Access and Success- Supporting English Learners in an Identity Safe Classroom

Bhavna Narula: Coordinator-Educational Services
Mary Ann Malkos: English Learner TOSA
Maura Brown: English Learner TOSA

Milpitas Unified School District
Think of one of your students...

- Use the pink handout
- Let's keep them in the forefront today during this presentation
Outcomes today:

● Explore the concept of identity safety
● Learn strategies for creating identity safe classrooms through self reflection
● Learn from one district’s journey towards promoting positive language learner student outcomes-structures, programs and challenges.
● LEARN FROM EACH OTHER!
Know thy neighbor!

Turn to the person sitting next to you and
1. Introduce Yourself
2. Share with your partner:
   a. What makes you feel identity safe as a teacher in your building?
   b. What experiences shaped your own identity as a student?
What can we do as educators to promote positive student outcomes in our diverse classrooms?

“Identity Safety is a concept where teachers create conditions for students of color to feel safe, to be themselves and to achieve at high levels based on the assumption that each student is competent and capable.”

- Dorothy M. Steele (2003)
What does it look like?

Components of identity safe teaching:

• Student Centered teaching
• Cultivating Diversity as a Resource
• Classroom Relationships
• Caring Classroom

( Steele and Cohn-Vargas, 2013)
Student Centered Teaching

- Listening for Student Voices (building confidence)
- Teaching for Understanding (the bridge between teaching and learning)
- Focus on cooperation
- Classroom autonomy - offer choices; ownership of learning and behavior
A note about

• **Stereotype Threat**
Stereotype threat refers to being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group. (Steele & Aronson, 1995)
Was used in the context of testing- Black students underperformed when race was emphasized; when it was not their test scores were better and equivalent to White students.

• **Color Blind dilemma** - the unintended impact on students
Cultivating Diversity as a Resource

- From Deficits to Assets!
- Acceptance and Equal Status
- Fostering Intercultural Communication
- The Hard Conversations on stereotyping and racism- Dealing with emotions and Proactive discussions
- High Expectations and Academic Rigor- challenge with scaffolds
Classroom Relationships and Caring classrooms

- Getting to know each other (including the teacher)
- Promoting a sense of belongingness
- Teacher warmth and availability
- Caring Classroom: clear expectations, positive presumptions, emotional safety
Our call to action- we are the somebody we have been waiting for!

• What are the 3 steps you can take in your class/school/district to support identity safety for your students?

• Go to https://todaysmeet.com/GOCABE2015
The MUSD journey

• Facts:
  • K-12 district
  • 30% English Learners
  • EL programs: EL Achieve; Imagine Learning; Language!
• Our Opportunity: Consistency, Long term EL students; Accelerate proficiency level growth
Our Support Structures

- We are a blended learning district- known for this! All schools have learning labs
- Site EL support: Designated ELD block, EL Advocates, P-FELD( Reclassification), Bilingual IAs
- District Support: EL TOSAs( new structure)
What do the TOSAs do?

- **Coaching 10 teachers** per semester in supporting EL Students in reading and/or math.
- **Training new teachers** in Designated ELD using a Systematic ELD Program.
- **BTSA Mentors** - Supporting new teachers as Mentors
- **Training Middle School English teachers** in meeting the needs of struggling and second language students in reading and writing.
- Provide **Staff Development for Bilingual English Paraprofessional**
- **Professional Development Day Training** on the new ELA/ELD integrated standards at district elementary schools- example in your packet!
Broad impact

- **DRA 2 Training** for elementary school’s to calibrate testing results and focus on planning lessons based on the needs of each student in reading.
- **Monthly Training for English Language Advocates** - Teachers who advocate for English Learners at each school site.
- **Model lessons** for teachers using the coaching cycle.
- **Collaborating with teachers** to align lessons to CCSS Standards and how to scaffold for EL Students and struggling readers.
A Video Example of our work..

Grade 4/5 ELD enrichment
Cultivating Higher Level Thinking in EL Students through Reader’s Response

Esperanza thought she'd always live with her family on their ranch in Mexico--she'd always have fancy dresses, a beautiful home, and servants. But a sudden tragedy forces Esperanza and Mama to flee to California during the Great Depression, and to settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. Esperanza isn't ready for the hard labor, financial struggles, or lack of acceptance she now faces. When their new life is threatened, Esperanza must find a way to rise above her difficult circumstances--Mama's life, and her own, depend on it.
# Scaffolding Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sentence from the Book</th>
<th>Picture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperious</td>
<td>Commanding, overbearing</td>
<td><em>Ellen stood against making an Imperious face.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murmur</td>
<td>A soft, low, Indistinct sound</td>
<td><em>For awhile they continued to murmur in the dark.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abruptly</td>
<td>Suddenly</td>
<td><em>It was hours later, but still dark, when she was awaked abruptly by pounding on the apartment door.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalk</td>
<td>To walk with haughty strides</td>
<td><em>Annemarie heard the spider stalk around.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frantically</td>
<td>Dead, wild with fear</td>
<td><em>’I can’t get it open!’ Ellen said frantically.’</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwavering</td>
<td>Constant &amp; spread</td>
<td><em>”Lise Margrete, she read finally, and stared at Ellen for a long, unwavering moment’</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clenched</td>
<td>Relaxed the clenched fingers of her right hand, which still clenched Ellen’s necklace’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying Inferences through Open Mind Portraits
I'm worried that Mama has given up.

I'm scared about the dust storm.

I'm hoping that the wind will calm down.

I'm worried that Mama won't do what I need her to do.

I'm scared that Mama would die.

I'm worried that Mama would be in the hospital forever.

Esperanza "Las Papas"

I think that we need to find a way to go on vacation.

I'm really scared that we won't be able to find a place to stay.

I'm worried that my family will be so happy.

I'm really worried about the storms.

I'm really worried that people will hurt us.

I'm worried that people will want to stay at our house.

I'm worried that people will want to go to our house.

I'm worried that people will want to stay at our house.
I am worried because Mama is going to the hospital.

I am calm because crutches help me to walk and sit.

I am worried about Mama because she is very sick.

I am confident because I will take proper care of the house.

I am hoping for more than just services to support Mama and Abuelo.

I am going to work more to earn money.

I am (still) hopeful.

I need to know if someone is coming to see our Abuelo's Peaceful Rest home near my house.
Professional Trainings

Attended This Year

- Training with Kate Kinsella - Academic language and literacy development in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms.
- Silicon Valley Math Initiative Training - CCSS Math and supporting all student's success in math
- 3 Day Santa Clara County Training on Integrated ELA/ELD Standards
- Coaching Collaborative Training - “The Art of Coaching” by Elena Aguilar
- CABE Conference - California Association for Bilingual Education conference 2015.
Remember the students?

• Talk to your neighbor about one strategy you could use based on what we discussed today
Resources

Creative apps:
• Kahoot: gaming app: create instant surveys, discussions, quizzes
• Todays meet

Websites:
http://identitysafeclassrooms.org/
http://www.tolerance.org/
http://www.edutopia.org/blogs/tag/culturally-responsive-teaching
“We can throw stones, complain about them, stumble on them, climb over them or build with them”
-William Arthur Ward

What are we choosing to do?
Raffle and Questions?

Contact us at:
Bhavna Narula: bnarula@musd.org
Maura Brown: mbrown@musd.org
Mary Ann Malkos: mmalkos@musd.org

We are glad you joined us today! Thank you!!