

How Oregon's Early Literacy Framework Supports Multilingual Learners

Oregon Department of Education

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf4B6veIVTo>

Angelica Cruz: Alright, it looks like we have folks coming into the webinar. Thank you so much everyone for joining us this afternoon. Welcome. My name is Angelica Cruz and I have the pleasure of serving as the Director of Literacy at the Oregon Department of Education and I'm joined today by colleagues from ODE as well as WestEd to present this webinar. We are also grateful that you are joining us today and hope you find this webinar helpful and informative. If everyone could in the chat, please go ahead and share your name, your role, include your district or organization where you work, and something that brings you joy when teaching literacy to multilingual learners. We'll also be adding a link to the slides in the chat for anybody who wants to follow along on your own. We do obviously have the presentation sharing with you all right now through SlideShare, but that way if folks want to pull it up on their own, they can.

Jessica Arnold: Looks like the chat is open, so please feel free to share your names in the chat and we'll keep going at the webinar.

Angelica Cruz: Thank you, Jess. So names and roles, you can add the organization that you work for or the school district or ESD where you work. And then the most important thing we would love to hear from everybody today is what brings you joy when teaching literacy to multilingual learners?

Excellent. I see a lot of answers coming in. Thank you everyone. I see some folks we know. Great to see you all today. Thank you. Alright, I think we can move on to our webinar objectives and everybody can browse the chat and see who is joining you here today so you can have follow up conversations as needed and a little joy from all the ways that we enjoy working with our multilingual students. Alright, so we have two objectives for this webinar today. Our first is participants will learn how Oregon's Early Literacy Framework operates in service of our multilingual learners. And our second is that participants will consider instructional practices and resources from Oregon's Early Literacy Framework that support our multilingual learners.

And then next slide has our agenda. So we just did our quick welcome and community building activity. Next we'll do a brief introduction to the Framework and dig into key ideas within the Framework that support our multilingual learners. Finally, we'll get to view some instructional practices and resources in action thanks to our talented colleagues collaborating on this webinar with us today. And then we'll end with a reflection and a closing. So, as you may know, Oregon's Early Literacy Framework was released in May of 2023. The purpose of a statewide Literacy Framework is to help build momentum and capacity for making literacy instruction stronger in Oregon so that all of our students leave elementary school reading and writing with grade level fluency, confidence and competence in at least one language. It also serves to build coherence, common ground and clarity across the state for the vision of literacy instruction so that we can work together to improve literacy outcomes for every Oregon student. Additionally, it aligns with the governor's vision for improving literacy outcomes across our state with an intentional emphasis on how the literacy language assets that diverse learners bring. Today we'll focus in on multilingual learners and how the framework specifically supports their literacy development. It is

intended to be actionable for district and building leaders, useful for teachers and informative for families and communities.

The guiding principles of the Framework serve as the foundational values that we hold about students and literacy. These principles were developed through several rounds of feedback from educators and leaders around the state. First, early literacy begins at birth. We know that children are hearing and learning language in utero even before birth, and 0-5 is a crucial time in a child's life to develop oral language. Second, children are full of literary promise. We know that children are eager to learn to read and write. They want to have the skills to access books and knowledge. Our third guiding principle is that families and communities play an important role. We know that literacy skills are not just built at school, but also in the home and in the community. It's important that we partner with our families and communities, so our libraries, our community-based organizations, afterschool programming and more to grow our students' literacy skills.

Next, which is our focus today, is that multilingualism benefits everyone. We know that students come to us, students who come to us speaking another language, have deep funds of knowledge and skills that we need to see as assets. Building our students' multilingual abilities will deepen and strengthen their literacy skills. Next, we know that foundational skills matter. We know how children learn to read and write based on decades of research, and we must ensure that foundational skills are taught in a systematic and explicit way. Finally, teacher knowledge and practice are critical. We have to invest in growing teacher knowledge and practice as it's the most impactful way to influence student learning. And finally, every student can be taught to read and write. We know children have the ability to be proficient readers and writers, and our role as educators is to ensure that that happens.

Moving on to this visual of the tree, we put together this visual because to us this is a good way to see the growth throughout the framework and how each of the pieces connect to each other and how each of the sections are intertwined. So there are eight sections and we've grouped them here for brevity and clarity. So sections one through three down at the bottom of the tree are all about setting the conditions for learning. These sections lean into the guiding principles that literacy begins at birth and that families and communities are critical partners. Section one speaks specifically to student belonging, particularly culturally responsive practice as a part of creating that belonging. Section two speaks to how to engage families and communities in literacy learning. And section three, as you move up the tree, oral language and its critical role in literacy development. While oral language has a role to play beyond just the early literacy years for students, there's particular importance, both in formal schooling and in how oral language is honored in our classrooms.

Then moving up the trunk of the tree and into the leaves, sections four and five provide common language for the science of reading. What can be learned from the convergence of research on literacy and the brain and the importance of explicit, systematic instruction of foundation skills. As you get into the leaves of the tree, sections six and seven cover an array of important topics, including the application of the foundational skills to reading and writing comprehension and the role of vocabulary and background knowledge, the role of core instruction and assessment. And then section eight takes a deep dive into supporting students experiencing disabilities, including dyslexia, students who are multilingual and supporting our talented and gifted students. So these are not in any order of importance. They are all important and they all work synergistically together. So each section of the

framework, when you go through the actual framework, there are key takeaways to support synthesis, common understanding, and professional learning and dialogue on the framework. And with that, I'll turn it over to our WestEd colleague, Sandra.

Sandra Leu Bonanno: Thanks so much, Angelica, I appreciate you very much. Good afternoon all. My name is Sandra Leu Bonanno. I'm a researcher from WestEd, which is a collaborating organization partnering with the ODE to create this webinar series. In this next section, we'll review some key ideas for supporting the early literacy development of multilingual learners. And as we do, we have an opportunity to explore some of the research-based ideas undergirding the framework as well as ones that preview some of the guiding principles that will be showcased later in an instructional example. As we preview these ideas, we need your engagement. After reading each statement, a zoom poll will pop up where you decide whether the statement is true or false. So let's begin. Next slide please.

The first statement is evidence-based literacy instruction for multilingual learners is also culturally and linguistically responsive. That zoom poll has popped up on your screen, select whether you think the statement is true or false. We'll have about 30 seconds or so to consider. I see those answers coming in. Thanks so much, Ilana. All right, so 86% of you all said that the statement is true and 14% said that it was false. The statement is... Drum roll, please. True. Let's dive deeper as to why. Next slide please. So research demonstrates that evidence-based instruction is culturally responsive because Ladson-Billings and Hammond-Darling, key researchers in the field, tell us that a component of culturally responsive teaching is supporting students to achieve at high expectations, and in this case, high literacy expectations. Now, bodies of research such as the science of reading, provide insight for supporting multilingual learners to read. Though throughout the webinar we'll be speaking to how we utilize this guidance and uniquely consider multilingual learners' linguistic skills to strengthen their literacy or hopefully biliteracy. Second, instructional materials that teachers select to support multilingual learners should be both intellectually rich, so ones that reinforce foundational skills, prompt rich oral discussions using academic vocabulary and foster higher order thinking and comprehension and be culturally affirming. Right? These two are not mutually exclusive. Next slide please.

Another component of evidence-based culturally responsive instruction for multilingual learners is teaching literacy in an asset-based and linguistically responsive way. Now this means engaging families first and foremost as linguistic experts of their students' language and literacy development as partners. It also means drawing on students' home languages and experiences to make sense of newer phonemes and phonics or newer content. For instance, an educator might compare phonemes across home languages and English. They could point out cognates or words that appear similarly across languages or false cognates, ones that seem similar but actually mean something different. They could also encourage translanguaging, which means the purposeful combination of language across syntax for students to make meaning. But really across all of these, we're centering students in an asset-based way and their languages in an asset-based way. For more information about the importance of culturally responsive teaching for student belonging, be sure to take a look at section one of the early literacy framework. Next slide, please. Alright, our second statement is here. Educators should teach multilingual learners foundational skills before developing their reading and writing comprehension skills. Is this statement true or false?

This one might be up for debate. Okay, we're going to close. Thank you so much, Ilana. So 20% of you all said that this was true and 80% of you all said this was false. This statement is... false. Next slide, please. Instead, we're asking highly effective educators to teach multilingual learners foundational skills while developing their language, reading and writing comprehension skills. Next slide, please. Instead, our goal is really to teach foundational skills in service of meaning-making. So in other words, we want to help multilingual learners become skilled readers who bridge word recognition and language comprehension. The goal is not solely to teach students how to decode. The goal is to support students to decode and comprehend language so that they can understand the importance of reading and writing for making sense of the world around them. When possible, educators might also explicitly teach foundational skills and students' home language as well as English. Research demonstrates that students who recognize connections across languages and cultures actually develop higher neuroplasticity or more connections and flexibility in the brain. Both teachers in dual language and immersion and monolingual settings can implement a form of these practices that support multilingualism and really curiosity for all students in the classroom. For more information, take a look at sections four and five of the framework to learn about science-based models of reading and how to teach foundational skills, particularly for multilingual learners. Next slide please.

All right, this is our last statement. Oral language development is key to supporting the literacy of multilingual learners across all content areas. Go ahead and launch that poll. Oh, I think you might've gotten a freebie, which is completely okay. That statement is true, but you know what? I know you all knew that. Anyway, let's go ahead to the next slide to find out why oral language is paramount. It is the root of literacy for all learners and especially multilingual learners. Through family/school literacy partnerships, which is a part of section two in the Framework, Students who practice oral language at home and school strengthen their overall literacy. So in other words, when you learn about a new word or a concept in oral language, you are more likely to also understand that words meaning and text makes sense, right? Also, although we've already stated it, it's helpful to name again that building foundational skills and vocabulary alongside oral language supports multilingual learners to both make meaning and decode. Next slide please.

Finally, highly effective teachers incorporate language and literacy instruction throughout the day and across content areas. Students are reading and making sense of texts across all of these areas such as math, science, and social studies. And it's really up to educators to explicitly teach the language demands and language features of content areas for multilingual learners to access new learning by pre-teaching the purpose of a text, whether the text is explaining, persuading or narrating, and then highlighting the language features or tools an author uses to explain, persuade, narrate we are cracking the code of language for multilingual learners and increasing their toolbox for adopting these language features into their own writing or speaking. Finally, the more opportunities that multilingual learners and all students have to orally practice language, the more opportunities they have to also demonstrate and reinforce their understanding of content. It's really the old adage that the individual who's doing the talking is also doing the learning. Next slide, please. All right. Next, we'll have an opportunity to see how these guiding principles for developing the literacy of multilingual learners are integrated into a lesson for first graders and really contextualizing what these principles mean in action. I'm going to turn it over to Jennifer Fontana.

Jennifer Fontana: Thank you, Sandra. My name is Jennifer Fontana. I am a multilingual education specialist at the Oregon Department of Education. I also had the honor of participating on the core writing team that developed the Early Literacy Framework. And as a former dual language educator myself, supporting biliteracy for multilingual learners has really been a passion of mine for many years, and it's exciting to see many participants here today who have been in this work for many of those years. With me, I'm excited to showcase a lesson demonstration that my colleague, Myrna Munoz, and I planned together. We'll be going over a pre-recorded debrief as she wasn't able to make it to the webinar today.

So as we were thinking about what we wanted to highlight in our planning process, we decided that we really wanted to ground our lesson with a multicultural text that would really reflect the identities of many of the students that Myrna was going to be teaching. And the one we chose is particularly fitting for the teaching of high level vocabulary, and I'll go over the book in the next slide. But we also wanted to demonstrate the practice of fostering oral language development and instructional conversations with students as a platform for reading and writing comprehension. And we chose some very specific linguistic scaffolds that are essential for making content knowledge accessible to multilingual learners. We really wanted to illustrate how foundational skills can be taught through meaning making, and we know that that is an essential practice for multilingual learners.

So as I mentioned, Myrna and I intentionally chose this bilingual book that you can see the cover title. "Mommy, Tell Me Why I'm Radiant" by Sandra Gonzalez and Julie Ray Rodriguez. The authors intentionally wrote this book with high level vocabulary and using simile as a literary device. And you can see an image here of our lesson plan that we were working from. We basically just jotted all of our thoughts down, didn't use a formal lesson plan template. This really represents what we do as educators when we're planning for instruction. We use the Early Literacy Framework as a guide, as well as first grade language arts standards. Hey, welcome, Myrna. I'm really excited to be able to continue this conversation with you today. So we have about 15 minutes, and last time when you and I met, we were discussing how the Oregon Early Literacy Framework informs your instruction and can really help you plan thoughtfully, keeping in mind the needs of multilingual learners. So given our conversation and your background with sheltered instruction strategies and the first grade content standards for English language arts, how did that conversation support your planning for instruction?

Myrna Munoz: Well, it was actually really, really helpful for me. So one of the things that we did in our conversation is select the text, which is this text that we're showing on the screen, "Mommy Tell Me Why I'm Radiant," and it has the beautiful picture of that tree and butterflies and just has a very positive attitude, and I appreciate that we picked it out as we were lesson planning and going through what we wanted to happen in the lesson because it proved quite instrumental. I would say that it was probably a large part of what made this lesson successful was planning with a book that kind of had the intention of vocabulary instruction. So this is a story of that mommy and the little girl, and on this page that we're showing, the mommy says, "Mommy." The little girl says, "Mommy, tell me why I am radiant."

And the mom answers, "Baby, you're radiant because your captivating eyes are as enchanting as the twinkling sky," with the beautiful pictures that really captured the kids' attention, and we were able to find 13 synonyms of radiant. In this book right here, it's highlighting twinkling. It was the first instance of a synonym. It was really useful to have a book that kind of lent itself to that. It also on this page when it

elaborated, had the use of the word like a whole lot, right? So on this page, the mom is saying, you're radiant because your charming smile brings joy. like a ray of sunshine. And it's like the sun and the little girl getting the rays from the sun. So I really appreciated that we were able to also connect it to the Oregon standards around foundational skills, and we found a keyword that's going to come up throughout the text that the kids could notice following the silent E rule.

It really was a highlight of our work together. The other thing is that under our little organizer for what was happening during pre-reading, during reading and to close the reading lesson in the lesson plan, we outlined the key elements of the Early Literacy Framework that we thought were really important. And on this slide I'm highlighting how one of the key things as an example, was oral language skills and text-based language skills being interrelated. And I highlighted that in green, and then in my organizer, I highlighted in green every instance where I felt that I was doing that. So in the organizer, in the pre-reading section, I noticed that I had students explaining what they understood as an oral tied to text. I noticed that I had a student brainstorm of the word radiant and its synonyms, and I noticed that in the bridge portion of the lesson, which is meant to bridge other languages to English, it comes up that if students contribute the word in the other language, I added to the chart.

So that was really helpful because it made me feel like our intentional planning was aligned. So I was very secure coming in. Also, you know how I'm tied to the standards so deeply and I was able to outline the standards under that Early Literacy Framework in that lesson plan and tie it specifically to the words and things I did in the lesson. So here I have the first grade standard: 1.RF.3C., which is no final E and common V team conventions for representing long V sounds. And in my lesson plan I wrote like for me to remember that's where I'm hitting that, and I called it out on the lesson plan so I wouldn't forget it. It was the last thing I mentioned before we moved into reading the book. So a lot of the kids immediately grasped onto it, felt very intentional and important in our process.

Jennifer Fontana: Thank you. Yeah. So it sounds like a couple of things. As you planned your lesson, you already used the first grade ELA standards to make sure you hit some of those foundational skills standards in your lesson, and then you're becoming more and more familiar with the sections of the framework. And so you were able to have that framework side by side and then really look for, is this showing up in my lesson? Is my lesson centering multilingual learners using the strategies and suggestions that the early literacy framework outlines?

Myrna Munoz: Yes.

Jennifer Fontana: Now tell us in which areas of your lesson did you feel like the strategies were working really well for students?

Myrna Munoz: Well, there was several parts of the lesson that I felt were very successful. I appreciated that we picked out these three pictures we have here of people that are radiating light to get the kids to understand what exactly the word radiant meant, and it was a really powerful brainstorm. The kids really came to that. How I knew is when during the reading, I read that first page about twinkling and a kid immediately said, twinkling, twinkling is a synonym of radiant, and I was able to add it to the chart. So it was a very successful strategy. I also thought it went really well to have a section where we did shared writing and we produced a summary of the book because you know how we talked about how

important it is to keep comprehension in the mix with kids learning a language? And I felt confident with the summary they produced, which is on this slide, it says, A little girl asked her mom if she's radiant.

The mom says, "Yes, she twinkles like the sun," which is so cute, but also had many opportunities for the kids to practice how you represent sounds in English as we made the summary. So that felt really good. I also felt the lesson was successful in producing a writing sample for every student, which I wasn't sure it would happen because it was the first time we talked about synonyms. But I set it up with a sentence starter. I am radiant, and I talked through my own example of what I was going to write, and I talked through how I was thinking and then wrote down, I am radiant, like the bright morning sun. So those things felt really successful in the lesson.

Jennifer Fontana: That's great. That's wonderful. Are there some areas that you would do differently if you went back to re-teach this lesson?

Myrna Munoz: Yeah, I do feel that I put too much into the pre-reading section, which you kind of warned me about, I feel like. And I was like, no, no, we could do cognates too. But when I was actually doing the cognates portion, I immediately noticed that that was going to take more time because while a child did contribute radiante and said they were kind of like radiante, and we had a big discussion about why it was. And then when illuminating came up and it spurred a big discussion because of the difference in the actual letters in the words, I started to think that maybe I needed to abandon that portion of the lesson. I tried one more, but brilliant did the same thing. The kids were kind of having a discussion about whether it was or wasn't a cognate. So I decided to kind of leave that portion for another time and focus on the synonyms because you remember, we actually went through the book and found 13 cognate words and 13 synonym words, and the kids got 10 of the synonyms of radiant, but only three and, with much scaffolding from me, of the cognates.

So I knew that I would need to come back to that.

The other thing that I was a bit disappointed with was that I didn't think through the sentence frames a bit more because it was evident as soon as I started to see what the students produced, that they needed much more scaffolding to be able to use the synonyms to create a simile like they did in the book. So 10 of the 22 students, for example, used an adjective of radiant as a noun rather than using it as an adjective to describe something else the way that I kind of was expecting. So right away I noticed, "Ooh, my frame wasn't as powerful as I liked," but I did like that one of the students wrote in Spanish because here we see that one of my students wrote, "*Yo soy radiante como la luminando,*" and they were making an attempt at using the cognate chart to create a sentence that responded to the prompt. And I was enchanted with the fact that it showed that they were following the meaning of the lesson. But I saw a lot of things that I should have, could have, would've when I saw the student responses.

Jennifer Fontana: Overplanning for instruction is something that we are all guilty of, and we never want to have a time where there's a lull and we don't know what to teach. So we tend to overplan. But I really appreciate your reflection on the fact that less is sometimes more, and especially when we are supporting language development and working with classrooms where we have students that are developing and acquiring language at the same time as developing reading and writing and literacy skills. So I appreciate your reflection in that aspect. So here you have some very specific examples of student

writing, and you've already kind of mentioned how you're using their production of writing and even their production of language through the discussion as formative assessment information. So thinking about that, if you had just a few next steps or instructional moves based on what you observed students to be, where their strengths in learning were and where there were opportunities to expand, what would those steps be?

Myrna Munoz: Well, the one that stood out to me the most was the small group work that I'll need to do with these four students who wrote a complete sentence, but were missing an article. They just kind of come up for me because a couple of them actually said the article when they read back the sentence, even though they didn't write it, but a couple of them didn't. So I felt like I needed to know more about those students, and I'll probably build a small group to work on that. I realized that the reason why I wanted to do the cognate chart is because this book lends itself so well to it. So I think there's nothing wrong with rereading a book. I'm going to redo a lesson with cognates in mind and let that concept deepen, let it be the main focus of that reading of a known book. It was also clear that the students need more opportunities to hear similes, to understand how they work and the grammatical structure they have, and more importantly, we've talked about oral language a lot for language development, and we've talked about them needing more practice. And I'm not sure we had enough repetitions of practicing what a simile feels like orally in your mouth before you write it down. So I think having more opportunities for practice in the future before we go to writing, it would probably be an important step.

Jennifer Fontana: So I mean, I heard three things, right? You have already a mini-lesson planned for a small group that is based on what you saw in your formative assessment information through their writing, you talked about getting deeper and developing a lesson specifically around cognates. And the last part that you touched on is so important for us to remember as we're working with multilingual learners. Multilingual learners develop their receptive comprehension skills more quickly. So we understand if we are learning a second language alongside literacy, we're going to understand the content of what is being taught or spoken, but it will take much more practice to become fluent and produce that language. So what it sounds like is you're noticing and wanting to give students more of an opportunity to use their productive language skills through speaking and using synonyms in speech, and then potentially through producing writing with those sentence frames and other lesson sheltered structures that really lend themselves to the productive format of language.

Myrna Munoz: Yes, exactly. So I'll probably follow up and build a few more lessons with the same text, and then I'm hoping we can get back together and just look through them. But I'll use the same things we used outlining the Early Literacy Framework issues or things that we want to make sure are there and outlining the standards. Thank you so much.

Jennifer Fontana: Very appreciative. Thank you. Thank you. I do just want to reiterate how appreciative I am of Myrna for just opening up her practice and sharing. It's not easy for us as educators to always be so transparent and vulnerable and share with folks like, yeah, this is what went well and here's what I would do differently. But I really think that our debrief demonstrated how through mutual trust and respect, we can use that reflection time to just ensure best practices for students. So that was just a joy to get to work with her in that way. And I want to just highlight some key takeaways that we were really hoping educators and participants who listen to this webinar take with them. We really wanted to

illustrate how when we center multilingual learners and our instructional practices and planning, we're really making sure to ground our lessons in culturally responsive practices that foster a sense of belonging, and that is really intentional work.

We also wanted to make sure and highlight that oral language and vocabulary development are and can be integrated into all literacy and content lessons. Incorporating sheltered and linguistic scaffolds really becomes our way of being in the classroom and as educators. Another element we wanted to demonstrate was how phonics instruction can and should connect to meaning. This is absolutely imperative for students who are simultaneously acquiring and developing language as well as literacy. And we may not always speak or understand all of the languages our students speak at home, but the use of bilingual books and cognate charts are just a couple of ways that we can connect to a child's home language. And finally, we wanted to emphasize how important formative assessment is to really understand what students' strengths are and to identify certain areas for future instruction. And with that, I believe Angelica has some instructional resources to share with everyone.

Angelica Cruz: Thank you, Jennifer. We've listed three resources for you here for future reference. All of these are also linked within the early literacy framework. The first on the left is a multilingual learner toolkit, which provides additional instructional strategies to serve multilingual learners, including guidance on family engagement or a language development and more. The second link is a webinar on how the science of reading is culturally responsive. And then the third link is a practice guide on how to use foundational skills to support reading for understanding. On the next slide here, we've summarized the key takeaways for this presentation. The first being that evidence-based literacy instruction can and should be culturally and linguistically responsive to the identities of multilingual learners. The second is that multilingual learners deserve comprehensive literacy instruction, including explicit instruction of foundational skills as a stepping stone towards meaning making. And finally, that educators can leverage oral language development as a cornerstone for building literacy across content areas and participants.

Participants, you can feel free, we'll open up the chat again, feel free to add any additional takeaways that you had from this presentation into the chat. And just a huge thank you to everyone for joining us today. We've included our contact information at the end of this slide deck in case you have additional questions regarding how to support your multilingual learners. And thank you for all that you do to embrace and uplift our multilingual learners in Oregon. We've also listed research at the very end of the presentation, so you can easily access any of those resources after the webinar ends. Thank you everyone for joining us today. And yes, we will be sharing the slides out as well.