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### English Language Learners in the General Education Classroom

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# **SENIOR THESIS APPROVAL**

This Honors thesis entitled

**“English Language Learners in the General Education Classroom”**

written by

**Jolie E. Crane**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for completion of the Carl Goodson Honors Program meets the criteria for acceptance and has been approved by the undersigned readers.

Anna Lambeth , Thesis Director

Carrie Sharp , Second Reader

Autumn Mortenson , Third Reader

Dr. Barbara Pemberton, Honors Program director

12/13/2022

# Introduction

Children are brilliant. They find ways to adapt to almost any situation while their brains are still developing. Most adults with fully-developed brains are unable to readily solve problems as easily as a child can, especially if it is a problem to which a child really wants a solution. Children are so uniquely themselves, but, somewhere along the way, things change and other people's opinions begin to play a major part in the formation of their own thinking. Sometimes, things that they cannot control, like skin color, home language, and socioeconomic status, begin to take precedence over who they are inside. As these children become students and experience life together, there are bonds created and broken, life long friendships are created, and a list of names that will never be given to any future kids are formed.

No educational experience is the same, but in the United States, there are the same general standards that everyone must learn. Even if every teacher taught everything the exact same way, each student would inevitably come out having learned something different, because "thinking and learning differ from individual to individual because of what each person brings to the experience" (Richardson, 6).

The sad truth of the matter is that sometimes, the superficial things that children cannot control like skin color, home language, and socioeconomic status, are the exact things that hold them back in life. As an educator, it is one of my biggest wishes that each child would receive a specialized education that is tailored to their every need. However, this is a lofty goal. One teacher cannot possibly individualize every student's learning experience all of the time. Not only is it an issue of time, but also the availability of resources. Nevertheless, teachers spend a significant amount of time trying to do the

best they can to differentiate and give all students opportunities to learn in a way that best benefits them even though sometimes specific students can fall through the cracks. These are often students who might not spend all of their time in the classroom and that are frequently absent from learning opportunities like English Language Learners.

English Language Learners (ELL) are “students who are in the process of learning English” (Colorín Colorado). All too often these are some of the students whose talents, skills, and intellectual abilities are overlooked. ELL students may have difficulties in multiple subject areas in the classroom, and, sometimes, teachers do not feel that they have the time to adequately get these students to grade level proficiency. Often, as long as some improvement is happening, then any other achievement goals are left for the English as a Second Language teacher (ESL teacher) to address. This is a very harmful mindset for teachers to have. All students deserve to have a teacher who is dedicated to them and their educational experience. Sometimes, the only thing standing in between a student and dropping out of school, getting into dangerous situations, or harmful mental states is having a teacher or mentor who cares about them. Teachers need to serve the needs of the whole child such as their well being and passion, not just their education. This is why I feel so strongly about prioritizing the “underdogs” in a school. All it takes is one person to show a student that they are important; all it takes is a little bit of effort to show these students that they are cared about. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that every child is entitled to a free, appropriate, public education. While ELL students are in no way disabled, they can be at a disadvantage and deserve the same dedication to their education that their peers receive.

Learning how to properly educate these students becomes even more important as the number of children in the U.S., ages five to seventeen, who speak a primary language other than English continues to increase. For example, the number of students needing ELL services jumped from around 9.7 million in 2000, to around 12.1 million in 2019 (Census Bureau). These are students that educators will see more and more in their classroom every year. Language is the foundation for learning. Information can be taught without speaking or reading, but often with great difficulty, and learning a new or second language (L2), especially while they are still developing their first language (L1), takes a lot of time and effort.

Some students at Stanford University did a research project in 2000 to see how long it actually took students to learn a new language. They looked into four different school districts with different numbers of ELL students and poverty levels. They then proceed to collect data about the students, the progress they made, and how long it took them to reach that level of proficiency. The Stanford students were able to conclude that in English, "oral proficiency takes 3 to 5 years to develop, and academic English proficiency can take 4 to 7 years" (Hahta, 13). Some students have four or more years of struggling through school, not because they are not smart and talented, but strictly because they do not speak the same language as their teachers.

It should be noted that schools are required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to give an equal opportunity learning experience to minority students. This Act includes accommodations for students, classes to help develop language proficiency, and other areas of assistance. However these programs, often referred to as English as

a Second Language (ESL) programs, are not always top notch. Often, funding is low and schools are unable to hire teachers who are qualified.

Some of the ESL programs I have observed are not very beneficial to ELL students and can turn into a study hall. I had an opportunity to talk with a few ESL instructors and with general education teachers that instruct classrooms with a large number of ELL students. Most of the time, a poor quality program is not a lack of interest on the teacher's part, but an issue of ignorance regarding how best to teach ELL students and include them in the general education classroom. I hope to address some of these issues and include some helpful practices that any educator can use in their classroom. ELLs, like all students, deserve to be thought of and taught to the best of any teacher's ability.

## Bilingual Learning and Development

Teaching an ELL is not always easy for the teacher or the student. Concepts that are hard for all students can be especially difficult if language adds another barrier. The best way for a student whose first language is not English to learn would be through bilingual education. However, this is not an option for most school districts. Since bilingual educators must have a bachelor's degree, are certified in another language, and often end up leading immersion programs, their salaries tend to be higher. This can be a major roadblock for many schools, especially smaller ones whose budgets are already tight and cannot afford another teacher, let alone someone who would require a higher salary due to their level of education. Bilingual education, however, is one of multiple program types in which an ELL student could be placed. These programs vary in support, and students are often pulled out of them before they need to be. As described by Wayne Wright in *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice*, some of the programs include:

- Home Language Content-Area Instruction
- Sheltered Content-Area Instruction
- Transitional Bilingual Education
- Developmental Bilingual Education
- Dual Language Education
- Pull-Out English as a Second Language Instruction
- In-Class English as a Second Language Instruction (Wright, 92-123).

The most common types of programs tend to lean towards a Pull-Out Model and a Transitional Bilingual Education (also known as early-exit programs or TBE), with the

transitional model being the most common in the United States. Pull-Out Models are exactly how they sound; a student is taken out of the classroom to work on language and classwork with an ESL teacher. A Transitional Bilingual Education, instead, groups students together based on home language and bases the majority of content instruction in those home languages with only a small percentage in English.

The TBE model is beneficial for students. By grouping students together with their same language peers. This can help students grow and build community. However, the TBE model can also have a negative aspect. It can encourage ELL students to only develop relationships with other ELL students. Those in this program do not get to know as many of their English speaking peers. This isolation can do ELL students a disservice when they leave the TBE program. Generally speaking though, this is not a big issue. As ELL students grow and learn English, they practice with English speaking peers and create friendships along the way.

The TBE model, or as mentioned before, early exit program, has a goal of getting the students out of the program and into the general education classroom full time, as soon as possible. In order to do this, the students have to go through the stages of language development. These stages, as explained by Robertson and Ford, follow five main tracks: Pre-Production, Early Production, Speech Emergent, Intermediate Fluency, and Advanced Fluency.

The Pre-Production stage is often known as the silent stage because the students spend a large amount of time just listening to the language. This stage lasts approximately six months, but can be longer or shorter based on the student. Students in this stage are often in "sink or swim" mode, which means they are either going to

grasp the language and “swim”, or “drown” trying to keep up. To help students become successful in this stage, teachers can use a lot of motions and visuals to help connect words with meanings.

In the second stage, Early Production, ELL students continue to focus on listening, but they begin to use some of the language. These early efforts are usually full of errors and in short bursts. It will be very important for students to work on vocabulary, as well as speaking the language out loud during this stage. It is also important not to overemphasize the errors they make. Just allow the students to work on the language and to encourage them to keep trying. Do not nitpick as it will often make a student give up.

The sentences ELL students use become longer and more accurate in the third stage - Speech Emergent. The students still do not know a large portion of the language and tend to stick to topics that they are familiar with for conversation. A teaching strategy to help these students would be to give them access to the vocabulary for the lesson beforehand. This could be through a list, flashcards, picture card or anything that works best for the individual student. These resources would give them a chance to familiarize themselves with the words so that they could recognize them and follow along in class discussions.

The Intermediate Fluency stage marks the beginnings of language interactions that are partially to mostly fluent. There will still be struggles with gaps in vocabulary, but students will be able to express higher-order thinking and analyze problems. In stage four, it is important to remember that the students are still learning the language. Errors will occur, but they will need to work on correcting them and moving forward with

learning. ELL students may also need help with pronouncing words. It could benefit ELL students to work with English speaking peers in order to practice. This peer tutoring would allow them to work with someone who understands the emotional and intellectual struggles that they are facing.

The goal for all students learning an L2 to reach stage five, Advanced Fluency. At this stage, the student can communicate freely. ELL students may still have issues with local phrases or idioms, but students in stage five can generally express themselves completely (Robertson, Ford).

Despite reaching Advanced Fluency, these students still need support and time. Often, students have to translate words and phrases in their minds and think through a response. ELL students may not be able to answer as fast as they might in their L1. Wait time is important for transfer of knowledge. When students transfer knowledge, they can take information out of the context where it was learned and apply that knowledge to a different area in life/learning. This can be extremely beneficial for older ELL students who have already experienced a large part of their education in their L1. Transfer of knowledge can help with learning a specific concept as well as applying information in one category to another. In cross-curricular studies, it can help offer a firm foundation for any new subject matter by allowing their knowledge to be applicable anywhere.

Offering students in stage five a firm foundation is just as important as offering students in the other stages varied types of support. By giving them this safe environment for thinking and feeling, ELL students can find intrinsic motivation. A student's motivation affects how they learn. Sometimes a student's motivation is to do

well and feel accomplished. Sometimes motivation comes from parents. At least some motivation should come from the educator. Educators should be the student's biggest supporter, but, in order to do that, teachers must have a positive relationship with the students. As said best by John Maxwell, "Students do not care what you know, until they know that you care." Also, because socialization and relationships play such a significant role in learning, showing students love and support is vital to their education. This supportive role has been demonstrated as effective through study and research done by many great theorists including Albert Bandura, Robert Sternburg, John Dewey, and Edward Thorndike.

Bandura's theory of Social Learning states that students imitate those around them and "encode their behavior" (McLeod, 1970). From then on, whether a student repeats that behavior or not is based on the type of reinforcement that they receive. If they are praised and it makes them feel good inside, they are much more likely to repeat the actions versus if they receive negative reinforcement and face consequences. This leads back to the teacher's relationship with the student. If teachers want students to make progress in learning English, it cannot just be the ESL teacher who is promoting positive reinforcement. All educators who come in contact with that student need to encourage and offer support to them. Language is hard, and when ELL students put in the work and progress is made, acknowledgement and rewarding the progress can make all the difference in the students' confidence and motivation.

## Modern Experiences of the English Language Learner

The modern ELL has a lot more tools at their disposal than previous generations. There are numerous text-to-speech options available and many other resources that simply require an internet connection or smartphone. However, the reality is that a lot of these students do not always have access to all of the resources that could benefit them, and even if they do, a lot of colloquial language items are not included.

In an optional survey (appendix C), given at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, students in the international program were asked about experiences they had while learning English. While the majority of these students currently feel more confident with their language skills, a lot of these students struggled when they first came to the U.S. The bulk of these students were taught in both their first language as well as English, and as mentioned before, in Bilingual Learning and Development, a joint approach is the most beneficial way for students to learn another language. However, the students who were not taught with the dual-language method tended to feel less confident around English speakers when they first started speaking English.

The biggest request of the students who answered the survey was for a safe place to practice with a native English speaker. Since these students were all part of the international program, they all learned English in their home countries and a large majority did not receive a chance to practice till they came to college. Many of these students still feel unsure of themselves when talking in large groups and they have practiced English for many years. This is not the case for most ELL students, at least not the type focused on currently. The majority of the ELLs that are at Ouachita from the

international program learned English and became proficient before they were put in classes on campus. ELL students in public schools are often thrown straight into classes, sometimes without even knowing where they are supposed to go when the bell rings. It is important that educators support these students and help them receive the support they need to properly adjust.

One student, who is part of the education program at Ouachita, found the new RISE initiative for Arkansas to be extremely helpful in her language skills. This program focuses on the science of reading and takes a bottom up approach to teaching students how to read. She found the individual skills that fall under phonological awareness to be extremely helpful, especially the syllable types that teach students how to divide up words that are unfamiliar. Learning about the science of reading helped this student fix misconceptions she had about the English language as well as provide a more solid foundation for her while she was learning how to teach students to read. Thankfully this new initiative in Arkansas will help all ELL students on their language journey. However, the helpful skills in phonological awareness that the education major found beneficial are only emphasized in Arkansas state standards through second grade despite the fact that not all students have mastery of these skills by the third grade. Many of the older ELL students will have to be pulled out of their classes at a higher rate than their younger peers for interventions in order to be caught up. Nonetheless, the new initiative will be helpful for these students and it will help to combat other issues that they may have, such as Dyslexia, orthographic processing disorders, and more.

# Improvement Opportunities in the General Education Classroom

There are many different programs and ways for students to learn. Now the question is, what can be changed in the general education classroom so that ELL students feel welcomed and included? There are numerous possible steps that could be taken, but some of the simplest include incorporating culture and language into the classroom, making sure that different teaching strategies are used, adding extra explanations that can be understood from all backgrounds, and being as accommodating as possible. These students want to learn and be successful, everyone does, but teachers need to provide opportunities and understanding to help ELL students reach their full potential.

Incorporating culture into a classroom is not about having one day every semester that is labeled "Culture Day!" It is about creating an ongoing sense of belonging for students, not only in academics, but for who they are. In an article written about preserving cultural identity, author Karen Sumaryono surveyed students to find out their ideas of the important parts of cultural identity. She discovered that students "commonly say the language and ethnicity of the social and cultural group to which they feel connected" is most important (Sumaryono, 17). And, while getting ELL students to complete fluency in English is a common goal, it is important to remember that there is a child behind the language whose culture and identity is tied to the language that they are supposed to be transitioning away from.

One way to add student culture into the classroom would be to include their language into everyday instruction and applications. A big part of this would be to

include the languages in whole class instruction and not just for individual students. By showing that their languages and culture is important enough for all the students to hear about, it shows a sense of equality and that teachers appreciate the students and their L1. This strategy shows that, even though the ELL students are required to learn English, this learning does not take away any sense of importance or dignity from the language they already know. If the students are older and they know more vocabulary words in their L1, when expressing a term and giving definitions, allow the students to share the same word aloud in their L1. Then use the words from their L1 when giving instructions to them and the entire class. Another idea that could be done is to incorporate the languages around the classroom including some labels and information in both English and the other languages that the students in class speak. A big step in the right direction would be to read about their cultures and the languages students speak in their homes.

It is also important to learn about some of the social cues and interaction expectations when talking with someone of authority, and include read-alouds and books by authors from different cultures into lessons and the classroom. Even just books that include characters that represent the ELL students can be helpful by showing the students that they are not alone in the world and people of their culture are just as valid and worthy to be talked about.

Also, because students' first languages in the general education classroom will most likely not all be English, it is important to consider how instructions are given. Especially if the classroom population has a large portion of ELLs, avoiding colloquialisms and uncommon expressions is essential. For example, the southern

saying “God willin’ and the creek don’t rise.” This is known to mean that some body really intends on doing something as long as nothing unforeseeable happens. Someone learning English (or a Northerner) would have a difficult time understanding the phrase. This is also relevant when referencing syntax. For example, in Spanish, the order of words and phrases are different from the order of words and phrases in English. When teaching students who are coming from a different language background, it is important to take into consideration the roles of letters and phrasing so that misconceptions are as minimal as possible.

As mentioned before, students learn in stages. Different classroom management strategies, based on ELL students’ language development stages will help ELLs get the most out of their educational experiences. Judie Haynes, author of *Getting Started with English Language Learners: How Educators can Meet the Challenge* (2013), recommends:

- First stage (preproduction/silent phase), allowing students to work with their peers who speak the same language and making sure to use lots of illustrations and visuals to help compensate for lack of oral understanding.
- For the second stage (early production), Haynes recommends using yes or no questions and making sure that reading is at an appropriate level.
- She recommends for stage three (speech emergence), that study and reading skills really be emphasized as these students are working towards greater understanding.
- Stage four (intermediate fluency) learners need learning strategies as they are trying to transfer concepts they already know into English.

- Stage five (advanced fluency) learners need to be exposed to greater content, but still given grace as they learn (Haynes, 29-35).

These strategies are not always easy to accomplish, and will take extra planning on the teacher's part. However, they will be beneficial for ELL students and help to create a safe environment where they feel safe to take risks.

Despite the language differences, something that all teachers can do for their students, despite their level of learning, is to differentiate instruction and teach with diverse materials. This is something that teachers should be doing, regardless of who they have in their classroom, because it gives multiple perspectives to different topics. One strategy is to use multisensory pedagogies. These pedagogies, such as writing letters in the air using the whole arm, incorporate different senses into learning. Not only are these activities useful and great for memory, they are fun and “the relationship between a positive attitude toward a subject and academic achievement in that subject is one of strongest correlations in educational research” (Baines, 15). Students who enjoy learning are engaged and motivated; they tend to do well in school, regardless of the language they speak. This can be a difficult task, but the multisensory activities make it easier, especially if visuals are provided and instructions are included in L1s or if students are allowed to work with others who speak the same L1. Giving definitions in L1 can also be beneficial until students have mastered enough of L2 to be able to use it academically.

Another thing to be mindful of while in the general education classroom is the quality and content of given examples. There have been many instances where a teacher will use an example to try and help students understand a problem or concept,

but forget that not everyone comes from the same background or brings the same experiences. For example, in teaching a math problem about velocity, a teacher may give a real life application about a carousel. However, everyone may not know what a carousel is. Maintaining awareness of the examples used in the classroom helps preserve clarity in the classroom. It can also be a good idea to use examples from individual student's backgrounds. Knowing where a student comes from and the culture in their home is important for creating a relationship, but also creating quality lessons. Allowing students to share different things from their lives that may fit into the example is often a good idea. Not only does this allow students to share their cultures and things that are relevant to them, it increases their engagement and gives teacher insights into student backgrounds and fodder for thoughtful and appropriate examples.

Another thing that an educator can do is to make sure that students can see solid attempts at understanding their lives and what they are going through. Multisensory activities are great for motivating students, but a student will not listen to the teacher until the teacher shows they are willing to actively listen. No matter what happens in the classroom with culture and language, each and every student, not just ELLs, should know that their classroom is a safe learning environment and that they are loved – not only when on task, but even during bad days.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, above basic necessities like food, water, and safety, is the need to belong and be loved. Teachers and other educators can help provide this in their classroom and make sure that their ELL students' needs are met. Teaching is a work of the heart. One of the best approaches to show ELLs that they are loved is to learn about them and their culture. What these students go through

is hard, and their experience needs to be acknowledged – not always in front of peers and others, but sometimes one on one and also positive phone calls home to parents. If the parents do not speak the same language, send home a letter or a text in their L1 talking about what a joy their child is to have in class.

## Representation in Literature

Every child wants to be the hero of their story. In fact, most adults do as well. To be the hero or the main character of their own lives gives purpose and meaning to everyday encounters. Every child goes through stages of development and has a time in their lives where narcissism is a prominent point in their day to day experiences. Piaget, a known theorist, would call it narcissism; it would be known as the preoperational stage (McLeod, 2020). However, as they develop, children tend to grow out of that phase and self-image tends to decrease. Decreased self-image can lead to many issues in the future, but the good news is that parents and teachers can play a vital role in helping students maintain a positive outlook.

There are many different approaches that will help developing children to view their self image positively. One of the easiest and most important approaches is representation of children and different cultures in books, shows, and media. "When children read books that only depict one kind of protagonist, it can skew their perceptions of themselves in a negative way. Children may see less value in themselves because of such poor representation, which can potentially minimize, erase, and ignore their identities" (Jagoo, 2021). Educators want to avoid harming children's self image. Children who embrace their cultures and identities are typically more comfortable in their own skins and are therefore more likely to show creativity and take risks, which is a goal in a diverse classroom.

Books are also used to help people understand concepts, learn new information, provide entertainment, and cope with everyday or difficult situations. Teachers need to screen the books they are exposing children to because all books have underlying

messages. Books should encourage students to think positively about themselves, their cultures, and their values. For example, Chimamanda Adichie recounts in her Ted Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," her development into an internationally famous author. As a child, she would create stories and all of her characters were white, even though she is from Nigeria. However, all of the literature that she was exposed to featured characters that were white. Adichie says, "because all I had read were books in which characters were foreign, I had become convinced that books, by their very nature, had to have foreigners in them, and had to be about things with which I could not personally identify" (Adichie, 2008). This is not an uncommon occurrence for children all around the world to only receive one version of a story, and finding quality books with children of color or of non-western/American cultural backgrounds can be a very hard task.

There are a multitude of children's books that highlight a specific race or culture, but when it comes to everyday stories/events (primarily in the award winning categories like the Newberry and Caldecott), there is a stark contrast in available literature. The Becker Friedman Institute at the University of Chicago did a study on literature featuring people of color/cultures as well as authors of color/cultures. After creating a computer program that would analyze the materials, they found that out of 1130 books that had received literary awards, "mainstream books have increased representation of lighter skin tones over the last two decades despite growing rhetoric about the importance of diverse representation" (Adukia, etc., 2021).

Availability of books that feature different cultures and people of color is not only important for individuals, but also for schools. School budgets are almost always less than what is needed. Because of this, schools may not be able to afford extra books for

libraries, and especially not if the books they do find in this category are more expensive or come from outside the major publishing houses. School libraries are a major source of literature for young students and if they are not exposed to good literature in their school libraries, they often will not be exposed anywhere else, especially if they do not read for pleasure.

A study done by Scholastic discovered that “On average, there are 103 books in the home libraries of children ages 6–17, yet this varies widely. Most strikingly, frequent readers have an average of 139 books in their homes vs. 74 in infrequent readers’ homes” (Scholastic, 2019). They also discovered that high income homes usually have double the amount of books as a low income home. Not only does this lack of literature set a child back in their reading and language development, but it also hinders students from accessing literature that includes more representation. This is especially important for our ELL students, because if they do not find interest in reading at an early age, they may not find books that accurately represent them until after a negative opinion has already been formed.

The subliminal messages and cultural mores that are taught to students are important and they are most commonly taught by accident. Educators have a huge responsibility in what they say, do, and how they act. The literature that is represented in the classroom could be an easy choice that teachers grab off the shelf, or it could be a lesson to students that who they are matters. For Adichie, she was able to overcome messages she internalized as a child. However, many ELL students are not as lucky and the literature they are exposed to creates a lifelong impression.

## Creative Process

I decided to write a children's book because I knew what an asset quality books are in education. I wanted something that I could bring into my classroom that my students could identify with. However, starting off I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. Honestly, I still don't. I started by creating a list of possible names, people, events, and problems that could happen in the book (Appendix A). After that, I started to write. I would write down a section that I thought would flow well together on a page, translate it to Spanish, and write the next page. This took a while and I hit a lot of road blocks. I had never written a story before. I was not even good at making them up to tell kids. I decided to start at the best place I knew, and I went to the Arkansas state standards. Since I wanted to be able to use this book in my future classroom, I knew it needed to be standards based. I found four standards to base my writing off of and with these I was able to create an outline of the story that I wanted to present (Appendix A) This outline allowed me to slowly come up with the story line. I started off with a lot of text that would be going on the page, that way I would have an idea of what I wanted to happen on the page. After going and talking to my third reader, Autumn Mortenson, we determined that I would need to let my illustrations do more of the talking and include less text due to the grade level I was targeting

About ten pages in writing the story outline, I realized I would need to start on my illustrations to get a true sense of where the story would go. I am not artistic. However, my sister is very talented and I asked her to see if she would have time to help me out. We talked about what kind of style, what each page would need and how much detail. I knew the kind of style I wanted, but had a hard time putting it into words. Eventually I

did a search for other children's books to see if one of the styles of illustration would match what I was hoping for. I found images of the book, *Let's Be Friends/Seamos Amigos* by René Colato Laínez and illustrated by Nomar Perez and asked for that general style of illustration. I promised my sister, Anna, I would give a layout of what I wanted in each illustration if she could make it come to life, and she did an amazing job (Appendix B contains layouts and character inspirations). The longer I worked on my project, the more excited I became. I decided that I wanted to change how the English and Spanish were being represented in the book. I knew that the main character, Emelia, would have a hard time understanding English at first, but would comprehend the Spanish. I struggled in figuring out how to represent this in the book, but then I decided to incorporate speech and thought bubbles into the illustrations to represent character speech. That way I could separate the words that drove the story from the details that their speech added. I also decided that it would be beneficial for both English and Spanish speech bubbles, that way the reader could determine which language was the L1 for the speaker. I determined that since the book was from Emelia's perspective, I would try and smear the words in English speech that were not common knowledge for people in other languages/someone who had lived in the states for a while, but not enough to know all of the language.

This whole project was a collaborative effort. I have bounced ideas off of many different people in order to come up with a story outline that I was pleased with. However, there is still much more work that needs to happen before the book will be ready for a classroom. Images need to be refined and so does the story. Since I have never attempted to create a work like this, I have felt out of my element many times. I

found it difficult and much harder than expected. Trying to create this work has given me new respect for authors that do create children's books (as well as for their illustrators).

This experience has shaped the future of my classroom as well. Not only do I imagine that my book will be available to help ELL and general education students, but I also plan to incorporate an extra focus on authors and writing in my classroom.

Creativity needs to be fostered and it needs space to grow. By encouraging students in elementary school to get in touch with their inner writers, many students may find new passions that could change the lives of their peers and students who come after them.

My main goal with this book was to inspire ELL students. I wanted them to have representation in the classroom and feel like their cultures were of value. However, in the end, I hope that this book inspires everyone. That all my students will see the value in themselves and develop an ability to create.

# Appendix A: Base Planning Sheet

## Titles:

- Maya's Adventure
  - This will be the main character's name. I dunno which one it will be yet
- The New School
- New Friends in New Places
- Emelia
  - Or whatever MC name is

## Characters:

- Main Character Name:
  - Maya
  - Mia
  - Isabella
  - Emelia
- Teacher
  - Ms. Jones
- Pull-out teacher
  - Mr. Martín
- Optional Friend Names
  - Jackson
  - Conner
  - Lauren
  - Ana
  - Lucia
  - Lucas
  - Hugo

## Events:

- First Day of School
- Pull-out classes
- Making friends
- Not understanding what's going on in class

## Outline:

1. MC moves to area
2. Has first day of school

## Appendix A: Base Planning Sheet

3. Meets nice teacher, but has issues understanding
4. Finds spot beside another kid in the ESL program
5. Goes to Pull out class and meets ESL teacher
6. Introduced to other kids that are friends of seat buddy
7. Struggles in everyday class, but the teacher uses great strategies that work over time and show compassion.
8. Everything turns out great

# Appendix B: Inspiration for Illustrations

Illustration Style:



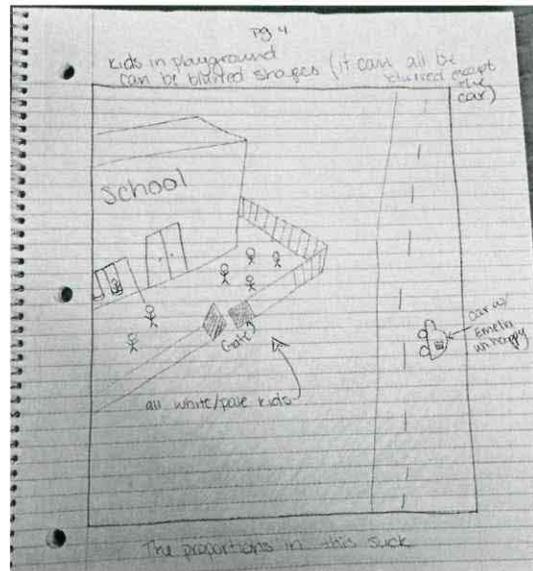
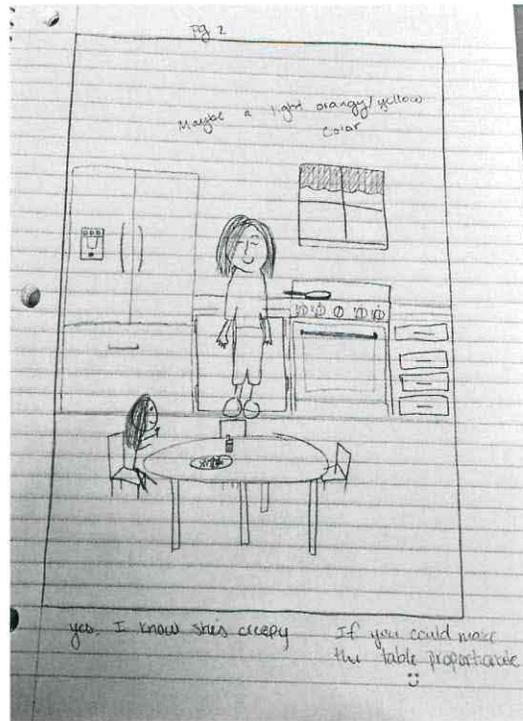
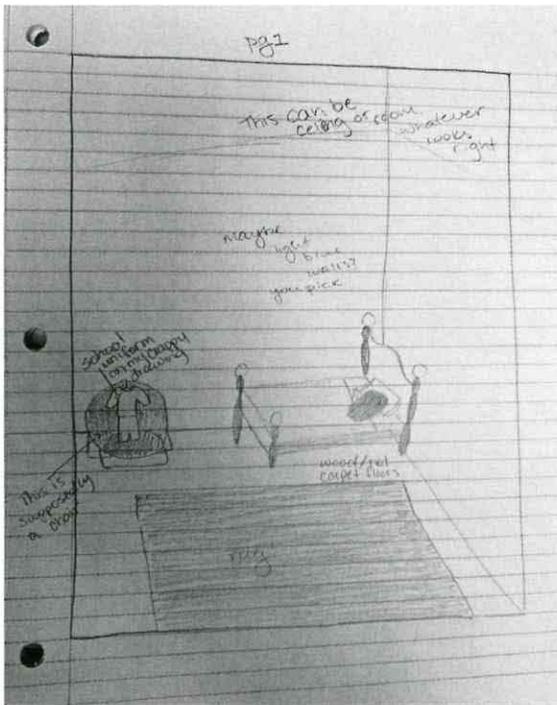
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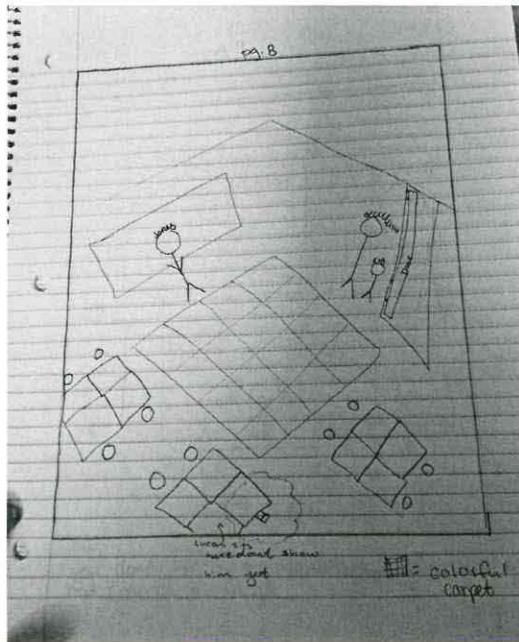
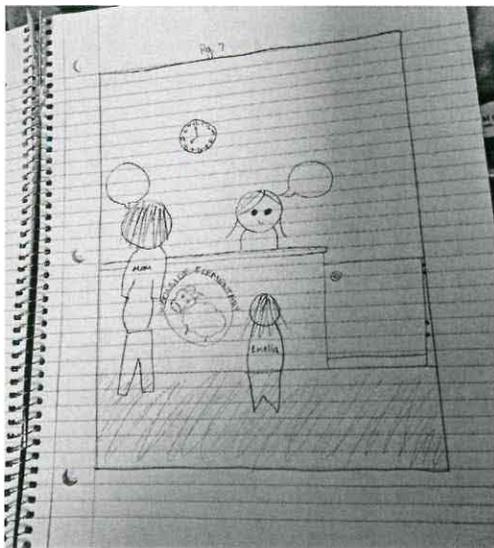


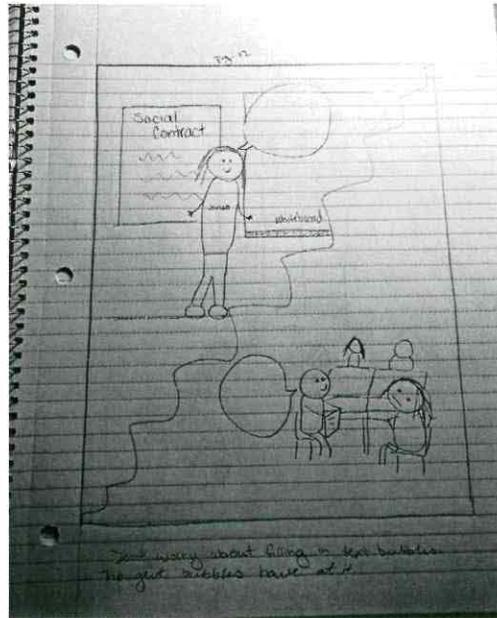
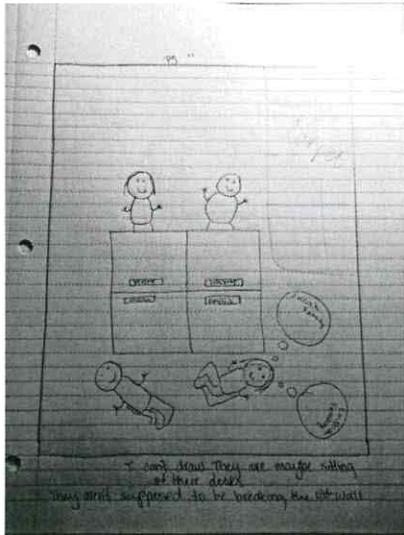
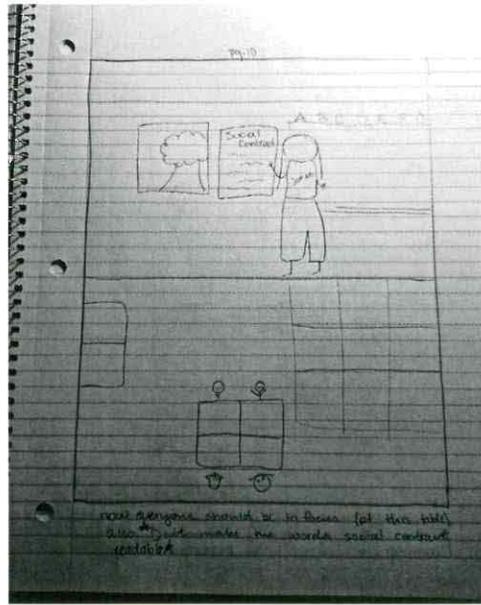
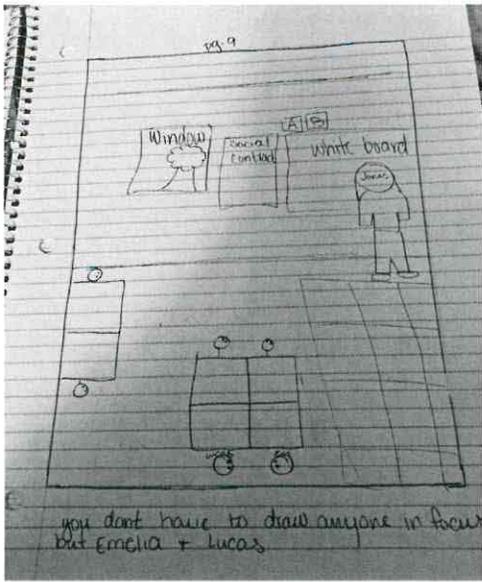
Emelia's Mom:

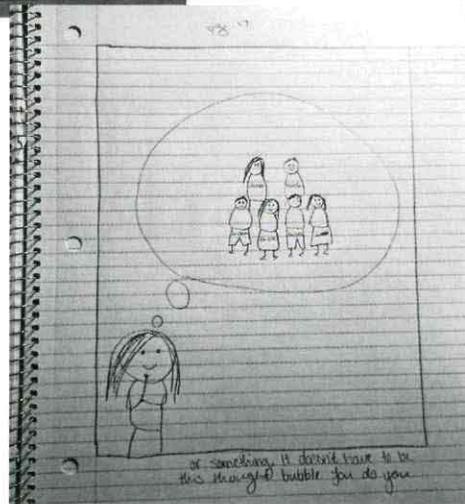
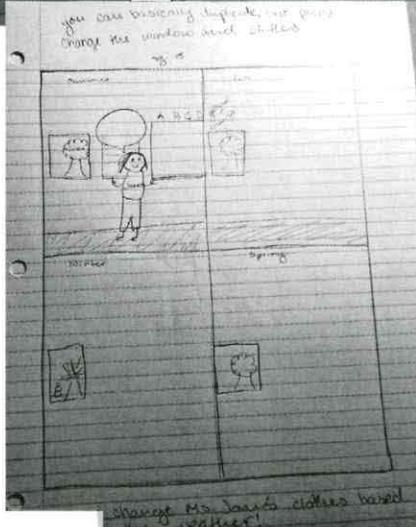
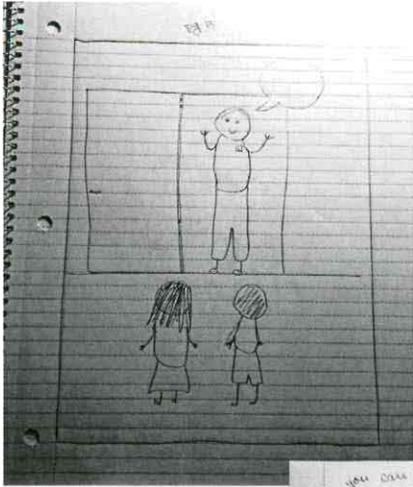


Book Pictures:









## Appendix C: Survey Results

The following survey results are questions given to students at Ouachita Baptist University. The survey was optional and sent out to all of the international students through email. There is inevitably response bias due to the small number of students that completed the survey.

# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Spanish

---

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

4- Spanish, English, French, Portuguese

---

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Spanish

---

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

English both

---

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

We used McGraw Hill textbooks

---

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

I dont remember I was in PreK and dont have a recollection about that

---

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

No

---

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

Maybe a chart with slangs from all the regions, I grew up learning English from Americans who were from the North so when I came to the south it was a bit hard to understand sometimes

---

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# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Vietnamese

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

4. Vietnamese, English, Spanish and Korean

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Vietnamese

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

Elem- both Vietnamese and English

High school- English

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

I used youtube videos mostly and music. I watched youtube vlogs, disney movies, read the lyrics of songs to learn.

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

I was confused and scared lol

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

yes!! I feel like i can express myself a bit better in my first language even though I don't use it as much as English

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

I wished there were more English speakers to talk to. I was insecure of my pronunciation when I first came to America because I didn't get much in real life practice in Vietnam

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# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Spanish

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

Two, spanish and english

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Spanish

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

English

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

The workbooks provided by my school

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

I felt that I wanted to say so much but couldn't because of my insecurity to talk english

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

Yes

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

Not really

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# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Korean

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

3. Korean, English, Indonesian

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Korean

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

English, English

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

My siblings who were more experienced but also knew my language.

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

Since, I was at such a young age when I was first surrounded by different language speakers, I felt excited to them.

---

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

No, because I am more comfortable with my secondary language (English).

---

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

I do not think so. Institutional education was the perfect environment.

---

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# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Spanish

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

English and Spanish (2)

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Spanish

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

English

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

Regular curriculum used in American schools

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

I was too young to really remember but I think I was just like okay

---

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

No, I am just as comfortable in both, except when people point out my accent or ask me dumb questions.

---

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

No

---

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# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Portuguese

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

2, portuguese and english.

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Portuguese

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

Portuguese

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

I had private classes, tutoring.

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

I felt embarrassed to speak and say something way wrong.

---

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

Of course.

---

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

I wish I listened to more songs, watched more movies, read more books, and especially had more conversations with native speakers.

---

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# ELL Survey

Please answer this survey if English is not your first language

What is your first language?

Spanish

How many languages can you speak? Which ones?

2. English and Spanish

What is the main language spoken in your home?

Spanish

What language did your elementary school teach in? Your high school?

Spanish

If you were taught in a language other than your first, what resources did you use?

I did not

How did you feel the first time you were surrounded by people who spoke a different language than you?

I felt nervous

---

Do you feel more confident when surrounded by people who speak your first language?

Yes

---

Are there any resources you wish you could have had when learning English?

Interaction with native language speakers

---

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