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### Narrative Sketch

Happy, excited, scared, and nervous. It's understandable for children to have first day jitters on the first day of kindergarten. It's even more understandable for children when kindergarten is their first schooling experience when they are use to spending all of their time at home with mom, and when their first language is different than the language spoken in their new school. Imagine what it must be like to leave your home and dad dropped you off in a building full of people you do not know. Imagine what it must be like to be a five-year-old child in a classroom full of children speaking a different language and you can't understand any of the sounds. There are new routines and expectations that you are expected to follow but not sure how because you do not understand what they are and you do not have a familiar face to help you understand.

This was the experience of one of my kindergarteners during my first year of teaching. Out of a class size of thirty students, two of my students had a different first language other than English. Ricardo's native language was Spanish and Ali's native language was Arabic. It was evident that Ricardo had a lot of exposure to English and that it was his second language. On the other hand, it was obvious that

Ali did not have a lot of experience with the English language. The beginning of Ali's kindergarten experience was full of misunderstandings, language barriers and a change in environment. Moreover, one of my coworker's native language was Arabic. She informed me that in the home, Arabic was the primary language and Ali's parents spoke and knew little English. To help Ali with his transition, she would comfort him through his native language and it helped him to have someone that he could express his ideas to while he was away from home.

During Ali's first week of school, he would jump out of seat and wonder around the classroom. He was quick to explore things instead of waiting for directions. He would often do things when he wanted to. These are things that Ali may have been use to while at home in a less structured environment, in an environment that these actions were acceptable and familiar. I realized very quickly that I needed to give Ali more explicit directions and extra help to get use to the routines that the other students were starting to follow.

Because I was teaching kindergarten, I knew that it would be beneficial to my students to model anything they were expected to do. For Ali, I would model things individually. I used fewer words to make my explanations and directions clearer for him to follow while still using complete thoughts. For example, sit on the carpet please instead of come find a spot and have a seat on the carpet please. This way he didn't have to focus on a lot of words. I focused on what he should do instead of what he was doing wrong. Sometimes taking his hand and guiding him to his seat

helped him understand certain directions. I used the same phrases for things that were apart of our routines. He heard the words more often and associated them with certain actions. We used thumbs up with a headshake when he understood and a headshake with thumbs down when he wasn't certain. He started repeating after me as well.

Lastly, it was nice to see the other students trying to help him. It was amazing to see how much he grew as the school year progressed. Once things became familiar to him, he would wait for me to signal to him that he was doing what he was expected. He started raising his hand instead of shouting out. He would use our signals whenever he needed to go somewhere in the classroom and would not get up until he had permission. He would ask for help when it was something he did not understand. I was proud to see the progress he was making in classroom and with the English language. With repetition, positive reinforcement, and comfort, the unfamiliar became familiar to Ali and he began to grow as an English Language Learner.