

Using Background and Tradition to Support English Language Development

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Using Background and Traditions in the English Learner Curriculum

Session Goals:

- Create awareness of the importance and power of students' backgrounds in language development.
- Create awareness of the importance and power of students' traditions in language development.
- Create awareness of the importance of confidence and sense of belonging in language development.
- Provide examples and strategies to support language development by using background and traditions in the curriculum.

Stories:

- Stories from students' culture:
 - Myths, legends and traditional events.
- Stories from family elders; grandmas, grandpas, aunties, uncles, others.

Benefits of Stories in the Classroom:

- Stories are powerful.
- Oral storytelling is traditional and consistent with many cultural groups throughout the world.
- Oral storytelling can stand alone as a valid form of communication and learning. Along with visual literacy can provide a foundation for print literacy.

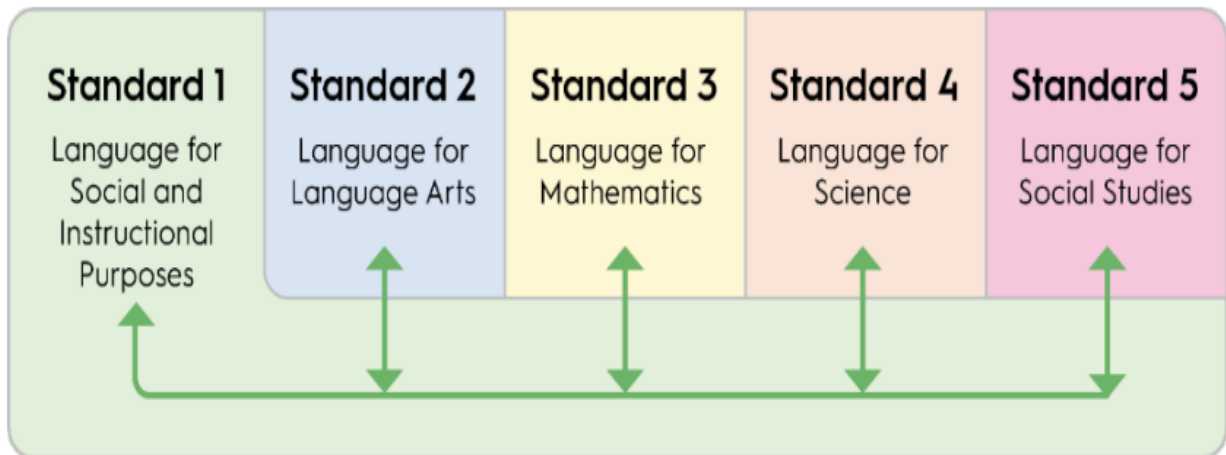
Connection to WIDA Standards:

WIDA Big Ideas

- Equity of Opportunity and Access
- Integration of Content and Language

- Collaboration Among Stakeholders
- Functional Approach to Language Development

WIDA Standards



WIDA Key Language Uses

- Narrate
- Argue
- Inform
- Explain

Examples of Curriculum Integration:

- English Language Arts - storytelling, story writing.
- Social Studies - stories of the past as authentic history.
- Science - stories that include the environment and natural world can be connected to further exploration on animals, plants and the environment.
- Math - stories can be used to generate real life problems, such as calculating distances between locations or dividing food items.
- Native language and culture - Language can be interwoven in the stories and culture can be taught through stories.

Activities to Teach Children on Interviewing and Gathering Stories

1. Choosing the individual.

Spend time brainstorming with students as to who they might choose. If students don't have any ideas, a field trip to a senior center or other location could be organized.

2. Plan the session.

Students need to be taught how to plan and organize the session. How will they set it up? How long will it be?

3. Develop questions.

Students should have a list of questions. But they need to know that the questions are guides. They might bring photographs or objects as prompts.

4. Choose the environment.

Will the session take place at the individual's home or another place? Is the session conducted through electronic media, such as Zoom?

5. Choose the recording equipment.

Will the student use a smart phone to record or another device? Will he or she also take notes? It's important that the students obtain permission to record.

6. Review and practice protocols of respect, courtesy, and cultural appropriateness with students.

7. Teach the value and skill of active listening.

Student Worksheet

Stories from My Family and Heritage

Who has stories in your family? Who knows the family history? Who knows stories of your culture? Who told you stories when you were little? Who has stories to tell about their childhood or about their parents or grandparents? What stories have been handed down in your family? Are there stories from your grandparents' or parents' country or place of origin?

Steps to take to interview relatives to learn family history, cultural stories and takes:

1. Choose the person you will interview.
2. Plan the session.
3. Plan your questions.
4. Practice interviewing or visiting.
5. Will the interview be in person, by telephone or video?
6. How will you document the information?
 - a. Will you record it?
 - b. Will you take notes?
7. How will you value and respect the person who is sharing the story?
8. How will you document and carry on the story?
 - a. Will you write the story or honor the oral tradition by telling the story orally?