Why it works:

There is great diversity in students’ literacy skills and content knowledge. Getting to know students’ personal stories, learning histories, and preferences helps us prepare the learners and identify their literacy, language, and content needs to continuously monitor progress. Robert Marzano and other researchers confirm that students learn more when we give specific, timely feedback and an opportunity to improve based on that feedback. Ways to get to know students’ background include surveys, quick writes, and creative assignments.

Suggested strategies:
- Surveys
- Portfolio
- Student Conferences
- Tracking Growth
- Graphic Organizer
- Circulate

Tech tools:
- OnTrack
- A4E Dashboard
- Lead4Ward
- Proficiency Level Descriptors

In the Get to Know Me routine, we regularly:

- Get to know students’ personal stories, histories, and preferences.
- Discover and document information about students’ literacy and content status using data history.
- Create and maintain student learner profiles for each student using a portfolio.
- Assess students’ prior knowledge for each unit.
- Plan extra support or extension.
- Monitor progress.
Classroom implementation:

- **Get to know students’ personal stories, histories, and preferences.**
  Talking with and listening to students could reveal much about who they are and what they care about. You can use surveys and informal writing to collect information allowing the use of native language and providing sentence stems and/or paragraph frames. Avoid making assumptions about students’ histories and situations. Learn about their funds of knowledge from parents and colleagues.

- **Discover and document information about students’ literacy and content status using data history.**
  Consult OnTrack and the A4E Teacher Dashboard to gather data from past assessments, including TELPAS proficiency ratings as data beginning points. Engage in collaborative PLCs with peers throughout the year to discuss each student’s content and literacy strengths and needs, looking at a variety of sources including writing samples and the results of reading assessments, such as Benchmark Running Records and Universal Screener.

- **Create and maintain student learner profiles for each student using a portfolio.**
  It is worth the initial time investment to create and maintain a learner profile for each student using a portfolio to add representative work samples. Review the information at regular intervals through student conferences and colleagues. It’s important to monitor students’ progress across all domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing using the Proficiency Level Descriptors. A portfolio can be as simple as a folder kept on your desk or one created digitally.

- **Assess students’ prior knowledge for each unit.**
  It is helpful to assess students’ knowledge prior each unit of instruction. Formative assessments are important to analyze students’ readiness throughout the learning process. Provide students with graphic organizers, sentence stems and/or paragraph frames and allow beginners to use their native language, and/or visuals to illustrate concepts as needed. Tracking growth helps you reflect on student work alone or during PLCs with colleagues.

- **Plan extra support or extension.**
  When planning instruction, make sure that your plans include enough scaffolding or extension for all proficiency levels to ensure each student’s success, e.g. graphic organizers, sentence stems and/or paragraph frames and allowing beginners to use their native language, and/or visuals. Portfolios can help inform instructional decisions for students of all levels. Think about which students could benefit from Huddle.

- **Monitor progress.**
  In brief student conferences, involve students by tracking growth, give them precise feedback, and set goals for improvement. Ask questions and listen in one-on-one exchanges. When you circulate as students engage in Let’s Talk and Pen/cil to Paper, take a few seconds to connect and give feedback.