

I gathered the following resources for the interests of middle school aged English Learners in mind with a WIDA level of Developing and higher, although many of the sites provide resources to students from Kindergarten to adult and all WIDA levels.

**Epals Global Community** <http://www.epals.com/>

The project I chose to join was “Class in Japan Seeks Partners for Introduce Your City Video Exchange Project”. The goal of the project was to have students from various countries around the world to create a video that represents their city to share on a “YouTube” platform. The initiator was a class of 9<sup>th</sup> graders studying English in Tokyo, Japan. I chose the project because I have created videos with my students in the past and it was highly engaging to the students. In addition, I felt as though my students would be interested in experimenting with YouTube as a medium. Even in our multicultural environment, we don’t always take the time to explore and understand other cultures and this provided a great opportunity. The ability to learning about various countries and cultures in the world from other young students’ perspectives is priceless. The project has not reached its completion as the classes abroad as well as my class are still in the creating stages of the project. My students really enjoyed the planning process and have begun to create a video that will eventually provide insight into the South Providence community and the various cultures my class represents to share with the other five countries that are participating.

**Website and Application Resources**

***Reading:***

1. Screen Actor’s Guild. (2013). Storyline online. Retrieved October 25, 2013.  
<http://www.storylineonline.net/>.

This website is from the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and is a collection of picture books read aloud by famous actors. The website contains a variety of multicultural books, as well as options for students’ different age and reading levels. The books are read at a clear and slow pace making it easy for ELLs to follow. The videos alternate between the actor’s reading and panning of the books pages. The books have rich illustrations to attract readers. There is enough variety in topic that any age level could find an appropriate book to read and enjoy.

WIDA Level: Beginning through Reaching

Interest level: Elementary through Adult

Grade Level: 2.7-4.1

Teacher Resources: There are thorough activity guides for each book available as a pdf download.

2. Adept Digital. n.d. World stories. Retrieved October 2, 2013.  
<http://www.worldstories.org.uk/stories/stories>

This is a website that provides stories from around the world in two languages, in English and in the language of the story's origin. This is a great website for exploring multicultural stories. It is likely that students can find and hear a story in their native language as well as English since so many languages are represented. The students can read along with the story while listening either in English or the language of origin. The languages included are: Akan, Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Danish, Filipino, French, German, Greek, Gujarti, Hindi, Javanese, Kannada, Korean, Mandarin, Pashto, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Yoruba, Zulu. Stories are also divided by collections for browsing. The students can rate the emotion the story provoked for them using emoticons, and view emoticons of other young readers.

WIDA Level: Beginning through Reaching

Interest Level: Pre-K through Adult

Reading level not given

Teacher Resources: Stories downloadable in pdf and mp3, Teacher guides available for each story

Family: Many languages and literacy level options, plus the option of hearing the story in native language.

3. Newsela. 2013. Newsela | Nonfiction Literacy and Current Events. Retrieved October 22, 2013. <http://www.newsela.com/>

Access to the website requires free registration. This website contains various current events articles that can be modified by lexile or grade level using a lexile converter tool. The articles are divided by categories of War & Peace, Money, Kids, Science and Law, so various topics of interest and students of various ages can find articles of interest. Next to each article is a scale of lexile or grade level. When a lexile/or grade level is chosen, the article is modified accordingly for appropriate reading levels. This is helpful for ELLs since the article can be modified to match their reading level. It also offers access to current events to older learners of English.

WIDA Level: Developing through Reaching.

Interest Level: Middle School through Adult

Lexile: 650-1170

Teacher Resources: This site could be used to provide various reading levels of the same article for current events or reading. As a teacher you can add your class roster and assign articles with or without quizzes. Grades are recorded right on the website.

4. Poetry Archive. 2005. Children's Poetry Archive. Retrieved October 1, 2013. <http://www.poetryarchive.org/childrensarchive/home.do>

This is a website where students can listen to poetry read by their authors. Students can search by theme, poetry form or for a specific poem on the children's archive. The poems were chosen specifically for children. Students can read the poem while listening to the reading by the poet. The reading by the poet conveys meaning and message that may be lost when reading alone. Also, it combines the listening and reading elements which may help ELLs develop language. Because poems are generally short, they are a good length for ELLs that may be overwhelmed by reading longer texts.

WIDA Level: Beginner-Reaching

Interest Level: pre-K through Middle School

Reading level not given

5. National Center for Families Learning. 2010. Wonderopolis | Where the Wonders of Learning Never Cease. Retrieved October 7, 2013. <http://wonderopolis.org/>

This is a website from the National Center of Family Literacy that contains articles based on children's curiosity. There are various options for browsing the site by topic. Also you can search by grade level from pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and by 100s of subjects and subtopics. Articles answer various questions such as "How Does 3-D work?" or "What is your Favorite Kind of Chocolate?" so the students can explore topics that match their curiosity and interests. Short videos are included with each article that help bring the topic to life. This website is better geared to more advanced ELLs, but the variety of topics provides something for everyone.

WIDA Level: Expanding through Reaching

Interest Level: Upper Elementary through Adult

Flesh-Kincaid- 6-8

Teacher Resources: The site can be filtered by wonders correlating to Common Core Standards by grade level under "Educator Sandbox". There is also blog that offers ideas for the website's use in the classroom.

6. Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. 2013. BookHive: Zingertales. Retrieved October 11, 2013. <http://www.cmlibrary.org/bookhive/zingertales/>

This is a website with several features that encourage reading and writing. This website provides multicultural stories told by various storytellers. Visitors may click on "Hear a Story" to listen, although the rate of speech may be difficult for ELLs. After listening to a story the website provides suggestions for other books the reader may like to check out of the library if they enjoyed the story. You are also able to view reading and interest levels for a variety of

multicultural books. Book reviews are also included for each book, and a space for comments from young readers. Students can also create an account to create their own stories using illustrations from the websites illustration gallery.

WIDA Level: Beginning through Reaching

Interest level: Elementary through Adult

Reading level not given

7. Palmer, Dandi. nd. Picture Books by Dandi Palmer. Retrieved October 9, 2013.  
<http://www.dandi.me.uk/>

This is a collection of online picture books by Palmer that are divided by age group. There is diversity amongst the books for age levels and their cultural origin. You can page through the complete picture book, browse thumbnails of just the pictures or read a text only version of each book. Students could use this in various ways, such as reading a book, making their own stories based on illustrations, or trying their hand at comprehension without pictures. The books have engaging and colorful illustrations that should appeal to students. It is a simple layout and easy to use.

WIDA Level: Developing through Expanding.

Interest Level: Elementary through Middle School

Flesh-Kincaid: 3-6

### ***Writing***

8. Launchpad Toys. 2013. Toontastic. Version: 2.2.1. Mobile application. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>

Toontastic is an ipad application that allows students to create their own cartoon-based stories. The app is arranged in sections so that the students have a layout for sequencing all the pieces of the story. The screens are separated into: setup, conflict, challenge, climax and resolution. This helps students organize their thoughts and stories. Students can choose pre-made backgrounds and characters for their stories, or draw their own backgrounds. This can be a great way for ELLs to express their ideas even if they have limited writing skills. The prospect of creating a cartoon may motivate reluctant students to write.

WIDA Level: Beginning through Expanding.

Interest Level: Elementary through Middle School

Grade Level: Elementary through Middle School

9. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). 2013. Wordmover. Version: 1.1. Mobile application. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>.

This iPad application provides a fun way to create poetry, based on the poetry magnets for refrigerators. Students can create a word bank, use an existing word bank or choose from famous works to create their own poetry. The words can be dragged into place and moved around. Students can create different backgrounds for their poem and create different fonts and colors. This app also allows students to share their completed poems with other students. Poetry is a great way for ELLs to experiment with language. The word banks, and the flexibility to click and drag words around, make the manipulation of language simple and fun.

WIDA Level: Beginning through Reaching

Interest Level: Elementary through Adult

Teacher Resources: Specific Lesson plans divided by grade level are available at <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/mobile-apps/word-mover-30930.html#resources>.

10. Tipitap, Inc. 2011. iDiary for kids. Version 2.2. Retrieved from <http://itunes.apple.com>.

This application for the iPad is an online journal for students that allows them to make entries by writing, drawing or uploading photos for \$1.99. This could be used to encourage all levels of ELLs to begin to write since even entering students could upload a photo or draw a picture for an entry and more advanced students could write actual journal entries, enhanced with drawings and photographs. The journal saves by date so the learner could have a chronological record of their personal entries as well as proof of progress. Journaling has been shown to be an effective way to increase writing skills and fluency. This application allows students the opportunity for freedom of expression and free writing.

WIDA Level: Entering through Reaching

Interest Level: Pre-k through Adult