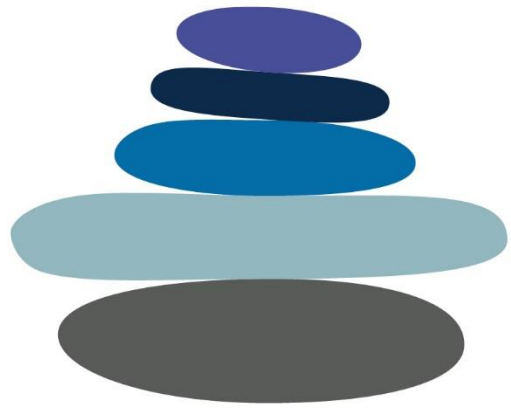


Welcome!

For today's session, you will need:

- Google Folder:
bit.ly/MaineElemFolder
- Series Padlet:
bit.ly/MainePadlet





SupportEd

Peer Learning and Intentional Student Grouping to Scaffold Literacy and Numeracy for MLs

Elementary Cohort

Maine DOE

April 7, 2026

Thank You!



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Series Overview (Document 1)

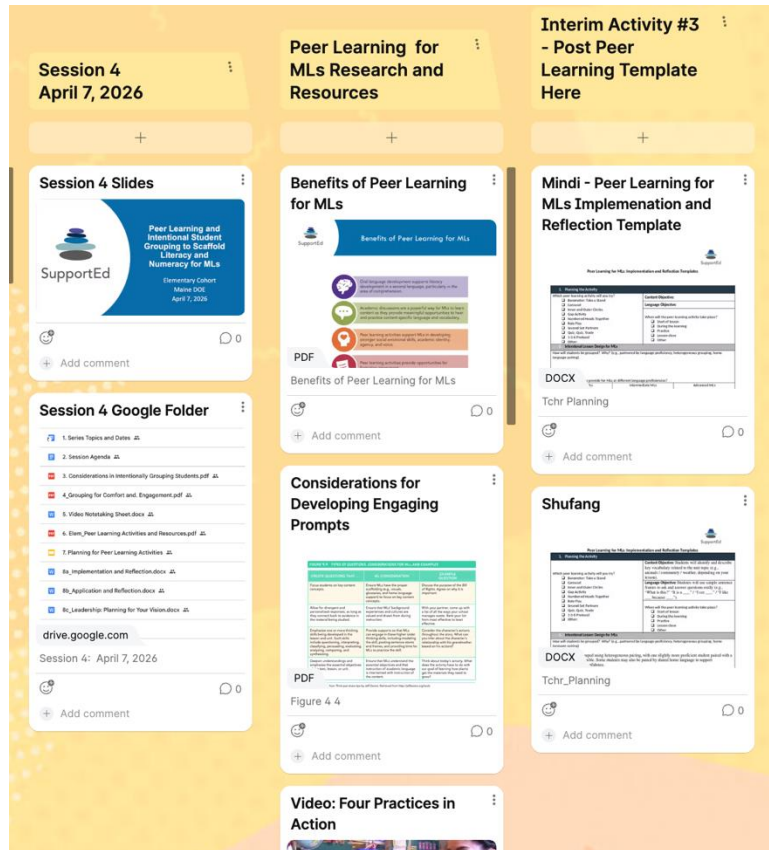
Session	Topic	Date and Time
1	Knowing Your Multilingual Learners and Using ML Research to Support Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Development	January 20, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
2	Building Literacy and Numeracy for MLs with Instructional Materials Scaffolds	February 24, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
3	Session facilitated by Maine DOE	March 17, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
4	Peer Learning and Intentional Student Grouping to Scaffold Literacy and Numeracy for MLs	April 7, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
5	Scaffolding Through Instructional Practices for MLs	May 5, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
6	Reflecting and Goal Setting for ML Success (combined meeting with Secondary Cohort)	June 3, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm



Session Objectives



Series Padlet: bit.ly/MainePadlet



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Google Folder: bit.ly/MaineElemFolder



Session 1: January 20, 2026



Session 2: February 24, 2026



Session 3: March 17, 2026



Session 4: April 7, 2026



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Agenda (Document 2)

Time*	Topic
3:00 – 3:15	Introduction and reflection on interim activity
3:15 – 3:50	Describe how peer learning and intentional student grouping can strengthen MLs' oral language development and scaffold literacy and numeracy
3:50 – 4:30	Explore peer learning activities and practical tools
4:30 – 4:45	Apply strategies
4:45 – 5:00	Wrap up, interim activity, and evaluation



Evaluation Feedback

Glows

- Adjustments based on feedback
- Time for collaboration and breakouts
- Practical strategies

Grows

- Breakout room timing and structure
- Clarity of directions

Your Feedback

In response, today we will:

- Adjust breakout structures and timing
- Clarify directions



Breakout Room Discussion: Interim Activity Reflection

- **Self-select** a breakout room.
- If you are currently teaching, choose a room based on the number of MLs in your context:
 - Low incidence – 0-50 MLs
 - Middle incidence – 51-100 MLs
 - High incidence – over 100 MLs
- If you are not currently teaching and completed the alternate activity, choose a breakout room labeled “Alternate Activity”.
- For eight minutes, **discuss your reflections and takeaways** from the interim activity that you completed.



Whole Group Debrief

Based on this experience, what **key insight about using instructional materials scaffolds** for MLs will shape how you plan or support instruction moving forward?





Describe How Peer Learning and Intentional Student Grouping Can Support Oral Language Development and Scaffold Literacy and Numeracy

What is Peer Learning for MLs?

Peer learning for MLs is a structured, collaborative approach where students interact to build language proficiency and content knowledge simultaneously. It encourages oral language development, vocabulary acquisition, and academic conversation through peer-to-peer engagement, allowing MLs to practice English in low-pressure settings.



MLs and Academic Conversations

- How much time during a school day do MLs spend engaged in academic conversation?
 1. 0 – 4%
 2. 5 – 10%
 3. 11 – 20%
 4. 21 – 50%
- What are the implications of this data?



Goal of
30%

Gibbons, 2015; Soto, 2021



Poll: Peer Learning in Your Context

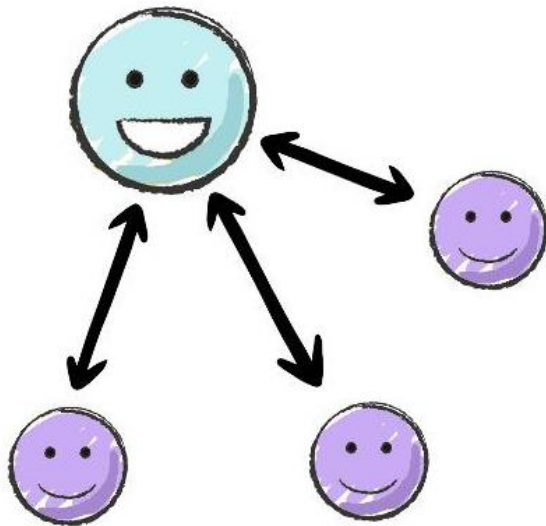
- **Consider** the use of peer learning for MLs in the classrooms, programs, or systems you support.
- How **often** do MLs engage in **meaningful peer learning** about academic content?
 1. Daily
 2. A few times per week
 3. Less than once per week
 4. Rarely or not yet
- What **factors** might influence either the availability of peer learning opportunities or MLs' ability to fully engage when they occur?

Adapted from Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

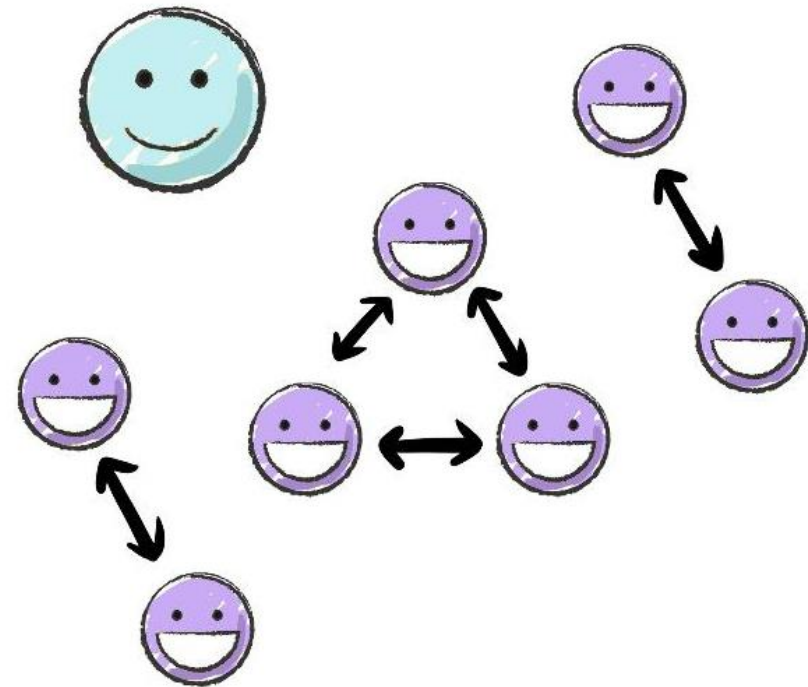


Reframing Classroom Talk

A Teacher-Student Discourse



B Student-to-Student Discourse



Benefits of Peer Learning for MLs



Oral language development supports literacy development in a second language, particularly in the area of comprehension.



Academic discussions are a powerful way for MLs to learn content as they provide meaningful opportunities to hear and practice content-specific language and vocabulary.



Peer learning activities support MLs in developing stronger social emotional skills, academic identity, agency, and voice.



Peer learning activities provide opportunities for formative assessment.

Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

Supporting Oral Language Development

During peer learning activities:

- Include authentic talk and scaffolds
- Develop meaningful and robust language
- Use engaging discussion prompts
- Provide clear expectations and directions
- Give feedback



Staehr Fenner et al., 2024; Walqui & Heritage, 2018; Zwiers, 2014, 2019

Your Reflection: Authentic Talk



Share your ideas in the chat:

- What do you think it means for students to engage in **authentic talk** during literacy or numeracy instruction?
- What would you expect to **see and hear**?



Discussion Prompts and Authentic Talk

Students solve a word problem and use cubes/base ten blocks to represent their thinking.

Jaxson has 36 toy cars. He gives 14 toy cars to his friend Mateo. How many toy cars does he have left?

- ↳ A. Explain in your group how you solved the problem.
- ↳ B. Work with your group to find **two different ways** to show the problem.
Which one is **easier** to use?
Why?



- **Read** the discussion prompts.
- **Share** your ideas in the chat:
 - Which prompt related to solving the problem is likely to generate more authentic student talk? Why?
 - What scaffolds might MLs need to effectively discuss that prompt?



Resource:

Considerations for Developing Engaging Prompts

FIGURE 4.4 TYPES OF QUESTIONS, CONSIDERATIONS FOR MLs, AND EXAMPLES

CREATE QUESTIONS THAT . . .	ML CONSIDERATION	EXAMPLE QUESTION
Focus students on key content concepts.	Ensure MLs have the proper scaffolding (e.g., visuals, glossaries, and home language support) to focus on key content concepts.	Discuss the purpose of the <i>Bill of Rights</i> . Agree on why it is important.
Allow for divergent and personalized responses, as long as they connect back to evidence in the material being studied.	Ensure that MLs' background experiences and cultures are valued and drawn from during instruction.	With your partner, come up with a list of all the ways your school manages waste. Rank your list from most effective to least effective.
Emphasize one or more thinking skills being developed in the lesson and unit. Such skills include questioning, interpreting, classifying, persuading, evaluating, analyzing, comparing, and synthesizing.	Provide supports so that MLs can engage in these higher order thinking skills, including modeling the skill, posting sentence stems and frames, and providing time for MLs to practice the skill.	Consider the character's actions throughout the story. What can you infer about the character's relationship with his grandmother based on his actions?
Deepen understandings and emphasize the essential objectives of the text, lesson, or unit.	Ensure that MLs understand the essential objectives and that instruction of academic language is intertwined with instruction of the content.	Think about today's activity. What does the activity have to do with our goal of learning how plants get the materials they need to grow?

Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

Examples of Scaffolds to Support Peer Learning Activities

- Sentence frames or starters
- Visuals
- Word banks/walls
- Modeling
- Practice with language in advance
- Group roles
- Intentional grouping



Types of Scaffolds

Instructional Materials



Audio, visual, and/or hands-on resources to support MLs

Instructional Practices



Actions an educator takes to support MLs

Instructional Groupings



Intentionally grouping students to provide support for MLs

Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

Grouping MLs in Your Context

Share your response in the chat:

- What **factors** do you think should be considered when making decisions about student grouping?



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Instructional Groupings Scaffolds

- Structured pair work/discussion
- Structured small group work/discussion
- Teacher-led small group work
- Intentional grouping:
 - Academic skills
 - Home language
 - Language proficiency
 - Social-emotional considerations



Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

Social Emotional Considerations When Grouping MLs

- Personal strengths
- Comfort using English with peers
- Comfort using home language in the classroom
- Interest in the topic
- Personality traits
- Relationships within the classroom
- Personal preferences
- Cultural expectations

Staehr Fenner & Teich, 2024



Tool: Considerations in Intentionally Grouping Students (Document 3)

FIGURE 3.6 CONSIDERATIONS IN INTENTIONALLY GROUPING STUDENTS

CONSIDERATION: DO I WANT TO . . .	POSSIBLE GROUPING
Use this time to support emergent MLs in negotiating meaning and building academic language through interactions with English-proficient peers?	Heterogenous grouping of mixed English language proficiency levels and English-proficient students
Provide students with differentiated materials or differentiated learning tasks?	Homogenous grouping based on language proficiency levels, academic skills, or home languages—each group of students will get a different set of materials based on their strengths and needs
Use this time to work with a small group of students on specific content or language skills?	Homogenous grouping based on language proficiency levels and/or academic skills
Provide an opportunity for translanguaging or home language support for MLs?	Homogenous grouping based on home languages
Use students' strengths as a way to support group roles?	Heterogenous grouping based on individual students' strengths to support such group roles as leader, scribe, and reporter
Consider students' background knowledge, interests, personalities, or other factors that may impact group work?	All types of groupings

Staehr Fenner et al., 2024, p. 81



Tool: Considerations for Student Grouping to Promote Comfort and Engagement (Document 4)

LESSON/PROJECT:		
CONSIDERATION	NOTES FOR CONSIDERATION	STUDENT GROUPS
What background knowledge do students bring to the activity? - On the topic of the activity - On the structure/type of the activity (e.g., debate, interview, etc.)		Group 1:
How can student interests inform grouping? - Students with similar interests relating to the topic of the activity - Students with similar interests in the type of activity		Group 2:
What individual strengths can inform student grouping? - Academic strengths - Linguistic strengths - Personal skills and talents (e.g., artistry) - Interpersonal skills (e.g., time management, organization, etc.)		Group 3:
What personality traits can impact collaboration within the group? (e.g., patience, empathy, cooperativeness)		Group 4:
What should you keep in mind regarding student preferences ? - Friendship - Working styles - Cultural expectations that may dictate gender roles and interactions		Group 5:

Staehr Fenner and Teich, 2024



Your Reflection

1. Independently, take five minutes to:
 - **Review** the two student grouping tools.
 - **Think** about how these tools can help create more effective peer learning opportunities for MLs.
2. Meet in a breakout room for eight minutes to discuss:
 - What stood out to you about how these tools **support intentional grouping**?
 - How can intentional grouping of MLs impact the **quality of peer learning or student talk** in your context?



A close-up photograph of two young girls working on a craft project. The girl in the foreground is a young Asian girl with dark hair tied in a braid, wearing a blue shirt and two beaded bracelets (one black, one pink). She is focused on her work, holding a wooden stick. The girl in the background is a young boy with brown hair and glasses, also wearing a blue shirt, and is looking down at his work. They are both sitting at a table with a colorful, patterned surface. The background is bright and out of focus.

Explore Peer Learning Activities and Practical Tools

Four Practices for Supporting MLs in Peer Learning Activities



Come to the discussion prepared



Be aware of nonverbal communication



Participate by taking turns

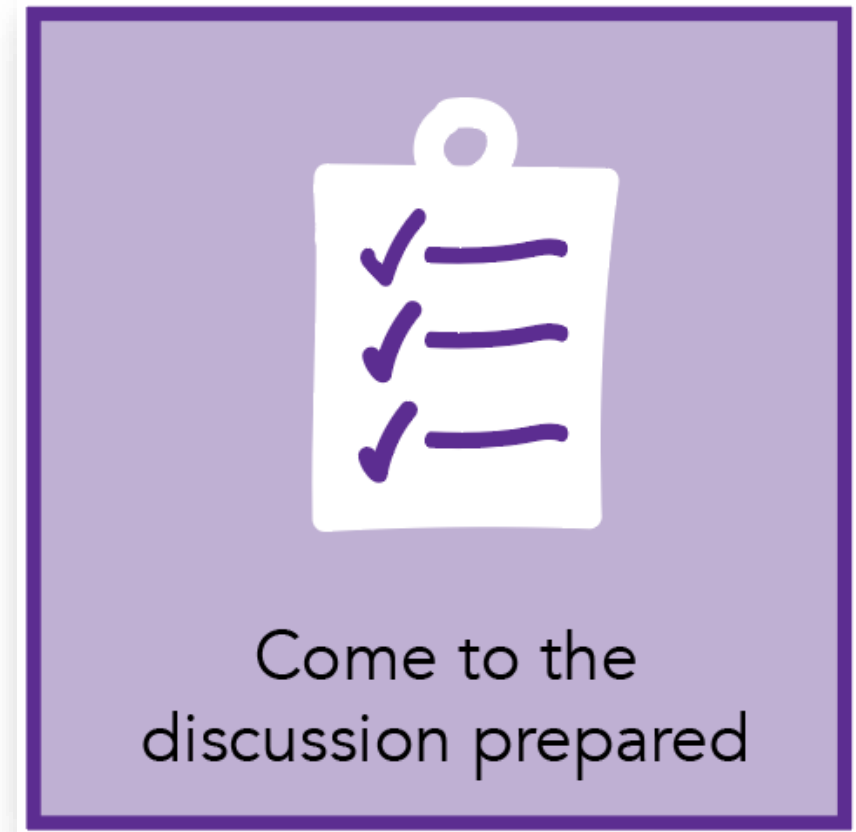


Make connections

Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

1. Come to the Discussion Prepared

- Prior knowledge
- Explicit vocabulary instruction
- Thinking and writing time
- Support content understanding



2. Be Aware of Non-verbal Communication

- Use “appropriate” eye contact
- Face each other with the entire body
- Lean toward the partner
- Show understanding through head nodding
- Use “appropriate” gestures
- Show interest



Staehr Fenner et al., 2024

3. Participate by Taking Turns

- Structured pair work
- Talking stick, talking rock, or discussion chips
- Group roles
- Language for inviting others to participate
- Supporting active listening
- Asking questions to others



4. Make Connections

- Teach and practice language
- Model how to make connections
- Hand signals
- Group and individual accountability



Staehr Fenner, et al., 2024

Video: Four Practices in Action (Document 5)

- Make a copy of document 5.
- As you watch the video, use Document 5 to **note evidence** of the Four Practices.

Four Practices Notetaking Sheet	
Practice	Evidence from Video
1. Come to the Discussion Prepared 	
2. Be Aware of Nonverbal Communication 	
3. Participate by Taking Turns 	
4. Make Connections 	





Video: Four Practices in Action

- What **evidence** of the four practices did you collect?
- What are your big **takeaways** from this video?

Four Practices Notetaking Sheet

Practice	Evidence from Video
1. Come to the Discussion Prepared 	
2. Be Aware of Nonverbal Communication 	
3. Participate by Taking Turns 	
4. Make Connections 	



Reflection: Four Practices

- Which of the four practices feels **most critical** for your MLs right now?
- What is **a step you can take** to support this critical practice?





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Sample Peer Learning Activities

Peer Learning Activity Goals

- Provide opportunities to hear and practice key academic language
- Include opportunities for all students to participate
- Push understanding of content to deeper levels



Waterfall Chat: Peer Learning Activities

- **Brainstorm** as many peer learning activities as you can think of.
- When I say “Go” start sharing your ideas in the chat.



Second Set Partners

- Discuss a question or prompt with a partner.
- Both students meet with a different partner.
- With the new partner, share what the first partner said.



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Inside Outside Circles

Students:

- Think about or write down their response to a prompt.
- Form two concentric circles facing one another
- Discuss their responses with a partner.
- Listen for directions for one of the circles to shift.
- Discuss their responses with a new partner.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNONGkX89yE>

Quiz, Quiz, Trade

1. Either the teacher or students develop questions.
2. Students:
 - Work with a partner.
 - Ask and answer partner's question.
 - Provide clues or coaching as needed.
 - Celebrate success!
 - Trade questions.
 - Find a new partner and repeat



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiAXPeWB8OI>

Resource: Peer Learning Activities and Resources (Document 6)

For four minutes, independently:

- **Review** the descriptions of activities.
- **Identify** two activities that you think would be effective for the MLs you teach or for educators you support.
- **Be prepared to discuss** one of your choices in the next breakout room activity.

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE IN MY CLASSROOM
Barometer: Take a Stand	• Select a statement that students can have an opinion about and is connected to your lesson. • Ask students who agree with the statement to go to one end of the classroom and students who disagree to go to the other end. • Students who are neutral or undecided can go to the center of the room. • Have students find a partner in their group and share why they went where they did. Or, have students find someone in a different group to discuss why they went where they did. • Invite several students to share their ideas with the large group. • Ask if any students have changed their minds after hearing the discussion.	
Carousel	• Write questions connected to the unit of study on poster paper and hang them up around the room (one piece of poster paper per question). • Divide students into small groups so that there is one question per group. • Give each group of students a different color marker and assign them a question to start with. • Instruct students to discuss and write their responses on the poster paper. • Have the groups rotate to another question after several minutes. • Encourage the groups to add on to and provide additional evidence to the responses that are already written. • Debrief each question as a whole class, providing appropriate scaffolds for your MLs.	



Apply Strategies



Peer Learning In Your Context (Document 7)

1. Self-select the breakout room that matches a Peer Learning activity you identified independently.
2. Find a slide with the activity you selected.
3. Choose a recorder and a reporter for your group.
4. Complete the questions on your slide.

Peer Learning Activities and Resources		Activity: Barometer: Take A Stand
Recorder:	Reporter:	
Describe how and when you would use this activity with MLs.	What would you consider when partnering or grouping MLs for this activity? What additional scaffolds might some MLs need?	How will you ensure this activity provides opportunities for MLs to hear and practice academic language and/or push understanding of content to deeper levels?



Debrief: Planning for Peer Learning

- What did you notice about the connection between **intentional grouping, scaffolds, and the quality of academic talk** MLs would experience in your selected activity?
- What is essential to keep in mind when **designing peer learning** tasks for MLs?



Considerations for Implementing or Supporting Teachers with Peer Learning Activities

- Plan with the four practices in mind
- Use engaging discussion prompts
- Provide language scaffolds to support engagement for all MLs
- Consider practicing with a non-academic topic
- Listen in, observe, and formatively assess MLs' interactions and engagement
- Try, adjust, and repeat until it becomes routine



Tool: Peer Learning Activity Checklist

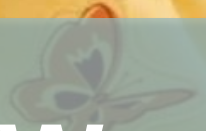
CRITERIA	YES	NO	FOLLOW-UP STEPS
 1. Have I developed a peer learning activity that will provide my MLs with • authentic opportunities to speak, • time to strengthen and deepen their responses, and • an engaging discussion prompt or task? <i>(Practice 1)</i>			
 2. Have my MLs had sufficient exposure to the content and academic language needed to participate in the activity? <i>(Practice 1)</i>			
 3. Have my MLs been taught expected nonverbal communication to support peer learning activities (e.g., looking at people when speaking, nodding understanding)? <i>(Practice 2)</i>			
 4. Do I have a way of monitoring students' nonverbal communication? <i>(Practice 2)</i>			
 5. Have I provided sufficient structure to the activity (including the use of supporting tools) and clear evaluation criteria so as to encourage all of my MLs to participate in the activity? <i>(Practice 3)</i>			
 6. Have I thought about how to intentionally group students? <i>(Practice 3)</i>			
 7. Have I considered assigning roles to students? <i>(Practice 3)</i>			
 8. Have I given sufficient thought to how to structure the classroom so that students can effectively interact and work together? <i>(Practice 3)</i>			
 9. Have I provided MLs sufficient practice and support in making connections to others' ideas before and during the activity? <i>(Practice 4)</i>			
 10. Have I considered how I might use the activity to assess MLs' acquisition and use of academic language or understanding of content? <i>(Practice 4)</i>			

Reflection

- What **shifted** in your thinking today about implementing peer learning and intentional grouping for MLs?
- What is **one action** you feel ready to try as a result?





 **Wrap-Up**



Interim Activity (Document 2 & 8a, 8b, or 8c)

Between now and the next session on May 5:

1. Plan and reflect using the template that best matches your role or resonates most with you:

- **Teachers with MLs:** Implementation and Reflection Template (Document 8a)
- **Non-Teaching Role or Teachers Without MLs in Class:** Application and Reflection (Document 8b)
- **Instructional Leaders:** Planning for Your Vision for Peer Learning (Document 8c)

2. Post your template to the Padlet.

Interim Activity #3
- Post Peer Learning Template Here

+

Mindi - Peer Learning for MLs Implementation and Reflection Template

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Peer Learning for MLs: Implementation and Reflection Templates

1. Planning the Activity	
Which peer learning activity will you try?	Content Objective:
☐ Barometer: Take a Stand	Language Objective:
☐ Carousel	
☐ Inner and Outer Circles	
☐ Gap Activity	
☐ Numbered Heads Together	When will the peer learning activity take place?
☐ Role Play	☐ Start of lesson
☐ Second Set Partners	☐ During the learning
☐ Quiz, Quiz, Trade	☐ Practice
☐ 1-0-6 Protocol	☐ Lesson close
☐ Other:	☐ Other

Instructional Lesson Design for MLs

How will students be grouped? Why? (e.g., partnered by language proficiency, heterogeneous grouping, home language pairing)

DOCX

Tchr_Planning

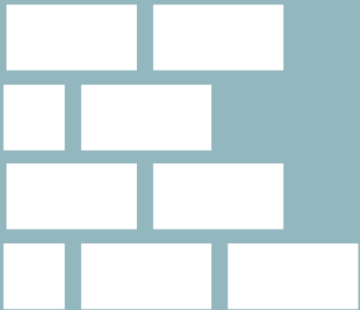
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+ Add comment

Session Objectives

1

Describe

A white icon on a teal background showing a grid of rectangular blocks arranged in a 2x4 pattern, with some blocks missing, suggesting a description or analysis of a structure.

2

Explore

A white icon on a purple background showing a lightbulb with rays emanating from it, symbolizing an idea, exploration, or discovery.

3

Apply

A white icon on a blue background showing a clipboard with a checklist. The checklist has four items, each with a checkmark on the left and a horizontal line on the right, indicating application or completion.

Next Steps

Session	Topic	Date and Time
5	Scaffolding Through Instructional Practices for MLs	May 5, 2026 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

- Before our next session on May 5, please complete the interim activity and post your template on the Padlet.
- Please reach out with any questions: Mindi@SupportEd.com

Reflecting on Today's Session (Document 9)

- Please provide anonymous feedback with a brief evaluation.
- bit.ly/MaineEval4
(case sensitive)
- Thank you!



Session Evaluation: Peer Learning and Intentional Student Grouping to Scaffold Literacy and Numeracy for MLs

Thank you for participating in today's session. Please take a moment to provide us feedback.

* Indicates required question

Please mark your cohort.

☐ Elementary

☐ Secondary

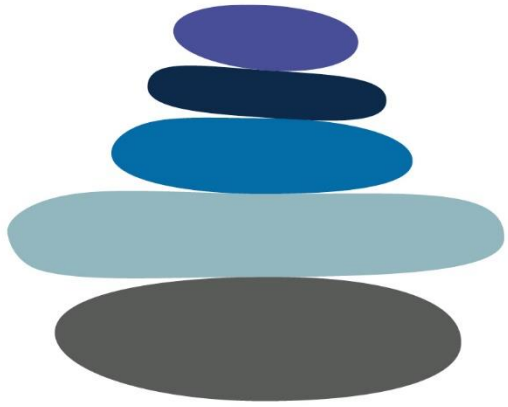
What did you appreciate about today's session? *

Your answer _____



Questions





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Thank You!

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