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Mac introduces new ELL curriculum

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 Of the News-Register

Vehicles were the subject Monday afternoon in one of Carol Baltazar's intermediate English Language Learner sessions at Newby Elementary School.

"What are vehicles?" she asked, holding up a brightly colored drawing of a travel agency office, with trucks and cars visible outside with window.

The children were eager to answer. "Vehicles are things that get you from one place to another," Santiago Ponce said.

He and his six classmates all are fairly proficient at their second language. They still have more to learn, though, so they spend 30 minutes a day in Newby's ELL room before returning to their regular classes.



Opinions	They are among about 650 students in the McMinnville School District qualifying for daily ELL services - about 20 percent of the district's elementary school enrollment.
Editorials	
Letters	
Commentary	Some enter McMinnville schools knowing no English at all. Others confidently speak quite a bit, but still need help with the written language.
Online Forum	
Arts & Entertainment	In ELL, students are grouped by skill level rather than grade level. That lets them progress as quickly as possible, said Christian Frack, director of ELL and migrant programs for the district.
A & E News	
Reviews	
TV Listings	Students move from the beginning level - no English - to the advanced level - near proficiency. The district's goal is for each student to be proficient in English within five years, Frack said.
Movie Listings	
Business & Real Estate	---
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Real Estate News	A new supplementary curriculum - the one with the colorful pictures of vehicles - is helping the district reach that goal. Called "Carousel of Ideas," the English Language Development curriculum goes hand-in-hand with the "Avenues" curriculum introduced earlier.
Yellow Pages	
HomeFinder	
Special Reports	The two fit together nicely and strengthen each other, Baltazar said. Together, they are part of the effort to make ELL services consistent across the district.
Out of the Shadows	
Communication	That's important, she said, especially when students change schools, either because their families move or because of boundary changes.
Breakdown	
Learning Curve	
Making The Grade	Chosen by the district's ELL Curriculum Adoption Committee this year, Carousel aligns perfectly with state standards for students who are learning English, Baltazar said.
Free To Go	
Habitat for Humanity	
Sex Offenders: Outside	
Meth: In The Grip	She said she is pleased that Carousel is visually oriented. It includes sets of picture dictionaries, story books, flash cards and other materials with themes such as animals, clothing or transportation.
Land of Promise	
PERS In-Depth	
Spruce Goose	The latter theme is what her students were working on this day. Santiago and his classmates identified various vehicles as the teacher flipped through picture flash cards: helicopter, sailboat, train and fire engine, for example.
Public Information	
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Special Sections	They giggled about the picture of a tow truck. The previous week, they had discussed the difference between "tow," as in pull along, and "toe," as in the digit you wriggle.



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In Spanish, the first language of most of McMinnville's ELL students, the two words wouldn't be confused. The verb "to tow" is "remolcar" and the noun "toe" is "dedo" or "dedo del pie," the latter translating literally as "toe of the foot."

Baltazar put the pictures down and picked up another set of cards, this one with the names of the vehicles written in English. Students read most of the names quickly, although they stumbled momentarily when they saw a word starting with "a," confusing "airplane" and "ambulance."

The teacher held up the card for "bicycle." "How do you spell the short word for a bicycle?" she asked.

"B-I-C-K?" a student guessed, and another offered, "B-I-K?"

Baltazar reminded them that the correct spelling is "B-I-K-E," and talked again about the silent "E" - a construction that doesn't occur in Spanish.

In her third year at Newby, Baltazar understands the frustrations of learning the rules of a new language.

A native English speaker, she became fluent in Spanish, then taught in Mexico, before moving to McMinnville.

Her experience helps her communicate with youngster who speak mostly Spanish. It also helps her understand the nuances of the two languages most prone to confusion, such as the silent letters of English or the need to pluralize both the noun and adjective in Spanish.

Although most of her ELL instruction is in English, she sprinkles in some Spanish words, too. During the transportation lesson, she watched the students list some of their favorite vehicles.

"I see perfect spelling," she said, eyeing Adilene Madrigal and Alvaro Medina's papers.
 "Perfecto, Adilene! Good job, Alvaro, muy bien!"




As the 30-minute period ended Monday afternoon, Baltazar gathered up papers and pointed to a shelf loaded with novels and non-fiction volumes in Spanish.

"Should we check out books tomorrow or Wednesday?" she asked.



In English, students answered immediately. "Today!"

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