

**Lesson Plan**

[Week 1] Mon, Jan 8

**\*\*Set up Kahoot quiz: kahoot.com (hyunjinjinnak@gmail.com)**

**\*\*Need: poster paper, markers, index cards (one acronym on each), sticky notes**

<b>11:45-12:15</b>	Welcome!
<b>(30 min.)</b>	My name is- and -: introduce my name & story (4 min.)
	My language experience: introduce my language experience (4 min.)
	“Your turn”: explain > Hand out index cards; hand out syllabus (5 min)
	Students work individually (15 min)
	Group ss; provide reading articles, guiding questions (poster paper & markers)
<b>12:15-1:15</b>	Centers: 4 centers (15 min. in each)
<b>(60 min.)</b>	- Syllabus quiz (9 questions; 5 min); Remind to write down notes for questions
	- Sharing (10 min)

**Break**

**1:15-1:30 (15 min.)**

<b>1:30-2:00</b>	Gallery walk (Group A/B) (10 min. each; 20 min.)
<b>(30 min.)</b>	Review through acronyms; questions? (10 min)
<b>2:00-2:23</b>	Who are ELLs? Kahoot quiz (7 min.)
<b>(23 min.)</b>	ELL Demographics (8 min)
	Florida Consent Decree (8 min)

<b>2:23-2:25</b>	Announcement; assignment for next class
<b>(2 min.)</b>	Wrap-up



## What English-Language Learners Wish Teachers Knew

By Wendi Pillars

June 22, 2016

Despite the fact that English-language learners (ELLs) and immigrant students have been the fastest growing student subgroup in the United States for the past 10 years, teachers continue to report that they feel unprepared to work with students who are language learners. Professional development for reaching ELLs seems, at best, a one-shot deal, even though ELL enrollment continues to increase annually in most states. As of 2013, there were 4.5 million language learners in the United States, nearly 1 in 10 students in public schools, and they are not going to disappear.

I believe teachers are frustrated. Teachers continually ask me, an English as a second language (ESL) teacher, what to “do” with “them,” and worry about “them” bringing scores down. They wonder why they have to have “those kids” in their classroom, and ask me what I will do with “my” kids while everyone else does the “regular” activity.

It breaks my heart. Of all the labels and data points (ELLs, ESL learners, LEPs, ELs, immigrants, migrants, LEP subgroup, Title III accountability, AMAOs considered in AYP, etc.), the absolute worst one of all is “*your kids*”.

In an effort to portray our students, who happen to be language learners, as the humans they are—stripped of labels, and devoid of data points—my students created a project entitled: *I have a face, I have a name, I have a voice*. Part of the project was indeed about honing language skills, but the sweet spot of learning lies in the center of content, purpose, and application. Students were determined to use this project to catalyze change and improve how teachers view ELLs. Here are their top takeaways compiled from the things they wish teachers knew.

**#4: Remember they are intelligent.** Just because they aren’t proficient in the English language—yet—doesn’t mean they are “stupid.” They are deeply attuned to body language and tone of voice—be mindful of yours. They have an incredible wealth of knowledge and experiences that inform their thinking and worldviews. Ask them what they know and ask them to share their experiences, even if only in pictures. They have fascinating stories of multidimensional resilience, courage, and perseverance that each of us can learn from.

**#3: Be patient.** Give them time to answer, to complete their work, and to think of the words they need. Allowing time to process, to listen, to manipulate the thoughts in their minds, and express their understanding as well as they can will help them feel more confident and successful. This also necessitates a positive classroom community, in which peers are equally patient and understanding. It further necessitates teachers knowing exactly what students should walk away from class knowing each day, and sharing those objectives with the students so they can measure their own learning.

**#2: Hold them accountable for their work and participation.** Provide feedback on what they do well and areas they can work on to become better. Make sure each student answers questions and participates in class every day. Don’t ignore “them,” or take it easy on “them.” Challenge them to do what others are expected to do at the very least, if not more, and celebrate their progress. If you lessen or lower your expectations for them, they know this,

and equate it with teachers not caring about them. When imagining what they are capable of accomplishing, students often take their cues from us. We know that our expectations of our students are often self-fulfilling, and language learners are no different.

By far the most frequently mentioned action that teachers can take to help language learners:

**#1: Talk to them.** Or at least try. Don't ignore them. Talk to them about non-academic things, their interests, their dreams and goals, and what they did during the weekend. Give them responsibilities in the classroom to demonstrate trust. Talk to them honestly about the obstacles they face. Spend time, when possible, in one-on-one interactions, whether it is during class or after-school tutoring. In other words, build relationships with them. Doing so helps us remember to see what they can do, rather than what they cannot do. From my listening and observing, it's also vital for us to impart the following message to our students about their responsibilities:

"Many teachers and classmates may consider you as invisible. Rather than wait for the perfect circumstances or for others to take the initiative to "see" you, it's time to take the responsibility to write, to tell your own story, and to represent yourself. You are important, and it's up to you to ensure that everyone knows you are. Turn your dreams, hopes, experiences, goals, and thinking into action. Use them to color yourself in, to fill in the proverbial lines and make yourself fully visible. You've worked so hard to get where you are today. Some of you have sacrificed beyond imagination ... but your story doesn't end here. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to make yourself visible. Doing so will provide the missing puzzle piece for others, so they know you, and begin to see you as the complex human being you are. Once they have seen you from your perspective, and have heard your voice and your story, you will have begun to catalyze change. You will have set into motion teachers' desires to view all students in a new way. In turn, others, too, will become visible. Their voices will be heard."

As teachers, our role is to be actors, advocates, and allies—not bystanders. Although it's true we live in an amazing country with powerful ideals—"The American Dream"—our journey, and that of our students, is far from over. Using the phrase "your kids" deflects our investment and responsibility in every student's learning, and denies us the richness of their lives. English-learners are not going away. They are "our kids" through and through, an integral piece of "our world," now and in the future.

I am not so naive as to believe all the labels or polarized conversations will disappear, but I refuse to let it be the only conversation. Listening to each other's stories can inspire us to care in a different way and consider what we need to do differently—better—to help all of our students succeed.

It may be demanding to work with our English-learners, but in the heart of our greatest challenges, we can indeed stumble upon life's most incredible gifts. It takes courage from all sides, which is only apt since courage comes from the Latin word for heart, at once the center and starting point for the most impactful learning.

*Wendi Pillars, NBCT, has been teaching students who are language learners for 21 years, both stateside and overseas. She is the author of [Visual Notetaking for Educators: A Teacher's Guide to Student Creativity](#), a member of the [Center for Teaching Quality Collaboratory](#), and a current Teacher for Global Classrooms Fellow. She can be reached on Twitter [@wendi322](#).*