



Celebrating the Power of Bilingualism

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATOR TOOLKIT

Dear Educator,

Today, nearly one in five people speaks a language other than English in their home. Over the past ten years, English Language Learner (ELL) student enrollment nationwide has climbed 57%, while the student population only grew 3% (OSPI Report Card, 2016). This means ELL enrollees compose 10% of our classrooms.

How can we better equip educators help students - and themselves! - succeed in this environment?

Within this toolkit, you will find a number of resources to assist you in celebrating the power of bilingualism to advance your own work. Importantly, these resources are designed for educators of all subjects and grade levels - and whether or not they speak a second language themselves!

This toolkit has:

- 1) A summary of the relevant research around bilingualism
- 2) Activities, guidance, and resources to help you harness the power of bilingualism in the way that's right for your classrooms
- 3) Information about programs that may help your bilingual students graduate on time
- 4) Tips on advocating for your local educational system to join you in embracing bilingualism

We encourage you to bookmark our website (SpeakYourLanguage.org) and sign up for updates and occasional new resources that may be useful for you.

Let's dive in!

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BILINGUALISM: SUMMARIZING THE RESEARCH

BILINGUALISM IS EXTREMELY COMMON – AND RISING!

In the United States, **21% of school-age children (between ages 5-17) speak a language other than English at home.** This number is projected to increase in the coming years.

Source: American Speech Language Hearing Association. The Advantages of Being Bilingual. Available online: <http://www.asha.org/about/news/tipsheets/bilingual.htm>

Over the past ten years, **English Language Learner (ELL) student enrollment nationwide has climbed 57%**, while the student population only grew 3%.

Source: OSPI Report Card, 2016

BILINGUALS HAVE SUPERIOR SKILL SETS THAT AID CLASSROOM LEARNING

Bilingual individuals have been shown to be more creative and better at planning and solving complex problems than monolinguals.

Sources: Center for Applied Linguistics. Benefits of being bilingual. Available online: <http://www.cal.org/earlylang/benefits/marcos.html>. Also: Paradis, J., Genesee, F., & Crago, M. (2011). *Dual Language Development and Disorders: A handbook on bilingualism & second language learning*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

BILINGUAL CHILDREN ARE BETTER ABLE TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON RELEVANT INFORMATION AND IGNORE DISTRACTIONS

Sources: Canadian Council on Learning (2008). Parlez-vous français? The advantages of bilingualism in Canada and Poulin-Dubois, D., Blaye, A., Coutya, J & Bialystok, E. (2011). The effects of bilingualism on toddlers' executive functioning. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*. 108 (3), 567-579

MAINTAINING HOME LANGUAGE HELPS ENGLISH LEARNERS ACQUIRE ENGLISH

Research shows that children who have a strong foundation in their home language more easily learn a second language.

A child can succeed in learning English whether or not it is the spoken language at home. In fact, there is no evidence that frequent use of the second language in the home is essential for a child to learn a second language.

Source: Paradis, J., Genesee, F., & Crago, M. (2011). *Dual Language Development and Disorders: A handbook on bilingualism & second language learning*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT CELEBRATES LANGUAGE

Actively encourage parents to retain home language & SUPPORT THEM in doing so!

Parents will always look to you for guidance on what's in their child's best interest. Be direct with families about how important it is to maintain home language. The loss of language is, ultimately, a loss for the student.

A helpful video about Home Language and why it's so important:

<https://youtu.be/Rus8N9S8C2E>

For many families, you are a key gatekeeper to information to clear misconceptions about home language retention. From you, they can learn that not only will it have cultural and personal benefits, but distinct cognitive and emotional benefits for their child.

Know & share helpful resources about raising bilingual kids!

On our website, we offer a number of translated videos and flyers about the importance of developing home language. Please refer to www.SpeakYourLanguage.org for these resources to share with families.

MomsRising.org has an immensely helpful page full of information and resources for parents and educators <https://www.momsrising.org/blog/parents-share-why-bilingual-is-better-bilingualisers>

MomsRising's Bilingual Parenting Resources:

http://action.momsrising.org/survey/bilingual_baby/

Create a classroom environment that celebrates languages.

Embrace home language, diversity of cultures and family experiences in the classroom. Some ideas:

- Stock your library with books representing home languages and stories
- Create visual displays to celebrate diversity
- Create visual displays to celebrate languages
- Encourage all students, monolingual or multilingual, to recognize the power of bilingualism. You can support bilingual students in maintaining home language by simply providing them with the space and opportunity to express their heritage and identity in the classroom.

- Consider doing activities that allow students to share their bilingualism, such as sharing words in their own language
- Take a 30 Day Culture-Positive Classroom Challenge, where every day class begins first with sharing a new fact about a different classroom culture

Understand and share the TRUTH about the power of bilingualism!

The highly informative report *PreK-3rd: Challenging Common Myths About Dual Language Learners* An Update to the Seminal 2008 Report by Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D., addresses commonly-held misconceptions about dual language learners, and reveals the truth and what it means for parents and educators.

<https://www.fcd-us.org/assets/2016/04/Challenging-Common-Myths-Update.pdf>

Tell your students about the academic rewards for and ADVANTAGES of being bilingual

In high school, many students are determining whether or not they are committed to keeping or developing their home language skills. Without distinct encouragement from within the education system, many will abandon home language in favor of English-only, losing a critical, highly valuable language asset. Make sure your students are aware that, if they keep their home language, they may be eligible for World Language Credits toward graduation or even a Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma and transcript (more on this below). High schools will reward them *for what they already know* - but only if they have maintained their home language.

You can make the difference in whether your students develop their home language skills and take pride in their bilingual advantage.

Actively correct negative myths about what will happen if students retain home language!

During high school, parents may be highly focused on academic success. Help them understand the cognitive and academic benefits of bilingualism. Prepare them for the high school opportunities and rewards that await their bilingual child.

Again, you may find this report eye-opening and full of useful information you can share with parents: <https://www.fcd-us.org/assets/2016/04/Challenging-Common-Myths-Update.pdf>

Engage parents in your work!

It is common in many cultures for families to defer to educators and keep a respectful distance from goings-on at school. You may find that if parents are keeping a distance, it is out of respect, *not* a lack of interest in their child’s education. In fact, many cultures feel quite strongly about the importance of education, and, accordingly, have parents who would be more than happy to be more involved.

Some educators find it useful to use a chart to send home academic progress reports that can be easily understood by parents who are not fluent in English.

The best way to support families is by helping them understand that maintaining home language is important to YOU, too!

**Help Your Bilingual Students Excel and Get the Credit They Deserve:
*World Language Credits & The Seal of Biliteracy***

Two important high school programs currently exist in support of multilingual students:

WORLD LANGUAGE CREDIT

What it is: Students who speak a non-English language may elect to test for language fluency and literacy, for which they can earn up to 4 credits toward high school graduation. This means that if a student *already* knows a home language, they may be able to receive academic credit for it. World Language Credits are now a high school graduation requirement in the state of Washington and are also required for admission to four-year colleges in Washington and elsewhere.

Watch the World Language Credit video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgCMhiM1N-o>

Based on results from World Language Credit testing in South King County from 2012-2014, we know know that:

***One in five (21%) students who participated in the program *needed* their competency-based world language credits to graduate high school; and**

* One in ten (10%) students who participated in the program needed the competency-based credits to be eligible to attend a four-year college.

* * *

As of 2013-14 (the latest available data), over 25 school districts in Washington have tested at least 4,220 students in 60+ languages to award World Language Competency Credits

For more information, visit:

OSPI - World Language Proficiency information

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/CompetencyBasedCredits.aspx>

Sources: <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/RoadMap/EducationNorthwest-ImpactofCompetencyBasedCredits.pdf>

Testing statistics: *Signed, Sealed, Delivered: District-Level Adoption of the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy* by Dr. Marta Mikkelsen Burnet

“We were ecstatic when we had students requesting to test in more than 50 languages... It helps us motivate students to continue to strive to develop their language skills, especially reading and writing, and to aim for high school graduation so they can earn the Seal of Biliteracy on their diploma...”

*- Michele Anciaux Aoki, Ph.D., P.M.P.
International Education Administrator
Seattle Public Schools*

THE SEAL OF BILITERACY

What it is: The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, district, or state in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in two or more languages by high school graduation. It is a graduation diploma feature for students who have demonstrated proficiency and literacy in a language other than English through:

Advanced Placement (AP); or

International Baccalaureate (IB) testing; or

qualifying for the full four (4) World Language Competency-Based Credits.

The Seal of Biliteracy honor is recognized on the student’s transcript and sometimes with a ceremony.

For more information:

Seal of Biliteracy Website

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/>

OSPI Seal of Biliteracy Page

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/SealofBiliteracy.aspx>

Seal of Biliteracy training video:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/pubdocs/SealofBiliteracyOrientation2016.mp4>

HOW DO I IMPLEMENT THESE PROGRAMS AT MY SCHOOL?

The Seal of Biliteracy is already established for the state of Washington. The Seal of Biliteracy website includes a series of extremely helpful tools and steps to implement the Seal in your school, including sample documents and best practices from other districts that have successfully done so.

You'll learn:

- how to determine award criteria
- how to develop outreach strategies
- how to establish an application process
- how to award students
- how to spread the word

See <http://sealofbiliteracy.org/steps> for more information!

There is often funding and support available to jumpstart implementation of World Language Credits in a school system.

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/AssessmentDays.aspx>

You may be able to email waflltesting@wafll.net for assistance establishing local testing.

HOW CAN I CELEBRATE BILINGUALISM & SUPPORT THESE PROGRAMS?

Tell your students and their families about these opportunities

We have translated the World Language Credit video into a number of languages, which may make it easier for parents to understand the value of the program. Please share the videos, which can all be found on the SpeakYourLanguage.org website

Help your students register to test for the World Language Credits

Without encouragement, students may not pursue these valuable opportunities. Connect your student with a guidance counselor or other individual in charge of providing services to ELL students, to assist them with registering for testing. Then, encourage them to practice until it's time to test!

Create a classroom and school environment that actively celebrates bilingualism

See earlier in this Toolkit and our website for additional ideas. Continuing to spread messages about the value of language and the power of bilingualism will create an environment in which bilingual students are well-supported.

Share your stories of success with us!

Testimonials are one of the most powerful ways to capture the power of bilingualism and encourage adoption of these programs. Please share your stories of success, so other schools are encouraged to embrace these programs and, with it, more opportunity for all students.

Go to SpeakYourLanguage.org for new information & resources as they become available - and join our mailing list for updates!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Seal of Biliteracy Website

<http://sealofbiliteracy.org/>

OSPI - Seal of Biliteracy information

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/SealofBiliteracy.aspx>

Seal of Biliteracy training video:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/pubdocs/SealofBiliteracyOrientation2016.mp4>

OSPI - World Language Proficiency information

<http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/CompetencyBasedCredits.aspx>

Research on the bilingual brain and learning: <http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/Bilingualism-in-Young-Children--Separating-Fact-fr.aspx>

UW Institute of Brain Sciences

<http://ilabs.uw.edu/>

Translanguaging

<http://www.cuny-nysieb.org/translanguaging-resources/>

