

UNDERSTANDING DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS



Accessible Learning for All Students



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Ensuring a bright future for every child

LeighAnne Cheeseman

Assistant State Literacy Coordinator
English Learner Coordinator (K-3)

lcheeseman@mdek12.org

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



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State Board of Education Goals FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2016-2020

1 All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas 	2 Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career 	3 Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program 	4 Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders 	5 Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes 	6 Every School and District is Rated "C" or Higher 
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Session Norms

- Silence your cell phones.
- Please check and/or reply to emails during the scheduled breaks.
- Be an active participant.
- Do not hesitate to ask questions.

Session Goals

- Understand the change in Mississippi's student population demographics
- Recognize why immigrants come to Mississippi, and what it takes for them to get here
- Learn about the three most common immigrant cultures present in Mississippi schools
- Identify strategies to implement in the classroom to pursue equity in education



5

WHO ARE YOUR STUDENTS?

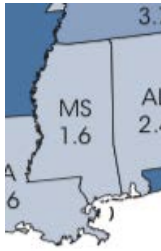
Mississippi's English Learner (EL)
Population and Your Diverse
Classroom



6

Our Mississippi EL Learners – Population Increases

Percentage of public school students who were ELs: 2014-2015



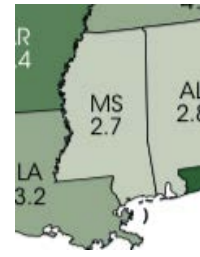
- Less than 3.0 percent (13)
- 3.0 to less than 6.0 percent (12)
- 6.0 to less than 10.0 percent (18)
- 10.0 percent or higher (8)

Percentage of public school students who were ELs: Fall 2015



- Less than 3.0 percent (9)
- 3.0 percent to less than 6.0 percent (14)
- 6.0 percent to less than 10.0 percent (20)
- 10.0 percent or higher (8)

Percentage of public school students who were ELs: Fall 2016



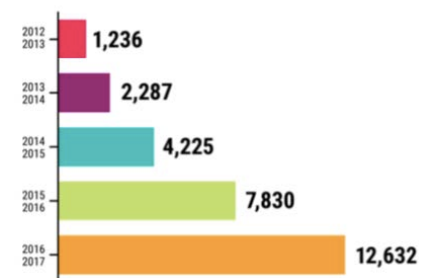
- Less than 3.0 percent (8)
- 3.0 percent to less than 6.0 percent (15)
- 6.0 percent to less than 10.0 percent (19)
- 10.0 percent or higher (9)



Who are your students? EL Population Facts

Nationally	Mississippi
Approximately 4.6 million English Learners	Increase of 3,000 ELs within the past 2 years
Spanish is the most commonly spoken non-English language	In 2018, the majority of Mississippi school districts had at least one EL
1 in 5 children between 5-17 years old live in immigrant families	In 2018, 14 Mississippi districts served more than 300 ELs
Immigrant parents account for 25% of the overall U.S. population	During the 2016-17 school year, approximately 12,630 ELs entered Mississippi schools

2012-2018 Mississippi EL Population



Mississippi schools have seen a 1,000% increase in English Learners over the past 10 years.



Who are your students? Mississippi Languages

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

2018-2019 Top 5 Most Common EL Languages in Mississippi

Spanish	12,696 EL speakers	21 countries represented
Arabic	925 EL speakers	26 countries represented
Vietnamese	548 EL speakers	1 country represented
Chinese	416 EL speakers	5 countries represented
Gujarati	111 EL speakers	1 country represented



Who are your students? Mississippi Languages

2018-2019 Top 10 Least Common EL Languages in Mississippi

Twi	1 EL speaker	4 countries represented
Somali	1 EL speaker	7 countries represented
Persian	1 EL speaker	1 country represented
Maori	1 EL speakers	1 country represented
Lithuanian	1 EL speaker	19 countries represented

2018-2019 Top 10 Least Common EL Languages in Mississippi

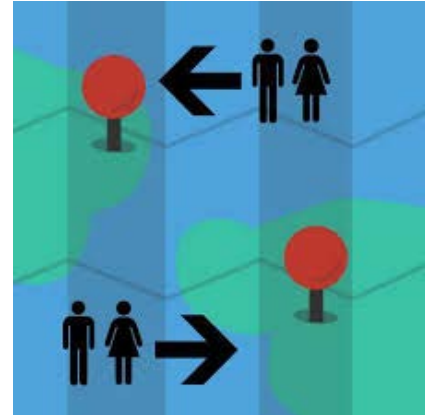
Guarani	1 EL speaker	4 countries represented
Finnish	1 EL speaker	8 countries represented
Chamorro	1 EL speaker	3 countries represented
Albanian	1 EL speaker	8 countries represented
Ukrainian	2 EL speakers	10 countries represented



Who are your students? Why ELs Come to Mississippi

“Hispanic immigrant families move to the South drawn to jobs in construction, agriculture, and food processing industries.”

“Immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia are filling shortages in medical professions.”



New America

Who are your students? Mississippi's Immigrant Facts

- More than 2% of Mississippi residents are immigrants, while another 2% are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

Top Countries of Origin for Immigrants (2015)				
Mexico	India	Vietnam	China	Philippines
36% of total immigrant population	6.7% of total immigrant population	6% of total immigrant population	4.9% of total immigrant population	4.3% of total immigrant population

- 1/3 of all immigrants in Mississippi are naturalized U.S. citizens.



Who are your students? Facts About Your Students' Immigrant Parents

- Almost one in four of Mississippi's adult immigrants have a college degree or more education; nearly one in three had less than a high school diploma.

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	24.8	20.7
College	18.0	32.0
High school diploma only	24.7	31.2
Less than a high school diploma	32.5	16.0



Who are your students? The Journey to Mississippi

The Guatemalan Immigrant's Story



- Guatemala is home to volcanoes, rainforests, and ancient Mayan sights.
- Education is compulsory up to 6th grade, and the average student attends 4.1 years of school.
- Education is free, however the costs of books, uniforms, and transportation is not included.
- 25% illiteracy rate across the population.



Who are your students? The Journey to Mississippi



The Guatemalan Immigrant's Story: Reasons for Fleeing Guatemala

- Desire to build a better life for their families
- Fleeing:

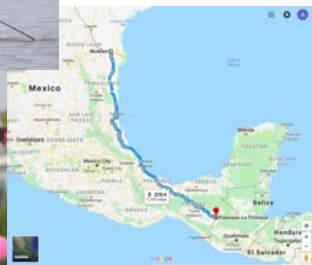
Gang violence/recruitment

Poverty

Exploitation in the form of prostitution and human trafficking

15

Who are your students? The Journey to Mississippi



The Guatemalan Immigrant's Story: The 2,700 Mile Journey

- Includes:

Rafting across the Suchiate river

Hundreds and thousands of miles of walking

Riding atop trains

Danger from perilous weather, falls, and gangs

16

WHO ARE YOUR STUDENTS?

HISPANIC CULTURE

- Culture
- Family
- Communication



Hispanic Culture

- Hispanics come from a large and varied group of people, and approximately 54 million Latinos live in the United states.
- Races vary - Black/African-American, White/Caucasian, Asian, and Native American or mixed race.
- The collective good is valued over the individual one.
- Manual labor may be regarded as more honorable than professional work.
- Fear of government may exist.

Hispanic Culture – Family Life

- The word of teachers is respected
- The father may be more likely to make big choices about schooling than the mother
- Religion and children are an important part of family life
- Girls are often expected to fulfill traditional gender roles (marriage, family, home)



19

Hispanic Culture - Communication

- Communication is sometimes much more formal than English, and respect is shown with formal titles.
- Hispanics tend to show more affection through touching, and tend to be very polite.
- Spanish is the language used by most Hispanics; there are some small differences in language that vary from country to country.
- Spanish has many cognates to English.



20

Share Out

- Consider and discuss at least one way your knowledge of Hispanic culture may affect your teaching or interactions with parents.



WHO ARE YOUR STUDENTS? ARABIC CULTURE

- Culture
- Family
- Communication



Arabic Culture

- Disrespect is shown to others by standing in a relaxed posture, keeping your hands in your pockets, leaning when talking, and not shaking hands when meeting.
- Tardiness is not a problem.
- Duty to friends is important.
- Honor and shame are collective.
- Lack of consideration without genuine reflection is shameful.
- Respect from children towards adults is very important.
- There is a tendency to call people by their title and then their first name.



23

Arabic Culture

- There are 300 million Arabic speakers in the world, and Arabic is the official language of 22 countries.
- Standard/Classical Arabic (Fusha) is used in media and other formal settings.
- Spoken Arabic varies from county to country.
- Speaking eloquently is important.
- Oaths are common in speech. (“I swear by God...”)
- Repetition is present in communication.
- A loud voice shows engagement.



24

Arabic Culture

- Family-arranged marriages are still common.
- Girls are taught to be passive, whereas boys are taught to be more aggressive.
- Older women are given more respect than younger ones.
- Women often have the final say about childrearing and education issues.
- Parents often want their children to maintain both Arabic and English languages.

Share Out

- Consider and discuss at least one way your knowledge of Arabic culture may affect your teaching or interactions with parents.



WHO ARE YOUR STUDENTS?

CHINESE CULTURE

- Culture
- Family
- Communication



Chinese Culture

- Group orientation is more valued than individualism; all actions reflect not only on you but on the group as a whole and the needs of the group or the good of society are placed above your own.
- Modesty and humility are prized traits.



Chinese Culture

The Importance of Face

Complex concept most closely defined as dignity or prestige but entails many fine nuances.

One of the worst things that can happen in Chinese Culture is to lose face, and Chinese people will go out of their way to save face for each other.

Chinese Culture

Ways to “Give Face”	Ways to “Lose Face”
Give high compliments often and freely	Revealing someone’s lack of knowledge or ability
Praise someone in front of their elders or superiors	Not showing the proper deference to one’s elders
Invite a student to eat lunch beside you	Turning down an invitation outright
Criticize in private	Openly criticizing, challenging, or disagreeing with someone
Endorse student ideas	Being openly angry

Chinese Culture

- Many aspects of Chinese life can be tied to honoring one's parents or ancestors.
- A significant aspect of life in the Chinese family is showing the proper amount of respect to the appropriate members of the family.
- One child policy in China has caused a great deal of importance to be placed on child rearing.

Chinese Culture

- Chinese is a family of closely related but mutually unintelligible languages, and has many varieties including:
 - Mandarin – spoken by over 1.3 billion people;
 - Wú – spoken by about 90 million people; and
 - Cantonese – spoken by about 70 million people.
- Written words are comprised of characters.
- Each character represents one syllable, and literacy requires the memorization of a great many characters; educated Chinese know about 4,000 characters.

Share Out

- Consider and discuss at least one way your knowledge of Chinese culture may affect your teaching or interactions with parents.

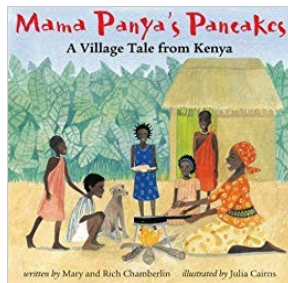
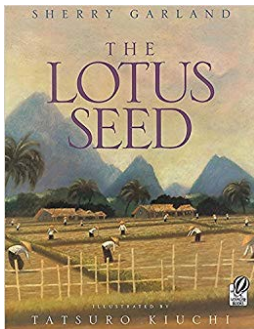


PURSUING EQUITY

- What it isn't
- What it is
- Books to support equity in your classroom

Pursuing Equity – Raising Cultural Awareness

- Is it **not** racially/ethnically diverse characters assimilated into American culture.
- It **is** racially/ethnically diverse characters who live their culture day-to-day.



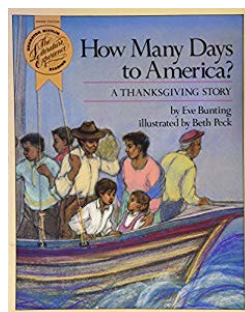
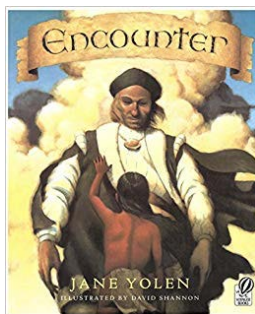
Talking about Raising Cultural Awareness

- What is one thing you learned about this culture that you didn't know before?
- What might you like to experience from this culture?
- How could you help other people better understand this culture?
- Is anything about this culture likely to be misunderstood?

35

Pursuing Equity – Openness to Alternate Perspectives

- Is it **not** the same story, but a different cover.
- It **is** hearing the story from a perspective not typically represented; establishing a more inclusive definition.



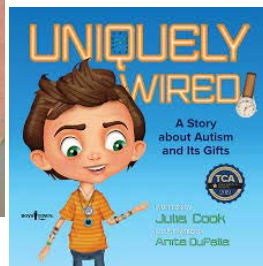
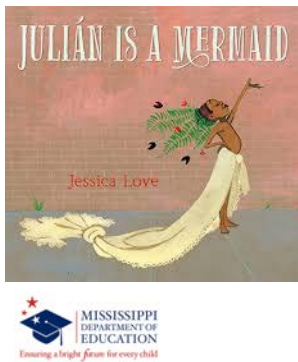
Talking About Openness to Alternate Perspectives

- Compare the traditional version of this story with the story told from an alternate perspective. What is the same? What is different?
- What information in Source #2 did you find surprising? Why?
- Having heard two versions of this story, do you wonder which one is really true? How could you draw a more informed conclusion about this?

36

Pursuing Equity – Celebrating Differences

- Is it **not** ONLY about race and ethnicity; it is **not** about “tolerance.”
- It **is** celebrating differences in many areas: race *AND* ethnicities, cognitive and neurological differences, physical differences, gender stereotypes, differences in family structure.



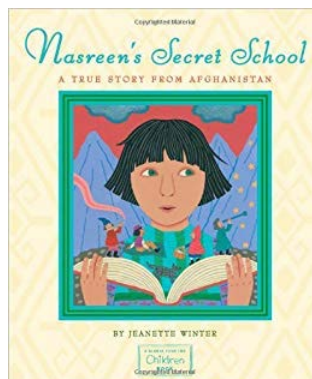
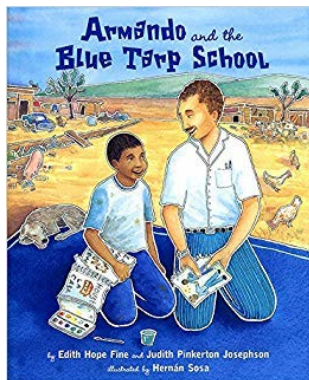
Talking About Celebrating Differences

- What is the difference between tolerating a difference and celebrating a difference?
- What are some unique features of this difference that should be celebrated?
- What challenges might this person face due to this difference?
- How could you support this person or advocate for her or him?

37

Pursuing Equity – Equal Access to Opportunities

- Is it **not** (mostly) about the 1860s; it is **not** (mostly) about the 1960s.
- It **is** a lot about NOW.



Talking About Equal Access to Opportunities

- In this story, who didn't have access to equal opportunities?
- What or who do you think was responsible for this lack of opportunity?
- Who has the power to solve this problem so the opportunity would be available to everyone?
- How do people change this?

38

Pursuing Equity – Honoring Heritage

- Is it **not** about mostly folklore (although there's certainly a place for traditional literature in a literacy curriculum); it is **not** about kids drawing their family tree, making food, etc.
- It **is** identifying points of cultural pride; it **is** reflecting on special memories from family traditions.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming



Written by Cheryl Savageau

Illustrated by Robert Hynes

Talking About Honoring Heritage

- What was the same and what was different about the way your family celebrated holidays in the past (from the way your family celebrates them today)?
- What makes your family proud of its past?
- What are some of the things your parents say to you all the time? What stories do they tell about their past?

39

Pursuing Equity – Empathy for Newcomers (and Each Other)

- It **is** about humanity; it **is** about caring and kindness; it **is** imagining what it's like to walk in someone else's shoes.



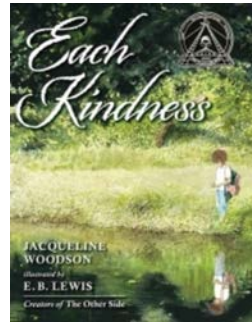
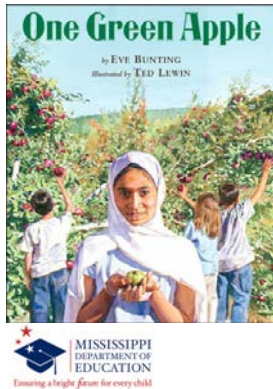
Talking About Empathy for Newcomers (and Each Other)

- What kinds of problems might take you away from your home-country?
- Imagine that you found out you had to leave your country the very next day. How would you feel?
- If you could only bring one small suitcase that you could carry yourself, what would you bring?
- What might you miss about your old home and country?
- What could you do to make a newcomer feel less scared in a new country where they might not even speak the same language and where they might have different clothing or customs?

40

Pursuing Equity – Communicating

- It is **not** ONLY verbalizing how important it is to communicate with each other.
- It **is** advocating for newcomers (taking ACTION) and helping newcomers to tell their story.



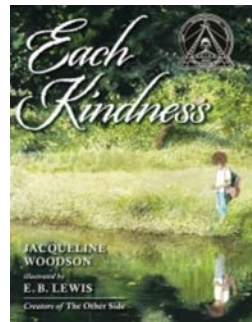
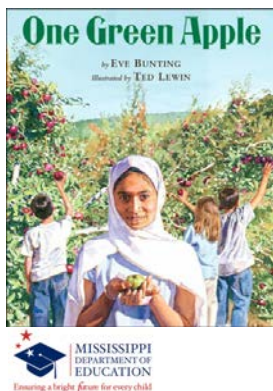
Talking About Communicating

If you are a newcomer

- How can you use body language to help other people understand you?
- What can you tell people about your home country, your family, or other things that would help them know you better? (Things you are comfortable sharing.)
- How can you “stand up for yourself” when others are treating you unkindly?

Pursuing Equity – Communicating

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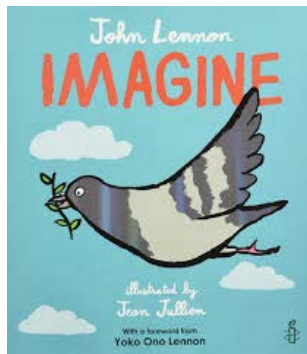
Talking About Communicating

If you are a classmate

- How can you use body language to show you care?
- How can you help a new classmate understand your words if they do not know the language?
- How might you communicate kindness to a new classmate?
- How can you show you're interested in a new classmate (to learn more about them)?

Pursuing Equity – Hope

- It is **not** typically about what's on your bucket list or what you're hoping to receive for your birthday.
- It **is** the difference between hanging on and giving up; it **is** belief that better things are coming.



Talking About Communicating

- What does hope mean to you?
- What are some of your most important hopes for yourself?
- What are some of your most important hopes for the world?
- How do you stay positive when times are tough?
- How can you help someone else stay positive when they're facing something difficult?
- How can you turn a "hope" into something real?

43

Being a Leader for Equity

Leaders for equity are educators who gracefully stand up and stand for others, demonstrate courage, and take risks to forge improvement.

Equality



Equity



44

Resources

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/ffcmelp.pdf>

<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/southeast-els/>

<http://res.dallasnews.com/interactives/migrantroute/>



45



LeighAnne Cheeseman, K-3 English Learner/Assistant State Literacy Coordinator

lcheeseman@mdek12.org

Sandra Elliott, English Learner Intervention Support Specialist

selliott@mdek12.org

Sharon Prestridge, English Learner Assessment Coordinator

sprestridge@mdek12.org



LeighAnne Cheeseman

Assistant State Literacy Coordinator
English Learner Coordinator (K-3)
lcheeseman@mdek12.org