



MUTUALLY ADAPTIVE LEARNING PARADIGM®

# WHAT IS MALP®?

culturally responsive-sustaining education for all learners

## Definition of MALP®

The Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm®, or MALP®, is a culturally responsive and culturally sustaining instructional approach for struggling language learners. It is intended to transition these learners—from their preferred and customary ways of learning to Western-style formal education by integrating key elements of formal education while balancing and acknowledging the needs, preferences, and priorities of struggling language learners. With MALP®, instructors have a concrete, practical set of guidelines to follow in designing and delivering instruction to this population.

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Many struggling learners, especially those learning a new language and/or participating in a new culture, do not share these assumptions. Because they are accustomed to different ways of learning, they experience “cultural dissonance” (Ibarra, 2001). To address this dissonance in a culturally responsive manner, teachers focus on the new ways of thinking and performing in school settings. MALP® is a mutually adaptive approach that assists in reducing the cultural dissonance struggling learners face in their new school settings. MALP® takes elements of the learners’ paradigm and elements of the formal educational paradigm to form a transitional approach and help address the cultural dissonance these learners face.

Culture is often defined or viewed simply as “holidays and heroes.” MALP®, a culturally responsive teaching approach, looks more deeply into what culture means as it applies to classroom settings. According to DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004),

*“Culture acts as a filter or set of lenses through which we view and interpret the world around us.”*

Western-style education is based on a set of cultural assumptions that require specific “lenses.”

Primary among these are:

- ▶ Students believe in the promise of future reward from education.
- ▶ Students will become independent learners who pursue individual excellence in their learning.
- ▶ Students arrive with the age-appropriate background in literacy and can both learn and demonstrate mastery through print.
- ▶ Students are accustomed to and familiar with Western-style, academic ways of thinking and school-based tasks.

# MALP® Teacher Planning Checklist

Our MALP® Teacher Planning Checklist guides teachers in using this innovative instructional approach.

## A. ACCEPT CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING

MALP® asks teachers to create a learning environment based on the conditions struggling learners need to feel comfortable. They expect to see immediately how classwork directly relates to their lives. They often come from collectivistic cultures and work best in classrooms that encourage the formation of a strong web of relationships among teachers, students and their families.

Accept Conditions for Learning	
A1.	<input type="radio"/> I am making this lesson/project immediately relevant to my students' lives.
A2.	<input type="radio"/> I am helping students develop and maintain interconnectedness with each other.

## B. COMBINE PROCESSES FOR LEARNING

MALP® instruction provides opportunities to move frequently between individual accountability and sharing of knowledge and responsibilities. Individual accountability is a hallmark of Western-style education, yet struggling learners are generally more accustomed to working together. MALP® activities integrate oral and written modes, providing learners with the requisite scaffolding to develop literacy. These learners are used to oral transmission modes of learning and less familiar with learning and conveying information through print.

Combine Processes for Learning	
B1.	<input type="radio"/> I am incorporating both shared responsibility and individual accountability
B2.	<input type="radio"/> I am scaffolding written word through oral interaction.

## C. TARGET NEW ACTIVITIES FOR LEARNING with FAMILIAR LANGUAGE and CONTENT

MALP® asks teachers to explicitly teach the academic ways of thinking and school-based tasks that are largely unfamiliar to the learners. These tasks must, however, be introduced using familiar language and previously mastered content.

Focus on New Activities for Learning	
C1.	<input type="radio"/> I am focusing on tasks requiring academic ways of thinking.
C2.	<input type="radio"/> I am making these tasks accessible with familiar language and content.
C3.	<input type="radio"/> I am using familiar language and content as scaffolds.

[www.malpeducation.com](http://www.malpeducation.com)

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MALP® LLC is dedicated to providing educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources to implement the Mutually Adaptive Learning Paradigm® successfully.

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