

# Multilingual Magic: Tools that Make Every Student Shine





# Melissa Henning

# Multilingual Learners

- Two or more languages
- 1 in every 10 in public school
- 5 million in the USA public schools
- Illinois is 17.5% as of 2024-2025



# EEOA and Title VI



# Multilingualism and Diversity

01

**Different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences**

02

**Differentiate to meet the needs of the diverse class**

03

**Multilingualism is a strength, not a weakness**

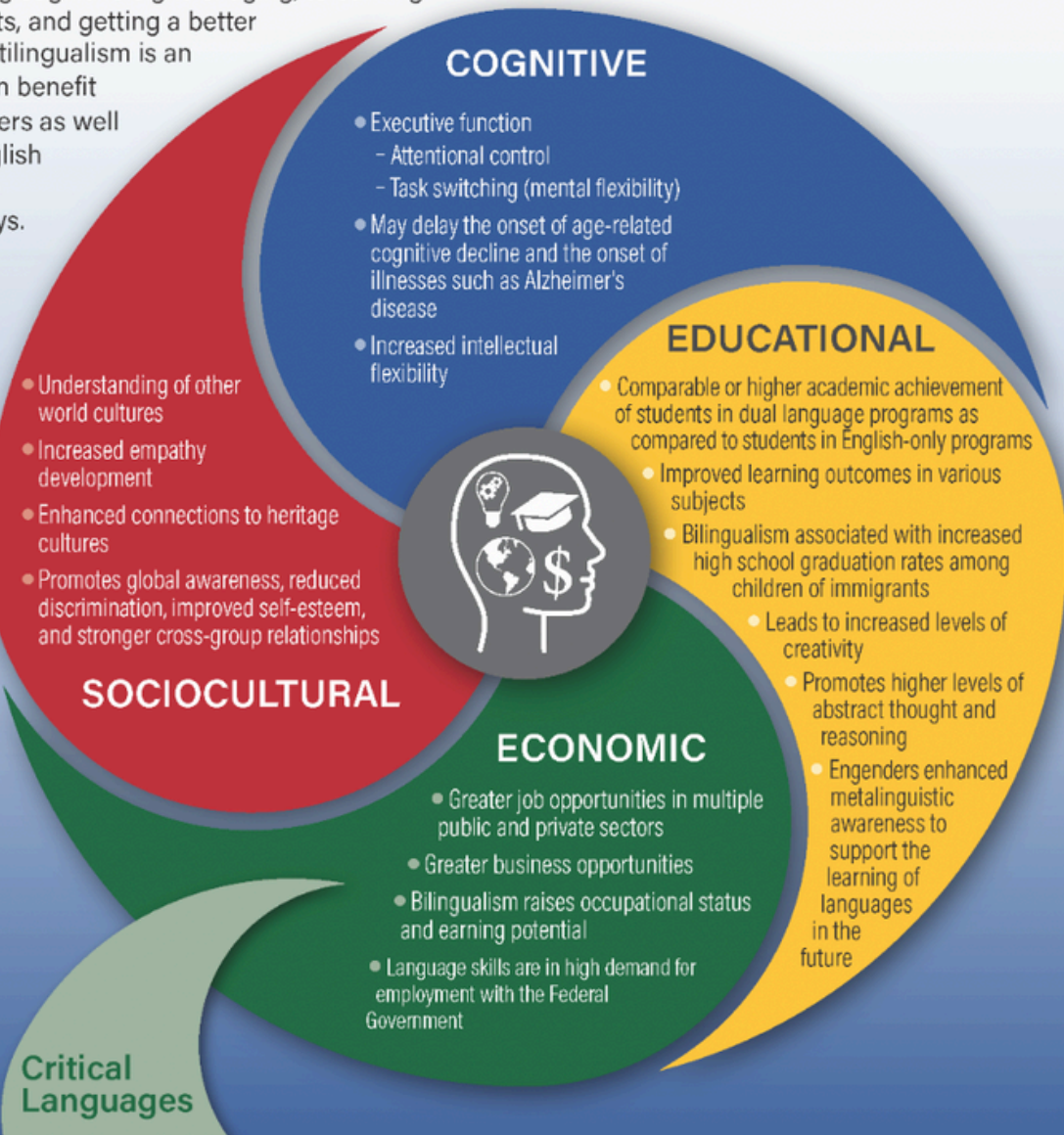


# Benefits of Multilingualism

- Cognitive – Increased intellectual flexibility
- Sociocultural – Promotes global awareness
- Economic – Greater business opportunities
- Educational – Increased levels of creativity

## Benefits of Multilingualism

There are multiple benefits to being multilingual, multiliterate, and multicultural in today's global society. Knowing more than one language from birth, acquiring a new language through school, or learning languages later in life, can provide tangible advantages in many areas. From delaying cognitive signs of aging, to earning college credits, and getting a better job offer, multilingualism is an asset that can benefit English learners as well as native English speakers in a variety of ways.





**Give students the keys to learn!**

# Questions to consider:

- 1 When did the student arrive?
- 2 What is the native language?
- 3 What educational experiences?
- 4 Cognitive strengths and needs?
- 5 Behavioral strengths and needs?

# DEMONSTRATION



- 1 Adapt-a-Strategy
- 2 MLLs special topics pages
- 3 Infusing Technology Blog posts

# Translation & Communication



# Translation Strategies



- Use translation tools for essential documents.
- Create a library of commonly used documents already translated.
- Leverage bilingual staff, community liaisons, or trained interpreters for conferences and meetings.
- Use visual aids, diagrams, and pictures alongside text to support comprehension
- Consider technology tools like Google Translate, Microsoft Immersive Reader, or even Magic School.

# Communication Strategies

- Send communications home in families' native languages
- Provide advance notice for meetings so families can arrange interpreters if needed.
- Use clear, jargon-free language and avoid educational acronyms
- Offer multiple communication channels—to meet different family preferences
- Build relationships with cultural liaisons or parent ambassadors
- Create welcoming spaces where families feel comfortable asking questions
- Host multilingual family events or coffee hours
- Use visual schedules, photos, and videos to share classroom activities and progress.
- Be mindful of cultural differences in communication styles
- Provide translated versions of key resources on your school website

# DEMONSTRATION – Magic School



- Text Leveler
- YouTube Questions
- Report Card Comments
- Email Family



CREATIVITY  
CONCENTION

# Visual Supports for Instruction

01

**Use graphic organizers, anchor charts, and visual schedules**

02

**Incorporate labeled diagrams, infographics, and flowcharts that pair vocabulary with images**

03

**Display word walls with pictures, cognates, and translations**

04

**Use color-coding systems to highlight key information, text structures, or grammatical patterns**

05

**Create visual step-by-step instructions for routines, assignments, and multi-step tasks**



# Multimedia and Technology Tools

- Integrate videos with subtitles or captions in multiple languages to support comprehension
- Leverage text-to-speech and speech-to-text tools to support reading and writing
- Create digital vocabulary journals with images, audio pronunciations, and student-generated examples

# Content Creation Opportunities



**Encourage students to create bilingual books, posters, or presentations that showcase their home language as an asset**



**Incorporate collaborative projects where multilingual learners can contribute through visuals, research, or peer support roles**



**Provide choice boards with various ways to show understanding—comics, art, video demonstrations, etc.**

# DEMONSTRATION – TeachVid



- Listening + Reading + Writing
- Five free per month
- Ready-to-go resources
- Differentiate the activities with translation and difficulty levels

# Assessment & Feedback

**Effective assessment for multilingual learners focuses on what students can do and provides multiple pathways to demonstrate their growing knowledge and skills.**

# Alternative Assessment Methods



- **Use multiple forms of assessment**
- **Offer choice in how students demonstrate their learning**
- **Implement performance-based assessments that evaluate content knowledge**
- **Use graphic organizers, drawings, or labeled diagrams as assessment tools**
- **Allow students to use their home language**

# Assessment Accommodations

- 1 Extended time
- 2 Read questions aloud
- 3 Use bilingual dictionaries
- 4 Break into smaller chunks
- 5 Provide visual supports

# Ongoing Formative Assessment

01

**Use quick checks**

02

**Implement strategic  
questioning techniques  
with wait time**

03

**Observe students  
during collaborative  
work**

04

**Use digital tools that  
provide immediate  
feedback**

# Effective Feedback Strategies

**Focus feedback on content and ideas first**

**Provide feedback in multiple modalities**

**Highlight strengths and progress explicitly**

**Use tiered feedback that addresses the immediate next steps**

**Provide key feedback in students' home language**

**Use portfolio assessments**

**Use visual examples**

**Involve students in self-assessment**

**Provide feedback in home language**

# DEMONSTRATION – WordWall



- 1 Community area
- 2 Language and game options
- 3 Create and assign activities

# Collaboration and Community



# Creating an Inclusive Classroom Culture & Community Building



- Celebrate linguistic diversity
- Incorporate students' home languages into daily routines
- Share positive narratives about bilingualism
- Create a "language of the week" spotlight
- Use literature, music, and art from diverse cultures

# Collaborative Activities That Build Community

**Use icebreakers and team-building activities**

**Incorporate collaborative art, music, drama, or movement**

**Plan service-learning projects**

**Use storytelling circles**

**Create classroom traditions and rituals**

**Organize multicultural showcases**

**Use collaborative digital tools**

**Leverage translation features in communication tools**

**Create class blogs, websites, or social media accounts**



Collaboration and community building aren't just nice extras—they're essential for multilingual learners' academic success and sense of belonging.

# DEMONSTRATION – Padlet



- 1 Gallery
- 2 How to post
- 3 Options for multilingual students



**Scan the QR code or visit  
<https://bit.ly/TFIDEA26> to access  
today's session resources and more!**



# TeachersFirst

TeachersFirst is brought to you by  
**The Source for Learning, Inc.,**  
a nonprofit that has been providing educational  
resources for more than 40 years.