

On My Mind

The Power of Multilingual Education

In late February, I was pleased to [announce](#) the opening of 68 new Dual Language (DL) and Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs in September. This expansion includes our first-ever Urdu TBE program in Brooklyn, in addition to programs in Chinese, Russian, Arabic, French, Bengali, and Spanish. The goal of these programs is “to prepare our students to become bilingual, biliterate and bicultural,” notes Milady Baez, Deputy Chancellor for the Division of English Language Learners and Student Support.

Like Milady, I have witnessed the impact high-quality bilingual programs have on students’ lives. At Manhattan Bridges High School, where we announced our bilingual expansion, we met a remarkable student named Carlos Vega. Born in Mexico, Carlos arrived in New York with his parents six years ago. He recalled being struck by how many handicapped New Yorkers struggled to get on the train, climb stairs, and navigate the City independently. A dual language student in an eleventh-grade, pre-engineering program, Carlos hopes to one day create prosthetics and sensory aids to help people without limbs to become more independent. This is the beauty of our City and our bilingual programs: they increase opportunities for thousands of students like Carlos every day.

We are also thrilled to announce that the Division of Family and Community Engagement (FACE) has launched the Family English Initiative with the goal of increasing engagement with ELL families. The program supports families learning English and helps develop their English language skills together with their children. In addition, this summer, 75 ELL kindergarten and first-grade students will participate with their parents in interactive sessions that incorporate art and culture at select sites.

Team Building is Key

Intense professional learning is a key feature of our new fall bilingual programs. All of the schools opening new programs will receive planning grants funded through the Federal Title III Language Instruction for ELL program to provide teachers and principals with quality resources and ongoing training and professional development.

In addition, through the Principal Supervisor Initiative, led by Executive Superintendent of Leadership Dolores

Esposito, members of the Office of School Support—along with superintendents, principal leadership facilitators, and select principals from 12 districts—are participating in an ELL Leadership Institute. We are excited to partner with Dr. Aida Walqui of WestEd and Generation Ready, national providers of professional learning services. Since January 2017, participants have been exploring the role of leadership in developing a common lens in order to provide high-quality teaching and learning for our multilingual learners. This collaborative effort, which includes members of our Field Support Centers, also provides opportunities to bridge theory and practice by developing lab sites in every district. Superintendents Isabel DiMola, Alexandra Estrella, and Rafaela Espinal Pacheco have deepened these partnerships in their respective districts. This work is funded by The Wallace Foundation.

This winter, Deputy Chancellor Baez and members of her division led a Chancellor’s Initiative to enhance [advanced literacy skills](#) in linguistically diverse public schools. Dr. Nonie Lesaux from the Harvard Graduate School of Education conducted the institute, which engaged five superintendents, 10 principals, and their lead teams. The goal was to promote advanced literacies among all students to make schooling more equitable. The DOE holds high expectations for our students’ literacy attainment.

Commitment to Family Support

One of the best ways to support ELLs is to support their families as well. Our Native Language Parent Conferences, under the leadership of FACE Executive Superintendent Yolanda Torres, provide ELL students and families with resources and information to stay on a path toward college. During parent conferences, representatives from the DOE, City Council, Mayor’s Office, City University of New York, and community-based organizations provide families with a variety of workshops and opportunities to engage in activities together. We have already offered native language parent conferences in Spanish, Bengali, and Mandarin, and we will be hosting one in Arabic on March 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at P.S./I.S. 30 in Brooklyn. Parents can register for the conference [here](#).

As principals, you can support these efforts by asking teachers to introduce books that discuss students’

On My Mind (continued)

experiences from a variety of cultures and languages. My Book of the Month, *Mango, Abuela, and Me*, is an excellent choice as it features words and phrases in both English and Spanish. Watching the characters move past their language constraints can also teach students about empathy and the value of practice and patience. I encourage you to consult this [list of books and resources](#) on immigration and diversity to facilitate discussion during your professional development sessions and in the classroom.

I hope you will amplify the great work going on across our school system by providing ELLs with more experiential and interactive learning opportunities,

preferably outside their neighborhoods. Have teachers or your parent coordinator plan visits to libraries, museums, or historical societies. Students can interpret and draw meaning from these experiences by making a video or poster, holding a debate, writing a paper, or even teaching a class in English. Hold a parent workshop to discuss why it is important for ELLs to learn by doing. Encourage parents to take their children to a movie, the theater, or a dance performance and reflect on these experiences. Expanding students' worlds expands their knowledge and vocabulary, and can help them master a new language.

Fiction Grades K-5

The Year of the Three Sisters by Andrea Cheng
Growing Up Pedro: How the Martinez Brothers Made it From the Dominican Republic All the Way to the Major Leagues by Matt Tavares
Freddie Ramos Takes Off by Jacqueline Jules
The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi
Two White Rabbits by Jairo Buitrago
The Seeds of Friendship by Michael Foreman
My Name is Sangoel by Karen Williams
My Two Blankets by Irena Kobald
Colour of Home by Mary Hoffman
A Shelter in Our Car by Monica Gunning
Mama's Nightingale by Edwidge Danticata
Pancho Rabbit & Coyote by Duncan Tonatui
My Diary from Here to There by Amada Irma Perez
My Name is Jorge: On Both Sides of the River by Jane Medina
Chocolate Milk, Por Favor by Maria Dismondy
The Quiet Place by Sarah Stewart
From North to South by Rene Colado Lainez
A Movie in My Pillow by Jorge Argueta
Home at Last by Susan Middleton Elya
One Green Apple by Eve Bunting
My Name is Yoon by Helen Recorvits
Here I Am by Patti Kim
My Chinatown: One Year in Poems by Kam Mak
Good-bye, 282 Shin Dang Dong by Frances Paark
Tea with Milk by Allen Say – US back to Japan
Lailah's Lunchbox by Reem Farupi
I'm New Here by Anne Sibley O'Brien
The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco
Sofie and the City by Karima Grant
In the Small, Small Night by Jane Kurtz
My Name is Bilal by Asama Mobin-Uddin
Teacup by Rebecca Young
Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes
Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey (Arabic and English Edition) by Margriet Ruurs and Falah Raheem
The Journey by Francesca Sanna
Ambassador by Alexander, William
Immigrants by Sandler, Martin W
Their Great Gift: Courage, sacrifice, and hope in a new land by John Coy
Mama the alien = Mama la extraterrestre by Rene Colato Lainez

Grades 6-12

Echo by Pam Munoz Ryan
Funny in Farsi by Firoozeh Dumas
Never Fall Down by Patricia McCormick
Inside Out and Back Again by Thanhha Lai
Home of the Brave by Katherine Applegate
Brother, I'm Dying by Edwidge Danticat
The Turtle of Oman: A Novel by Naomi Shihab Nye
Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok
Heat by Mike Lupica
Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother by Sonia Nazario
In the Time of the Butterflies by Julia Alvarez
Ask Me No Questions by Marina Tamar Budhos
Honeysuckle House by Andrea Cheng
Children of the River by Linda Crew
Border Crossing by Maria Colleen Cruz
Fresh off the Boat by Melissa De la Cruz
First Crossing: Stories about Teen Immigrants. Edited by Donald R. Gallo.
Lowji Discovers America by Candace Fleming
La Linea by Ann Jaramillo
Any Small Goodness by Tony Johnston
Drita, My Homegirl by Jenny Lombard
Call Me Maria by Judith Ortiz Cofer
Tell Us We're Home by Budhos, Marina Tamar
Audacity by Melanie Crowder
Lucy and Linh by Alice Pung

Nonfiction Titles

Grades 3-8

First Generation Americans by Sara Howell
How People Immigrate by Sarah DeCapua
What Was Ellis Island? by Patricia Brennan Demuth
Ellis Island (True Book) by Elaine Landau
Who Belongs Here? An American Story by Margy Burns Knight
South American Immigrants by Frank DiPietro
The Debate About Immigration by Cath Senker
Immigration by Nick Hunter
Becoming a Citizen by Sarah De Capua
Coming to America: The Story of Immigration by Betsey maestro
Illegal Immigration by Karen Latchana Kennedy
New York: An Illustrated History of the People by Allan Schoener
The Peoples and Cultures of New York by James Bernard
Three Immigrant Communities: New York City in 1900 by Monica Halpern
Angel Island by Alice K. Flanagan

Critical Perspectives on the Industrial Revolution by Josh Sakolsky Rosen

Ellis Island by Lucia Raatma

Ellis Island: A New Hope, A New Land by William Jay Jacobs

Immigration 1850-1925 by Richard Worth

This Land is Our Land: A History of American Immigration by Linda Barrett Osborne

Websites

- SEAdoc - Documenting the Southeast Asian American Experience - SEAdoc is an educational resource of the Southeast Asian Archive at the UC Irvine Libraries focusing on post-1975 refugees and immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and the communities they have developed in the United States.
- Open Collections Program: Immigration to the US, Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) - Harvard collection.
- The University of Washington has the Many Paths, Many Voices, a growing collection of oral histories including the South Asian Oral History Project & Washington State Jewish Archives Project. Their East Asia Library is in the early stages of gathering oral histories from Chinese immigrants.
- Immigration Records (National Archives) - Immigration records, more popularly known as "ship passenger arrival records," may provide evidence of a person's arrival in the United States, as well as foreign birthplace. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has immigration records for various ports for the years 1800-1959.
- Immigration to New York, 1900-2000: This short PBS article details the century of immigrant experience to New York.
- International Migration (US Census)

Lessons and Resources

- Teaching Tolerance: Teaching Tolerance has several lesson plans for teaching the topic of modern immigration as well as the stories of immigrants. Each lesson identifies the grade level designated as appropriate. However lessons can be modified up for older students: Exploring Young Immigrant Stories; Immigration Myths; The Human Face of Immigration (article describes lesson in detail); An Educator's Guide to the Immigration Debate; and Toolkit for An Educator's Guide to the Immigration Debate
- Scholastic: Explore Immigration Data: Study the numbers and charts to learn more about the history and present story of immigration.

- Voices of Mixed Heritage: Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations is an interdisciplinary curriculum designed for grades 6–12. We invite students and educators to engage with the topic of mixed heritage and identity in the United States from the mid-19th century to the present. Students will investigate the voices and representation of those who identify as mixed-heritage individuals through oral histories, archival primary sources, popular culture references, and contextualizing secondary sources. This will allow them to unpack complex political concepts such as race, racism, identity, equity, and self-determination. Although not specifically on immigration stories, this resources can be modified to teach about immigration, identity, and oral history.
- Learning About U.S. Immigration With The New York Times: Post created by educators on the NY Times staff that highlight ways to teach about immigration using the New York Times archive. This site includes links to “Lessons on The Immigrant Experience” as well as other educational resources and lessons.
- After their Arrival (New York Times): Four men and women from across the world and the economic spectrum tell their stories of coming to the NYC metropolitan area.
- Chinese American: Exclusion/Inclusion (New-York Historical Society): This resource explores this question as it chronicles the long and complex history of Chinese Americans in the United States. The exhibition and educational materials highlight more than 200 years of stories form across the nation, many of which connect directly with some of the most compelling themes in American history: immigration, American identity, westward expansion, racism and nativism, the importance of work and workers, and the power of individuals' stories.
- Nueva York (New-York Historical Society): Discover the vital role the Spanish-speaking world played and continues to play in New York City's trade, politics and culture through investigating artifacts and artwork from the exhibition Nueva York: 1613–1945, organized in collaboration with El Museo del Barrio. These materials include a teachers' guide, primary sources, Life Stories, and a visual arts unit.
- Destination America (PBS): A documentary series organized around some of the driving forces that cause immigration to the United States, such as economic opportunity, religious freedom, and artistic expression. The episodes include contemporary stories and historic portraits, and the site offers lesson plans based on five freedoms: freedom to worship, freedom from oppression, freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom to create.

Films

Kid's Talk: The Stories of Refugee Children: Project documenting the stories of refugees in Buffalo, New York

Independent Lens – Meet the New Americans (PBS Video)