

Tips for Uplifting Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Learning

Uplifting multilingualism and multiculturalism positively impacts students' well-being and academic outcomes. Consider the following classroom and district tips for incorporating multilingualism and multiculturalism in your context. Then, identify a practice you want to try out or strengthen.

Classroom Tips

- **Make multilingualism and multiculturalism visible and valued.** Present classroom displays, greetings, and norms in a variety of languages, dialects, and forms of communication. This includes recognizing translanguaging practices, home languages, regional dialects, and multiple forms of expression.
 - Learn and use greetings, names, and pronunciation practices from students' families and communities.
 - Include multilingual texts, audio, music, visuals, and media throughout the classroom library and in instructional materials.
 - Display maps, family stories, artifacts, photographs, and community connections that reflect students' identities and lived experiences.
- **Address deficit thinking and assumptions about language.** Refrain from using comments or approaches that position English or standardized forms of a language as more legitimate than other languages or language varieties.
 - Discuss when and why different language varieties may be used in different contexts rather than labeling a language variety as "wrong."
 - Explore the cultural and historical roots of different language varieties.
 - Evaluate student understanding through multiple modes of expression instead of relying only on standard written English.
- **Integrate students' and their families' languages and cultures into instruction.**
 - Uplift students' and their families' lived experiences as assets, not obstacles.
 - Integrate students' and their families' lived experiences into units and lessons throughout the school year, not just during special days, months, or events.
 - Integrate students' and their families' lived experiences into grade-level, multimodal content instruction.

- **Encourage group work and dialogue among peers who share the same language.**
 - Provide dialogue supports such as sentence starters or dialogue frames in English and in the languages represented in the classroom.
 - Provide mentor texts in the languages represented in the classroom.
 - Invite students to choose a language partner or join small groups where everyone uses a common language.
- **Include opportunities for students to complete schoolwork in all the languages they know.**
 - Provide meaningful ways for students to engage in translanguageing.
 - Encourage students to create final projects using their preferred language(s).
 - Co-create project resources with students in languages represented in the classroom.

District Tips

- **Make multilingualism and multiculturalism visible and valued.**
 - Ensure school signage, websites, communication systems, and family materials are available in the languages represented in the community.
 - Allocate funding for multilingual classroom libraries, translation supports, and culturally-sustaining instructional material.
 - Ensure interpretation services are offered at all school events that families are invited to attend.
- **Share about the benefits of multilingualism with staff and families.**
 - Co-facilitate a book circle with families centered on the benefits of multilingualism.
 - Co-facilitate a staff discussion with families about ways the school and district can encourage and support the use of various and preferred languages among students, staff, and families. Support the implementation of the ideas presented.
 - Provide families with research and resources that focus on the benefits of multilingualism.
 - Facilitate a focus group with families and community members to explore additional ways to affirm and support the use of preferred languages among families, educators, and students.
- **Address deficit thinking and assumptions about language.** Refrain from using comments or approaches that position English or standardized forms of a language as more legitimate than other languages or language varieties.
 - Review curricula, assessments, policies, and communication practices for deficit perspectives about multilingual learners and their families and communities.

- Examine placement and grading practices to ensure students are not limited because of English language proficiency alone.
- **Engage families and community members as leaders and partners in fostering multilingualism.**
- **Invest in educator professional learning and hiring.**
 - Support pathways for educator development through grow-your-own programs, professional learning on culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining approaches, and opportunities for ESL/bilingual certification.
- **Explore multilingual programming and initiatives in your setting.**
 - Consider opportunities such as early childhood programming, heritage language programs, dual language immersion programs, and the Seal of Biliteracy.
- **Integrate multilingualism across the curriculum regardless of program type.**
 - Engage families and other educators in collaborative and informative conversations around translanguageing pedagogy and your teaching practices.
 - Dedicate time during grade-level, department, and team meetings to discuss ways to support students in using their preferred language(s). Consider how the learning environment and lesson design can encourage and sustain multilingual practices.

After reading these suggested practices, what ideas do you have for uplifting multilingualism and multiculturalism in your context? Record your thoughts below.