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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Unlocking Multilingual Learners' Potential*.

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# Introduction



## Why We Wrote a Second Edition

Since *Unlocking English Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* was published in 2017, we have continued to work extensively with educators of multilingual learners (MLs) to implement the strategies shared in the book. We have also framed ongoing coaching projects in several school districts around the content of *Unlocking* and have seen trends in terms of teachers' strengths and needs in implementing these strategies to support MLs. As a result, we decided we needed to add to the activities and tools from the first edition that align with each chapter based on our collaborative work with K–12 educators. In addition, since the first edition of *Unlocking* was published, there has been new research on effective strategies to support MLs' acquisition of language and engagement with grade-level content, and we wished to give the research we draw from a refresh. This second edition of *Unlocking* has allowed us the opportunity to update the research that we include so as to provide the most relevant theory that undergirds the instructional practices that we share.

We have also seen the impact that interrupted schooling and virtual learning had on MLs' language development opportunities and learning and recognize the urgent need to revisit what we know about the best way to build on MLs' assets and further their growth. For example, through our work, we have noticed a need to be more explicit about strategies to support MLs in reading and writing across content areas, including the elevated importance of peer interactions to foster growth in literacy and content understanding. Additionally, we are frequently asked about unique strategies to support the specific learning needs of ML newcomer students (students who have been in the country for less than a year) and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). The second edition of our book gives us the opportunity to highlight our collaboration with educators and districts and to incorporate new strategies for supporting MLs' language and literacy development, including much-needed strategies for newcomers and SLIFE.

## What's New in This Edition

In addition to updating the classroom examples, instructional strategies, and research in each chapter, we have also made several other changes in the second edition. Some highlights of the new or modified content follow.

- In order to take a more assets-based approach in the second edition, we use the terms *multilingual learner* and *emergent multilingual learner* instead of *English learner*. Please see Chapter 1 for our rationale for this shift and the definition of these terms. In addition, we are using the term English language development (ELD) teacher instead of ESOL teacher to refer to teachers who specialize in MLs' language development.
- We have revised our five core beliefs (formerly called guiding principles) to include a belief framed around the importance of peer learning opportunities for MLs. While we have always understood peer learning to be a valuable support for MLs, the urgency for incorporating these practices into daily instruction has become even more pronounced. For more on our rationale for this shift, see Chapter 1.
- To respond to the many questions that we have received about strategies for supporting ML newcomer students and SLIFE, we have added a section in Chapters 2–9 to focus on practices specific to leveraging the strengths and meeting the needs of these populations of MLs. In these chapters, we provide specific considerations in the instruction of ML newcomer students and SLIFE related to that chapter's topic. Then we provide a scenario to illustrate how these unique considerations might be applied in a school or classroom.
- We revised Chapter 8 to focus more broadly on supporting MLs in reading and writing in the content areas rather than focusing only on text-dependent questions. Chapter 8 now includes a variety of recommendations for incorporating scaffolded instruction and peer learning opportunities into reading and writing activities for MLs.
- We developed a unit planning template that is aligned to the research-based instructional practices presented in the book. Chapters 3–9 include the relevant section of the unit planning template so that, if you would like, you can develop a complete unit plan as you progress through the book. The complete unit planning template and a model unit plan are provided in the appendices on the online companion website. To access the companion website, please visit [resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E](http://resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E).



### UNLOCKING RESOURCES

To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera.

We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

[resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E](http://resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E)

## How This Book Is Structured

As we wrote the second edition of book, we imagined all of the different types of current and future educators who might use it and took steps to adapt the content, as well as the structure, of the book to reach a wide audience. We have heard from countless educators in varied roles, including preservice teachers, teacher

educators, content teachers, ELD teachers, support staff, and administrators about how practical and relevant the first edition of the book has been for them, and we wanted to ensure it continues to be relevant for everyone who reads it. First, we were sure to frame the book around solid research that grounds the ML strategies you will encounter and apply. Next, we structured the book in a way that provides the background that teachers with less training in working with MLs will need in order to understand the research, the rationale, and the use of particular strategies. At the same time, we also included ample modeling and examples, application activities, and reflection questions that can support even an experienced teacher of MLs in deepening their understanding and use of the selected research-based strategies, weaving in scenarios that span grade levels and content areas. We are confident that anyone from kindergarten dual-language teachers to high school mathematics teachers can find useful strategies that they can apply in their context. Further, we have included ample opportunities in the book for reflection so that educators can focus on their intentionality in selecting certain strategies, voicing their rationale for why and how they would use such strategies to support MLs. The online companion website that accompanies this book includes a compilation of all the reflection questions in the book with space to write your responses. You can print out this document and jot down your responses as you read. To access the companion website, please visit [resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E](https://resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E)

In addition to ensuring the book is relevant for all educators, we have structured the book so that you can use it independently, as part of a course, or within a professional learning community (PLC), where ideally, ELD teachers and content teachers can discuss and interact with the material together. The book is organized so that the first two chapters introduce our organizational framework and provide overarching instructional practices for MLs that are meant to be implemented in combination with other strategies shared in Chapters 3–9 of the book. Chapters 3–9 then each introduce a very specific instructional practice in a multilayered fashion that you can incorporate into your instruction. Each chapter includes scenarios that allow you to reflect on how the practice might be applied to a particular classroom setting and tools to help you implement the practice in your own setting. If you are reading this book as part of a PLC or in a coteaching partnership, you could select any of Chapters 3–9 to read, discuss, and implement in your classroom. In addition, for ready-to-use, practical tools to support these instructional practices, please visit [SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox](https://SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox).

Even though integrating research-based strategies is crucial to MLs' success, educators must also constantly monitor and strengthen their professional skills with other educators to most effectively serve MLs. Our approach to working with MLs is unique, and so is this book. Because we believe the principles of collaboration, equity, advocacy, and leadership are fundamental to supporting MLs, we have woven these ideas into each chapter. As a result, we have included two sections at the end of each chapter that identify the role collaboration can have in relation to each specific instructional practice and also how equity, advocacy, and leadership



#### UNLOCKING RESOURCES

[resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E](https://resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E)



#### SupportEd TOOLBOX

For ready-to-use, practical tools to support culturally responsive teaching, please visit [SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox](https://SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox).

can play out in the facilitation of each practice. This book offers you a space in which you can hit the pause button, reflect on your own practice and your relationship with your colleagues, and recharge your batteries to better support MLs. We encourage you, as you implement the different practices recommended in this book, to examine how you can build on your collaboration with your colleagues in the service of equitable and excellent education for MLs. We also hope you will reflect on how you can bolster your advocacy and leadership skills to share the new considerations, approaches, and strategies that you are implementing with other educators as a result of your learning in this book. This book will provide you with the opportunities to begin conversations not only around instructional practices that all teachers can use to support their MLs but also around ways in which teachers can continue to enhance their own professional development and grow as leaders and advocates for MLs. Now that we have provided you this overview, a summary of each chapter follows.

### **Chapter 1: Why You Need This Book to Support MLs**

Chapter 1 identifies the urgent need to provide MLs with the type of instructional support that they require to succeed academically and recognizes that they are equal members of any classroom. The chapter provides an overview of the current educational context, demographics, research, and climate within which MLs are being educated. We also introduce the five core beliefs that define our work with MLs and their educators. These beliefs provide an easily accessible theoretical framework that forms the foundation for the remaining chapters in the book.

### **Chapter 2: Using a Culturally Responsive Framework to Leverage the Strengths and Meet the Needs of MLs**

Chapter 2 provides an understanding of the crucial role culture plays in the education of MLs. The chapter includes working definitions of culture and culturally responsive teaching, a description of the characteristics of culture, and strategies to support culturally responsive teaching. It also provides opportunities for you to reflect on your own culture and how it shapes your instruction, classroom expectations, and interactions with MLs.

### **Chapter 3: Scaffolding Instruction for MLs**

Chapter 3 shares an overview of what scaffolds are and why they are essential to incorporate into instruction and assessment for MLs. The chapter's deeper focus is on research-based strategies for selecting and developing scaffolds based on

such factors as the academic task at hand and MLs' English proficiency levels, as well as other student background factors. The chapter includes examples of a variety of different types of scaffolds, checklists, and practical tools for you to plan and implement scaffolded lessons and units for MLs in your context.

## **Chapter 4: Peer Learning: Fostering MLs' Oral Language Development and Content Understanding**

Chapter 4 begins with a discussion of the importance of integrating peer learning opportunities into content-based instruction of MLs framed around relevant research. It introduces and provides examples of four student practices that will foster MLs' engagement in peer learning activities in order to support their oral language development and their understanding of challenging content. The chapter also includes tools that you can use when planning and incorporating oral language activities into your instruction and offers recommendations for different types of peer learning activities.

## **Chapter 5: Teaching Academic Language to MLs at the Word/Phrase Level**

Chapter 5 is the first of two chapters dedicated to explicitly teaching academic language to MLs. This chapter defines what academic language is and shares why it is critical for MLs to acquire academic language in order to engage with challenging content and be fully integrated into content classrooms. Then, it takes a deeper dive into why the focused teaching of academic vocabulary is critical to MLs' academic achievement. Recognizing that teachers must select vocabulary for MLs carefully and judiciously, the chapter includes research-based guidelines on selecting the vocabulary to teach that will have the most benefit for MLs as well as strategies for teaching and reinforcing those new words. The chapter also offers a tool for planning lessons based on content-specific vocabulary.

## **Chapter 6: Teaching Academic Language to MLs at the Sentence and Discourse Level**

Building on Chapter 5, Chapter 6 examines teaching academic language at the sentence and discourse levels. It includes practical examples of how to analyze a text's academic language and how to teach a sample of the linguistic forms and functions necessary for MLs to interact with challenging grade-level texts and topics. The chapter gives you guidance on how to leverage different types of teachers' strengths in order to effectively collaborate to integrate instruction of academic language at the sentence and discourse levels, weaving together academic language and content instruction.



## **Chapter 7: Activating and Teaching MLs Background Knowledge**

Chapter 7 presents research on the role of background knowledge in MLs' engagement with academic content. This chapter addresses the need to develop a new approach to activating and teaching background knowledge to MLs, including a specific focus on supporting background knowledge in mathematics. It presents a four-step framework for deciding which types of background knowledge to teach MLs as well as ways to activate and teach background knowledge concisely. The chapter models several activities that you can use in your own planning and instruction to help you put our ML background knowledge framework into practice.

## **Chapter 8: Engaging MLs in Reading and Writing in the Content Areas**

Chapter 8 first synthesizes a new body of relevant research on engaging MLs in literacy practices. Then, it presents an integrated series of activities to scaffold MLs' engagement with reading and writing in the content areas. The chapter emphasizes the connection between reading and writing practices and offers strategies for incorporating classroom activities that provide opportunities for both. Building on Chapter 4, Chapter 8 offers a variety of ways to incorporate peer learning as a tool for supporting MLs in unlocking the meaning of complex texts and strengthening academic writing.

## **Chapter 9: Formative Assessment for MLs**

Chapter 9 highlights the necessity of creating formative assessments that measure MLs' acquisition of academic language and content. The chapter includes a definition of formative assessment and provides a summary of relevant research on the practice of formative assessment for MLs. It also includes guidance on creating valid classroom assessments for MLs based on MLs' English proficiency levels and offers you the opportunity to apply what you've learned to your own formative assessment of MLs.