

**Adapt for Success: Supporting Multilingual Learners in Canadian Classrooms**

by

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M.A., Perm State Pedagogical University of Humanities, Russia, 2014

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **My Personal Journey**

Can you remember the last time when you made a major decision? I am not talking about deciding on a color of your new couch. I am asking you to reach back in your memory and try to recall a moment when you have realized something major, which subsequently changed the entire course of your life. In 2022 I made a major decision to start my Master of Education degree at the University of Victoria and build upon my previous education and eight years of practical experience as a teacher of English. Yet, I am getting ahead of myself.

I was born in Perm, Russia, one year following the breakup of the Soviet Union. I took my first English classes in kindergarten, which exposed me from an early age to Western culture. Immersed in the English language from a very young age, I found myself absorbed in English studies. Eventually, I graduated with a master's degree in Linguistics and Translation studies from a Russian university. While still in university, I was looking for opportunities to practice my language skills, get international work experience, and make my modest contribution to the world. In the winter of 2012, I got an opportunity to participate in the World Leader Contribution for Education project in Jakarta, Indonesia. Staying with an Indonesian host family and experiencing the local culture first-hand made this experience invaluable. I wanted to show respect, so I picked up some basic Bahasa Indonesia to communicate with my host parents, who didn't speak much English. But with my host sister, who was planning to study abroad, we spoke English. We helped each other improve our language skills, blending Bahasa Indonesia and English. Our time together was about building connections and understanding each other's worlds. Looking back, that experience reshaped how I see the world and my place in it. Apart from overcoming my fears of going to a new place and the excitement of experiencing a completely new culture, I learned to communicate effectively in a new cultural setting and to embrace differences. As part of this

educational volunteer project, I taught basic English skills, numeracy, and literacy to underprivileged children of Jakarta. This teaching experience was truly a major milestone in my life – the first step in my professional career as an educator. It was then that I first discovered that teaching is my calling.

After my graduation, I was full of hope, dreaming about a career in the international community. My relatively small hometown of Perm is not exactly a place where one can easily launch such a career. I made another pivotal decision to head East - to China - to pursue my career as an educator. Living so far away from my family in a foreign country proved to be both challenging and inspirational. I encountered numerous predicaments while discovering the depth of my potential as a young professional woman. At the age of 24, I was hired as a foreign expert at Liaocheng University. Liaocheng University is in a third-tier city in China<sup>1</sup>, many students come from rural areas and most of them have never had a chance to encounter a foreigner, let alone be taught by a foreign teacher. I specifically requested to teach future teachers at the School of Foreign Languages. I felt it was my life purpose, my calling to inspire my students to be future educators and expose them to a new culture. The best reward for me was to see how their eyes lit up with excitement and curiosity when I taught them English or when we compared Chinese and Russian cultures. For the next two years, I worked closely with American, European, and Asian colleagues on developing curriculum, classroom management, and creating an encouraging learning atmosphere. Through that experience, I realized that teaching is not just a technical process. I also reaffirmed what a rewarding experience it is to help others succeed and achieve their goals and dreams. Reminiscing now on my time there, I think I was not just an instructor, but also a

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<sup>1</sup> A third-tier city in China refers to a smaller, less economically developed urban area compared to first- and second-tier cities. These cities often have populations ranging from a few hundred thousand to a few million people and may have less advanced infrastructure and fewer economic opportunities compared to larger cities like Beijing, Shanghai, or Guangzhou (The State Council Information Office the People's Republic of China, 2023).

role model for my students. I was looking for ways to help my students learn a language from a much broader perspective, beyond textbooks and the classroom.

I saw building a solid theoretical foundation for my years of practical learning and teaching English in Russia and China as the next logical step in my career as an English teacher. My quest for knowledge and improvement as an educator led me to pursue a master's degree in education at the University of Victoria, Canada. This experience was my first immersion into studying and working in an English-speaking country, offering a unique opportunity to delve into the theories of English language teaching and explore a new cultural and pedagogical setting firsthand. In the second year of my graduate program, I was afforded a unique opportunity to teach a methodology course EDCI 447 – Principles of Teaching English Language Learning to a group of 45 students (20 international graduate students and 25 Canadian undergraduates). This was a large class and a particularly challenging teaching assignment due to the diverse backgrounds of the students and different levels of understanding about how to teach ELL students in the regular secondary classroom. Navigating this diverse classroom dynamic and looking back at my previous learning and teaching experiences has inspired me to design a practical workshop for pre-service teachers on how to support multilingual learners in Canadian classrooms. This workshop is grounded in the latest research in English language teaching and includes practical classroom activities with reflection as part of deepening pre-service teachers' understanding of theory and effective practices to support multilingual learners.

### **Significance of the Study**

The number of English language learners (ELLs) in mainstream classrooms in Canada continues to rise (Government of Canada, 2023; Statistics Canada, 2023). Many teacher education programs and the government policies emphasize the need to support ELLs to smoothly integrate into Canadian classrooms (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Kerekes et al.,

2021). Therefore, content teachers are no longer just subject teachers and are required to provide a tailored language support to help multilingual learners reach academic success (Echevarria et al., 2023). However, teacher training programs and schools' professional development programs may not provide sufficient hands-on culturally responsive strategies to adapt content instruction to meet the unique needs of ELLs (Burton et al., 2024; Cummins & Persad, 2014; Kerekes et al., 2021; Payant & Galante, 2022). This project aims to bridge this gap and address the growing need for equipping content teachers with practical strategies grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles to address the language needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and tools to raise awareness and create an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment. The workshop provides teachers with a brief overview of relevant theory and hands-on activities which makes it a valuable resource for pre-service and in-service teachers in mainstream Canadian classrooms. On a broader scale, this project contributes to create an equitable learning environment where all learners could succeed.

To build a theoretical foundation for this project, the following questions have been explored in the literature review:

1. What are common pedagogical approaches of English language teaching using a communicative approach?
2. What are the theoretical underpinnings of a communicative approach to English Language teaching?
3. What are the complicating factors and challenges in English language teaching from a communicative perspective?
4. What are the emerging trends in CLT?
5. What are the nuances of CLT in Canada?

In Chapter 2, I examine Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the approaches within CLT that integrate content and language instruction, theoretical underpinnings and principles of CLT, challenges of implementing CLT in different educational contexts, emerging trends in CLT along with theoretical perspectives that emphasize the role of interaction and cultural responsiveness in education. Additionally, this literature review analyzes CLT in Canadian educational context and aims to establish a theoretical foundation for designing a professional development workshop that equips content teachers with practical strategies for adapting their instruction to support multilingual learners in Canadian classrooms.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the practical workshop *Adapt for Success* I designed for content teachers on how to adapt instruction to support multilingual students in Canadian classrooms. The workshop consists of two modules: 1) Getting to know your learners: A culturally responsive approach; and, 2) Adapting instruction for accessibility: Scaffolding and differentiation strategies. Under these modules, there are a series of mini lectures comprised of concise theory and practical classroom activities for teachers to try first-hand as part of the workshop training and experience these practical activities from a learner's perspective. The project modules are rooted in theory I discussed in the literature review and offer practical classroom activities. Additionally, in Chapter 3, I reflect on my learning from developing this workshop.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

My experience as a learner and teacher of English led me to my research interest in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and adapting instruction to meet the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Teaching in three different contexts, Russia, China, and Canada, has prompted me to recognize that understanding the various and complex factors that affect learning and teaching in diverse environments is essential for planning effective support and teaching methods (Markey et. al, 2023). Additionally, it is crucial to “know our students and understand their diverse backgrounds”, and their dreams and aspirations to provide tailored support for success of these learners (Echevarria et al., 2023, p. 4). This proactive approach aims to encourage integration, foster intercultural understanding, promote respect for cultural and linguistic differences, and develop a supportive learning environment. Recognizing, respecting, and building on the cultural backgrounds of students and assets they bring to our classroom is a foundational principle to ensure the academic success of multilingual learners. When students’ culture, identity, home languages, and aspirations are recognized and utilized, learners “can make critical connections to classroom content that can lead to improved outcomes” (Howard & Banks, 2012, p. 551). With the growing cultural and linguistic diversity in Canadian classrooms, content teachers are tasked with dual responsibilities: 1) delivering subject instruction; 2) supporting the language development of English language learners. Many teachers lack specific training and practical skills to integrate language and content instruction successfully (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Kerekes et al., 2021). As a result, a significant number of teachers are “underprepared to meet the educational needs of multilingual learners” and help them achieve academic success (Echevarria et al., 2023, p. 12). Recognizing this need, many universities in Canada have implemented a mandatory course on teaching English language learners as part of their teacher education program

(Burton et al., 2024; Kerekes et al., 2021; Rajendram & Bale, 2024). Despite this policy, many teachers who have undergone the training, reported the considerable gap between the real needs of multilingual learners in their classroom and the theoretical knowledge they acquired while taking this course in university (Kerekes et al., 2021).

### **Theoretical Framework**

My epistemological beliefs about how I view education and English Language teaching have been influenced by the following theories: 1) social constructivism theory (Vygotsky, 1978); and 2) culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

#### ***Social Constructivism***

*“By giving our students practice in talking with others, we give them frames for thinking on their own.” - Lev Vygotsky*

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was a Soviet psychologist and educational theorist who has made significant contributions to the fields of education, second language acquisition, and developmental psychology. Lev Vygotsky formulated social constructivism theory which asserts that individuals play an active role in constructing knowledge within their social and cultural worlds. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that cognitive development is inherently social and occurs through interactions with others. Cognitive processes, such as problem-solving and language acquisition, are fundamentally shaped by social interactions with others. A key tenet of social constructivism, therefore, is that knowledge is grounded in individuals' social environments. Vygotsky's perspective emphasizes that learning occurs predominantly in social and cultural contexts rather than being confined solely to individual (cognitive) experiences. Learning is seen as a collaborative process (Vygotsky et al., 1978).

### ***Social constructivism and language learning***

As noted above, social constructivism emphasizes the social and collaborative nature of learning and language development. It considers learning as occurring *between* individuals (Vygotsky et al., 1978). Knowledge is collaboratively built by (language) learners through social interactions (Howard, 2017). The roles of teacher and learner are therefore interrelated, with both taking active roles in the learning process. In social constructivism, the role of a student shifts from being a passive listener to becoming an active participant and collaborator in constructing knowledge with teachers and fellow learners (Akpan et al., 2020). According to Vygotsky (1978), human development is seen as a social construct, and it is to a larger extent a product of an individual's social and cultural experiences. Social constructivism theory posits that language and culture serve as the foundational frameworks through which humans perceive, communicate, and understand reality. Language and culture are pivotal in human intellectual development and shape individuals' perceptions of the world (Vygotsky et al., 1978). In essence, the transmission of learning occurs through language and is interpreted and understood through experiences and interactions within a cultural context (Akpan et al., 2020). Therefore, although humans typically possess the biological capacity to acquire language, what language we learn, how adept we are at using them, and the purposes for which we can use them are a matter of the social contexts and situations we have experienced (Gibbons, 2015).

### ***Culturally Responsive Pedagogy***

Culturally responsive pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching in which the students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world (Lynch, 2016). This approach extends beyond the concept of "good teaching" and underscores the importance of educators integrating students' cultural identities and perspectives into both teaching and

learning processes (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) connects students' academic knowledge with their individual frames of reference, fostering a rich interplay in culturally diverse communities (Idrus & Sohid, 2023). The main goal of culturally responsive pedagogy is to create spaces in our classrooms where students' "cultural elements and cultural capital" are used as rich resources to learn new content and achieve academic success (Howard & Banks, 2012, p. 550). Acknowledging students' backgrounds enhances academic success and engagement, as positive relationships cultivate a sense of belonging and well-being. Tailoring instruction to diverse needs leads to improved outcomes (Caingcoy, 2023). Ladson-Billings (1995) stressed the importance of: 1) recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities within the educational context; and 2) empowering students by making the curriculum relevant and meaningful to their lived experiences, thus fostering a sense of ownership and agency in their learning (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Built on the principles of differentiated instruction, CRT incorporates students' ancestral and contemporary cultures (Santamaria, 2009). This approach positions every student as "cultural funds of knowledge" in the classroom, facilitating peer learning based on diverse background knowledge, experiences, and cultural skills (Echevarría et al., 2023). Teachers embracing culturally sensitive practices view culture as an asset, leveraging it to promote both academic and social achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2014).

Preparing to teach in a culturally responsive classroom involves three main categories: self-exploration of one's own culture, gaining knowledge about other cultures, and understanding students' cultural backgrounds (Lynch, 2016). Teachers should develop cultural competence to effectively engage and connect with students from diverse backgrounds, understanding their cultural norms, values, and perspectives (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

## Setting the Context

Language teaching and learning methods are not static; they are in a perpetual state of evolution, responding to the changing dynamics of society, ways of communication, education systems, technology, and theoretical and pedagogical research. With the paramount importance of communication and language skills in a modern world, educators need to seek ways to adapt to the evolving needs of learners and choose pedagogies that best fit language learners' profiles while also considering learning context. The field of English Language Teaching (ELT) has specifically experienced a notable transformation over the years, marked by a shift from Grammar Translation Method (GTM)<sup>2</sup> towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Natsir & Sanjaya, 2014). This shift places emphasis on not just language proficiency, but also the development of practical communication skills, aligning more closely with the real-world needs of language learners. As English continues to assert its role as a global lingua franca, educators and researchers are drawn to explore the intricacies of the communicative approach to English Language Teaching. The forthcoming review will address such concerns.

### *Historical Overview of CLT*

The evolution of CLT can be traced back to various factors, notably the shortcomings of the Grammar Translation Method and the Audiolingual Method<sup>3</sup>, and the changing landscape of global societies (Loumbourdi, 2018; Thamarana, 2015). Traditional approaches, such as situational language teaching, audiolingual, and grammar-translation methods, treated

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<sup>2</sup> Grammar Translation Method is the traditional approach of language instruction that focuses on teaching grammatical rules and translating sentences between the target language and the native language. Students' native language is often used as the medium for teaching (Pemberton, 2024). This approach focuses mainly on reading and written translation, often without much emphasis on speaking or listening skills (Coelho, 2004). GTM is still widely used around the world, despite the influence of Communicative Language Teaching (Deng, 2023; Du, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> The Audiolingual Method is an approach to language teaching that emphasizes the importance of oral and listening skills in language learning, rather than explicit grammar instruction and writing. It was influenced by behaviorist psychology, particularly by the theory of B.F. Skinner, which pointed out the importance of reinforcement and habit formation in learning (Coelho, 2004).

language as a set of discrete skills to be learned through isolated repetition, building from the ground up, but also served to hinder effective and fluent communication, especially oral language (Dos Santos, 2020; Richards, 2006). Responding to Chomsky's work (1964), which emphasized the importance of linguistic competence as the core of language understanding, British applied linguists Brumfit (1979) and Wilkins (1976) explored a more functional approach to language. Wilkins (1976) highlighted the crucial role of a situational syllabus, focusing on teaching language through real-life contexts in which learners will use the target language. Wilkins (1976) argued that language cannot be fully understood outside its social context, as specific situations dictate the formality and vocabulary used. With the support from educational administrators and curriculum developers, Brumfit and Wilkins introduced the concept of notional syllabus, which prioritizes the content of communication; more specifically, what learners communicate over how or where communication takes place. This approach is based on the meanings and ideas conveyed, making it a content-driven syllabus rather than one focused on structure or context, emphasizing notions and functions of language use over more rigid structures (Brumfit, 1979; Richards & Rodgers, 1986; Wilkins, 1976). It was also the time when the term "communicative competence" came into play. It was initially coined by Dell Hymes in 1971 (Hymes, 1972). Hymes (1972) argued that effective language education should prioritize the practical application of language in real-world contexts. In North America, Hymes' theory of communicative competence, which suggested that understanding a language involves more than just grammar rules (linguistic competence) but also knowing how to use the language in real life situations (communicative competence), had a major influence on the later development of CLT (Spada, 2007). The introduction of communicative competence brought new optimism that the limitations of grammar-focused and structural teaching methods could be addressed and improved (Pemberton, 2024). In the 1970s, the central role of grammar in language teaching and

learning was questioned, as the argument was made that language proficiency encompasses more than just grammatical competence (Richards, 2006). The focus turned to acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to employ grammar and various language aspects for diverse communicative purposes, including making requests, giving advice, offering suggestions, expressing wishes, and more (Richards, 2006). Communicative competence was a broader concept and implied knowing what and how to communicate appropriately in various situations. Originating from sociolinguistics, it gained traction in language teaching, advocating communicative competence as the primary goal. This led to the development of CLT in the 1970s and 1980s, sparking enthusiasm in language education (Richards, 2006).

### ***The Theoretical Underpinnings of CLT***

The essence of CLT lies in fostering communicative competence. Savignon (2003) defined communicative competence in terms of the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning. According to Savignon (2003) effectively developing communicative competence entails not only knowing the target language, but also using it in line with sociocultural norms. This theory, integral to CLT, was further developed by Canale and Swain (1980), who broadened the term communicative competence (CC) and identified four other competencies within CC: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic (Canale & Swain, 1980). Considering these four competences, CLT can be defined as an approach focused on language acquisition while simultaneously promoting expression, understanding, and negotiation of meaning (Kumaravadivelu, 1993). Even though CLT is widely recognised, there is still lack of clear understanding what this approach means (Pemberton, 2024). This ambiguity stems from ongoing debates over what constitutes the foundational aspects of the approach (Pemberton, 2024). CLT is not a distinct methodology; rather, it serves as an approach to second language learning based on a set of principles to direct a teacher's instruction in the classroom (San Martin, 2015). In CLT, communication is the basic feature

of the instructional process (Adem & Berkessa, 2022). Richards and Rogers (1986) emphasized the core theoretical principles of CLT: 1) Communication aids language learning; 2) Language use while completing meaningful tasks enhances learning; 3) Meaningful language that is relatable to learners' experiences promotes learning (Richards & Rogers, 1986). The focal points of CLT can be summarised in the following features: "1) Language is a system for the expression of meaning; 2) The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication; 3) The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses; 4) The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse" (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p. 161).

According to Pemberton (2024), methodologically, all CLT approaches share the goal of developing communicative competence, focusing on giving learners practical language skills through interaction and cooperative learning. Another foundational tenet of CLT is that "learners learn a language by communicating in it" (Pemberton, 2024, p. 50). Pemberton (2024) highlights that authentic materials are at the core of CLT methodology. These materials promote learners' interest and give accurate examples how language is used in real life (Pemberton, 2024). Meaningful activities also take the central part in CLT and facilitate language learning (Pemberton, 2024; Richards, 2006).

### **Pedagogical Approaches in English Language Teaching Using a Communicative Approach**

CLT has evolved significantly since its inception, leading to various adaptations in communicative language teaching approaches. CLT now serves as an umbrella term for various approaches to second language teaching (Pemberton, 2024; Spada, 2007). These approaches focus on enhancing communicative competence and the practical language use.

## ***Task-Based Language Teaching***

One significant offshoot of CLT is Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes the use of real-world tasks that require meaningful language use. Real-world tasks promote authentic communication in the classroom (Loumbourdi, 2018; Nunan, 2004). TBLT is a pedagogical approach that enables learners to develop new language skills through practical use of the target language within various tasks (Ellis, 2017). TBLT adopts communicative tasks as the central unit for instruction and assessment (Spada, 2022). David Nunan, a prominent Australian linguist in the field of Task-Based Language Teaching, highlights the importance of learner-centeredness, where students actively engage in tasks that reflect real-life situations (Nunan, 2004). Real-world tasks strive for situational authenticity by replicating activities performed in everyday life (Ellis, 2017). An example of a real-world task might be organizing a birthday party, where a group decides on various elements such as food, invitations, decorations, party games, music, and more (Loumbourdi, 2018). Nunan (1989) first distinguished between “real-world tasks” and “pedagogic tasks.” Pedagogic tasks aim for authenticity in interaction, mirroring the natural language use and conversation strategies found in everyday communication outside the classroom; for example, the Spot the Difference activity<sup>4</sup>. While it is uncommon for people to discuss differences between two pictures in real-life conversations, this activity can foster typical conversational patterns, such as taking turns and clarifying misunderstandings while using descriptive language, thereby achieving interactional authenticity (Ellis, 2017). Generally, group tasks are a fundamental component of TBLT and are widely used in both traditional and online classrooms. These tasks foster an environment where learners can engage with their peers and teachers, facilitating collaborative and cooperative problem-solving and

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<sup>4</sup> Spot the Difference is an information gap activity that is aimed at practicing descriptive language. Students are paired up to compare nearly identical pictures to find differences by describing, clarifying, and asking questions, while practising their communication skills (OnTESOL, 2022).

consensus-building (Xie et al., 2023). Most tasks can be completed in pairs or groups and involve some form of public presentation, either orally through posters or visual media, or in written formats such as reports, emails, or letters (Loumbourdi, 2018). It is important to note that TBLT is not limited to small group work only. Tasks can be performed using different participation structures, such as teacher-class in the case of input-based tasks, and individually when learners work alone (Ellis, 2017).

### ***Content-Based Instruction***

Another communicative language teaching approach is Content-Based Instruction (CBI). Content-based instruction was initially introduced and explored in the early 1970s to address the growing need for effective French immersion programs in Canadian schools (Johnson & Swain, 1997; Sato et al., 2017). Sato et al. (2017) highlight that CBI arose more out of necessity than preference. The introduction of French immersion programs highlighted the challenge of integrating language learning with subject instruction; therefore, the need for a more effective approach arose (Sato et al., 2017).

CBI integrates the learning of language skills with the learning of content simultaneously, such as academic subjects. CBI facilitates language acquisition, but its advantages extend beyond mere linguistic improvements. It also enhances overall academic achievement, motivates learners to engage actively and remain with their grade-level peers in the classroom, promotes learner autonomy, and more (Sato et al., 2017). This approach can also be referred to in literature as content and language integrated learning (CLIL – used more commonly in Europe). Regardless of the name, the central ideas remain the same: the process of learning the language is integrated with the subject matter, ensuring that students receive language support while studying a specific content area (Waller, 2018). Content-based language teachers generally aim to enhance students' English proficiency by integrating subject matter that students are required to study or might have missed as new immigrants.

For content-based language instruction to be effective, teachers should offer practice in academic skills and tasks typical of standard, grade-level classes (Echevarria et al., 2023). In content-based language instruction, materials from various subjects are often integrated through thematic or interdisciplinary units. For instance, a theme like "The Marketplace" could encompass objectives from economics, science, geography, history, and mathematics. Students might create maps showing the movement of goods from farms and factories to city markets, design brochures or video ads to promote a product or service, use online resources to study supply and demand, or develop a business plan for a product or service they want to sell. Additionally, they might learn comparative and persuasive language techniques for advertising their product or service and specific genre features for the written and visual texts they are reading and producing (Echevarria et al., 2023).

### ***Sheltered Instruction Approach***

To make academic content accessible to multilingual learners, another variation of CBI was developed - Sheltered Instruction (SI). Both approaches integrate language development with subject matter instruction. The main difference from CBI is that SI is specifically tailored for English language learners in mainstream classrooms. It adapts content instruction to make academic subjects comprehensible without sacrificing content rigor. Sheltered instruction aims to make content standards and topics understandable while simultaneously teaching the academic language specific to that subject area (Echevarria et al., 2023). In sheltered content classes, teachers present grade-level objectives for various subjects to multilingual learners using modified instruction that makes the content comprehensible while also fostering academic language development. The aim is to teach content to ELLs through a language-focused approach. Effective sheltered instruction is not just about adding or replacing teaching techniques; it builds on and enhances methods used in both second language and mainstream classrooms. Such techniques may include cooperative learning,

linking lessons to students' experiences, culturally responsive activities, targeted vocabulary development, simplified language, visuals, and online resources to ensure ELLs understand complex topics while they continue to develop their language skills. Unlike CBI, which may be used across various learning levels, SI is often for students with limited English proficiency in content-heavy subjects, helping them succeed academically while learning English (Echevarria et al., 2023). Sheltered Instruction classes may have a mix of multilingual learners and native speakers, or multilingual learners exclusively.

### **Scaffolding in Communicative Approaches**

Scaffolding is inherent in content based communicative approaches. Scaffolding is connected to Vygotsky's theory (1978) of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Scaffolding is the process by which a more knowledgeable individual (such as a teacher, parent, or peer) provides structured support to a learner within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD is a central concept in Vygotsky's work. It refers to the gap between what learners can do independently and what they can do with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. The ZPD represents the range of tasks that a learner can accomplish with guidance and support, but cannot yet do independently (Vygotsky et al., 1978). The term "proximal" refers to the skills the student is on the verge of mastering (Main, 2021). In other words, effective collaboration with a partner, often referred to as "assisted performance," empowers learners to reach beyond what they can achieve alone, participate in new tasks, and learn new ways of using language (Vygotsky et al., 1978). Providing adequate support gives students the necessary "boost" to successfully accomplish tasks. Educators are advised to focus on three essential elements to assist individuals in progressing through the zone of proximal development: scaffolding, a more knowledgeable other, and student interactions (McLeod, 2024). This support is tailored to the learner's current level of

proficiency and gradually subsides as the learner becomes more capable (Vygotsky et al., 1978).

In social constructivist classrooms, collaborative learning involves peer interaction guided and structured by the teacher. Discussions are prompted by specific concepts, problems, or scenarios, facilitated through directed questions, concept introduction, and references to previously learned material (Akpan et al., 2020). In ZPD, learning occurs optimally when it strikes a balance between being not too easy and not too challenging. This concept recognizes the dynamic nature of learning, promoting personalized support that considers cultural contexts and individual learner's needs. Educators can facilitate effective learning in content-based classrooms by offering appropriate challenges and scaffolding, enabling students to enhance their existing knowledge and skills (Main, 2021).

In CBI and TBLT pedagogical frameworks, content classroom teachers are generally expected to integrate pre-, during-, and post-instructional strategies as a means of ensuring that essential language and genre features are explicitly addressed for English Language Learners (ELLs). Such scaffolding is crucial to fostering both comprehension and the ability to produce the required content, aligning with the dual aims of language acquisition and subject mastery (Coelho, 2004; Echevarria et al., 2023).

### **Complicating Factors and Challenges in English language Teaching from a Communicative Perspective**

English language teaching has undergone significant changes over the years, with many educators trying to adopt communicative approaches in their classrooms that focus on the practical use of language in real-life situations. CLT emphasizes interaction and communication as the central goals of language instruction, moving away from more traditional, form-focused methods. Despite its great potential for improving communicative skills, the implementation of CLT often poses a variety of challenges.

### ***Balancing Communicative Competence and Linguistic Accuracy***

Central to these difficulties is the tension between achieving communicative competence and maintaining linguistic accuracy. Studies indicate that teachers often struggle to balance the dual demands of promoting spontaneous language use while ensuring grammatical correctness, leading to conflicts between fluency and accuracy in classroom practice (Savignon, 2003). Ellis (2005) emphasizes that teachers often find it difficult to foster spontaneous communication while ensuring that students adhere to grammatical norms. This tension can lead to a compromise in either fluency or accuracy, which are both essential components of language proficiency (Ellis, 2005). Successful second language acquisition needs to ensure the balance between focusing on developing the communicative competence and focus on form (Ellis, 2015). Additionally, teachers often experience frustration due to the ambiguous nature of discussions surrounding communicative competence. While the concept of meaning negotiation is appealing, it lacks precision and fails to offer a universal scale for assessing learners. Instead, communicative ability is seen as variable, influenced by context, purpose, and the roles of all participants (Savignon, 2003).

### ***Cultural and Contextual Factors***

Cultural and contextual factors heavily influence the successful implementation of CLT, particularly in Asian countries where traditional, teacher-centred approaches are deeply engrained in the school system. Littlewood (2014) points out that in its initial stages, CLT was broadly advocated as suitable for all learning environments. However, over time, numerous questions have emerged regarding its true meaning and which versions, if any, are appropriate for particular educational contexts (Littlewood, 2014). The experiences in Asia, where the educational traditions and current conditions often differ significantly from those in the regions where CLT was first developed, have significantly fuelled this debate. The emphasis on rote learning and exam preparation in these contexts often conflicts with the

principles of CLT, which prioritize communicative interaction over memorization (Littlewood, 2014).

One of the issues of adapting CLT to Chinese education system, for example, is that CLT approaches have been originated in the West and are based on the Western philosophy and theories, including social constructivism (Liu et al., 2021). The key tenet of social constructivism is that knowledge is collaboratively built through social interactions (Vygotsky et al., 1978). The roles of teacher and learner are therefore interrelated, with both taking active roles in the learning process. However, the Chinese Confucian-heritage culture puts emphasis on teacher as a sole authority and the transmitter of knowledge, whose expertise is not questioned by students (Liu et al., 2021). A prominent Chinese linguist, Hu (2002), argues that key elements of CLT, such as learner-centered instruction, focus on communicative competence, and teacher's role as a facilitator rather than authority, clash with the traditional Chinese culture of learning, which is deeply rooted in Confucianism.

Classroom dynamics, including large class sizes and mixed-ability groups, complicate the implementation of communicative activities, as these conditions can inhibit meaningful interaction and providing individualized feedback. Communicative activities often require small-group interactions and personalized feedback, which are difficult to manage in overcrowded classrooms (Song, 2019). For example, the number of students per class in China averages between 50 to 80 in many K-12 and college classrooms (Song, 2019; Zhang, 2014). Furthermore, this contextual constraint is exacerbated by limited teaching hours. For example, the typical English class in Chinese universities consists of about four hours per week, divided into 45-minute periods. Given the large class sizes, each student has minimal time to engage in communicative activities (Song, 2019).

Resource limitation is another major obstacle. In the Philippines, for example, teachers reported challenges in implementing CLT due to a lack of access to adequate teaching

materials which are compatible with CLT principles (Barrott, 2018). The same issue was revealed in Saudi Arabian universities, where the teachers claimed that available teaching materials were often “uncommunicative” (Asmari, 2015). Other challenges included inability to design CLT activities for students due to several factors, such as extensive syllabi, time limitations, and insufficient CLT training (Asmari, 2015). Moreover, the communicative approach’s reliance on authentic materials poses challenges related to cultural relevance and content appropriateness. According to Liu et al. (2021), the textbooks used in Chinese classrooms have limited speaking activities and selected topics are often “irrelevant to the students’ life” (Liu et al., 2021, p. 139). Similarly in Russia, imported Western textbooks with CLT activities were often not the best match with Russian students’ needs and cultural backgrounds. Ter-Minasova (2005) criticizes these materials for focusing on topics irrelevant to Russian learners; for example, “hotel registration, hiring a car, going to the bank” (Ter-Minasova, 2005, p. 453).

Another major challenge is insufficient teacher training in using communicative approaches. In Taiwan, Huang (2016) conducted the survey and interviews with 75 rural EFL teachers. The data was analysed using coding and identifying three main categories of codes. The findings reveal that teachers acknowledge the importance of improving students' English proficiency through CLT. However, many are concerned about their own insufficient communication skills and a lack of confidence in fully implementing CLT (Huang, 2016). Similarly, many English teachers in China have been trained in traditional, grammar-translation methods and lack the skills to effectively implement CLT or are even not familiar with this approach (Liu et al., 2021; Song, 2019). Liu et al. (2021) emphasized that TBLT is endorsed by China’s Ministry of Education to foster communicative language skills, yet the reality of applying it in Chinese classrooms is complex. The researchers used a mixed-method approach which included surveys and interviews with 66 teachers from various

regions in China to investigate the complexity of TBLT teaching practices and factors influencing its use. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data and identify themes. Findings show that most educators appreciate TBLT's potential for fostering communication. However, several contextual challenges, such as a lack of TBLT training or little familiarity with TBLT, large class sizes, insufficient task-based materials, students' resistance to interactive learning, and an exam-focused education system make meaningful implementation of TBLT challenging. According to Liu et al. (2021), limited knowledge of communicative approaches has been stated as one of the main reasons why Chinese teachers avoid CLT. The inconsistency in teacher training and professional development often leaves educators ill-equipped to effectively implement communicative activities.

### **CLT Today: Emerging Trends**

Given the highly contextualised nature of CLT, it is viewed not as a fixed teaching method, but rather an approach that recognizes language as deeply tied to individual identity and social behavior and is used to develop materials appropriate to a specific context of learning (Savignon, 2007). Today, CLT encompasses a broader range of language domains, including increased focus on social and cultural aspects (Spada, 2018). There is also a greater emphasis on providing in-depth, cognitively engaging, and challenging content, which is especially important for content-based language teaching as well as for teaching language as a subject (Spada, 2018). Additionally, CLT does not exclude the focus on metalinguistic awareness or understanding rules of morphosyntax, discourse, and social norms (Savignon, 2007; Spada, 2018). Spada and Trahey (2020) conclude that the success of communicative approaches, especially in content-based instruction, is largely attributed to focus on linguistic form during communicative activities.

### ***Focus on Form Instruction***

To help learners achieve advanced knowledge and proficiency in the target language, form-focused instruction<sup>5</sup> must be integrated into meaning-based approaches to CLT. The research so far supports the benefits of balancing form and meaning in second language classrooms (Spada, 2007, 2018; Ellis, 2015). Unlike traditional grammar-focused instruction, focus-on-form instruction is often integrated within a communicative context (Spada, 2018). When focus on a linguistic form becomes relevant - for example, when a learner encounters difficulty or when clarification is needed - the instructor can briefly highlight the problem (Ellis, 2015). In this mode of instruction, language accuracy is combined with communicative fluency, making it a more comprehensive approach to language teaching. Spada (2018) also highlights that focus-on-form might be isolated. In this approach, the attention is drawn to form and meaning outside the communicative practice. Isolated focus-on-form may help learners who are at the beginner level “to make the form-meaning connections” (Spada, 2018, p. 4). Additionally, this instruction may be beneficial for learners who share the same L1 and make common mistakes when learning an additional language (Spada, 2018).

Ellis (2015) highlights two main types of integrated focus-on-form: reactive and pre-emptive. These approaches facilitate focus-on-form instruction in a way that does not disrupt the communication flow and ensures linguistic forms are naturally integrated within the context of communicative language use. According to Ellis (2015) reactive focus-on-form addresses linguistic issues as they arise during a conversation. They could be taught through implicit or explicit conversational correction and feedback. Conversational correction takes place around negotiation of meaning when the instructor or peer subtly guides the learner to self-correct without disrupting the communicative flow and such correction is typically

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<sup>5</sup> Focus-on-form instruction is defined as a teaching approach that "overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (Long as cited in Ellis, 2015, p. 2).

implicit. For example, if a student says, "I was in pub," the teacher might ask for clarification, "Oh, you were in *the* pub?"(Ellis, 2015, pp. 6-7). In this question, the teacher briefly recasts the utterance as a confirmation check ("In the pub?"), without breaking the interaction. This implicit correction allows the learner to notice and potentially correct their error without overt feedback. In cases where the linguistic form is particularly important, explicit feedback may be given. For instance, if a learner refers to the place where movies are shown as "the theater" (rather than "the cinema," the teacher might correct, "Actually, 'cinema' would be a better word to talk about a place where movies are shown" (Ellis, 2015, p. 7). Explicit feedback might occasionally be necessary to make sure that learners use the correct form; however, implicit strategies are less disruptive to the natural flow of communication in an activity.

Ellis (2015) emphasizes that pre-emptive focus-on-form targets language forms before any errors occur. This strategy aims to anticipate linguistic challenges based on the task's communicative goals. Pre-emptive focus-on-form can occur in the form of student-initiated questions. For example, a student might ask, "Should I say, 'who was' or 'who is' from Thailand?" (Ellis, 2015, p. 8). The teacher can briefly explain the usage based on context and still maintain the focus on the communicative goal while addressing the form. Another form of pre-emptive focus-on-form is teacher-initiated queries. For example, the teacher might review past tense forms before a task that requires past-tense narration. Students are directly advised to pay attention to using past tenses correctly as they recount events (Ellis, 2015). This prepares learners for the target form in a way that complements the communicative nature of the activity. Ellis (2015) and Spada (2018) advocate for balancing focus-on-form strategies discussed above to ensure communicative tasks retain a primary focus on meaning-making while incorporating attention to form when necessary.

### ***Translanguaging***

A contemporary and still emerging approach to promote content learning and language acquisition is *translanguaging*. Translanguaging is an asset-based approach that utilizes multilingual students' linguistic repertoires for content and language learning, and for creating an equitable classroom environment (Burton, Wong, & Rajendram, 2024; Echevarria et al., 2023). According to Echevarria et al. (2023), learners' languages are combined in "one complex linguistic system" in which language learning strategies and skills can transfer from language to language (Echevarria et al., 2023, p. 38). Translanguaging emphasizes that the "borders" between learners known languages are fluid and dynamic, allowing learners to use more than one language to communicate effectively (Burton, Wong, & Rajendram, 2024; Echevarria et al., 2023; Wong, 2024). For example, learners "may choose a word from another language because of its nuanced meaning" to be able to convey meaning accurately and build understanding (Echevarria et al., 2023, p. 38). Translanguaging has proved to be beneficial in affirming multilingual students' identity, giving learners' agency to choose from their linguistic repertoires for effective communication, developing metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness, fostering appreciation among all learners for multiculturalism and multilingualism, developing lexical and grammatical knowledge (Burton, Wong, & Rajendram, 2024; Cruz, 2022; Echevarria et al., 2023; Wong, 2024).

### **CLT Nuances in Canada: Multilingualism and Multiculturalism Influence on Teaching Approaches**

Due to Canadian immigration policies and global turmoil, many immigrants and newcomers are entering mainstream Canadian classrooms. As a result, between 2016 and 2021, Canada welcomed over 1.3 million immigrants, who continue to "diversify Canada's linguistic landscape" (Cruz, 2022; Government of Canada, 2023). According to the 2021 Census, 12.7% of the Canadian population spoke a language other than English or French at home (Statistics Canada, 2023). Statistics Canada also predicts that the population of Canada

will continue to grow more linguistically and culturally diverse (Statistics Canada, 2023). Therefore, multilingualism in Canada is the norm rather than the exception. To provide a supportive and welcoming environment for all learners, educators need to have a special training in employing inclusive pedagogical approaches that embrace linguistic and cultural diversity, and challenge dominant monolingual ideologies that marginalize minority language speakers and shape second language acquisition theories and teaching methods (Payant & Galante, 2022).

Despite Canada's multicultural framework and efforts to embrace diversity, national policies do not fully embrace the multilingual realities of students, especially those who are refugees or immigrants (Cummins & Persad, 2014). This issue originates from previous educational policies in Canada, which is comprised of four distinct phases: 1) Pre-1971: Active suppression of minority languages, with English or French conformity as the dominant policy; 2) 1971 to mid-1980s: Introduction of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, but with continued marginalization of languages other than English and French; 3) Mid-1980s to mid-2000s: Reduction in overt language suppression but with a neglect of students' home languages in schools; 4) Mid-2000s to present: Emergence of "teaching through a multilingual lens," viewing using students' home languages as a cognitive tool and accomplishment (Cummins & Persad, 2014).

Even though educational policy has transformed significantly over time and shifted focus toward more inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogies, the research community in Canada highlight that monolingual perspectives and policies still remain in effect in the Canadian context (Payant & Galante, 2022). One typical example of this issue is "implementing standard curricula in language classrooms" which negatively influences multilingual students' identity and language development. Therefore, language teaching

professionals seek ways and approaches that could replace “one-language-only policies” and affirm learners’ linguistic and cultural assets (Payant & Galante, 2022, p. vi).

Lately, the theoretical-pedagogical framework of plurilingualism, which aligns with the idea of “teaching through a multicultural lens,” has gained prominence in Canada (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Payant & Galante, 2022). Plurilingual strategies emphasize that languages and cultures of learners “are interconnected in one linguistic repertoire,” which is considered one of the most important assets when learning an additional language (Cruz, 2022, p. 38). Cruz (2022) identifies three main plurilingual strategies that help bridge linguistic and conceptual gaps in additional language learning: 1) translanguaging; 2) translation for mediation; and 3) cross-linguistic comparison.

Translanguaging, as noted above, is the approach to language learning that allows students to use their full linguistic repertoires when they communicate (Echevarria et al., 2023). This approach emphasizes that language skills acquired in other languages provide a solid foundation for transferring knowledge into learning an additional language (Whelan Ariza et al., 2019). Translation for mediation is the strategy “when learners translate between their L1 and the target language to carry out tasks.” (Cruz, 2022, p. 39). Cross-linguistic comparison is the approach when learners contrast and compare forms in L1 and their additional language (Cruz, 2022). These strategies are considered as “vehicles for empowerment,” as they give space to “validate learners’ plurilingual and cultural identities,” and challenge “monolingual discourses” (Payant & Galante, 2022, pp. vi-vii). The research has proved that learners find plurilingual approaches “effective in scaffolding their English language development” (Cruz, 2022, p. 48).

Even though newly emerged plurilingual strategies validate students’ linguistic accomplishments, affirm their identity, facilitate comprehension, enhance vocabulary, and foster positive learning experiences, they may be quite challenging to implement. Cruz

(2022) investigated the plurilingual strategies EAL students used when tutoring each other in English in a Francophone college in Montreal, Canada. The study employed a convergent mixed-methods design, analyzing data from field observations and interviews with 20 tutors and tutees, which was then coded and analyzed to identify common themes. Findings reveal that plurilingual strategies are often sporadic; therefore, teachers do not feel knowledgeable about how to incorporate these strategies into their teaching materials. An additional challenge is that some teachers claimed that they were hesitant to implement the plurilingual strategies in their classes since they may contradict with the school's "English-only policies" (Cruz, 2022, p. 40). Another issue is the feasibility of implementing plurilingual strategies when students do not share the same L1 or when their language repertoires differ significantly (Cruz, 2022).

While special training on how to support multilingual learners (MLs) is now a mandatory part of teacher education programs in Canada, teachers who have been employed in Canadian public school before this policy came into effect may not have the proper training and professional development opportunities to work with the increasing number of MLs in regular content classrooms (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Kerekes et al., 2021). In 2015, a new provincial policy requiring all teacher candidates to have a practical and theoretical knowledge of how to teach linguistically diverse learners has been introduced in Ontario (Kerekes et al., 2021). Teachers in K-12 schools are required to understand the complexity of being a ML, anticipate the potential challenges these learners encounter in Canadian classrooms, and help the learners achieve academic success (Kerekes et al., 2021). Kerekes et al. (2021) examined the perspectives of teachers on how to effectively support multilingual learners (MLs) in Ontario's K-12 classrooms. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 teachers in regular content classes and explored teachers' experiences, challenges, and successes in working with MLs. These interviews were analyzed through

inductive thematic analysis. The findings reveal that teacher preparation, especially training in linguistically and culturally responsive teaching, is crucial for supporting these students. Kerekes et al. (2021) identified several key issues that hinder the success of supporting MLs, such as inadequate specialized training or lack thereof, lack of resources, and insufficient professional development opportunities. The researchers also highlight the disconnect between theoretical training in teacher education programs and practical classroom needs (Kerekes et al., 2021).

One challenge is that funding for EAL programs that MLs take before entering mainstream classrooms is often insufficient (Kerekes et al., 2021). This issue is exacerbated by allocating the ESL program funds to recruitment and developing programs for international students instead of MLs (Kerekes et al., 2021). Additionally, official policies do not provide detailed guidance on how to implement culturally responsive pedagogies (Cruz, 2022). Therefore, EAL teachers may struggle to address their own “monolingual bias,” as standard curricula carry on prioritizing “a monolingual approach” to language instruction (Cruz, 2022, p. 38). Furthermore, many schools still do not view students’ home languages as “their linguistic accomplishment” (Cummins & Persad, 2014, p. 34). As a result, an important opportunity to use students’ home languages as an important foundation that could contribute to academic success in additional language learning is often overlooked (Cummins & Persad, 2014).

Another contextual issue is that some provinces adopted the policies that do not promote multilingualism, but on the contrary restrict it “by prohibiting use of languages other than English and French as mediums of instruction.” (Cummins & Persad, 2014, p. 4). This results in considering learners’ L1 “as either irrelevant to their schooling or even as an impediment to learning the school language” (Cummins & Persad, 2014, p. 4). Cummins and Persad (2014) highlight that these views are even reflected in the terminology; for example,

in the official curriculum documents across different provinces in Canada the students who do not speak English as their first language are referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs). However, lately in the research community, this term may be viewed as having a “deficit perspective on English learners’ abilities” (Cummins & Persad, 2014; Kerekes et al., 2021, p. 3). Kerekes et al. (2021) suggest using the term multilingual learners (MLs), which emphasizes “students’ multilingualism and multiculturalism as assets” (Kerekes et al., 2021, p. 3). This asset-based approach reflects Canadian educational context that celebrates diversity and affirms learners’ identity.

Teaching English as an Additional Language in Canada has been influenced by the country’s multiculturalism, which continues to be on the rise with the focus on inclusivity and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity. These views are also reflected in Canada’s educational policies which shifted toward “teaching through a multicultural lens,” emphasizing the importance of accommodating multilingual learners and viewing their culture and home languages as their accomplishments which lay a solid foundation for additional language learning. “Teaching through a multicultural lens” requires implementing new pedagogical approaches and attitudes toward supporting multilingual learners. Recently, as discussed above, the research community has highlighted the effectiveness of plurilingual strategies in EAL teaching. However, the process of incorporating these pedagogical approaches present a variety of challenges, such as the persistence of monolingual attitudes in official schools’ policies, teachers under preparedness and insufficient training in incorporating these approaches, and limited funding. Despite these challenges, Canada’s multicultural approach continues to thrive and seek solutions to mitigate these issues.

## **Conclusion and Implications for Future Research**

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides evidence that CLT is a theoretically sound approach for improving language proficiency through meaningful communication. CLT offers a framework that prioritizes meaningful communication and learner interaction, and recently, affirming and validating multilingual students' cultural and linguistic assets, making it a valuable foundation for addressing the linguistic and academic needs of multilingual learners. CLT's implementation, however, is often complicated with factors across diverse educational settings. The balance between communicative competence and linguistic accuracy often remains a battlefield for many educators, especially in educational contexts where traditional teaching methods take the central role. Contextual factors, such as limited resources, monolingual perspectives, diversity of learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and insufficient teacher training further complicate the successful implementation of CLT. By knowing these nuances, instructors may be better prepared to teach in multicultural contexts, manage their expectations and assumptions about multilingual learners, adapt their instruction accordingly, and ultimately contribute to learners' success and creating an inclusive and safe learning environment. By recognizing and integrating students' home languages and cultures into the learning and teaching process, teachers could make the educational experience relevant to students' lives by affirming and celebrating their identities and drawing on the valuable knowledge multilingual learners bring to our classrooms.

As is evident from the literature review, CLT is a broad concept and encompasses a wide range of pedagogical approaches within. Building on the insights from the reviewed studies, the following directions for future research can be proposed. One potential implication could be examining the effectiveness of translanguaging in content instruction and offering practical, step-by-step strategies how to implement this approach in the

classroom, especially where students do not share the same L1; or in contexts where English is not spoken as L1, and class time is the only opportunity to be immersed in an English-speaking environment. Another implication could be research into how to adapt CLT effectively to contexts which are constrained by cultural and contextual factors. Addressing these challenges requires a thorough understanding of local educational contexts and the need for ongoing research to address these pedagogical challenges. Future studies could also aim at examining cross-cultural linguistic and cultural variables between certain learner groups and Canada; for example, learners from Russia and their challenges in adapting to Canadian classrooms caused by the interplay of linguistic and cultural variables. Understanding the cultural context and linguistic nuances could enable educators to tailor their teaching strategies to foster a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

## **Chapter 3 : Reflection and Project Product**

### **Project Introduction and Description**

In today's multicultural classrooms in Canada, there is a growing need for content teachers to understand the intricacies of working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners and being prepared to employ teaching strategies and offer teaching resources that create an inclusive environment where all learners have equal chances to succeed. Drawing from teaching approaches like Communicative Language Teaching, Content-Based Instruction, Sheltered Instruction, and Culturally Responsive Teaching, this project presents a professional development workshop tailored for pre-service content teachers and ELL specialists. This workshop aims to develop abilities in teaching and supporting multilingual learners in the mainstream classrooms. The workshop provides a general understanding of the scaffolding and differentiation as core strategies designed to help teachers effectively teach multilingual learners in content areas while promoting language development and fostering supportive classroom environment. The integration of content and language instruction is emphasized throughout this workshop.

The main objectives of the workshop are: 1) Understand the diverse needs and backgrounds of multilingual learners in the Canadian schools. 2) Create inclusive and equitable learning opportunities in the classroom for all learners. 3) Emphasize the importance of leveraging students' linguistic and cultural assets. 4) Prepare pre-service teachers for the complexities of multicultural and multilingual classrooms. 5) Develop strategies for planning and delivering content-based instruction using scaffolding and differentiation techniques.

The workshop consists of two modules: 1) Getting to know your learners: A culturally responsive approach; and, 2) Adapting content instruction for accessibility: Scaffolding and differentiation strategies. Under these modules, there are a series of mini lectures comprised

of concise theory and practical classroom activities, such as designing scaffolded tasks and analyzing classroom scenarios for teachers to try first-hand as part of the workshop training and experience these practical activities from a learner's perspective. The project modules are rooted in the theories and teaching approaches I discussed in the literature review and offer practical classroom activities. Participants will engage in hands-on exercises, group discussions, and reflective practices that aim to prepare them to implement these strategies in real-world classrooms. Each module will conclude with a practical project.

### ***Personal Connection***

This project is deeply informed by my own experiences as a multilingual learner, and teacher in three diverse cultural contexts: Russia, China, and Canada. Growing up in Russia, I experienced firsthand the challenges of learning English in a traditional system that often emphasized rote memorization over meaningful communication. Teaching in China opened my eyes to the difficulties of applying Western-oriented frameworks like CLT and social constructivism in a context where traditional teaching methods and Confucian culture dominate. Now, studying and working in Canada, I see how multilingual learners face not only language barriers, but also the challenge of adjusting to a new multicultural educational environment. These experiences and realizations have shaped my understanding of the challenges multilingual learners face and the critical role teachers play in creating supportive learning environments. Through this workshop I aim to highlight the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices and practical application of scaffolding and differentiation strategies.

### ***Context and Participants***

This workshop is designed to equip pre-service teachers and ELL specialists with practical strategies to support academic success and integration of multilingual learners in mainstream classrooms. The workshop could be a part of teacher education programs in

colleges and universities, TESOL certification programs, and professional development programs at schools. The workshop consists of six 90-minute sessions, held twice a week within a classroom setting. The sessions will involve approximately 20 pre-service teachers. The activities will include mini lectures on theory, watching relevant YouTube videos, group discussions, and teaching demos. The classroom should be equipped with a desktop computer, projector, loudspeaker. There should be enough space to move chairs around and create “working stations” for group discussions, teaching demos and a gallery walk. Additional materials include poster paper, tape, stickers, and markers.

### **Connections to Theory**

With the growing number of newcomers to Canada, multiculturalism has become a norm rather than exception. In 2022-2023 school year British Columbia, for example, welcomed 76,091 ELL students, which is 6,886 more than the year before (Government of British Columbia, 2023). According to Statistics Canada, this number is expected to grow (Statistics Canada, 2023). ELL students typically receive some language support at school; for example, in ELL support programs where ELL support teachers provide extra instruction during an ELL block (Government of British Columbia, 2023; Government of Ontario, n.d.; Saanichschools.ca, n.d.). Even though they attend ELL classes, these students still need support with English language learning in a regular content classroom to achieve academic success and meet the rigorous standards of the curriculum. Therefore, there is a growing need for a targeted language support for ELLs and all content teachers are ultimately language teachers and are expected to support English language development of ELL students (Echevarría et al., 2023; Government of Ontario, n.d.). Several teaching approaches, such as Culturally Responsive Teaching, Sheltered Instruction, Asset-based Approach, Translanguaging are designed to address these needs.

### ***An Asset-based Approach and Culturally Responsive Teaching***

This workshop is grounded in asset-based approach and culturally responsive teaching. The asset-based approach points out the importance of recognizing and valuing the diverse backgrounds of multilingual learners, their experiences, languages, and cultures that students bring to the classroom. Culturally responsive teaching, as described in Chapter 2, is a teaching approach that respects and incorporates the diverse cultural characteristics of all students. Both approaches view students as “funds of knowledge” and focus on the students’ rich array of assets, such as home language and culture, life experiences and individual talents, literacy skills from previous schooling (Echevarría et al., 2023). Recognizing these funds of knowledge helps teachers see students’ backgrounds and experiences as assets rather than deficits. Therefore, the first module of the workshop is dedicated to raising awareness about what assets the learners bring to the classroom and eliminating a deficit perspective. The asset-based approach could also be reflected in how we address our learners. If we analyze BC and Ontario curriculum documents, students are often referred to as ELLs (English language learners). Some scholars highlight that this term emphasizes a deficit perspective, focusing on what students’ lack, for example, including proficiency in English (Kerekes et al., 2021). Therefore, they suggest the terms “multilingual learners” or “culturally and linguistically diverse learners” should be used to follow the principles of culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally responsive teaching and asset-based frameworks influenced the inclusion of workshop activities that encourage teachers to reflect on their own cultural identities, design lessons and activities that incorporate students’ backgrounds, and utilize strategies like translanguaging to leverage students’ home languages as tools for meaning-making.

### ***BICS and CALP***

This workshop emphasizes the important distinction between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)

and its implications for content classrooms. According to Cummins (2008), Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) refer to conversational fluency in a language, which is typically acquired within one to three years. Multilingual learners usually acquire conversational oral language proficiency before academic language proficiency. Cummins (2008) emphasizes that fluency in everyday communication does not translate to academic language proficiency. Therefore, it is pivotal to recognize the difference between BICS and CALP to avoid misjudging a student's language proficiency. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) refers to the academic language, which is crucial for educational success. This is more a complex and cognitively challenging endeavor and typically takes four to ten years of targeted instruction in academic settings to achieve grade level norms (Cummins, 2008). It may take multilingual learners several years to catch up to peers academically because they have a double job to do: 1) learn English and 2) acquire academic content in English. Therefore, content teachers need to help learners bridge this gap, which most of the time will occur in the mainstream classroom.

The distinction between BICS and CALP is essential for teachers to understand because many multilingual learners may appear fluent in social interactions but struggle significantly with academic tasks. To address this, the following workshop includes modules on scaffolding and differentiation, where pre-service teachers learn strategies to support CALP development, such as pre-teaching academic vocabulary and using sentence frames for structured writing and speaking.

### ***Social Constructivism***

The design of this workshop is rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory. According to the key tenets of social constructivism, as noted in Chapter 2, learning is a social process, co-constructed through meaningful interaction and collaboration (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, I intentionally incorporated numerous group discussions and collaborative

activities throughout the workshop. For example, the group brainstorming activities and teaching demos are designed to model how teachers can foster active participation and encourage reflective practice in their classrooms. By engaging with these “co-constructed” learning activities firsthand, pre-service teachers may not only deepen their understanding of the strategies but also see how collaborative environments can empower multilingual learners to engage more fully with both content and language.

### **Reflection on My Learning**

In designing this workshop, I was looking for ways to support my practical experiences as a multilingual learner and teacher of multilingual learners with existing research. I found myself at the intersection of several fields: educational studies, teaching English as an Additional Language, applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and cultural studies. I was overwhelmed with different theories and approaches and was trying to find a framework that would combine the key findings across the fields and fit best with the workshop objectives.

I discovered sheltered instruction as a theoretically sound teaching approach to serve this purpose. I was excited to learn that sheltered instruction is a teaching approach specifically designed to help multilingual learners develop academic English proficiency while acquiring core content by employing several teaching strategies, such as comprehensible input, targeted vocabulary instruction, collaborative learning, culturally responsive activities, and connecting content to students’ prior knowledge. Sheltered instruction is well-supported and empirically validated by existing research. Echevarría et al. (2023), for example, conducted an extensive literature review in ESL, bilingual education, classroom management, and second language acquisition to select the most effective teaching strategies that integrate language and content learning, which became part of a sheltered instruction model. The selected strategies were then empirically investigated in a seven-year,

quasi-experimental research study that involved field experiments among middle school teachers in four large metropolitan school districts in the United States to ensure that sheltered instruction model was grounded in proven teaching strategies. The findings reveal that the sheltered instruction model improves academic performance of multilingual learners by providing a structured and effective approach to teaching (Echevarría et al., 2023).

Based on the empirical evidence of sheltered instruction teaching approach, I decided to incorporate its key findings into my workshop. The challenge, however, was to strike a balance between making the workshop concise and comprehensible while still including key insights from the research, and at the same time without overwhelming pre-service teachers who may not have a background in linguistics. Overall, I managed to condense extensive theoretical points into “digestible” modules.

Being a believer in social constructivism and that learning is co-created, I decided to make my workshop highly participatory and practical, as collaboration with colleagues and students is a necessary and much-valued component of working in schools. Therefore, I decided to add collaborative activities after introducing key theoretical points. This practical component gives space for active processing of the theory to decrease the cognitive load, especially when the participants experience activities that involve movement and active thinking firsthand. I learned that practical activities could be extended and varied beyond simple group discussions. For example, the “Placemat Collaborative Activity” allows learners to work together to synthesize their ideas into a collective response, accommodates diverse learners by combining individual work with group work, keeping students engaged and motivated. In this activity, students are divided into small groups (four people). Each student individually reflects on the question and writes their thoughts in their designated section of the “placemat” (chart paper that is divided into four sections for individual reflection). After the answers are written down, students take turns sharing their ideas with the group. Students

then summarize their discussion and write their collective response in the center of the placemat. The collective response should reflect the most important or agreed-upon ideas from their discussion.

Another collaborative activity I created was inspired by “Jigsaw” and “Gallery Walk.” In my variation of the activity students are divided into small groups of four people. Each group gets a different topic and becomes an “expert group.” Together they research and discuss the key points of their topic in-depth with their peers and present their learning on a chart paper in any modality they prefer; for example, a drawing, graphic organizer, and bullet points with the key information. Students create a “working station” where they place their work. When all groups are ready they get a set of stickers and start moving from station to station. They read the material carefully and put a sticker next to the idea they like the most. Each group will also have to write down one question on the poster related to the topic. When groups finish exploring different topics, they come back to their original working station. Each group presents briefly the main points of their topic and chooses to answer one question asked by other groups. By the end of the activity, participants will have a comprehensive understanding of the topic, as each group has researched a distinct part of the main topic, and the learning process has been co-constructed through their presentations and discussions. This activity makes learners actively construct knowledge through interaction and collaboration, supports active learning where students are engaged in discussions and critical thinking, which promotes retention of theory. Additionally, this activity could be transferrable into participants’ teaching practice when they work with multilingual learners.

Another big discovery for me while reviewing the literature on my topic and designing this workshop was learning about the benefits of using learners’ L1 for second language acquisition and translanguaging. I learned English in Russia where in our university there was a strict rule of “English only.” If we resorted to Russian, we would be scolded by our

teachers. After being in “English only” academic environment for five years, the idea of only using English during an English class has become deeply ingrained in me as the only right option to reach the proficiency in English. Later, when I moved to China and started teaching English at university, I introduced the same rule into my classroom. When my students spoke Mandarin while preparing for role-plays or debates, I would point out to the rule of using English only during our class, as I firmly believed that it is absolutely necessary for achieving fluency. This belief was shaped by the common misconception that immersion in the target language is the most effective way to learn. When I started my Master of Education degree, however, I encountered research by Jim Cummins and other scholars, which changed my understanding of teaching and additional language acquisition. According to Cummins (2015, 2019), learning strategies and L1 language and literacy skills transfer to additional language learning. Cummins emphasizes that allowing to use students’ home languages can enhance comprehension and serve as a scaffold for processing complex concepts in L2 (Cummins, 2015, 2019). Additionally, I learned about the translanguaging approach to teaching. As described in Chapter 2, translanguaging allows for the flexible use of all linguistic resources learners have in their repertoire to make meaning and navigate complex academic tasks. These insights changed my perspective on allowing to have a structured use of L1 in the classroom; for example, students can discuss the key points of reading in their L1 and allow this discussion to be a scaffold for the output in English. I now advocate for an asset-based approach to language teaching that incorporates both translanguaging strategies and structured L1 use as powerful tools for meaningful learning, academic success, and validating students’ identity.

### **Conclusion and Implications for Future Research**

Building a truly inclusive and supportive environment where we recognize and value diversity starts with teachers and our instructional practices. As a teacher having a lot of

power and privileges, my goal is to create equal educational opportunities for all learners by building a safe environment where students' languages, cultures, and identities are recognized and viewed as assets. The *Adapt for Success* workshop, described in the forthcoming Appendix, was designed to address the growing need for equipping content teachers with the practical skills to integrate content and language instruction alongside creating inclusive and culturally responsive classrooms. With the focus on culturally responsive teaching, asset-based approach, scaffolding and differentiation strategies, the workshop aims to bridge the gap between theory and practice, raise awareness of how to better support multilingual learners, and change the deficit perspective on multilingual learners. Participants are expected to gain a deeper understanding of how to adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of multilingual learners through hands-on activities grounded in theory. The workshop takes a small step forward to creating learning environments where all students, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, can thrive academically and socially.

The workshop provides a general “roadmap” for pre-service teachers at the beginning of their career on what areas to focus on when working with multilingual learners. Looking ahead, several research questions could be explored to enhance the quality of teacher education programs and teacher preparedness to work with multilingual learners:

- Which scaffolding methods involving L1 are most effective for different language proficiency levels or content areas?
- In what ways do specific scaffolding and differentiation strategies impact multilingual learners' academic achievement and engagement?
- What strategies do multilingual students find the most effective and how their lived experiences shape their engagement with content and academic language?

- To what extent do teacher education programs prepare pre-service teachers to support multilingual learners? What are the gaps in training and how could they be addressed?
- In what ways can schools better support teachers in addressing the needs of multilingual learners through policy changes and professional development?

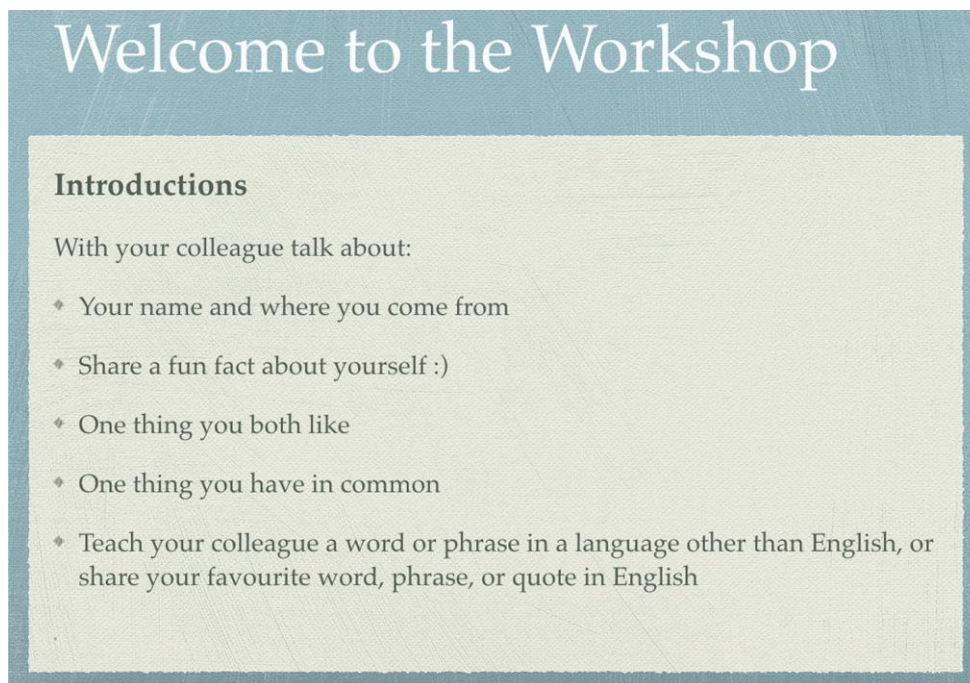
These questions could become a part of a larger conversation in teacher education and deepen our understanding of how to effectively support multilingual learners and contribute to building a more equitable society, preparing all learners for success.

## Appendix A: Workshop Slide Deck and Description

### Module 1: Getting to know your learners: A culturally responsive approach

#### *Slide 1 (25 minutes)*

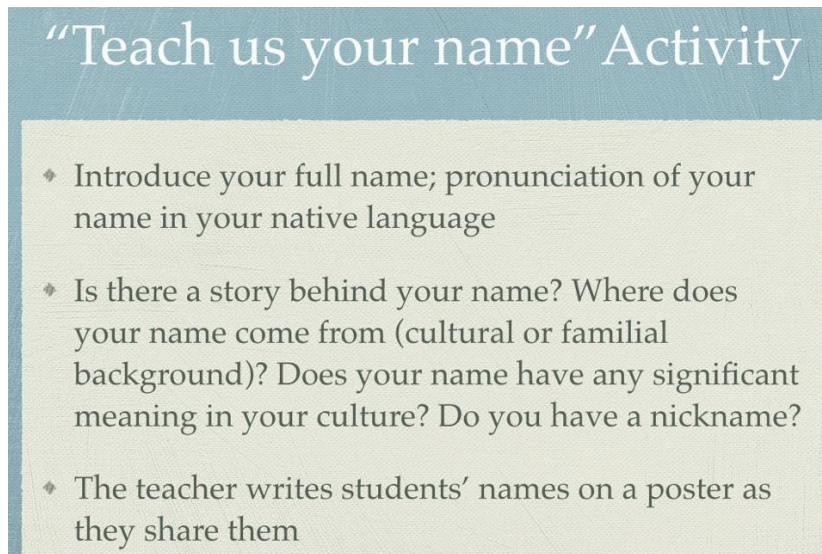
The instructor starts the workshop by welcoming the participants and giving a brief introduction of their education, teaching experiences, research interests and a few personal facts to break the ice. The instructor continues with an overview of the workshop. After that, the instructor invites the participants to introduce themselves first in pairs and then to a whole class. See the prompt below:



The workshop begins with welcoming in-service teachers and introductions which set the tone for collaborative environment in class, as the participants will have to find something they have in common, regardless of their diverse backgrounds. Additionally, this activity highlights and affirms multilingual assets participants may bring to the classroom. As the participants wrap up the discussion, the instructor explicitly highlights that this activity could be used in the classroom with culturally and linguistically diverse learners to affirm their linguistic assets and create unity among all learners.

**Slide 2 (20 minutes)**

The instructor emphasizes that one of the important things to do when you start working with new students is to learn their names and how to pronounce them properly. The instructor then invites the pre-service teachers to take part in the activity “Teach us your name.”



The slide features a title “Teach us your name” Activity in a white serif font against a teal background. Below the title, on a light beige background, are three bullet points, each preceded by a small diamond symbol. The text is in a dark grey serif font.

- ♦ Introduce your full name; pronunciation of your name in your native language
- ♦ Is there a story behind your name? Where does your name come from (cultural or familial background)? Does your name have any significant meaning in your culture? Do you have a nickname?
- ♦ The teacher writes students’ names on a poster as they share them

After the discussion, the instructor points out that this activity could be used in the classroom with multilingual learners at the beginning of a school year. The activity could be extended by teaching all students to learn to say each other’s names.

**Slide 3 (3 minutes)**

The instructor sets the context for the workshop by giving a brief introduction to multilingualism in Canada and pointing out that based on the statistics multilingualism is the norm rather than the exception.

## Multilingualism in Canada: a brief overview

- ♦ 2016 - 2021 1.3 million newcomers to Canada
- ♦ 12.7% of the population speak a language other than English or French at home
- ♦ 26% percent of people in B.C. speak a language other than English or French as their first language
- ♦ 2022-23 school year - 76,091 ELL students in B.C., **6,886 more** than the year before
- ♦ **Multilingualism** is the **norm** rather than the exception!

(Government of British Columbia, 2023; Government of Canada, 2023; Statistics Canada, 2023)

### Slide 4 (2 minutes)

The instructor introduces what terms are used to talk about students and emphasizes that the terms multilingual learners or culturally and linguistically diverse learners are in line with asset-based approach.

## A word on terminology

- ♦ ELL (English Language Learner)
  - ♦ ML (Multilingual learner)
  - ♦ CLD learner
- (Culturally and linguistically diverse)
- These terms highlight learners' strengths and assets*

### Slide 5 (2 minutes)

The instructor talks about how multilingual learners are typically supported in Canadian schools.

## How multilingual learners are supported in Canadian schools?

- ◆ Typically receive some language support at school (e.g., in ELL support program)
- ◆ ELL students are integrated into regular classrooms. ELL support teachers provide extra instruction during an ELL block.
- ◆ Even though they attend ELL classes they **need support** with English language learning in a regular content classroom to achieve academic success

(Government of British Columbia, 2023; Government of Ontario, n.d.; Saanichschools.ca, n.d)

### *Slide 6 (2 minutes)*

The instructor highlights that content teachers are tasked with helping learners to acquire academic language and literacy alongside acquiring content knowledge.

## Academic Language and Literacy

- ◆ Academic language is a second language for **all** students.
- ◆ Academic literacy: 1) knowledge of English, 2) knowledge of the content topic, and 3) knowledge of how to do the tasks
- ◆ Multilingual learners do the double job - learn English and acquire content in English

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### *Slides 7 and 8 (20 minutes)*

The instructor introduces the concept of BICS and CALP and invites the participants to watch a YouTube video by Dr. Jim Cummins (included below) who came up with the idea of these concepts and their implications for teaching. The participants are invited to discuss the

main take aways from the video and how these ideas could potentially be applied in their teaching in pairs and then share their ideas with everyone else in a whole class discussion.

## BICS and CALP (Cummins, 1984)

- ◆ BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills)  
- conversational fluency 1-3 years to attain
- ◆ CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) - academic language is more complex; 4 - 10 years to acquire in academic settings (our mainstream classroom)
- ◆ Teachers need to help ELLs with academic language proficiency

## Group Discussion

- ◆ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLw6XRyoPrE>
- ◆ What is your main take away from this video?  
How can you apply this idea into your teaching?



### ***Slide 9 (2 minutes)***

The instructor summarizes and highlights the key ideas from the video and from the class discussion.

# The key points

- ◆ ! fluency in everyday communication doesn't translate to academic language proficiency.
- ◆ ! BICS are acquired first before academic language proficiency
- ◆ ! the significance of recognising the difference between BICS and CALP to avoid misjudging a student's language proficiency
- ◆ ! students need comprehensible input, consistent opportunities for meaningful output, and explicit feedback to reach academic language proficiency

Great news! L1 (home language) language and literacy skills, and learning strategies transfer to L2 learning

## ***Slide 10 (10 minutes)***

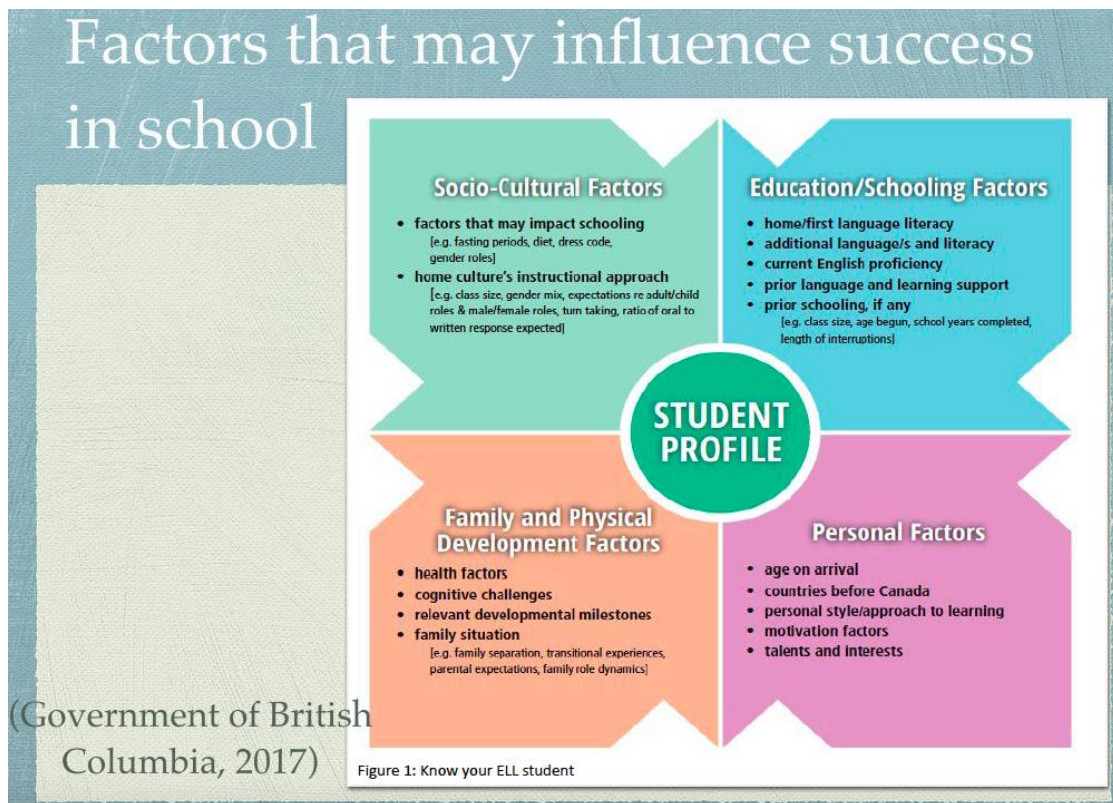
The instructor invites the participants to brainstorm ideas of what factors might influence students' success in school. The pre-services teachers are divided into groups of four for this discussion. After discussing, each group shares 2-3 ideas with the rest of the class.

## Group Brainstorming

- ◆ What are some of the characteristics of multilingual learners that may influence their success in school?

## ***Slide 11 (5 minutes)***

The instructor concludes the brainstorming session by going over the BC curriculum examples of various factors that may influence students' success in school and highlights the factors that haven't been mentioned during the group discussion.



The instructor also emphasizes that the quality of previous schooling and the amount of formal instruction in L1 are one of the most important variables in successful additional language acquisition.

***Slides 12 and 13 (3 minutes)***

The instructor introduces culturally responsive teaching as a viable teaching approach to support the diverse needs of multilingual learners and a few examples of how culturally responsive teaching can be used in the classroom.

## Culturally-responsive teaching

- ♦ a teaching approach that respects and incorporates the diverse cultural characteristics of all students into the classroom experiences.
- ♦ aims to create an inclusive learning environment that reflects high expectations and builds on students' strengths, such as prior experiences and linguistic assets.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

## Examples

- ♦ use students' home languages and cultural experiences to make connections with the content.
- ♦ incorporate students' cultural knowledge and experiences into lessons (use real-world examples from students' home countries and teaching materials that include diverse cultures)

### ***Slide 14 (20 minutes)***

The instructor emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching builds upon multilingual students' strengths and involves recognizing and valuing students' backgrounds, experiences, languages, and cultures. The instructor invites the pre-service teachers to take part in a small group discussion about what assets multilingual learners bring to our classroom and in what ways teachers use these strengths. The participants are divided into five groups (four people in each group). The groups discuss the above-mentioned questions for 10 minutes. The groups get together for a whole class discussion. The instructor uses *Wheel of Names* to call on groups randomly to share one idea from their discussion. The next group will have to share one idea that hasn't been mentioned by other groups.

## Group Discussion Activity “Multilingual Learners’ Assets”

- ◆ Describe strengths multilingual learners can bring to our classroom. How can you potentially use these strengths in the classroom?
- ◆ Share: each group shares 1 point that hasn’t been mentioned by other groups

### *Slide 15 (2 minutes)*

The instructor briefly goes over the examples of the assets and emphasizes that multilingual learners should be viewed as "Funds of knowledge." This term refers to the valuable knowledge and experiences that students bring from their homes and communities.

## Multilingual Learners’ Assets

- ◆ “Funds of knowledge” (Moll, 1994) wide variety of educational backgrounds and experiences
- ◆ Language and cultural practices in the home
- ◆ Language and literacy skills from previous schooling and out-of-school literacy experiences
- ◆ Metalinguistic awareness (how language works)
- ◆ Life experiences and individual talents
- ◆ Social-Emotional Skills

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### *Slide 16 (1 minute)*

The instructor reads out the quote by Dr. Jim Cummins related to the importance of leveraging students’ language, culture, and experiences to raise awareness of how multilingual learners could feel undermined if we ignore their backgrounds.

*“When students' language, culture and experience are ignored or excluded in classroom interactions, students are immediately starting from a disadvantage. Everything they have learned about life and the world up to this point is being dismissed as irrelevant to school learning; there are few points of connection to curriculum materials or instruction and so students are expected to learn in an experiential vacuum. Students' silence and non-participation under these conditions have frequently been interpreted as lack of academic ability or effort, and teachers' interactions with students have reflected a pattern of low expectations which become self-fulfilling.”*

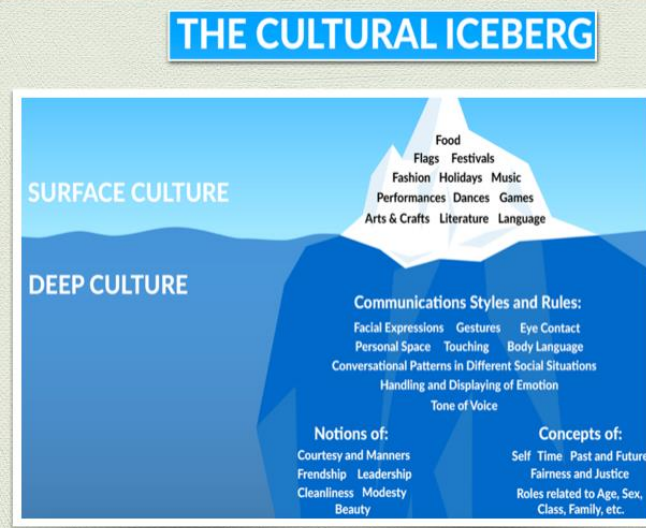
[-Jim Cummins, Negotiating Identities: Education for Empowerment in a Diverse Society](#)

***Slide 17 (5 minutes)***

The instructor invites the participants to take part in the identity-based icebreaker activity based on the model of Hall's cultural iceberg to promote culturally responsive teaching. Hall's cultural iceberg illustrates that culture has both visible and invisible aspects. The visible part, often referred to as surface culture and is the tip of an iceberg, includes obvious elements and practices, while the hidden part beneath the surface, often referred to as deep culture, consists of deeper values and beliefs (BC Council For International Education, n.d). The instructor shares a few examples of surface and deep culture.

# Identity-based Icebreaker Activity (Shmor, 2023)

- ◆ to affirm plurilingual identities
- ◆ based on the idea of the cultural iceberg (Hall, 1976)



(BCCIE, n.d.)

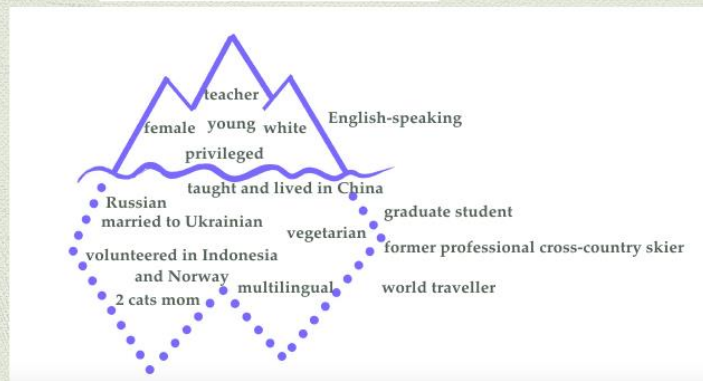
## *Slides 18 and 19 (20 minutes)*

The instructor points out that identity iceberg activity designed by Shmor (2023) and affirms and validates students' assets and unique experiences they bring to class. The instructor then shares the template of identity iceberg and talks about her identity markers with respect to visible and invisible elements of her identity. The instructor then distributes identity iceberg templates and gives the participants five minutes to fill it out. Then the participants share their identity markers they feel comfortable talking about in small groups. The instructor monitors the participants answers and gives a few comments. After a small group discussion, the instructor invites a few volunteers to share what they discussed. To conclude the activity, the instructor explicitly highlights that this activity could be used in pre-service teachers' future classrooms.

# Identity Iceberg (Shmor, 2023)

- ◆ affirms and validates students' assets and unique experiences they bring to class (Shmor, 2023)

**Identity Iceberg Icebreaker Example**

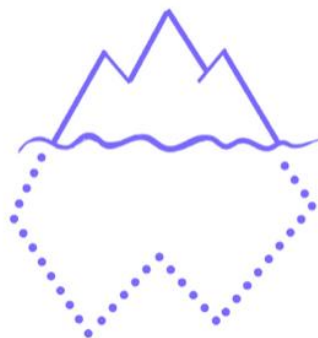


# Identity Iceberg discussion

- ◆ Fill out your identity iceberg and share in small groups your identity markers you feel comfortable talking about

**Identity Iceberg Icebreaker Template**

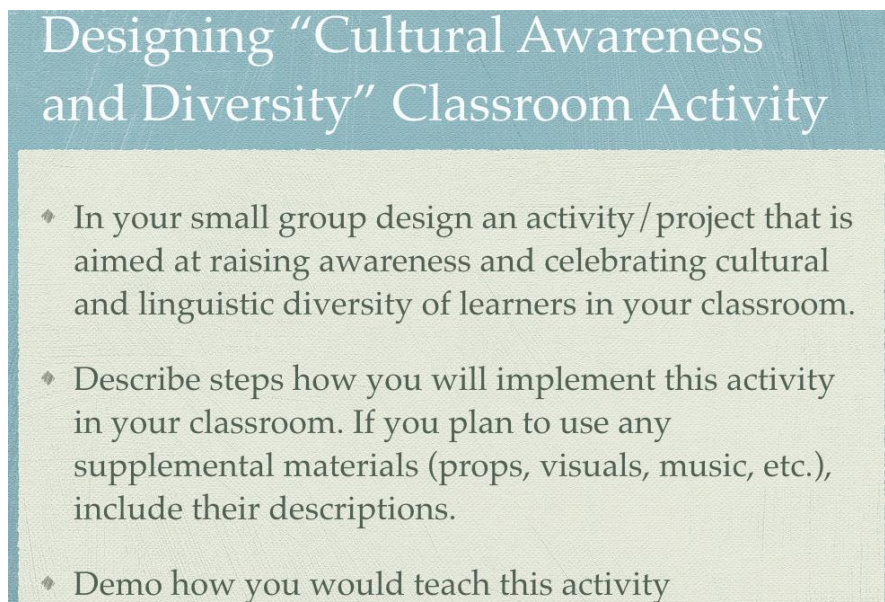
**Name:**



(Shmor, 2023)

**Slide 20 (35 minutes)**

The instructor guides the participants to design their own classroom activity that follows the principles of culturally responsive teaching. The participants will be asked to design the activity aimed at raising awareness and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity of learners. The students will be divided into five groups of four people. The instructor will ensure that the participants will be working with peers they haven't worked before. The groups will have a 15-minute work period to design their activity. When groups are ready, they will demo teach their activity. (Note: the instructor may assign designing this activity as homework for next session which will begin with participants' demos.)



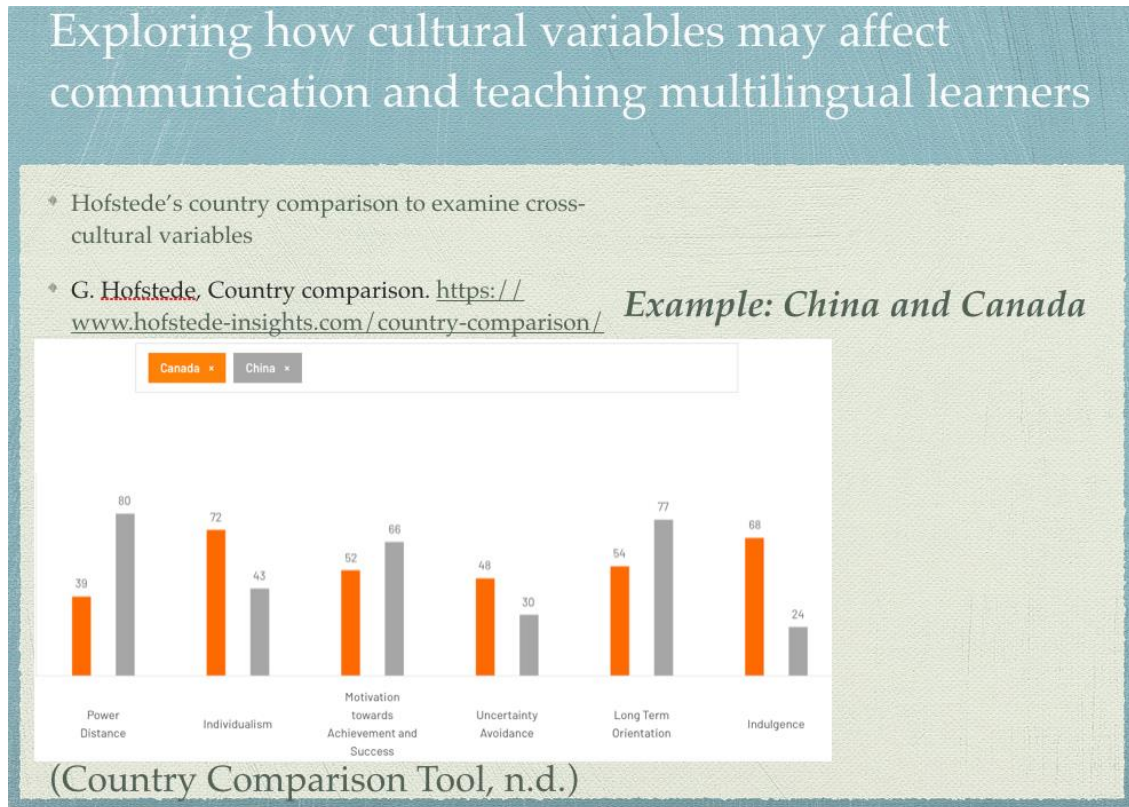
The slide features a teal header with the title "Designing 'Cultural Awareness and Diversity' Classroom Activity" in white serif font. Below the header is a light green rectangular area containing three bullet points, each marked with a teal diamond symbol. The text is in a dark grey serif font.

- ◆ In your small group design an activity/project that is aimed at raising awareness and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity of learners in your classroom.
- ◆ Describe steps how you will implement this activity in your classroom. If you plan to use any supplemental materials (props, visuals, music, etc.), include their descriptions.
- ◆ Demo how you would teach this activity

**Slide 21 (5 minutes)**

The instructor invites the pre-service teachers to further explore how cultural variables may affect teaching and communication with multilingual learners through Hofstede's Country Comparison Tool. Hofstede's Country Comparison Tool is a framework for understanding cultural differences between different countries. The differences are compared across several dimensions, including power distance, individualism vs collectivism, motivation towards success, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence.

This tool provides some insights into how cultural variables can impact various aspects of life and work, such as communication and negotiation styles. The instructor goes on the website <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/> to demonstrate how the tool works.



**Slides 22 and 23 (15 minutes)**

The instructor shows an example of country comparison between Canada and China with regards to the power distance dimension. The instructor asks the participants to examine this variable and discuss in small groups how power distance variable may come into play in communication and teaching Chinese learners in Canada. The second part of the discussion focuses on brainstorming potential teaching strategies teachers could employ when working with Chinese learners. The groups get together after the discussion and share their suggestions. The instructor comments on their points and shares her experience of working with Chinese learners.

# Cross-cultural comparison: Power distance



## Group discussion

- ◆ In your small group discuss how power distance variable may come into play in communication and teaching Chinese learners in Canada.
- ◆ Knowing this difference what potential teaching strategies could we employ when working with Chinese learners?

### *Slide 24 (5 minutes)*

To conclude the first module of the workshop and synthesize new knowledge, the instructor assigns the teachers to create a project: Multilingual Learner Profile. The teachers will submit this project in written form. The instructor will review and give written feedback.

# Module 1 project: Creating Multilingual learner profile

- ♦ Select one learner group among the top non-English-speaking refugee or newcomer groups (from the top ten source countries of new immigrants to Canada in 2024: e.g., India, China, Afghanistan, Nigeria, the Philippines, France, Pakistan, Iran, Syria, or a country of your interest).
- ♦ Referring to Hofstede’s country comparison tool (<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison-tool>) and your own understandings, compare and contrast **three** key cross-cultural variables. Describe how these cultural variables may come into play in communication and teaching this group of learners in Canada (e.g. power distance between your country of choice and Canada; uncertainty avoidance; individualism/collectivism, etc.)
- ♦ Discover and describe what challenges you might expect your chosen group to have when learning English in Canada.
- ♦ Locate and refer to **two** academic articles that you feel are relevant to understanding how to teach this particular group of learners.
- ♦ Reread the challenges that you identified above and describe **three** teaching strategies that correspond with these challenges.

## *Slide 25 (1 minute)*

The instructor begins module two of the workshop by introducing the key topics – scaffolding and differentiation that will be covered in the module.

## Module 2: Scaffolding and Differentiation

## *Slide 26 (2 minutes)*

The instructor introduces the concept of scaffolding in teaching and highlights the main points. The instructor points out that the concept of scaffolding was developed by Vygotsky (1978) and is closely associated with the Zone of Proximal Development theory. The term “scaffolding” was later coined by Bruner (1983).

## Scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1983)

- ♦ is a teaching technique which provides support to learners within their ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) by a more knowledgeable other, e.g, a teacher or peer to complete activities students cannot perform alone yet
- ♦ temporary support to help students achieve independence in learning

### *Slide 27 (5 minutes)*

The instructor introduces GISI (Gradual Increase of Students Independence) framework, which is aimed at helping students become independent learners (Echevarría et al., 2023, p.135). The instructor highlights the stages of GISI framework and emphasizes that teaching is not always linear from stage to stage, but rather recursive. Therefore, sometimes it may be necessary to take a step back and reteach a concept.

## GISI framework (Gradual Increase of Students' Independence) (Echevarría et al., 2023, p.135)

- ♦ helps students become independent learners.
- 1) **Explicit teaching** (teacher-regulated): the teacher explains the task and shows how to perform it.
  - 2) **Guided practice** (teacher-assisted): the teacher and students work together. The students are engaged in discussions to deepen understanding.
  - 3) **Collaborative practice** (peer-assisted): students work with peers.
  - 4) **Independent practice** (student-regulated): students complete tasks on their own and apply what they've learned.
- ♦ Teaching is a recursive process and sometimes it may be necessary to take a step back and reteach and re-model.

**Slides 28, 29, 30, and 31 (10 minutes)**

The instructor introduces the concept of differentiation and gives brief examples of how content, process, and product could be modified to meet the diverse needs of learners.

## Differentiation

- ♦ adapting instruction to meet the diverse needs of multilingual learners by changing 1) the content (what students learn), 2) process (how they learn), and product (how students demonstrate learning).

(Echevarría et al., 2023; Tomlinson, 2014)

## 1. Modifying Content

- ♦ 1) you can change the materials you're using based on the students' level of proficiency (levelled texts - versions of texts with glossaries, summaries, or annotations to make content accessible.)
- ♦ 2) Support understanding with visuals
- ♦ 3) pre-teach vocabulary (academic and content-specific words)

## 2. Modifying Process

- ♦ Consider flexible grouping, e.g. homogeneous or heterogeneous groups based on language proficiency, L1, interest, or task type.
- ♦ Give choices to engage with content in different ways (e.g., watch a video, read a text, or listen to an audio)
- ♦ Break tasks into manageable chunks with clear instructions and examples
- ♦ Promote interaction and peer learning by think-pair-share and small group discussions

### 3. Product

- ◆ Giving choices in what form students will demonstrate understanding (e.g. drawing a graphic organizer, creating a slide show, writing a paragraph, recording an audio etc.)

***Slide 32 (1 minute)***

The instructor highlights that in this module the participants will examine seven key scaffolding and differentiation techniques.

### Scaffolding and Differentiation Techniques

- ◆ 1. Connecting and activating students' prior knowledge
- ◆ 2. Using Visuals
- ◆ 3. Pre-teaching Key Vocabulary
- ◆ 4. Breaking Tasks into Manageable Steps
- ◆ 5. Sentence Frames
- ◆ 6. Translanguaging
- ◆ 7. Clear explanation of academic tasks

***Slide 33 (40 minutes)***

The instructor invites the participants to explore scaffolding and differentiation techniques by taking part in a “Jigsaw Gallery Exploration” activity.

## “Jigsaw Gallery Exploration” Activity

- ◆ Pre-service teachers are divided into 7 groups. Each group gets a card with a brief description of one scaffolding strategy. The group will have to research the topic online, expand the topic, provide examples, and set up a “working station” where they put their ideas into a graphic organiser which will be posted on the classroom wall.
- ◆ When groups complete their graphic organisers and post them on the wall, they’ll start moving around the classroom to read their classmates’ work and write down one question on each poster related to the topic.
- ◆ Groups return back to their “working stations” and present main points to class. Each group chooses to answer one question written on their poster.

### *Slide 34 (1 minute)*

To conclude the discussion of the previous activity, the instructor briefly explains the concept of schema with regards to activating students’ prior knowledge.

## 1. Connecting and activating students’ prior knowledge

- ◆ It’s important to connect the content to students’ schema\* (knowledge of the world) and prior experiences for learning to occur
- ◆ \***schema** is a foundation for understanding, learning, and remembering new facts and ideas found in texts.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### *Slide 35 (10 minutes)*

The instructor asks the participants to brainstorm in small groups ways how they can connect their content topic to students’ knowledge of the world. The students discuss their

ideas in small groups and then a few people share what they talked about in a brief whole class discussion.

### Group discussion “Connecting concepts to students’ existing schemas”

- ♦ Choose a topic from your content area. In your small group brainstorm ways how you can connect this topic to students’ knowledge of the world. After small group discussion, the teacher asks the participants to share their ideas.

#### *Slide 36 (2 minutes)*

After the brainstorming session, the instructor gives a few examples of sample activities that could be used to activate students’ prior knowledge.

### Ideas for activating prior knowledge

- ♦ Brainstorming, structured discussion, quick writes, KWL chart (What do we know? What do we want to know? What have we learned?)
- ♦ **Visualization:** Encourage students to picture a topic in their mind and describe it to a partner.
- ♦ **Recall:** Have students recall and share important points from previous lessons.
- ♦ **Pair-Share-Chart:** Students discuss a familiar topic with a partner, share with the class, and the teacher charts their responses. This helps in connecting known information with new concepts.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

#### *Slide 37 (1 minute)*

The instructor briefly gives a few examples of what kind of visuals and how these visuals can be used to aid comprehension.

## 2. Using Visuals

- ◆ Incorporate images, diagrams, graphic organisers, and real-world objects to aid comprehension of difficult texts by breaking them down.
- ◆ Types of graphic organisers: **Story Maps** (outline the elements of a story, such as characters, setting, plot, and resolution) **Text Structure Charts**: Identify the structure of a text, like cause-effect or problem-solution. **Venn Diagrams**: Compare and contrast two or more items. **Timelines**: Show the sequence of events in chronological order. **Word Webs**: Display relationships between words and concepts. **Thinking Maps**: Organise thoughts and ideas visually. **Flow Charts**: Illustrate processes or steps in a sequence.

Examples of using visuals:

- ◆ **Before Reading**: to build background knowledge.
- ◆ **During Reading**: to help organise and understand information.
- ◆ **After Reading**: to summarise and review key concepts.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### *Slides 38, 39, and 40 (7 minutes)*

The instructor goes over the strategies and examples of how and when to pre-teach vocabulary.

## 3. Pre-teaching Key Vocabulary

- ◆ Introduce and explain key academic vocabulary before engaging with complex academic tasks
- ◆ Choose words that are critical for understanding texts and content concepts.
- ◆ Ask yourself: What words or terms do students need to know to meet the content and language objectives of your lesson?

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

## Strategies for pre-teaching vocabulary:

- ♦ Introduce and explain new vocabulary words in meaningful contexts
- ♦ Demonstrate how to use the new words in sentences, discuss roots/ affixes, practice pronunciation
- ♦ Use pictures, diagrams, and videos to illustrate the meanings of words.
- ♦ Provide partially completed sentences to help students practice using new vocabulary.
- ♦ Engage students in activities like matching words with definitions or using the words in context.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

## Sample activities

- ♦ **Pretest with a Partner:** Students work in pairs to preview vocabulary and concepts, discussing and writing answers together.
- ♦ **Word Sorts:** Students categorize words into groups based on meaning or structure, enhancing their understanding through sorting activities.
- ♦ **Exit cards:** review key vocabulary during and at the end of lessons to ensure retention

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### *Slides 41 and 42 (3 minutes)*

The instructor points out the benefits of breaking tasks into manageable steps and shows a few sample activities how it can be done in the classroom.

## 4. Breaking Tasks into Manageable Steps

- ♦ helps alleviate stress for multilingual learners, particularly those who are uncomfortable speaking in whole-class settings.
- ♦ allows more processing time
- ♦ gives space for active processing which can be done through: summarising with a partner, answering questions, or completing a written task together.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

## Sample activities

- ♦ **"Chunk and Chew"**: Pause after every ten minutes of teaching to let students discuss the new information with a partner.
- ♦ **Roam and Review**: At the end of a lesson, have students roam the classroom and discuss their reflections with classmates.
- ♦ **Think-aloud**: While reading a short story, a teacher might use a think-aloud to make predictions: "It's beginning to snow heavily, and they can't see where they're driving. Are they going to have an accident? What's going to happen?" This helps students learn to ask questions and make predictions, enhancing their comprehension.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### *Slide 43 (1 minute)*

The instructor emphasizes what is important to keep in mind when offering multilingual students to use sentence frames.

## 5. Sentence Frames

- ♦ Provide a scaffold for speaking and writing by offering a starting point and structure for sentences.
- ♦ As students become more proficient, gradually remove the frames to encourage independent language use.
- ♦ Tailor frames to match the students' language proficiency.
- ♦ It's important to avoid artificial use of frames.
- ♦ Support students in using correct sentence structures and vocabulary naturally. Over-reliance on frames can lead to robotic repetition rather than natural language use.

Examples: This reminds me of . . . This relates to . . . I can relate to this because once . . . In a nutshell, this says that . . . This is the example of . . .

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

### ***Slide 44 (1 minute)***

The instructor introduces translanguaging as an asset-based approach to teaching that utilizes all linguistic resources multilingual students have.

## 6. Translanguaging

- ♦ a process where multilingual learners use all of their linguistic repertoires to communicate and make meaning
- ♦ learners use their L1 alongside English to support comprehension and negotiate meaning

(Burton, Wong, & Rajendram, 2024; Echevarria et al., 2023)

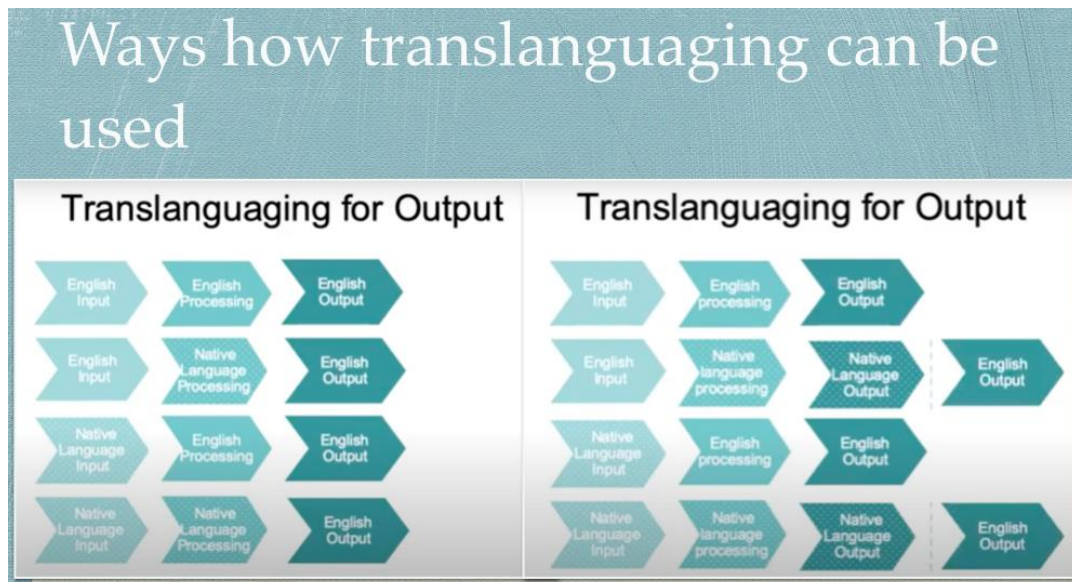
### ***Slides 45 and 46 (15 minutes)***

The instructor invites the participants to watch a YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSYKXIOL6-k>) by Dr. Echevarria about

translanguaging. After the video, the participants discuss in what ways they can use translanguaging in their classroom and share their ideas and questions with class.

### “Understanding Translanguaging” Group Discussion

- ◆ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSYKXIOL6-k>
- ◆ Watch a video on translanguaging. Discuss in small groups: In what ways and when can you use translanguaging in your classroom?



**Slide 47 (2 minutes)**

The instructor emphasizes a few important points related to translanguaging. Depending on the class goal, which in many cases is academic language development, the use of L1 might be more structured. However, we can still use translanguaging for affirming students’ linguistic identities and as a scaffold for the output in English.

# Important to note

- ♦ When the focus is on *English language development*, deliberate practice is essential for advancing proficiency. Therefore, the use of L1 might be more limited or structured.
- ♦ **Example 1:** Students can deepen their knowledge by reading a text in their L1 and discussing with peers who speak the same L1, however, they'll be expected to produce spoken or written output in English.
- ♦ **Example 2:** Allow students to share the names of objects in their L1 and teach their classmates how to say this word in their home language. Then, introduce an English word and how it's used.
- ♦ word banks and sentence frames might be used to scaffold output in English

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

## **Slide 48 (1 minute)**

The instructor goes over the examples of clear explanation of academic tasks.

# 7. Clear explanation of academic tasks

- ♦ Accompany oral instructions with written ones. You may incorporate students' L1 for lower proficiency students.
- ♦ Break down tasks into manageable steps.
- ♦ Demonstrate to show what is expected.
- ♦ Provide examples of finished products.
- ♦ Before students begin doing the task, incorporate a few ICQs (instruction check questions, e.g., "Do you need to write anything down or just discuss?") to ensure that students understand the task. Another strategy is to ask a student to summarise what they're supposed to do.

(Echevarría et al., 2023)

**Slide 49 (15 minutes)**

The instructor invites the pre-service teachers to analyze scaffolding and differentiation techniques in a sample lesson plan. See appendix B.

Sample Lesson Plan: analysing scaffolding and differentiation techniques

- ◆ Read a lesson plan and discuss in your small group what scaffolding and differentiation techniques were used in the lesson. Which ideas would you like to take on board? Which strategies would you add to scaffold understanding?
- ◆ Groups get together for a whole-class discussion of strategies.

**Slide 50 (15 minutes)**

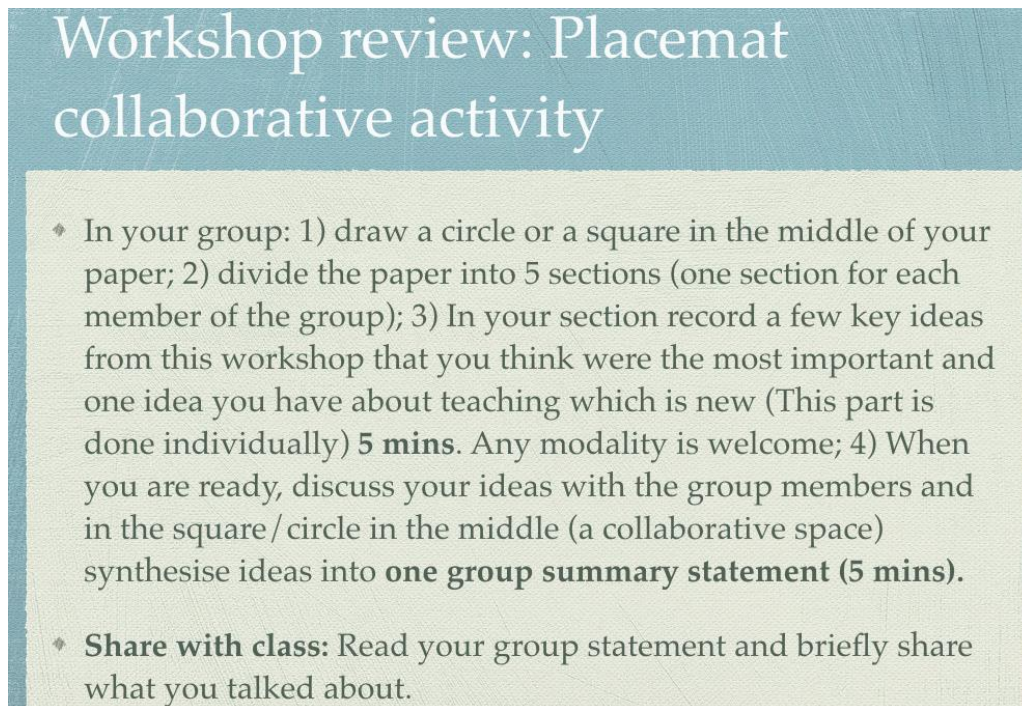
The instructor assigns the final project for module two to practice employing scaffolding and differentiation techniques that were discussed in module two.

Module 2 project: Design a lesson plan for your content area

- ◆ With your colleague, design a lesson plan that includes meaningful tasks for scaffolding integrated language and content learning using the techniques we discussed in this workshop.
- ◆ Choose two tasks from the lesson plan you designed. Perform a teaching demonstration based on the designed tasks.

**Slide 51 (20 minutes)**

The instructor concludes the workshop with the review of the main ideas by engaging the participants in the “Placemat” collaborative activity. The participants are divided into five groups of four to complete the activity and then discuss the learning outcomes in a whole-class discussion.



Workshop review: Placemat collaborative activity

- ♦ In your group: 1) draw a circle or a square in the middle of your paper; 2) divide the paper into 5 sections (one section for each member of the group); 3) In your section record a few key ideas from this workshop that you think were the most important and one idea you have about teaching which is new (This part is done individually) **5 mins**. Any modality is welcome; 4) When you are ready, discuss your ideas with the group members and in the square / circle in the middle (a collaborative space) synthesise ideas into **one group summary statement (5 mins)**.
- ♦ **Share with class:** Read your group statement and briefly share what you talked about.

During the last two 90-minute sessions, the pre-service teachers will teach their demos to apply the theory covered in the workshop into practice.

## Appendix B: Sample Teaching Scenario

Echevarria et al. (2023) have included several lesson scenarios for analysis into their textbook “Making Content Comprehensible.” The following is one of the teaching scenarios:

Mr. Montoya began his lesson by orally reviewing his lesson’s content and language objectives, and by introducing the unit theme, Interdependence of Organisms in an Ecosystem. To connect with the previous days’ lessons, Mr. Montoya wrote *ecosystem* on the whiteboard and gave students three minutes to review their notes with a partner and write their definition of *ecosystem* on an assigned spot on the whiteboard. The teacher and students then quickly checked the definitions for accuracy, and each pair was asked to identify an ecosystem that they had learned about previously.

Mr. Montoya then showed a picture of a rainforest on the smartboard, along with the vocabulary word, *rainforest*. He then separated the compound word into “rain+forest” and asked students to predict what might be unique about rainforests as compared to other forests. After listening to a few of the students’ ideas, Mr. Montoya projected a picture of a forest with pine trees and repeated his questions about how a forest and rainforest might differ.

After that, Mr. Montoya went online and brought up a three-dimensional map of the world that showed countries where there are rainforests. He introduced the vocabulary word, *deforestation*, showing a picture taken from the air of a rainforest with a large area that had been deforested. He asked students what they thought the word, *deforestation*, might mean. Students grappled with the parts of the word for a few minutes before Mr. Montoya defined the prefix *de-* as meaning *away from* or *opposite of*.

Students thought for a minute before Mr. Montoya reminded them about a vocabulary word that he wrote on the whiteboard *desalinate*, that they had learned earlier in the unit. He asked the class for a definition, and several students replied with, *removing salt from sea water*. He then referred students to the definition of *deforestation* in the article: *the action of*

*clearing a wide area of trees.* One student said, “That’s the opposite of planting trees. They’re cutting them down in the rainforest. Why are they doing that?”

After distributing the magazine article on the tropical rainforest to his class, he engaged his students in a SQP2RS activity (Squeepers: See Table 5.3). Students, with partners, surveyed the section of the article they were going to read, for one minute, and in small groups, they generated several questions that they thought would be answered by reading the assigned section of the article. Students then referred to the lesson objectives, their questions, and the text, and determined 4–5 main concepts they predicted they would learn about the tropical rainforest. Each group shared their questions and predictions with the class, as Mr. Montoya charted them under two columns: *Questions We Have* and *Predictions: What We Will Learn*.

Mr. Montoya then read aloud the first two paragraphs about the rainforest ecosystem while the students followed along in their copies of the text. At the end of the two paragraphs, students were asked to determine if any of their questions on the chart paper had been answered and if any of their predictions had been confirmed or disconfirmed. With partners, students were directed to indicate with small sticky notes where this information could be found in the article. Referring again to the chart, Mr. Montoya placed a plus (+) sign next to each prediction that had been confirmed by the text reading; a minus sign (-) indicated a prediction that was disconfirmed; and a question mark (?) was used for any prediction that had not been answered to this point in the article.

A few additional questions and predictions were generated by the class prior to Mr. Montoya’s directions to quietly read the next section of the text (about six paragraphs) with a partner or a triad. In their small groups, students ascertained whether their earlier predictions, as posted on the chart paper, were confirmed or disconfirmed. They also shared the evidence they had found in the article while reading.

Mr. Montoya led the class in a brief discussion of any unknown terms from the article, including further clarification of *deforestation*. In their small groups or with partners, the students then reviewed the questions that had been posted earlier to see if they had found answers during their reading. They also checked their predictions according to the process Mr. Montoya had previously modeled. Next, students individually wrote summary sentences, including the key vocabulary, about what they had learned, using their generated questions and predictions as a guide.

Toward the end of the class, Mr. Montoya displayed on the whiteboard the following questions:

1. Why are we dependent on the rainforests for our survival on Earth?
2. What is the ozone layer and why is it important?
3. Compare and contrast the arguments of foresters and environmentalists, as described in the article. With which argument do you most agree? Why? What in the text convinced you of one position or the other?

After reading the questions aloud, and having students read them with their partners, in their first languages and/or in English, Mr. Montoya turned to homework. He provided students with a copy of three of the questions and encouraged students to write them in their L1 if desired. He assigned a brief written response to each question, again in the L1, if they wished to. He announced that these questions and the topic of the ozone layer would be discussed further during the next day's class, and they would eventually have a classroom debate about question #3. Before the bell, Mr. Montoya reviewed each of the three content and language objectives with his students. On a sticky note, students self-assessed the degree to which they met each of the objectives, with a: 1. I understand it well; 2. I think I understand it, but I still have questions; 3. I don't understand it yet and need some help. They

put their names on the sticky note, and each gave the exit ticket to Mr. Montoya as they exited the classroom. (pp. 147 - 148)

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