

March 2008



ESOL Insights

Greetings from Halla Jmourko, ESOL Teacher Coach
Contact Information: Jmourko@pgcps.org
301- 445-8450, ext.228

IDEAS for Promoting Diversity in Your School/Classroom:

- Invite bilingual students to speak during school events and announcements in their home language.
- Create a multicultural and tolerance-related library.
- Provide a confidential method for students to ask questions, share their concerns, or report bullying.



- Start a pen pal program.
- Get students involved with other students from different communities or countries.
- Ask bilingual students to bring native-language magazines.
- Have students cut pictures and create posters representing cultures or content area concepts.

The Role of Culture in Educational Planning and Instruction

1. Culture is closely related to language and the development of basic communication, computation, and social skills.
2. Culture is an important part of the dynamics of the teaching-learning process in all classrooms.
3. Culture affects the organization of learning, teaching practices, evaluative procedures, and the rules of schools, as well as instructional activities.
4. Culture is more than the heritage of a people through dance, food, holidays, and history. Culture is more than a component of bilingual education programs. It is a dynamic, creative, and continuous process, which includes behaviors, values, and beliefs shared by people, which guides them and gives meaning to their lives.

How Can Teachers Integrate English Language Learners' (ELLs') Cultural Backgrounds?

1. Learning about students' culture or learning a few words in their home language will help make connections with your students and foster their sense of belonging. Visit www.culturegrams.com (username and password: pgcps).
2. Use ELLs' native language literacy skills to build new skills in English. To understand more about linguistic challenges that ELLs may have, refer to Houghton Mifflin Reading: ELL Handbook, Guide to Language Transfer Support, or seek additional support.
3. Ask ELLs and/or their bilingual parents to do cultural demonstrations to reinforce curriculum relevant content for all students.
4. Have newcomers use their home language to write in their journal when learning a new academic concept.
5. Encourage ELLs to share their unique personal and cultural experiences during whole and small brainstorming activities to enhance classroom interaction and build background knowledge across content areas.