

# Creating a Culture of Support: Understanding English Learner Behavior

MTSS Regional Training

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## Mississippi Department of Education

### VISION

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

### MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community



## State Board of Education Goals

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2016-2020



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## Session Goals

- Understand the stages of cultural adjustment
- Discuss behaviors in English learners
- Review methods of providing supports for English learners
- Role play possible supports for English learners



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# Understanding Culture



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## What is Culture?

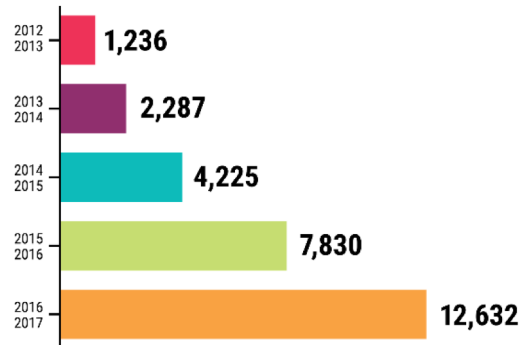
A culture is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next



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## Mississippi English Learners

**FIGURE 1**  
**2012-2018 Mississippi EL Population**



**FIGURE 2**  
**2016-2017 Top 5 Most Common Languages in Mississippi**

LANGUAGES	Number of EL Speakers
Spanish	8,243
Arabic	480
Vietnamese	277
Chinese	223
Gujarati	85

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## Transitioning to a New Culture

- Acculturation – the process through which a person or group from one culture comes to adopt the practices and values of another culture, while still retaining their distinct culture
- Feelings
- Behaviors



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## Transitioning to a New Culture

Assimilation – the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are absorbed into the dominant culture (often at the loss of the home culture)

- Feelings
- Behaviors



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## Stages of Cultural Adjustment

- Euphoria - ELs may experience an initial period of excitement about their new surroundings where they demonstrate a great interest in learning about the new culture and are very motivated and cooperative
- Feelings/behaviors



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## Stages of Cultural Adjustment

- Culture Shock – ELs may experience anger, hostility, frustration, homesickness, or resentment towards the new culture
- Feelings/behaviors



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## Stages of Cultural Adjustment

- Acceptance - ELs may steadily accept their different surroundings; this is a period of gradual adjustment where students begin to feel more comfortable with the new culture and are able to enter a stage of deeper learning
- Feelings/behaviors



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## Stages of Cultural Adjustment

- Assimilation/Adaptation - ELs may embrace and adapt to their surroundings and the new culture which begins to feel like home
- Feelings/behaviors



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## English Learner Behaviors



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## Red Flag Behaviors

- Lack of interest
- Sadness
- Withdrawal
- Anger
- Intense focus
- Classroom disruption



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## Contributing Factors

Factors that contribute to possible social-emotional or behavioral problems:

- Lack of language skills to express concerns and problems
- Perceived prejudices
- Low self-esteem



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## Social- emotional Learning

Is a process for acquiring life skills which includes:

- Dealing with others
- Building relationships
- Working in effective ways



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## Emotional Stressors

- Separation from family
- Changes in family roles
- Loss of school, neighborhood, friends, or culture
- Language barriers: verbal and non-verbal
- Culture shock
- Change in socioeconomic status
- Limited Health Care and other resources
- Discrimination: racism and stereotyping
- Limited freedom to return to native country and visiting love ones
- Unrealistic expectations of opportunities in the U.S.



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## Social Stressors

- Desire to fit in
- Additional family responsibilities
- Feelings of isolation/low self-esteem
- Navigating cultural differences
- Overcoming discrimination/racism
- Overcoming academic deficits
- Lack of opportunities to safely practice their English



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## Supporting Positive Behaviors



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## So, What Do We Do?

Create a school culture and climate that is accepting of **ALL** students.

- Agreed upon 3-5 broad school wide behavioral expectations
- Universal supports for ALL students and staff in all settings



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## Understand Biases

Understand and diminish explicit and implicit biases

Explicit – thoughts and attitudes that are at the conscious level that are deliberately formed

Implicit – thoughts and attitudes that are at the unconscious level that are involuntarily formed and unknown to us

**Both types of biases impact our actions, behaviors of school personnel, students and parents**



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## Understand Students

Understand students may go through a grieving process after immigrating

- Loss of the familiar
- Separation from family, friends, school, food, etc.
- Emotional reactions should diminish over time but careful attention should be paid to student feelings



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## Maintain Routine and Consistency

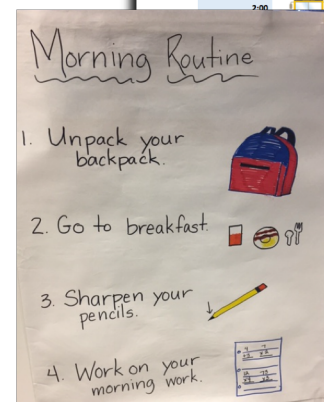
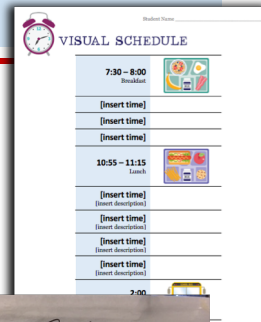
- Use Visual Schedules and Anchor Charts
- Use Social Contracts

Students and teacher work together to design an **agreement** for classroom norms, rules and consequences

- Use a Positive Behavior System

Recognize the positive in order to eliminate the negative

- Use Small Group instruction



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## Outward Signs of Support

### Model Positive Body Language

- Smile
- Look at the student – heart towards the person
- Sit or stand up straight



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## Negative Behaviors

- Not completing classwork
- Disruptive behaviors
- Inattentiveness



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## Assistance with Classwork Completion

### Determine

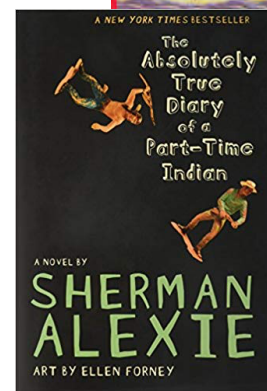
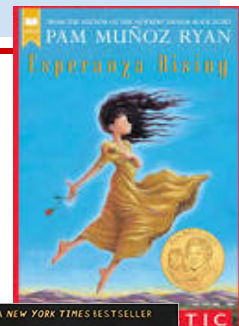
- Reasons work is not being completed
- Student supports needed to aid in understanding



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## Diminishing Disruptive Behaviors

- Directly teach skills that allow ELs to manage stressful situations
- Teach lessons that include scenarios where students role play how to observe others for models of correct behaviors
- Use literature that includes typical difficulties and possible solutions to those difficulties



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## Dealing with Inattentiveness

Determine the causes:

- Emotional concerns
- Lack of understanding
- Physical issues



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## Support for Managing Stressful Situations

- Use sentence frames
- Role play social situations
- Provide opportunity for social interaction
- Use or create videos



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## Supports for Building Self- Esteem

- Have students practice phrases to ease social interactions
- Give ELs encouraging messages every day

### Greetings: Dialogue

1. Hola.	Hello.
2. Buenos días.	Good morning.
3. Buenas tardes.	Good afternoon.
4. Buenas noches.	Good evening, night.
5. ¿ qué tal?	How's it going?
6. (muy) bien	(very) good/fine
7. (muy) mal	(very) bad
8. Así-así	so-so
9. ¿y tú?	And you? (INFORMAL)
10. ¿y Ud.?	And you? (FORMAL)
11. Gracias.	Thanks.
12. De nada.	You're welcome.
13. Señor	Mr., Sir
14. Señorita	Miss, ma'am
15. Señora	Mrs., ma'am



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## Supports for Building Self-Esteem

- Help ELs acquire/maintain pride in their culture
- Teach ELs positive self talk to better manage their feelings
- Build self esteem by supporting academic progress



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## Prevent challenging behaviors before they Start

- Prepare a list of 10-20 survival words or phrases that will help the student feel welcome, safe and comfortable
- Provide materials such as books and music that reflect the child's culture and/or are written in the students language
- Talk to all your students about being patient, speaking slowly, using gestures and repeating to help ELs understand



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## Observe and understand language and behavior differences

Can you detect particular triggers for the student's challenging behavior

- such as large group activities where he/she may feel out of place
- Independent work time where the student may feel frustrated because he/she doesn't understand the task requirements?



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# Role Play

## Activity

1. Read the provided role play situation,
2. Work with your group to make a list of possible skills/statements that may be needed to help the student overcome the stated difficulty



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## Student Intervention Supports

### Behavior Specialist

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