

Focusing on WIDA PreK-3 Essential Actions Video Transcript

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WIDA: We asked educators to share which of the WIDA Pre-K-3 Essential Actions they focus on in their practice and why the action is essential. Here are a few of the examples shared with us. Establish and sustain relationships with the families and community members of the multilingual children you serve that are collaborative, informative, and reciprocal.

Luisa: When we are considering the students and the population that we work with, all of the WIDA Pre-K-3 Essential Actions are very important to us. However, specifically looking at establishing and sustaining relationships with families and community members of multilingual children, that's essential to the work that we do. Oftentimes, this is families' first experience with a school and with special education services. So we work really hard to build those relationships so they have a foundation of trust and support, and we are working hard in our district to find some more multilingual services and resources as the community is growing, and we have more languages and cultures moving into our valley.

WIDA: Engage in self-reflection to examine personal experiences, beliefs, attitudes, identities, and practices connected to promoting and providing culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining opportunities for the multilingual children you serve.

Alejandra: As an English learner myself, I approach my practice with how I would've liked to have been treated when I was a child learning English. Providing opportunities to respond in my home language if I didn't know how to respond in English is something that stuck with me that only a very few teachers let me do. In the work I do as an EL coordinator supporting teachers and families, I share how powerful and important it is for students to be able to integrate their full linguistic background in their learning process and encourage families to continue to teach their home language to their children as it is a foundational part of their identity. When interacting with families, especially during IEP meetings, I think of how my own mother would've felt or engaged in this type of meeting. I know she would've been very overwhelmed and maybe even intimidated. This is why I try to encourage full dialogue with families and encourage them to ask questions while utilizing an interpreter as needed to ensure that what they

have to say is a part of the conversation and that there are no misunderstandings. WIDA: Know and affirm the multilingual children you serve, reflecting on their individual histories and lived experiences, interacting identities, language development, dynamic language, and cultural practices and learning.

Mariana: Understanding a student's background and experience helps me better support their academic growth and build stronger relationships with them. I implemented this by learning about students' cultures and languages and their experiences through conversations, family communications, and classroom projects that allow them to share about themselves. We also discuss the similarities that our cultures share, and it has been amazing to see the connections that form between students as they realize how much they have in common. I also create opportunities for students to connect their learning to their own experience and make sure that the classroom environment reflects and values different cultures and languages. I'm currently shifting my practice by being more intentional about incorporating students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into the daily instruction because it helps students feel seen and valued while also making the learning more meaningful.

Holly: Our students come to us from some pretty unique backgrounds. We typically have five to six languages spoken at home other than English and Spanish, and some of our students have interrupted schooling or other challenging circumstances, so that's why Essential Action number two is really critical. One shift I have made this year is incorporating more hands-on materials so that students can use their imaginations and cooperate with children at all different levels. So I have LEGO building sets that I received through a DonorsChoose grant. We also did community literacy mapping this week, and that's where the students make a map of all the places in the community that are most important to them, and then we were able to reflect and see how they use language in those different settings. These strategies are important because multilingual learners' language journey really is a marathon and not a sprint, so my strategies have to support them for multiple years.

WIDA: We would like to thank Luisa Lowry, Alejandra Howell, Mariana Chavez, and Holly Weber for collaborating with us. We appreciate all you do for multilingual children, their teachers, their families, and communities.