



Summer 2013

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Editor

The RI-TELLER

The Newsletter for Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners and ELL Professionals

Common Core State Standards & ELLs

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) give educators little advice on how to help English Language learners (ELLs). In fact, the document itself mentions that including the supports needed to help ELL learners is “beyond the scope of the standards.”

(www.corestandards.org) Other information from the CCSS website gives some guidelines for applying the standards to ELLs. These include general suggestions such as:

- Additional time for ELLs to complete tasks and assessments.
- Modified assessments that

allow ELLs to demonstrate their content knowledge.

- Appropriate instructional supports to make grade-level course work comprehensible
- Opportunities for classroom interactions that develop concepts and academic language in the disciplines.
- Opportunities for ELLs to interact with proficient English speakers.
- Opportunities for ELLs to build on their strengths, prior experiences, and background knowledge.

These recommendations still leave school leaders and teachers without *continued page 5*

English Language Learners & The Common Core State Standards Resources

Compiled from Achieve, a bipartisan, non-profit organization that “helps states raise academic standards, improve assessments, and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for postsecondary education, work, and citizenship.” It is not meant to be exhaustive, nor is it an endorsement of particular resources.

www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core

General Resources

- The Common Core State Standards: www.corestandards.org

- Application of the CCSS for English Language Learners from the Common Core State Standards Initiative:

<http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-for-english-learners.pdf>

- Common Core en Español (translated in Spanish):

<http://commoncore-espanol.com/>

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Why Join RITELL? Six Essential Reasons

RITELL is the only association in Rhode Island that maintains an affiliation with TESOL. Joining RITELL can help members present themselves as serious professionals by being a member of his or her professional association.

Highlight your membership on your resume:

There are few better ways to show serious commitment to the field and be distinguished within the profession.

Pay special member fees and use RITELL resources:

At RITELL Conferences in the fall and spring, pay discounted fees. Designed with our members' needs in mind, visit

the RITELL website regularly to stay up to date in your field. www.ritell.org.

Receive the association's newsletter--The RI-Teller:

Receive the *RI-Teller* twice a year and stay up to date on issues and developments in the field. Learn of changes in state policies, gain valuable information that can help teach students more effectively, and learn of professional conferences of interest to be held in our region.

Job Postings:

Receive job postings through *RIWorks*, our e-bulletin that will notify RITELL members of ESL and bilingual/dual language positions as

they are announced.

Networking:

Network with colleagues who can offer ideas, strategies, resources and encouragement. Join one the Special Interest groups (SIGs). See our website for a list of SIGs.

Advocacy:

Benefit from the advocacy efforts of RITELL on behalf of Rhode Island ESL and Bilingual professionals, as well as ELL students and their families.

Get involved!

RITELL members are the backbone of our professional association. Looking for a way to Contribute? RITELL is a wonderful option. Join others and make a difference!



Don't miss out on the opportunities and benefits RITELL can bring!

Contribute to RI-TELLER!

We welcome book reviews, articles, lesson ideas, notices or relevant meetings and any other news of interest to ESL educators in RI.

For more information contact:

Christopher Bourret
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Check Us Out Online!

On www.ritell.org, check out the growing collection of resources, including our Book List Project, our Language & Country Projects, and Internet Resources.

Also, please "Like" us on Facebook at

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Ritell-an-Affiliate-of-Tesol-International/181353538598462>

RITELL's Fall 2013 Conference
*Sheltering Science and Social
Studies Informational
Texts for ELLs*

Saturday, November 23, 2013

Rhode Island College
Student Union Ballroom



Main Session Speaker:



Deborah J. Short, Ph.D.

Senior Research Associate, Center for Applied Linguistics

Short co-developed the research-validated *SIOP* Model for sheltered instruction, has directed quasi-experimental and experimental studies on English language learners, and has authored numerous research articles, the policy report *Double the Work*, as well as several publications, including books on the *SIOP* Model and National Geographic Learning's ESL series: *Edge, Inside, Reach, High Point, and Avenues*.

Adult Education Breakout Session:
*Teaching Tips to help Prepare Students
for the US Citizenship Interview*

Visit
www.RITELL.org
for registration
and upcoming information.

New RITELL Coordinating Council Announced

At our spring RITELL Conference, an election was conducted to choose the members of the 2013-2016 RITELL Coordinating Council. All elected members will serve as volunteers for a three year term. The Coordinating Council members are:

Suzanne DaSilva (continuing into the third year of her three year term)

Flavia Molea Baker

Lauren Bentley

Christopher Bourret

Nancy Cloud

Jane George

Michael Paul

Jessica Quaranto

J. Andrés Ramirez

Dina Silvaggio

Representative at Large: **Joe Lopes**



RITELL Members Vote for Council

The outgoing council also recognizes and thanks outgoing Council Members Patricia Morris and Sarah Petronio for their dedicated service on the 2010-2013 Council.

Among its activities, Coordinating Council Members organize and work at RITELL Conferences, manage the www.ritell.org website, advocate & present position statements for teachers of ELLs, help form and support Special Interest Groups, and actively recruit new RITELL members. The Council meets monthly from September to June.



Council members in action

Roles for each Council member will be assigned at the June Council meeting.

Show your support by purchasing a nifty RITELL flash drive or fashionable RITELL T-Shirt at our next conference in November! We will also raffle an I-Pad Mini!



concrete ideas on instruction and instructional supports needed to help ELLs participate in grade level coursework.

In their article *Common Core Challenge for ELLs*, Rhoda Coleman and Claude Goldenberg, provide great ideas that connect CCSS and ELL achievement. They write that in addition to “effective teaching” strategies teachers normally employ (goal and objective setting, well-structured tasks, adequate practice, opportunities to interact with others, frequent assessment and re-teaching when necessary), research shows that teachers also must make academic content as accessible as possible for ELLs. The authors mention the importance of creating tasks and activities that focus on developing vocabulary, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension and writing, in addition to the literacy instruction that develops academic skills and concepts.

Sheltered Instruction

Coleman and Goldenberg see *Sheltered instruction* as invaluable in the way it creates “a number of techniques and strategies to help make academic content accessible” for ELLs, while at the same time focusing on the development of English language skills. The authors list “effective modifications” for ELLs that sheltered strategies cover, including:

- Targeting both language and content objectives in all lessons
- Employing visuals, charts and diagrams to aid comprehension
- Using primary language for support
- Choosing reading material with familiar content
- Providing additional practice and repetition

Coleman and Goldenberg also emphasize that content instruction can't only focus on

academic content, but also has to effectively include the oral and written language needed for ELLs “to learn about, discuss and write about the academic content.” For example, a social studies lesson that asks students to compare differing viewpoints means teachers should model and have students practice compound and complex sentences that contain expressions of comparison and contrast, such as “although” and “however.”

Promoting ELL Proficiency

In order to ensure ELL academic success, Coleman and Goldenberg also advocate having schools provide both English language development (ELD) and content-area instruction classes.

“Content-area instruction can be a venue for language learning, but the focus during content instruction should be content; the focus during ELD instruction should be the English language.”

Teachers and administrators need to make sure instruction in content classes and ELD classes complement and reinforce one another, providing ELLs with adequate and meaningful hours in both content and language development.

Additionally, the authors say promoting ELL proficiency effectively includes other key instructional components:

- Daily Language Instruction

This should include *elements of English* (vocabulary, syntax and conventions), *conversational conventions* (e.g., taking turns, signaling disagreement), and *strategies for how to learn the language* (e.g., taking notes, summarizing, paying select attention).

Coleman and Goldenberg note that ELLs need ample opportunities for authentic and functional use of English. Just learning these

functions and expressions on their own is not enough. Students need “extensive use” of the language in meaningful ways, or they will not attain high levels of proficiency.

- Identifying Academic Language

This should include not only vocabulary, but the syntax and text structures needed in various academic disciplines. Ideally, ELD and content instruction should be well thought out, so students have the opportunity to apply the language they learn to their academic tasks.

- Structured Student Talk

It is important for teachers to create “elaborate student talk” by making *open-ended prompts* (e.g., *Why do you say that? Can you give an example?*) or *prompts for specific language structures*, which make students answer using identified vocabulary or use a particular sentence structure.

- Sufficient Duration of Services

Coleman and Goldenberg recommend that ELD instruction continue through level four (advanced intermediate) and if possible through level five (advanced or native-like proficiency). Stopping ELD at Intermediate proficiency (level 3) is “almost certainly inadequate” for success in the mainstream middle elementary classroom and higher grades.

- Grouping

ELLs grouped by language proficiency specifically during ELD

instruction “is likely to be effective” if instruction is tailored to students language learning needs. ELLs should not, however, be in classroom subjects segregated by language proficiency levels.

- Encouraging Verbal Interaction

Students should not be simply finishing tasks, but instead focused on “participating in productive verbal exchanges”, especially between ELLs and native speakers, if possible. Providing cooperative group work means opportunities for structured practice of targeted language forms and structures to help ELLs master academic language while discussing content.

Coleman and Goldenberg make it clear that content teachers need to see the connections between teaching language arts and their content to ensure ELL success: “Some teachers might feel that they don’t have time to teach language arts, because they have so much content to cover.” However, the authors say there is no getting around the fact that in order for ELLs to meet the requirements of CCSS, the teaching of academic content must go hand in hand with language development. Therefore school leaders and teachers at all levels must organize conversations and planning within each subject area to promote success for ELLs.

Source:

The Common Core Challenge for ELLs. Coleman, Rhoda and Claude Goldenberg. Principal Leadership. February, 2012

Common Core Resources continued from page one

- Framework for English Language Proficiency Development Standards corresponding to the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards:
www.ccsso.org/Documents/2012/ELPD%20Framework%20Booklet-Final%20for%20web.pdf
- The Role of Language and Literacy in College- and Career-Ready Standards: Rethinking Policy and Practice in Support of English Language Learners:
www.all4ed.org/files/LangAndLiteracyInStandardsELLS.pdf
- Colorin Colorado's Common Core State Standards resources:
http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/common_core/
- National Charter School Resource Center webinar on Helping English Language Learners Meet the New Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts:
<http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinar/helping-english-language-learners-meet-common-core-state-standards-english-language-arts>
- New Jersey's Model Curriculum Scaffolding for ELLs in ELA:
www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/elal/

Implementation Resources

- New Mexico Department of Education Common Core State Standards' Implementation Plan:
<http://newmexicocommoncore.org/uploads/downloads/nmccss-implementation-plan-22a4f779c059.pdf>
- Raising the Bar: Implementation Common Core State Standards for Latino Student Success, an Implementation Guide from The National Council on La Raza:
http://www.nclr.org/images/uploads/pages/Implementation_Guide.pdf
- TESOL Connections Common Core Special Issue, December 2012:
<http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/tesol/c/issues/2012-12-15/email.html>

Communication Resources

- National PTA Briefs on the Common Core in Spanish:
<http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2129>
- Council of Great City Schools Parent Roadmaps in Spanish:
<http://www.cgcs.org/Page/261>
- New York City Department of Education's Resources for Families:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/ForFamilies/default.htm>

Instructional Resources

- Stanford Understanding Language initiative:
<http://ell.stanford.edu/>

Common Core Resources *continued*

- California's fact sheets on the CCSS in Chinese (simplified), Chinese (traditional), Spanish, and Vietnamese: <http://inet2.cde.ca.gov/cmd/translatedparentaldoc.aspx?docid=6966-6973>
- Delaware PTA's Common Core Workshop in Spanish: <http://brighted.funeducation.com/News/Common-Core-State-Standards%20News/delaware-pta-to-host-common-core-workshop-for-spanish-speakers>
- The Council of Great City Schools video on the CCSS in Spanish: <http://vimeo.com/51947947>
- The National Council of La Raza's Access to Common Standards for All Advocacy Toolkit: http://www.nclr.org/images/uploads/pages/CCSS_Toolkit.pdf
- The Council of Great City Schools coverage of panels on the implications of CCSS on ELLs and classroom examples of CCSS instruction to ELLs: <http://cgcs.schoolwires.net/site/Default.aspx?PageID=144>
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) Accessibility and Accommodations Fact Sheet: http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/SmarterBalanced_Accessibility_Factsheet.pdf

ELLs and Common Assessment Consortia

- The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Accessibility, Accommodations and Fairness Policies: <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-accessibility-accommodations-and-fairness>

Common Core & Adult Education

After a nine-month process that examined the Common Core State Standards from the perspective of adult education, The US Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) published the *College and Career Ready* standards (CCR) in April. According to OVAE, the new standards are intended to "reflect broad agreement among subject matter experts in adult education about what is desirable for adult students to know to be prepared for the rigors of postsecondary education and training." OVAE hopes to "raise awareness and understanding of the critical skills and knowledge expected and required for success in colleges, technical training programs, and employment in the 21st century." The standards cover the ELA/literacy domains of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Math. See the new CCR standards at:

<http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/CCRStandardsAdultEd.pdf>

Advocacy Story *by Michael Paul*

It was a dark and stormy Wednesday afternoon, as I drove to the RI State House, raining so hard I had wished I brought my kayak. It would have been easier to park, too. There were several reasons why I was there. First, I read my RITELL emails because they are infrequent but important. Second, I had help from some trusted people. Third, “put the students first” is one of those convenient slogans used by adults to fight other adults, but that was what I was trying to do.

Earlier that week I received a RITELL email, telling me about a hearing on a bill to change NECAP scores as a graduation requirement. The RITELL message included information about the bill, and NECAP testing & ELLs. Those of us who give NECAP to our students know the fear and frustration these young people experience. Also, we know the “just do your best” advice is useless. When we tell them that we cannot help them, our students feel betrayed. So I was resolved to go to the hearing to testify.

Tuesday morning I was back at Central Falls High School with a pad of paper and a pen in hand. Told of my plan to testify, my colleagues Pam Garabedian and Sheila Lawless rattled off six or seven points for me. Pam, our ESL math teacher, offered to give me sample NECAP math problems in Spanish, which I brought as part of my handout. Then I shaped their ideas into five points.

That night my wife, a former lobbyist, suggested I make copies of the comments for more impact. And that is what I did the next morning after reviewing my handout with my colleagues. I then asked an administrator if I could skip our weekly hour of professional development to go to the hearing. He thought the hearing would be great PD.

Many of my students are afraid to speak in front of the class. My response is that someday you will have something you want to say, and you do not want fear to control you. This day I had to tell them about my concerns about speaking in front of an audience of strangers. I practiced my presentation with my students and solicited their feedback. With their encouragement, I set off for the State House.



I arrived, and signed in as speaker number 6. Eventually, there would be 88 people to testify for their allotted two minutes each. Who was lucky #1? Why Commissioner Gist, who spoke against the bill, and fielded questions for one hour. She spoke eloquently about giving waivers and multiple opportunities to take the test. She was encouraged about how many students have signed up for on-line tutoring. (At this time, Central Falls High School does not have the technology to participate.)

I followed two lobbyists, a superintendent, and a parent, and then I was on. It was challenging, especially with the time pressure. I am not sure I swayed anyone’s opinion. I was not sought out by Channel 12, who covered the event. But following me, seven students from Young Voices hit a home run, talking about their low NECAP scores and the effects it has had on them. We were in solidarity: we had spoken out for students.

Michael Paul is an ESL teacher at Central Falls High School and new member of the RITELL Coordinating Committee.

RITELL Advocacy Letter

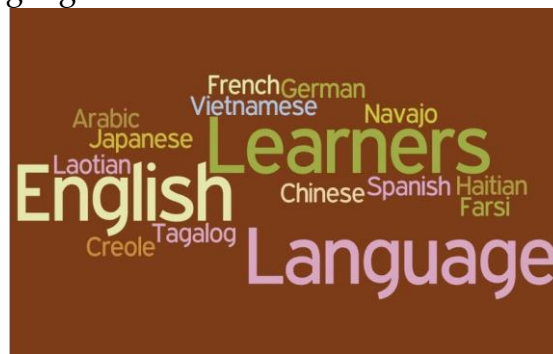
RITELL has supported passage of RI Senate Bills recently heard before the Senate Education Committee, which would bar state assessments or other standardized testing program or assessment from being used to determine a student's eligibility to graduate from high school. Any such assessments would instead be used to promote school and district accountability and improvement, and to target early and intensive remediation to individual students and to at-risk student subgroups, like ELLs. The following RITELL letter to the Senate Education Committee is a response to comments raised at a hearing on the bill.

In order to respond to some of the excellent questions asked at the hearing about English Language Learners and how to craft a policy that would both hold students accountable while creating equitable testing conditions, we would like to make several points, as well as correct some misimpressions created at the hearing about our position.

First, it is not the position of RITELL that all ELLs are deficient in mathematics and that adapting tests will make no difference to their performance as was asserted last night at the close of the hearing.

On the contrary, many ELLs would be able to perform if given the assessment in a language they could understand. Therefore, we agree with the provision in Senate Bill 0968 to offer tests in other languages and recommend that Rhode Island offer the test to the three highest incidence language

groups in Rhode Island. These language groups are Spanish (75%), Creole, Patois or Portuguese (10%), and Asian Languages (8%), according to RI Kids Count in their 2013 RI Kids Count Factbook. Of course such assessments can only be administered to students who are literate in their native languages. But when it comes to the secondary grades, if ELLs are arriving to Rhode Island schools at later ages, most would have been educated in their home languages and would meet these criteria.



We also urge that Rhode Island offer a Plain English version of the assessment to all other ELLs. Plain English is a form of test wording in which all phrasing is made as simple and understandable as possible to aid ELLs in interpreting the questions; it does not influence the test results. The focus is on comprehending the task at hand. So contrary to the final speaker's position, it does not reduce the cognitive demand of the questions, it just expresses prompts and questions in "plain English" to give ELLs a chance to understand what is being asked of them.

Second, the Department of Education conducts an annual ELL Census and knows very well who

continued next page

the ELL students are in terms of their home languages and in terms of their English proficiency levels as measured per RIDE's own ELL Assessment System; the *ACCESS for ELLs* Assessment. Therefore, it was somewhat disingenuous to state that the Department of Education doesn't have exact data on what languages are spoken for students at each grade level.



We could be using this information to determine who can sit for exams in English (Expanding, Bridging, Proficient ELL Students) and who does not have the requisite English proficiency to sit for tests in English (Entering, Beginning, Developing Proficiency ELL Students) in order to determine which students need native language or Plain English versions of state assessments. There are close to 9,000 ELLs in Rhode Island (8,855 as per RI Kids Count 2013 Factbook). But in addition to all the documented ELLs, there are additional ELLs who have been waived from services by their parents or who have recently exited ESL services. So significant numbers of Rhode Island students are affected by annual testing conducted exclusively in English; a language ELLs are still learning.

Third, we want to reiterate our support for annual assessment, if conducted in an equitable manner, to make districts accountable for the achievement of their ELLs. But we oppose use of the NECAP assessment for determining graduation from high school because standardized tests conducted in English or even given through translated versions have been documented to have many threats to their reliability and validity when it comes to language minority students. For this reason, we urge a true multiple-measure system in which ELLs are given every opportunity to show what they know through multiple measures of their performance and in which the NECAP results do not dominate in decision making. We further urge greater use of the native language in the supports offered to recently arrived students so they can learn as much as possible, as quickly as possible to meet our rigorous educational requirements, while they are in the process of learning English.

Therefore, for all these reasons, we urge the Committee to continue to work on these issues blending the best elements of S-0968 and S-0117, specifically continuing annual assessments administered in the fairest possible way (i.e. native language and Plain English version) while not tying performance on the NECAP assessment with graduation from high school. Instead, we urge that annual accountability assessments be used for the originally intended purposes: to improve the quality of the education provided to Rhode Island students.

Adult Education Corner

U. S. Citizenship Preparation: Not Just 100 Civics Questions

By Larry Britt

Many U.S. Citizenship applicants as well as native born Americans think that the U.S. Citizenship interview is a simple matter of memorizing 100 U.S. Civics and History questions. The Naturalization process is much more than an exercise in memorization. The vast majority of applicants are ELLs, and they need help in understanding and negotiating this process as well as learning the content and language items needed to pass their interview. There are aspects involved that every Citizenship instructor, volunteer should be aware of in order to help students succeed.

Who is Eligible to take the Citizenship Test?

ESOL/Citizenship Preparation teachers should first help learners determine their eligibility. All applicants must be at least 18 years old and have been a legal Permanent Resident for 5 years. Applicants who have been married to an American citizen may apply after 3 years as a legal Permanent Resident. There are also residency requirements that oblige applicants to have lived in their current district or state for the past 3 months, to not have been outside of the U.S. for more than 6 months in the past 5 (or 3) years and to not have been away from the U.S. for more than 12 consecutive months in past 5 (or 3) years. There are exceptions for Permanent Residents who've served in the U.S. Military.

Though the majority of students have straightforward paths of Permanent Residency to Naturalization, each case is different. I'm a Citizenship Preparation Teacher, not a U.S. Immigration expert. So when the occasional student has a complicated immigration history, I access outside resources to be sure a potential applicant is truly eligible for naturalization. The definitive source for details about eligibility and the Naturalization process can found at the

United States Immigration and Citizenship Services' website (USCIS), www.uscis.gov. If you're not familiar with the process, take a look at the site's section for *Citizenship Through Naturalization*. The site is loaded with links to forms, guides, study resources and videos for teachers and learners, as well as answers to most questions you might have.

If you can't find what you need, click on the OUTREACH button and you'll be able to directly contact a USCIS representative. If I am not sure about a potential applicant after doing the above research, I refer the student to Immigration experts at Dorcas International Institute of RI. (see link, page 15)



What must an applicant demonstrate at his/her interview?

In addition to answering 6 of 10 U.S. History/Civics questions correctly, applicants must demonstrate an ability to read, write and speak basic English. They must correctly read 1 of 3 English sentences and they must correctly write 1 of 3 dictated sentences. The history/civics, reading and writing requirements aren't they only test elements, however. The most common reason for an applicant to not pass the Naturalization process is their inability to understand and speak conversational English, centered mostly on the N-400 Application for Naturalization form. In my classes, *Continued next page*

US Citizenship Preparation *continued*

students usually come in already knowing the 100 questions orally and most can learn the reading and writing exam portions easily. Yet, asking questions from the N-400 can trip them up. For example, I might ask a question using the wording from the N-400: "What's your date of birth?" New students may focus on the word "date" and respond with the current day's date. That in itself can be grounds for failure on the interview! Yet, if asked "What's your birthday?" most students would understand the question and reply appropriately. It's important to keep in mind that USCIS Adjudicators are not ESOL trained and it's not their responsibility to word questions in ways that are ESOL friendly. So a key part of our job as Citizenship Preparation Teachers is to help students understand the different ways a question might be asked while also providing a good understanding of the Form vocabulary that doesn't come up in everyday conversation. The N-400 is a 10 page application and students need to know the meaning of every question and corresponding appropriate answers. This involves teaching a whole range of vocabulary and expressions.

Students also need to be clear about commands and instructions that they'll encounter and they'll need to be able to engage in everyday American small talk, which is how examiners informally start to assess an applicant.



The assessment of an applicant's English understanding and speaking starts from the moment her name is called and she shakes hands with and greets the Adjudicator. In order to master the English they'll need, ELL

students should ideally be at the Low Intermediate level, with their English Language abilities, using *the National Reporting Service (NRS) Levels* (US Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education - OVAE) Highly motivated, High Beginners can usually master what's needed as well. Students below these ESOL levels should be referred to more ESOL classes before starting with Citizenship Preparation.

A Citizenship Preparation Class

In most of my classes, I try to touch upon each of the components of the Naturalization Interview. Each class starts with a different small talk, introductory question. We start with what most students know like "How are you today?", "Who did you come with today?", and "How did you come here today?" Later, the class works with idiomatic expressions like "How's it going?" or "What's it like out?" Native speakers, like USCIS Adjudicators, use these expressions all the time, but if an ELL has to cope with an idiomatic expression or colloquialism on the walk to the Adjudicator's office, it could shake his or her initial confidence and lead to self-doubt and panic during the interview.

Next, the class reviews 10-15 History/Civics questions that were assigned as homework. Teachers use a variety of games, flash cards, and a great series of USCIS Lessons to help students master the questions. (see www.uscis.gov for Citizenship study resources and lesson plans). An Internet search will also provide lots of ideas for activities. For reading and writing practice, USCIS provides vocabulary lists. Since these are simply categorized lists of words, Citizenship Preparation teachers and book publishers have made up sentences that use all of the words in the lists. Practicing with actual sentences is better *continued next page*

than having students memorize the vocabulary lists since they'll be presented with complete sentences to read and write at their interview. You can find lists of sentences with a quick Internet search or you can request a copy of mine at the e-mail address below.

The last part of class usually focuses on the N-400 and interview practice. Each year, a handful of students come to class with N-400s already filled out and mailed with the help of some profit making agency. Students pay up to \$200.00 to have someone ask them the N-400 questions in their native languages and fill in the form. This is a huge disservice to U.S. Citizenship applicants, because they don't know the English version of the questions and they're not told the importance of understanding them. It's crucial that students practice reviewing the N-400 in class. This gives them the opportunity to understand the form and the unique and legalistic English they will be exposed to at the Interview.

Interview practice can be accomplished by just asking questions from the N-400, but I like students to start modeling with a script they can read from. My favorite N-400 Interview scripts can be found at www.uscitizenpod.com. You can start with simple and basic interviews and work up to the Advanced Interview. As with all U.S. Citizenship Interview scripts, these are examples of what an interview could be like. This web site for teachers and students has other great study resources, self-tests and current, civics related news stories worth checking out.

Once a student and teacher agree that an applicant is prepared, the applicant mails the N-400 and \$685.00 fee to USCIS using Return Receipt mail. I have the student begin one-on-one practice with an interviewing volunteer. This intensive practice habituates the interview process for the applicant and allows him or her to focus on unique challenges or potential interview questions based on their application or personal situation. It is also important for students to learn how to respectfully ask to have questions repeated and how to buy "thinking time" that's natural and appropriate, (e.g., "let me think", "one second please", etc.).

These practice interviews also expose students to different ways that they might be asked to respond to questions. For example, some Adjudicators may ask applicants to reply "correct" or "incorrect" to application questions. Other Adjudicators may simply state what is or isn't on the application and ask "Is that right?"

For the past few years, turnaround time from mailing the application to the interview day has been quick in Rhode Island. Applicants with no complications normally receive notice for a Fingerprint Appointment about one month after mailing their N-400. The appointment letter for their Naturalization Interview comes about a month later. So be sure students are prepared before applying!



The day of the Interview

Almost all applicants are extremely nervous just before their interview. For some, the emotional strain is intense. It's important for teachers to help students manage their stress. I teach students how to do breathing exercises to calm themselves while in the USCIS waiting room. They can do this quietly without anyone else being aware of it and it gives them a sense of control over their emotions. Also, as with a job interview, I advise that they know the interview location in advance, arrive about 30 minutes early, and dress in business casual clothing or better.

If an applicant fails all or part of the interview, there's a second opportunity to interview without
continued next page

US Citizenship Preparation *continued*

the need of another application. The applicant only has to demonstrate what was failed during the first interview. The second interview is normally 1-2 months later. Students spend this time focusing intensively on what they need to master. If an applicant can't demonstrate what was missed in the first interview, the entire process has to start again with a new N-400 and another \$685.00 fee.

You've Passed!

When students pass their interview, they almost always want to come and tell their classmates and teacher about their success. This is important for the class and teacher as well as for the successful applicant. Applicants want to share their success and encourage their classmates who want to know every detail of the interview. These details can give teachers a lot of information about different Adjudicator's interview approaches and could help with others' future interview practice. A successful applicant's return to the classroom is also an opportunity for the teacher to give out U.S. Passport and Voter Registration information. Lastly, it's a great opportunity to have a party that celebrates the student's success and strengthens your classroom community.

Larry Britt (lbritt@provlb.org) has taught ESOL and Citizenship Preparation for the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) for the past 10 years. RIFLI is a member of the Rhode Island Citizenship Consortium of nonprofit agencies. See next column.

The Rhode Island Citizenship Consortium (RICC)

The RICC, funded through a grant from USCIS, serves the needs of

- immigrants, refugees and asylees who have adjusted status to legal permanent resident.
- people 65 years or older with legal permanent resident status.
- people adjusting to permanent resident status under the Violence Against Women Act, U or T Visas.

Services include:

- Citizenship and English as a Second Language Classes
- Citizenship Application and Preparation Assistance
- Citizenship Resource Materials
- Workshops and Events Promoting Citizenship
- Citizenship Tutoring and Study Groups

Partnering Programs

Progreso Latino

www.progresolatino.org 401-728-5920

Diocese of Providence Office of Community Services & Advocacy

dioceseofprovidence.org 401-421-7833

Genesis Center

www.gencenter.org 401-781-6110

Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island

www.iiri.org 401-461-5940

RI Family Literacy Initiative (public libraries)

www.rifli.org 401-455-8185

Important Links:

www.uscis.gov (go to Citizenship Header)

www.elcivics.com (designed for students)

www.elcivicsonline.org (training modules for teachers and volunteers)

www.uscizenpod.com (U.S. Citizenship podcast listening exercises)

www.citizenshipnews.us (Citizenship resources)

Useful Tool for the Independent Adult ELL *by Kevin McKay*

Adult ELL students learn at an individual pace and need to be encouraged through the learning process. Developing tools to build student self-efficacy, so that they feel successful in their learning, is an essential part of any Adult Education ESL course. The “English Practice Log” is one tool I created to help students in this process. The log can start to enable students to manage their time outside class so they can include time to practice their English language skills. Students record when and how they have practiced English. By reflecting on their entries can both in and out of class, students become independent learners as they realize that the learning process goes beyond the classroom and into their hands. Many then begin to take responsibility of their learning and fit it into their busy schedules. Here are the steps involved in using the logs:

1. Students record the English they have practiced outside class into the English Practice Log. (see sample below)

2. During the first five minutes of class, I check their practice, make a quick oral comment, and initial the latest recorded practice.
3. The student and teacher can evaluate if additional practice is needed with one particular English skill.
4. The student becomes an independent learner as they begin to look for opportunities to practice needed English skills outside of class time and adjust their schedule to practice English.

Successful students will notice that success in their learning is connected to not only their class attendance and participation, but to how much time they can dedicate outside of the classroom to their learning.

Kevin McKay, M.Ed, TESL, is a program Coordinator with RI Family Literacy Initiative, East Providence



<i>I PRACTICED ENGLISH BY...</i>				
<i><u>Skills: Listening, speaking, reading and writing English.</u></i>				
<i>Date Practiced</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>How Long</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Skill</i>
<i>1/9/13</i>	<i>6:00pm</i>	<i>2 hours</i>	<i>I went for a doctor's visit.</i>	<i>Speaking, listening</i>
<i>1/9/13</i>	<i>12:50pm</i>	<i>1 hour</i>	<i>I listened to the radio in English.</i>	<i>Listening</i>
<i>1/10/13</i>	<i>6:00pm</i>	<i>30 mins</i>	<i>I read an article in the newspaper.</i>	<i>Reading</i>

I do not know how to pray in English and I feel more comfortable reading the bible in Spanish. However, outside of church I would prefer to read and recite everything in English. At home when I speak with my sister it sounds something like this: "Doris, can you get me la laptop; I need to do my work." Or you may hear me say: "Do you have my charger? Tengo que cargar el telefono." Sounds crazy, right? But to me and many bilingual individuals, we would call this trend "Spanglish" where Spanish and English are blended effectively in order to communicate.

This phenomenon, called *translanguaging*, refers to multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds. According to researcher Ofelia Garcia "Bilingual families and communities must use translanguage in order to construct meaning." In other words bilinguals have to use both languages in order to communicate effectively with their family members.

This is the case in my family. Since I have family members at different language degrees in Spanish and English, I communicate with them through switching languages. Below are some scenarios of translanguaging within my family:

- Scenario 1: I have a conversation mainly in English with another family member who is more fluent in L2 English.
- Scenario 2: I have conversations in L1 Spanish with my Mom, grandmother or family living in Puerto Rico. All these family members are fluent in L1, and is their dominant language.
- Scenario 3: My sister and I, both fluent in L1 and L2, code switch between Spanish and English frequently.

- Scenario 4: A conversation mainly in Spanish with reinforcement in English can take place if there is a get together between family members more fluent in L2 and family members like my mom and grandmother, who are L1 dominant.

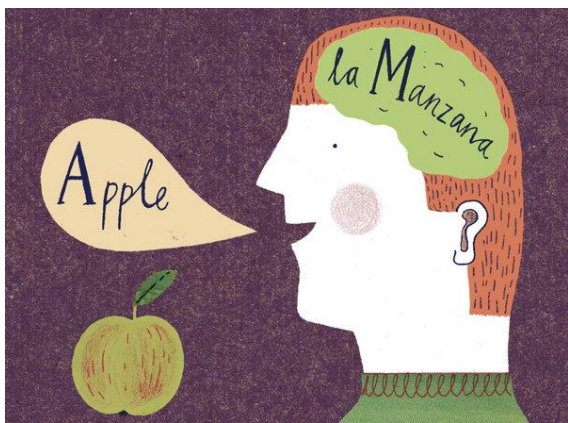


Looking at the scenarios above, it is clear that the kind of translanguage depends on the family member I am interacting with. Code-switching occurs when I interact with a family member of whom I know can speak and understand both languages fluently (such as my sister). The fourth scenario may seem the most difficult kind of conversation participate in, yet I am accustomed to this type of scenario; the conversation is able to go smoothly because of my ability to quickly switch easily between L1 & L2.

Besides constructing meaning, Garcia states that bilingual people translanguage by using their languages for different modalities. *Continued next page*

For example, I only know how to pray in Spanish. Growing up, I was raised in the Spanish church, despite one year when my mother put me in English religion classes. That year we were required to learn the prayers in English. I struggled and never learned the prayers. Today, I attend both English and Spanish mass. When I listen to English mass I am able to better understand when the priest is addressing the congregation. However, when the prayers are out loud I recite them in Spanish so that I can make meaning of what is happening. Garcia would describe this process, in which I am listening to the prayer in English and translating it in Spanish, as possibly being due to translanguaging in different modalities.

A third example of how I code switch occurred some months ago at a meeting. I was sitting with a colleague (English speaker) and a former student of mine (bilingual) came



to speak to me. The student spoke in Spanish, but my responses were in English. I did not realize this, but I tend to do this and vice versa if I am surrounded by monolingual people. The student and I were able to hold a small conversation where she spoke in Spanish and I responded in English. At the end of the conversation my colleague was amazed and

felt it required much skill to perform this bilingualism so well. At the time I didn't think much of it, as I was so used to responding in English during a Spanish conversation. However, having learned later that my ability to hold such a conversation was due to the ability to translanguage Spanish and English, I am now amazed at how I can do this naturally.

I also demonstrate what Garcia calls *language-contact phenomena*. I might borrow the form of a word from another language along with its content. A majority of the time this borrowing is phonologically assimilated. For instance, in a Spanish conversation with my mother, I would use the English term *lipstick*, when referring to it, instead of using the Spanish term *pinta labios*.

"En donde esta mi lipstick rojo?"

Yet when I am speaking with a bilingual person, code-switching occurs extensively from one language to the other. It may seem odd to an observer, yet the language comes out naturally. I've had people criticize me for doing this, but I feel it's a unique skill that only fluent bilinguals have. Garcia would agree with me by saying, "code-switching is a sophisticated linguistic skill." It's not being sloppy with the language one is producing; it's a natural course that language seems to take when balanced bilinguals speak.

Translanguaging is evident among many new young bilingual artists in the Spanish music scene; many bounce between two languages when they sing.

For example, a very well-known bachatero named Prince Royce translanguages in many of his songs. For example in his song *Stand by Me* he sings:

“When the night has come and the land is dark y la luna es la luz que brilla ante mí. Miedo no, no tendre oh I won’t, no me asustare. Just as long as you stand, stand by me “.

Another young Latin artist named, Leslie Grace, also demonstrates this phenomenon when she sings *Day One*:

“Nunca pense enamorarme asi de los pies a la cabeza. Had me feel like a little girl in a fairy tale, como un cuento de princesa”.

Both singers are doing what Garcia calls *borrowing*, or taking individual lexical items from both English and Spanish. They are also going back and forth, code-switching between English and Spanish. If you look at Prince Royce’s lyrics, the switch occurs within boundaries, such as in the middle of sentences. This type of code-switching Garcia calls *intrasentential*. For example, In the second sentence of his song, Royce switches within that sentence.

On the other hand, Leslie Grace’s switch sounds more *intersentential*. She begins the first sentence in complete Spanish and then changes the first clause of the second sentence in English and finishes in Spanish. Language elements seem less mixed in this usage, as there are clearer boundary markers like clauses and

sentences that mark where one language begins and the other ends.

After listening to these songs and looking at their interviews I noticed that Prince Royce is more fluent in both languages than Leslie Grace. This made me wonder if the type of code-switching used is based on their bilingual ability. I feel like intrasentential switches requires much skill than the intersentential ones, because you are utilizing both languages close to each other at the same time, while also making sure it (hopefully) makes sense to the audience.

I chose my personal examples as well as what we see today in the Spanish music industry to demonstrate how translanguaging practices play an important role in bilingualism. Like Garcia says, this process “makes it obvious that there are no clear-cut boundaries between the languages of bilinguals. What we have is a languaging continuum.” This also demonstrates that bilingualism is not equal to monolingualism times two, instead, it is a mix of language behaviors used to communicate and make sense of their surroundings.

Maria Monet is a Fourth Grade Dual Language teacher in Central Falls.

Source Material:

Fishman, Joshua A. and Ofelia García (eds). 2011. *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: The Success-Failure Continuum in Language and Ethnic Identity. Vol. 2.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Candid Camera at RITELL: Spring 2013 Conference



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