students were disproportionately impacted by school closures, shifts to virtual learning, rising living costs, and other factors impacting students' physical and mental well-being (Sahakyan & Cook, 2021; U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2021; Villegas & Garcia, 2022). Two areas of continued inequity for MLs include their educational outcomes and opportunities and their access to qualified teachers and administrators who share their cultural and linguistic backgrounds or have training in meeting the needs of MLs. We will explore these two areas next.

### Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for MLs

MLs tend to experience significant gaps in educational opportunities and outcomes. While it is difficult to find disaggregated data for MLs as a whole, data specific to emergent MLs (MLs qualifying for ELD services) highlights several areas of inequity. Emergent MLs as a subgroup achieve below national averages for student proficiency rates on state math, language arts, and science exams (Office of English Language Acquisition [OELA], 2021d). However, it is essential to keep in mind that emergent MLs are a dynamic group with students being reclassified as they gain English proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). In fact, there is growing evidence in some states to show that students who formerly qualified for ELD services and have been reclassified are outperforming native English speakers who never qualified for ELD services (Jorgensen, 2019; U.S. Department of Education, 2023; Villegas & Ibarra, 2022).

Additionally, emergent MLs tend to be underrepresented in honors and gifted programs as well as Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes (OELA, 2021b, 2021c). During the 2017-2018 school year, only 1.5 percent of emergent MLs were enrolled in gifted and talented programs compared to 7.2 percent of students who were not emergent MLs (OELA, 2021c). Similarly, during the 2017-2018 school year, fewer than one in ten emergent MLs were enrolled in AP courses when these courses were offered by their school compared to more than one in five students overall (OELA, 2021b). Emergent

MLs are also underrepresented in dual enrollment courses, which are courses in which students simultaneously earn credit for both a high school diploma and a college degree. In 2017-2018, fewer than 4 percent of emergent MLs were enrolled in dual enrollment courses compared to 11 percent of the total school population (OELA, 2022).

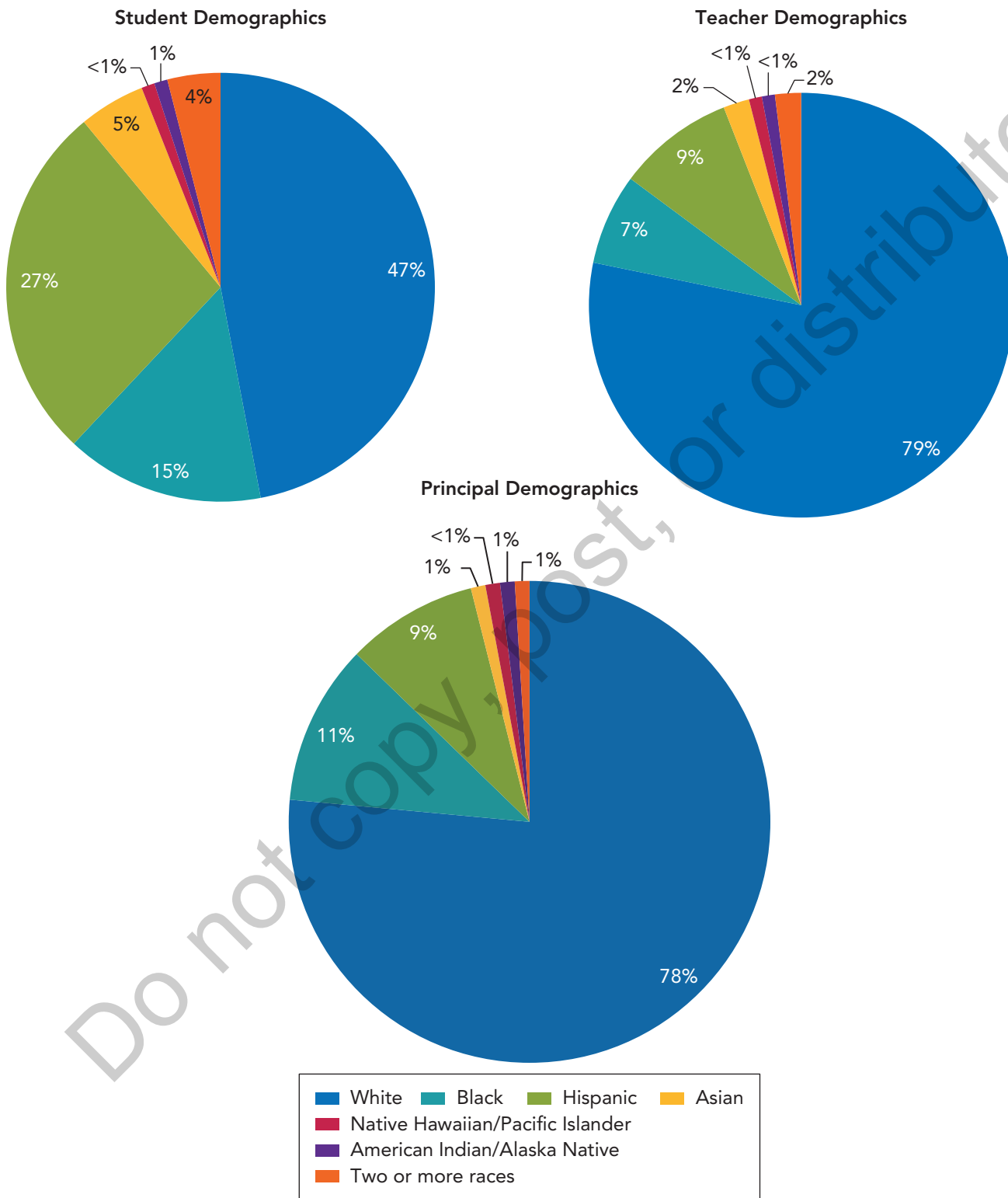
These types of inequities also extend to ML student retention rates. In Grades K-12, emergent MLs represented 10 percent of students enrolled in public schools nationwide but 14.3 percent of students retained during the 2017-2018 school year (OELA, 2021a). While we have provided a national overview of some areas of inequities for MLs, we encourage you to review similar data for your school or district in order to identify where advocacy for MLs might be needed.

### Teacher Demographics and Professional Development

A second area of inequity for MLs is that many MLs do not have teachers who represent their racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds (Ingersoll et al., 2018). The number of teachers of color is increasing nationally in the United States. However, there still remains a noteworthy gap between the percentages of students of color and the percentages of teachers of color in U.S. public schools (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Schaeffer, 2021). During the 2018-2019 school year, 47 percent of U.S. public school students identified as non-Hispanic white, 27 percent as Hispanic, 15 percent as Black, and 5 percent as Asian. Approximately 1 percent or fewer identified as Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaska Native; and around 4 percent were of two or more races (Schaeffer, 2021). In contrast, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) data show that 79 percent of public school teachers identified as non-Hispanic white during the 2017-2018 school year (Schaeffer, 2021). Additionally, 7 percent identified as Black, 9 percent as Hispanic, 2 percent as Asian American, and fewer than 2 percent of teachers identified either as American Indian or Alaska Native, Pacific Islander, or of two or more races. There are similar patterns for racial and ethnic diversity in principals. In 2017-2018, approximately 78 percent of principals were non-Hispanic white, compared with 11 percent who were Black, 9 percent who were Hispanic, and 1 percent who were Asian American (Schaeffer, 2021). Figure 1.2 illustrates this gap.

Although a common racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background is not a prerequisite for effective instruction of MLs, the fact that a significant percentage of educators are white, middle class monolinguals does emphasize the need for educator professional development centered on effective teaching and social-emotional support for MLs. In order to bolster educational opportunities and respond to educational inequities for MLs, teachers must value MLs' cultural and linguistic assets and be prepared to use and sustain students' assets during instruction (Banks & Banks, 2019; Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings,

**FIGURE 1.2 RACIAL AND ETHNIC MAKE-UP OF PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND PRINCIPALS<sup>1</sup>**



Sources: Schaffer, K. (2021), National Center for Education Statistics (2022).

<sup>1</sup>These percentages are approximates based on available data.

2004; Paris & Alim, 2017). ML equity and excellence extends to our moral obligation as educators to ensure that our MLs, who often navigate complex, conflicting cultural balances between home and school, are supported on a social-emotional, holistic level (Staehr Fenner & Teich, in press). MLs must know that their teachers are providing a safe space in which they can learn and also trust their teachers enough to reach out to them if a personal factor is presenting a barrier to their learning. At a time in which concerns about student mental health and well-being have reached a crisis point, we must be especially vigilant and collaborate to provide a support network for our MLs, who may be recovering from trauma, and encourage them to learn and thrive on many levels. The types of student-teacher relationships that will foster this safe space begin in the classroom and set the stage for MLs to feel valued, a part of the community, and ready to learn (Staehr Fenner & Teich, in press).

Despite the fact that numbers of MLs continues to rise, the number of certified ELD educators has decreased (Najarro, 2023). During SY 2017–2018, 32 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico did not meet their projected needs for bilingual or ELD teachers (OELA, 2021a). Furthermore, in an analysis that we conducted in 2020, we found that only four states have teacher recertification requirements for general-education teachers that included professional development on instructional practices for MLs (Duggan et al., 2020). Thus, there is an urgent need for professional development to support educators as they become prepared for and invested in working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and families in service to a more equitable and excellent education for MLs.

## What Is the Framework for Equitable and Excellent ML Education?

Through our work with all educators who serve MLs—including content teachers, ELD teachers, specials teachers, school counselors, administrators, and others—we recognize the importance of a framework that identifies and addresses the need for all teachers to adjust their instruction to recognize MLs' strengths, as well as to support their needs. This framework for equitable and excellent ML education encompasses many areas related to instruction that are necessary for MLs to meaningfully engage in challenging content classes and develop their language skills. In addition, our framework is unique in that it also recognizes the need for all teachers of MLs to collaborate and operate within a context of equity, advocacy, and leadership to continually develop as professionals in order to best support MLs. The framework is driven by our five core beliefs. Figure 1.3 provides a visual representation of the framework.

FIGURE 1.3 FRAMEWORK FOR EQUITABLE AND EXCELLENT ML EDUCATION



### What Are the Core Beliefs That We Use to Frame Our Work With MLs and This Book?

In our work supporting MLs and their teachers, we often analyze complex educational issues and try to make sense of them as they apply to MLs, phrasing our findings and recommendations in a way that resonates with educators in different roles. Along those lines, we have developed a set of five core beliefs that synthesize our beliefs, grounded in research and practice, about the education of MLs. You will see these core beliefs exemplified in our recommendations and strategies throughout the chapters of this book. In this chapter, for each core



belief, we provide an explanation of what that belief means to us, we briefly share the research on which it is based, and we also leave you with reflection questions and practical tools that you can use to support your understanding of each core belief as it applies to your context. Our core beliefs are as follows:

1. MLs bring many strengths to the classroom.
2. MLs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate.
3. MLs acquire language and content when teachers purposefully integrate language development opportunities into meaningful content instruction.
4. MLs thrive when their teachers include opportunities for peer learning and meaningful conversations.
5. MLs excel when teachers and administrators collaborate, advocate, and lead in support of their students' academic achievement and social-emotional well-being.

### **Core Belief 1: MLs bring many strengths to the classroom.**

MLs enter the classroom with diverse cultural and linguistic experiences that we feel are often unintentionally overlooked or underappreciated by their schools and teachers. In order to effectively educate MLs, it is important to first recognize the knowledge and skills that they already have and what they bring to the educational landscape. Moll et al. (1992) coined the term **funds of knowledge** to refer to these **accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills that MLs bring to the classroom**. MLs' home languages, knowledge, and cultural assets should be incorporated into instruction, so as to honor students' backgrounds and experiences, sustain their cultural and linguistic practices, and support their academic learning (August, 2018; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine [NASEM], 2017; Paris & Alim, 2017). For example, refugee students may enter the U.S. education system with gaps in their education due to interrupted schooling, emerging literacy skills in their home language, and beginner-level English language proficiency (ELP). However, those same students might bring with them a passionate desire to learn, a strong oral tradition of sharing knowledge, persistence in overcoming obstacles, and creative problem-solving skills. A teacher educating these students should look for ways to build on these strengths as a tool for instruction, such as having oral language activities linked to writing tasks.

As we build relationships with students, we learn about their strengths and are better positioned to use students' lived experiences as foundations for learning (Snyder & Staehr Fenner, 2021; Staehr Fenner & Teich, in press). Providing MLs opportunities to share their backgrounds, experiences, and ideas benefits other students as well. Listening to and responding to diverse perspectives helps prepare all students to live in a multicultural society and interact with individuals from

different backgrounds (Gorski, 2010; Snyder & Staehr Fenner, 2021). In addition, with all states recognizing the value of bilingualism and biliteracy through the Seal of Biliteracy,<sup>2</sup> MLs can serve as needed language models for non-MLs studying world languages and in dual-language settings. They can also share cultural and linguistic insights in less formal ways during content instruction. For example, in a discussion on U.S. elections, MLs who were born in countries outside the United States might share what the election process looks like in their home countries if they feel comfortable doing so. Such straightforward ways to include MLs and highlight their perspectives can go a long way in creating an environment conducive to building their trust and facilitating deeper learning. We explore this idea in greater depth in Chapter 2 when we discuss using an assets-based approach in our work with MLs and leveraging MLs' cultural and linguistic assets. Application Activity 1.1 is an opportunity for you to reflect on the ways in which you recognize MLs' strengths in your role.

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.1: RECOGNIZING MLs' STRENGTHS

Consider the following reflection questions to help you better understand your perspective when working with MLs. For each question, answer *yes*, *sometimes*, or *no*. For any question that you answer with a *sometimes* or a *no*, write down a question or idea that you have about how to shift toward an assets-based perspective in this area. Then, answer the reflection questions.

FIGURE 1.4 RECOGNIZING MLs' STRENGTHS


REFLECTION QUESTION	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	QUESTION OR IDEA FOR A SHIFT TO A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH
1. Do I view students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as a valuable source of knowledge and skills that I can build on in my lessons?				
2. Do I view diverse perspectives as a beneficial resource for all students and look for ways to incorporate these diverse perspectives into my teaching?				
3. Do I recognize and appreciate that ML families may contribute to their children's educations in varied and sometimes unseen ways?				

<sup>2</sup>State Laws Regarding the Seal of Biliteracy: <https://sealofbiliteracy.org>.

REFLECTION QUESTION	YES	SOMETIMES	NO	QUESTION OR IDEA FOR A SHIFT TO A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH
4. Do I hold my MLs to the same high standards as other students?				
5. Do I recognize that MLs who are struggling in my class may be doing so because they need additional forms of support to acquire language and content knowledge that they are not currently receiving, or they may need additional social-emotional support?				

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.1: REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. What is an area of strength for you in terms of recognizing MLs' strengths?  


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2. What is an area where you would like to improve in terms of recognizing MLs' strengths?  


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## Core Belief 2: MLs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate.

A school culture that supports equitable and excellent educational opportunities for MLs includes schoolwide beliefs about the potential of MLs, interest in and appreciation for MLs' culture, and the desire to foster positive relationships with the MLs and their families. Dr. Cooper (2021), in her book *And Justice for ELs*, highlights the pressing need for a whole-school approach to meeting the needs of MLs. She writes, "Misconceptions about linguistic diversity, racial identity, cultural diversity, citizenship, and how one might feel included (or excluded) with a learning community can pose persistent challenges that affect [MLs'] language instruction and overall sense

of belonging” (p. 6). As the leaders of the school, principals and assistant principals influence this culture in terms of their commitment to the academic success of MLs, how they speak to and about MLs and their families, the types of professional development they offer staff, and how they evaluate teachers’ work with MLs (Alford & Niño, 2011; Staehr Fenner et al., 2015). Unfortunately, many school administrators have received insufficient training in culturally responsive teaching practices to foster a school climate that fully embraces MLs as part of the school community and effectively supports their language and content learning (Callahan et al., 2019; Khalifa, 2018; Staehr Fenner, 2014a).

In building a school culture that supports high achievement for all MLs, shared beliefs at the school level should include recognition of the benefits of multilingualism, an appreciation of MLs’ culture, and the need to overcome stereotypes and a deficit paradigm. School leaders must be prepared to reflect on their own biases and gaps in knowledge about supporting ML populations (Bryan et al., 2019; Cooper, 2021). Callahan et al. (2019) argue that school leaders must recognize students’ linguistic civil rights (equitable access to instruction) and also have a “research-based understanding of bilingual and [ELD] instructional programs that frame language as a resource and right, rather than a problem” (p. 291). They further argue that, in order to be responsive to the needs of MLs in their context, it is essential to have a shared dialogue with teachers, families, and staff. To engage in these types of dialogues with families, it is critical to build strong partnerships with ML families and foster a welcoming climate. We explore strategies for building these types of partnerships in greater detail in Chapter 2. Application Activity 1.2 is a collaborative activity that you can take part in with your school leadership team or as a department to reflect on your school environment.

**APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.2:  
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST**

Review the questions on your school environment in relation to MLs and ML families. Identify possible areas that you might want to strengthen.

**FIGURE 1.5 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST**

AT OUR SCHOOL, DO WE . . .	YES	NO
Take time as staff members to reflect on our own biases and gaps in knowledge around supporting MLs?		
Have a school mission that is inclusive of MLs and values multilingualism and multiculturalism?		
Use a research-based program model and strategies for developing MLs’ content knowledge and language skills?		

AT OUR SCHOOL, DO WE . . .	YES	NO
Create a welcoming environment for ML families (e.g., have signs in ML families' home languages, display maps and flags of MLs' home countries, offer school tours to new families in their home language)?		
Prioritize relationship building with ML families (e.g., host ML family events, give staff opportunities to learn common phrases in families' home languages and key information about families' cultures)?		
Communicate effectively with families in their preferred language (e.g., information shared in families' home languages, bilingual staff or bilingual volunteers available to meet with families)?		
Provide services that remove barriers that prevent ML families from attending school events (e.g., childcare, interpreters, and transportation)?		

*Source:* Adapted from Breiseth, L., Robertson, K., & Lafond, S. (2011).

**Action Steps:** To make a more welcoming environment for MLs and families of MLs, we will . . .

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### **Core Belief 3: MLs acquire language and content when teachers purposefully integrate language development opportunities into meaningful content instruction.**

In order to assist MLs in meeting challenging content standards, they will need language instruction that closely corresponds to the content they are learning. WIDA, a national organization that provides language development resources and assessments for MLs, created an ELD Standards Framework (WIDA, 2020a). This framework, first developed in 2012 and then most recently revised in 2020, highlights the way in which content and language are integrated for MLs. WIDA (2020a) explains that MLs “develop content and language concurrently, with academic content as a context for language learning and language as a means for learning academic content” (p. 19). In other words, direct instruction in academic language and language skills that provide a bridge to content

standards will bolster MLs' achievement in specific content areas. And language will be acquired most effectively when it is taught through meaningful content that includes opportunities for students to practice using the four domains of language (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

The WIDA ELD Standards Framework (WIDA, 2020a) has identified four key language uses (i.e., narrate, inform, explain, and argue) that can be helpful in thinking about how to determine language objectives and support the integration of content and language. **Language objectives are learning objectives that specifically focus on students' language use and language development.** Let's consider how teachers might use this information in practice.

In Figure 1.6, you can see the WIDA ELD Standard and one of the language expectations for explaining in science in Grades 2–3. **A language expectation is the language that students need to be able to understand and produce in a specific content area and grade level.** The language expectation included in Figure 1.6 is one example of how students can be expected to use language when providing a scientific explanation. We have added a possible **student-friendly language objective (a language objective that is understandable to students)** based on that language expectation. When you begin sharing student-friendly language objectives with MLs, you give them opportunities to think more about their language use and language development and become more independent learners. We have also included a possible mini lesson to support the language objective. **A mini lesson is a short lesson in which you practice one aspect of language.** Developing student-friendly language objectives and ideas for language mini lessons is a great place for the ELD teacher to take the lead in a cotaught classroom.

**FIGURE 1.6 USING LANGUAGE STANDARDS TO WRITE STUDENT-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES**

WIDA ELD STANDARD 4 GRADES 2–3 LANGUAGE FOR SCIENCE (KEY LANGUAGE USE: EXPLAIN)	
<b>Language Expectation:</b> MLs will construct scientific observations that develop a logical sequence between data or evidence and a claim.	
<b>Possible student-friendly language objective:</b> I will explain orally how my claim is supported by evidence.	<b>Possible mini lesson:</b> Academic language for supporting claims with evidence (e.g., Our data shows . . . , I observed that . . . )

*Source:* Adapted from WIDA English Language Development Standards, 2020 Edition, <https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/standards/eld/2020> (2020a), p. 94.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. What do you notice about how the language expectation can be used to develop a student-friendly language objective?
2. What do you notice about how the language objective can be used to determine possible language mini lessons?
3. What questions do you have about language objectives or integrating language and content instruction?



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As more districts move toward collaborative, inclusive models of ELD instruction in which MLs receive language support as part of their content classes, MLs will benefit when their teachers learn how to teach language and content in an integrated way. The strategies presented in this book are intended to facilitate the teaching of language and content in tandem by ELD as well as content teachers. We recognize it can be a challenge to step outside your area of expertise, especially when you may not have received adequate resources or training on teaching MLs. However, we hope that as you work through the chapters and try out the strategies used in this book (ideally, together with a colleague or two), you will gain increasing confidence in how to better support your MLs as they acquire language and content. Figure 1.7 outlines some—but not all—ways a content and an ELD teacher can plan and prepare for, teach, and assess lessons that incorporate academic-language instruction along with content instruction. We will explore more strategies for collaborating in support of MLs' academic language development in Chapters 5 and 6.

**FIGURE 1.7 POSSIBLE ROLES OF TEACHERS IN TEACHING LANGUAGE AND CONTENT**

COMPONENTS OF INSTRUCTION	CONTENT TEACHER	ELD TEACHER	BOTH
Planning and preparing for the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select content</li> <li>• Identify content objectives</li> <li>• Identify content-specific vocabulary and language needed for students to meet content objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze language demands of lesson and texts</li> <li>• Identify language objectives</li> <li>• Develop supporting materials for MLs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach consensus on language objectives</li> <li>• Determine key vocabulary</li> <li>• Decide on strategies for teaching and practicing academic language at sentence and discourse levels</li> </ul>

(Continued)

(Continued)

COMPONENTS OF INSTRUCTION	CONTENT TEACHER	ELD TEACHER	BOTH
Teaching the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate additional opportunities to practice academic language into lesson</li> <li>Coteach large group of students, embedding scaffolds for MLs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with small groups of MLs as needed to support language development</li> <li>Coteach whole class, embedding scaffolds for MLs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach academic vocabulary and language</li> <li>Teach language-focused mini lessons (e.g., compound sentence structure or connecting ideas at discourse level)</li> </ul>
Assessing student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop assessment of content objectives</li> <li>Determine scoring mechanism (e.g., rubric or checklist)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add assessment of language to assessment of content for MLs</li> <li>Scaffold assessment as needed for MLs (e.g., word banks, bilingual glossaries, or visuals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine how MLs will be assessed</li> <li>Reflect on MLs' assessment results, and determine how to adjust instruction of content and language</li> <li>Work with MLs needing additional support</li> </ul>

#### **Core Belief 4: MLs thrive when their teachers include opportunities for peer learning and meaningful conversations.**

In our work with some educators of MLs, one of our greatest takeaways is the missed opportunities for peer interactions. Imagine the difference between a teacher leading a whole class discussion in which the teacher asks a series of questions and a couple of students—usually the same ones who raise their hands all the time—are called on to respond versus a teacher posing a well-developed prompt and students discussing it in pairs. Consider the dramatic difference in terms of student engagement and students' opportunities for language use.

While every question we ask the class isn't a peer learning opportunity, the strategic inclusion of peer learning opportunities throughout a lesson can have significant impact on MLs' language development, understanding of content, and feeling of belonging (August, 2018; NASEM, 2017; Zwiers, 2019). Well-structured peer learning opportunities support language development because there is an opportunity for MLs to receive feedback on their language use, to develop greater understanding of the grammatical structures of English, and to be pushed to interact at higher proficiency levels (August, 2018). Additionally, peer learning supports students' understanding and engagement with course content and helps build stronger social-emotional skills and student agency (Staehr Fenner & Teich,



in press; Zwiers, 2019). Zwiers (2019) explains that as students interact with each other they gain understanding about how others think and feel about different topics and how they express their feelings. These type of interactions help build empathy for others which is so critical in creating a safe space for student learning. Additionally, when students are given the space to co-create ideas and ways to express these ideas, their sense of agency grows (Zwiers, 2019).

In order to foster a safe space for effective peer learning, the teacher must consider the routines that they will teach to support effective peer-to-peer interactions, the steps that they will take to build a safe space for MLs to take risks with their language, and the room setup. Without these structures in place, peer learning activities may fall flat. In addition, once a safe space has been created and students are familiar with peer learning routines, these types of activities can be incorporated into learning with minimal preparation. In Application Activity 1.3, consider the classroom look-fors from our Classroom Checklist (Figure 1.8), and answer the reflection questions. The complete checklist can be found on the online companion website in Appendix C. To access the companion website, please visit [resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E](https://resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E).



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### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.3: SETTING THE SCENE FOR PEER LEARNING

**FIGURE 1.8 CLASSROOM LOOK-FORS FOR PEER LEARNING**

#### I have . . .

- Clustered student desks in groups of 3–5 or used small tables to promote collaboration and peer interaction.
- Posted select talk moves needed to support pair and group discussions (e.g., “I think . . .”, “I agree with you because . . .”). I will add new expressions throughout the year as I teach them.
- Planned for routines to learn about my students and support students in learning about each other (e.g., Morning Meeting, dialogue journals, icebreaker/community building activities).
- Identified and planned for teaching and modeling routines that will support structured peer interaction (e.g., turn and talk, think-pair-share, small group work).
- Planned how I will use language to support a welcoming, inclusive environment in the classroom (e.g., a personal morning greeting for each student which may include multiple languages, expectation that all student names will be pronounced correctly by everyone in the class).
- Planned how I will use language in the classroom that empowers or positions MLs to participate (e.g., highlight MLs’ strengths, support use of MLs’ home language or visuals to plan or share a response, acknowledge and build on what MLs say).

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.3: REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. Which of the look-fors stands out to you? Why?

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2. What is a step that you might take to implement one of the look-fors in your classroom or support others in implementing the look-for?

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We will explore peer learning in greater depth in Chapters 4 and 8.

### **Core Belief 5: MLs excel when teachers and administrators collaborate, advocate, and lead in support of their students' academic achievement and social-emotional well-being.**

The work of promoting equitable educational opportunities for MLs implores us to draw on the skills of collaboration, advocacy, and leadership, which are skills many do not immediately consider that will have an impact on MLs' outcomes. We must collaborate with colleagues, students, families, and communities in support of MLs. We must also speak on behalf of those MLs and their families who have not yet developed a strong voice of their own due to their acquisition of English or knowledge of the U.S. education system (Staehr Fenner, 2014a) and use leadership skills to support our advocacy efforts. To that end, in each chapter of the book, we include a section on collaboration and another on advocacy, equity, and leadership to highlight possible strategies or needs related to the chapter topic.

#### **Collaboration With Colleagues**

As we mentioned earlier, educator collaboration is a powerful tool in supporting MLs' acquisition of language and content, but it also has additional far-reaching benefits. Teacher collaboration helps bring home the idea that all teachers are responsible for MLs' language development, social-emotional well-being, feeling of belonging, and academic success (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018). Additionally, well-structured collaboration builds teacher capacity and supports a shared understanding of culturally responsive and sustaining practices (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018).

ELD teachers can share their knowledge of second language acquisition and language pedagogy and can model strategies that will support content teachers in becoming teachers of language in addition to teachers of content (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Valdés et al., 2014). Similarly, content teachers can share with ELD teachers the skills and knowledge that all students, including MLs, will need to be successful in a particular content area. Both types of teachers can support each other in ensuring that MLs' individual personal characteristics (e.g., motivation and learning preferences), as well as their backgrounds (e.g., literacy in the home language and amount and/or quality of previous schooling), are part of the schooling equation.

In order to foster such high-quality collaboration, schools must have a structure in place so that teachers can work together in a systematic and ongoing way and share their expertise with one another. Administrators must build time into schedules for collaboration to occur, make it a priority for the entire staff, and ensure it is happening.

### Advocacy

Advocating for MLs can sometimes feel like a daunting task. In order to begin advocating for MLs, it's often helpful to get a sense of what the larger, systemic or programmatic advocacy issues may be to decide which direction your advocacy should take. Figure 1.9 provides an equity audit, which can help you reflect on your context at the school level. Working through this equity audit can assist you in deciding which areas of advocacy for MLs present the highest needs. You simply can't take on each potential injustice simultaneously, and prioritizing your top advocacy issue or issues will help you determine your path forward.

**FIGURE 1.9 ML ADVOCACY EQUITY AUDIT**

POTENTIAL ML ADVOCACY ISSUE	QUESTIONS TO ASK: TO WHAT DEGREE . . .	RESPONSE	ACTION ITEMS
Role of ELD teacher	Are ELD teachers working as experts and collaborating with general-education teachers?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Instructional materials and curriculum	Are instructional materials and curriculum appropriate for MLs?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Professional development	Does professional development focus on preparing <i>all</i> teachers to teach academic language and content to MLs?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	

(Continued)

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POTENTIAL ML ADVOCACY ISSUE	QUESTIONS TO ASK: TO WHAT DEGREE . . .	RESPONSE	ACTION ITEMS
Assessment	Are teachers aware of the linguistic demands of content assessments for MLs? Are they using valid formative assessments with MLs?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
ML family outreach	Are ML families' assets understood and valued? Are ML families aware of the school's expectations of all students and supports available to them?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Teacher coaching	Are teachers receiving the professional development and coaching that they need to assist their MLs in accessing challenging content?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	

*Source:* The concept is adapted from Betty J. Alford and Mary Catherine Niño's *equity audit*, which appears in *Leading Academic Achievement for English Language Learners: A Guide for Principals* (Alford, B. J., & Niño, M. C., 2011).



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After you have taken the steps to determine which areas of advocacy you might like to prioritize at the school or district level, it's time to consider how you will approach your advocacy and how you will work to empower MLs to be stronger advocates for themselves. Just as we scaffold instruction for MLs, we also can scaffold our advocacy efforts. **Scaffolded advocacy is a concept in which MLs and their families are provided with just the right level of advocacy while at the same time being supported in developing their own advocacy skills** (Staehr Fenner, 2014a). The goal of scaffolded advocacy is for MLs and their families to advocate for themselves. In Figure 1.10, we offer ML advocacy steps and implementation suggestions for each step to collaborate and advocate on behalf of MLs.

### Leadership

While it's always beneficial to reflect on your advocacy priorities and steps, in order to effectively advocate for MLs' equitable and excellent learning, you will also need to draw from and, in some cases, develop the necessary leadership skills to do so. While many definitions exist, one definition of **leadership is "the process of influencing . . . the behavior of others in order to reach a shared goal"** (Northouse, 2007). To advocate for MLs and support their equitable and excellent education, we encourage you to first increase your awareness of your own leadership skills and build upon those skills to make changes occur. As this is an area that teachers are typically not trained in, administrators can help develop these skills in their teachers. In our work with MLs, we have seen many educators rise up as leaders who successfully advocate for MLs, serve as allies to MLs, and bring about much-needed changes. It's truly inspiring to witness teachers serve MLs on multiple levels to impact change.

**FIGURE 1.10 STEPS FOR ML ADVOCACY AND IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS****1****Begin thoughtfully**

Consider all of the areas in which you can advocate for MLs and collaborate to benefit them. Choose one or two areas to focus on in which you have the agency to enact changes, and plan out what your action steps will look like.

**2****Build alliances first with those who seem open**

Begin by carefully considering colleagues who seem open to working with MLs and supporting them. Approach those colleagues first to ascertain whether they would like to collaborate with you.

**3****Demonstrate empathy first**

When collaborating with colleagues, show your empathy for their challenges and frustrations related to working with concepts outside of their area of expertise. Acknowledge those areas they find to be most challenging.

**4****Respect educators' expertise**

Voice your understanding of their area of expertise so you can leverage it together. Operating within a strengths perspective when it comes to your colleagues (as well as your students) will go a long way.

**5****Operate from a strengths-based perspective of MLs**

Intentionally highlight MLs' contributions to classrooms, such as their home language, culture, and/or families' commitment to education. When you hear deficit language offer an alternative strengths-based perspective.

**6****Showcase ML achievement**

Underscore the ways in which MLs make progress, be it academic or social. Often, MLs' progress may not be as apparent or obvious as it is with non-MLs.

**7****Offer support and time for collaboration**

Suggest concrete ways in which you can offer guidance to other teachers and/or administrators so that they can better serve MLs. Examples of supports include an ELD teacher sharing a graphic organizer for MLs with a content teacher or a content teacher sharing a content lesson plan ahead of time with an ELD teacher.

In order to leverage these leadership skills to advocate for MLs, it takes a strong foundation of interpersonal skills, many of which we are not explicitly taught or are not even mentioned in our preparation as educators. These interpersonal skills are increasingly important in today's educational landscape, which relies on more collaboration and innovation in order to lead and support MLs' equitable education. Figure 1.11 provides a self-awareness checklist and discussion questions about a sampling of crucial leadership skills that you may need to draw from to advocate for MLs and strengthen your voice as a leader. Consider how you would rate your leadership skills in each of the six areas.

**FIGURE 1.11 LEADERSHIP SKILLS SELF-AWARENESS CHECKLIST**

LEADERSHIP SKILL OR ATTRIBUTE	DESCRIPTION	MY RATING: LOW (1) TO HIGH (5)
Character	The moral self that reflects the principles and ideals of the collective to which the leader belongs, including trustworthiness and credibility	1 2 3 4 5
Political skills	Social astuteness, networking ability, sincerity, integrity, honesty, charisma, and not being seen as manipulative	1 2 3 4 5
Nonverbal communication	Sensitivity to colleagues; use of culturally appropriate gestures, such as nodding in agreement; body openness	1 2 3 4 5
Conflict resolution	Managing one's own and others' emotional experiences, establishing norms and rules, and refocusing on tasks at hand	1 2 3 4 5
Interpersonal skills	Relationship development, trust, intercultural sensitivity, providing feedback, motivating and persuading others, showing empathy and support	1 2 3 4 5
Interpersonal communication skills	Connecting with others by using skills in sending and receiving culturally relevant nonverbal and emotional messages, listening and speaking skills, and effectively engaging others in conversation	1 2 3 4 5

Source: Adapted from Riggio, R. & Tan, S. (2014).

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. What area(s) am I strongest in?
2. What area(s) am I weakest in?
3. What is one example of how each leadership skill affects my work with MLs?
4. What implications are there for my leadership in advocating for and supporting MLs?



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## How Do I Get Started Using All Five Core Beliefs?

We find in our work that educators have very little time to reflect on where we are in order to plan for where we'd like to go. This application activity will give you the gift of space for reflection. First, you will compare our core beliefs with your own. If you don't already approach your work with MLs from a set of core beliefs, this application activity will allow you the time and place for reflection in order to develop these. Based on your core beliefs and your role, you can create a vision for your grade-level team, department, school, or district's equitable and excellent instruction of MLs. Then, you will use your vision to create a succinct elevator speech to define your role and accountability in the process. By doing so, you will use this chapter's contents to create an aligned framework to support your work with MLs that will guide you as you work through the subsequent chapters.

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.4

**Step 1.** Using Figure 1.12, review our five core beliefs, compare them with your own, and add any comments you have.

**FIGURE 1.12** COMPARISON OF CORE BELIEFS

OUR CORE BELIEFS	MY/OUR CORE BELIEFS	COMMENTS
1. MLs bring many strengths to the classroom.		
2. MLs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and culturally responsive school climate.		
3. MLs acquire language and content when teachers purposefully integrate language development opportunities into meaningful content instruction.		
4. MLs thrive when their teachers include opportunities for peer learning and meaningful conversations.		
5. MLs excel when their teachers and administrators collaborate, advocate, and lead in support of their students' academic achievement and social-emotional well-being.		

**Step 2.** Drawing from your own core beliefs, create a vision for educating MLs in your school. Your grade-level team, department, school, or district needs to have a shared vision so that all stakeholders are working toward common goals and using common language. We suggest convening a group of educators committed to MLs'

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equitable and excellent education to develop a shared vision statement for your grade-level team, department, school, or district. You may need to meet several times to revise and refine the vision statement, but your work will certainly pay off. Figure 1.13 provides some examples.

**FIGURE 1.13 EXAMPLE VISION STATEMENTS**

SCHOOL OR DISTRICT	VISION STATEMENT
Anne Arundel County Public Schools (MD)	"Our English learners will become empowered multilingual global citizens who are academically, linguistically, and culturally equipped for success in school and beyond."
Bellevue School District Multilingual Department (Bellevue, WA)	"To affirm and inspire each and every student to learn and thrive as creators of their future world while celebrating their cultural, racial, and linguistic identities."
Summit Hill School District 161 (Frankfort, IL)	"Our vision is to ensure that our English Language Learners have meaningful access to rigorous instruction, materials, and academic choices. We will ensure equity for English learners while maintaining their cultural and linguistic identity."

Sources: Adapted from Anne Arundel County Public Schools (n.d.), Bellevue School District (n.d.), Summit Hill School District 161 (n.d.).

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.4: REFLECTION QUESTIONS, PART 1



To create your vision, consider these questions:

1. Which aspects of your core beliefs from Figure 1.12 resonate the most with you?

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2. What content from your core beliefs can you synthesize into succinct key ideas and values regarding equitably educating MLs?

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**Step 3.** Referring to your vision for equitably educating MLs, outline a brief elevator speech that defines your role in the process.

One way for ELD and content teachers to reflect upon their roles and effectively explain them to others is to develop an **elevator speech, which is a concise summary of a topic—so concise that it can be delivered**



*during a short elevator ride* (Staehr Fenner, 2014b). We recommend limiting your elevator speech to about 30 seconds. ELD and content teachers can also use it as a tool to clearly define the expertise they bring in serving MLs in their school within their school vision and explain it to administrators. The elevator speech you develop corresponds to your core beliefs and grade-level team, department, school, or district vision for educating MLs. It should outline how you see your role and the unique skills you leverage in supporting your MLs' equitable and excellent education. To develop your elevator speech, consider these questions:

### APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.4: REFLECTION QUESTIONS, PART 2

1. Which aspects of your department, school, or district's vision resonate the most with you?

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2. In which aspects can you take a lead role to equitably educate MLs so that they excel? You may want to highlight these aspects in your elevator speech.

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Once your elevator speech draft is complete, compare yours with that of your colleagues to ensure you're leveraging your expertise to support MLs. You may need to revise your elevator speech periodically as your skills with working with MLs evolve. Figure 1.14 provides an example of elevator speech.

#### FIGURE 1.14 EXAMPLE ELEVATOR SPEECH

In order to support MLs in becoming integral members of our school community and to support them in building the content knowledge and language skills needed to be successful in school and beyond, I am a strong advocate for MLs' equitable and excellent education. I collaborate with colleagues to integrate research-based practices that foster MLs' language development and content learning. I build relationships with ML families to provide both social-emotional support and goal-setting opportunities for MLs. I speak up when I hear deficit language being used about MLs and when I see barriers that are standing in the way of MLs' access to school academic and extra-curricular programs.

#### My Elevator Speech

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## Conclusion

In this chapter, we shared why it is crucial to equitably instruct MLs to unlock their potential for excellence. We began with a brief discussion of who MLs are and shared why there is such an urgent need to equitably educate MLs. The bulk of the chapter was devoted to our five core beliefs. For each core belief, we described relevant research, as well as provided practical tools for you to use to apply the principles. Finally, we gave you the opportunity to draw from our five core beliefs to create your own set of core beliefs; a grade-level team, department, school, or district vision; and a personalized elevator speech that outlines your crucial role in supporting MLs. In the next chapter, we focus on creating a culturally responsive learning environment for MLs.

### CHAPTER 1 REFLECTION QUESTIONS



1. Which core beliefs resonated the most with you? Why?
2. What are your three takeaways from this chapter? Why?



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