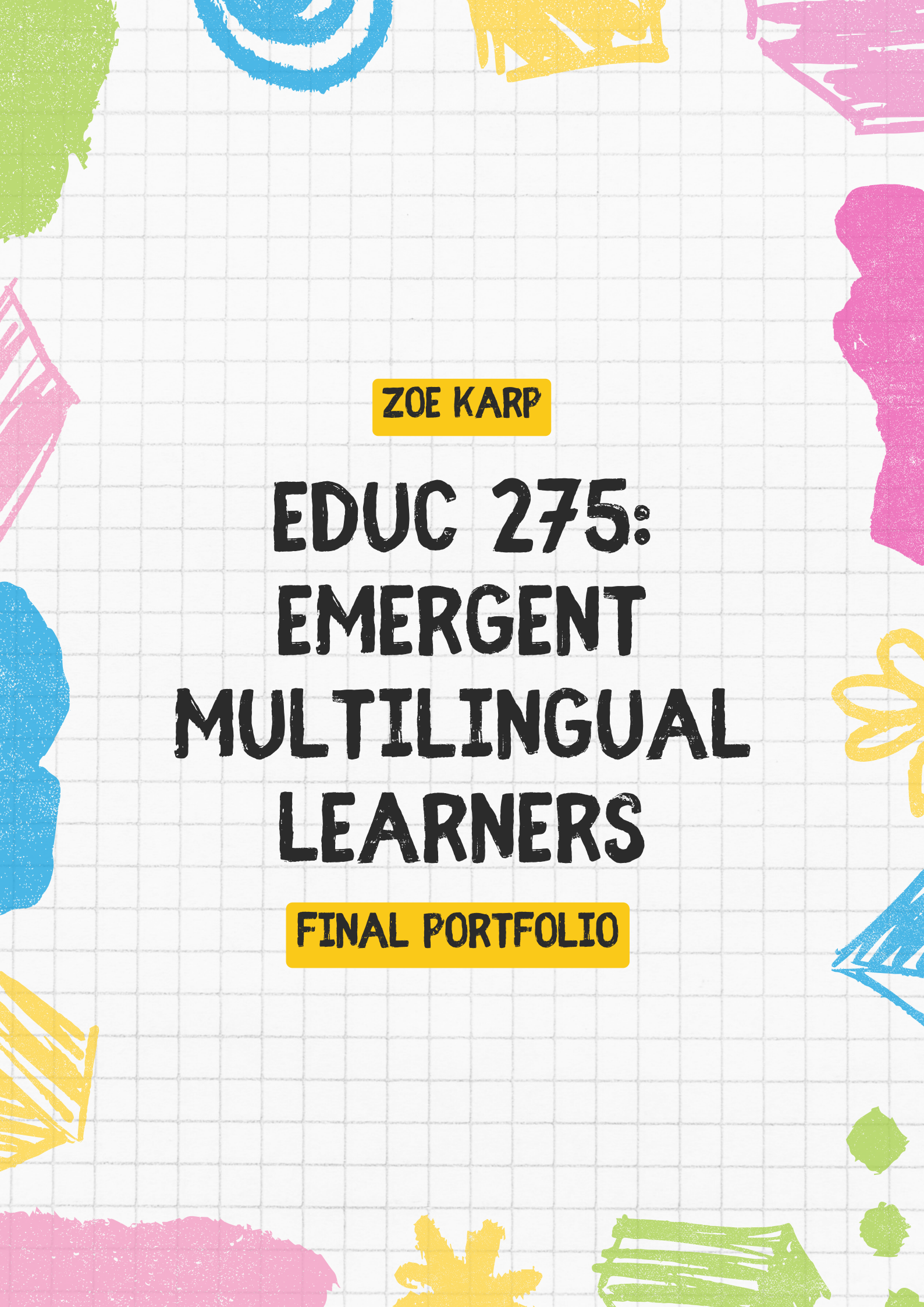




ZOE KARP

**EDUC 275:
EMERGENT
MULTILINGUAL
LEARNERS**

FINAL PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION

Coming into this course, I had no idea what it meant to be a student in a primarily English-speaking school who speaks a different language at home, and I hadn't spent much time considering the experiences or even the traumas that come with it. I spent a lot of the semester reflecting on my ignorance and disregard for these experiences, and coming to understand that part of the reason I hadn't considered them is because language was never much of a concern for me in my schooling. Because of this positionality and the time I've spent reckoning with it, what immediately comes to mind when I think of emergent multilingual learners is the concept of possibility.

I've come to deeply believe that to be an emergent multilingual learner is to be full of possibility. I think this is most precisely and aptly defined by the term "funds of knowledge," that every student enters into a classroom with a defining set of experiences that change their worldview, and that teachers are most able to create an open, inclusive, and exploratory classroom by drawing on their students funds of knowledge. To me, these funds of knowledge represent the possibility present in every child to be a wholly embraced community member.

I do think that as we discussed throughout the course, possibility isn't always the immediate association with multilingual learners, but the culture and pedagogy are shifting more in that direction, though not quickly enough. Particularly in regard to the policies and structures around bilingual education, it seems to me that what was once viewed as a restriction and a detriment is now being viewed as an asset, like in the repealing of California's Prop 227.

I've also been thinking a lot about what possibility means for me as a future educator. I think that first and foremost, it feels crucial to me to always remain focused on what students bring to the classroom, not on any perceived issues that they present. I've come to believe that one of the only ways to transformatively support EMLLs is to function under the assumption of possibility, and to rely on their lived experiences to draw out that possibility.

ARTIFACT 1: LINGUISTIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY

It feels like a really interesting retrospective look back on my semester to reflect on my Linguistic Autobiography. I continue to be proud of the work I turned in, but I'm particularly struck by the new understanding I have of language and identity after the course has concluded. I remember that as I was writing this project, I was struggling to come up with ways to represent my language and linguistic experience that was in any way out of the norm. To be honest, I think some of this searching was coming from a place of wanting to prove that as a woman, or as a Jewish person, I've also experienced oppression, but in doing so, I didn't do a complete enough job of addressing my positionality and privilege as a white person. The language I use is deeply rooted in the privilege that comes from all my identities, particularly my whiteness, and the fact that I was struggling to generate examples of it being outside the societal standard is indicative of the fact that I've never really had to consider myself as outside of societal standards.

Particularly after reading "An Indian Father's Plea" by Robert Lake (Medicine Grizzlybear) and other first-person accounts from people with the experience of being an emergent multilingual learner, I think I would approach this assignment completely differently. Rather than defining my language and linguistic experience in terms of specific vocabulary, I think I would take a more holistic approach, focusing on the cultural and societal building blocks that have factored into my privilege, and therefore, my language. In "An Indian Father's Plea," Lake points to the fact that his son is not at a cultural disadvantage, he's simply culturally different, and I think I could've taken some of this sentiment to explore cultural and linguistic differences in my life, not just focusing on oppression or disadvantage.

ARTIFACT 2: PRAXIS 2

All of the Praxis assignments, but Praxis 2 in particular, gave me a more nuanced understanding and a more specific critical reflection on my fieldwork site. Looking at the pedagogy at Davenport through the lens of Problem/Right/Resource was, in the end, an immensely heartbreaking thing to do. My eventual conclusion was that at Davenport, language is viewed at the very least as a problem, so much so that it isn't discussed or worked with in any capacity. While I was working on this Praxis assignment, I found myself growing increasingly emotional about the fact that a crucial aspect of students' identities was being disregarded so fully, that I couldn't pick up on any concrete pedagogical moves towards a more linguistically inclusive environment. I absolutely don't feel that there's anything malicious or strategic about this neglect, it just feels so clear that it isn't a priority on a systemic level.

While Praxis 2 was a particularly difficult assignment emotionally, I found the praxis assignments as a whole to be incredibly valuable as a way of understanding the more subtle aspects of the curriculum and life in general at Davenport. To be totally honest, a lot of what I gained from these assignments was an understanding of the kind of teaching and pedagogy I *don't* want to embody in my career, mainly in terms of the lack of supports, scaffolds, and reliance on the funds of knowledge of students I saw at Davenport.

Although I had a few really valuable discussions with my host teacher, I'm definitely left with some questions about the specific pedagogical moves she made, and if she had a particular awareness or motivation behind the moves. On a larger level, I have many remaining questions about the social-emotional development of multilingual learners in schools that don't place much value on their home languages.

ARTIFACT 3:

PROBLEM/RIGHT/RESOURCE

DISCUSSION POST



DP 3

by **Zoe Karp** - Wednesday, 18 September 2024, 12:23 PM

Based on our recent readings and discussions, one way that I've been thinking about this question is language as a promise. In some ways, I think this could fall under the umbrella of "language as a resource," but I found Suoto-Manning's supposition that there's a shift needed between being seen as "at risk" to being seen as "at promise" to be incredibly interesting. I think there are two ways to look at the word promise. One way is what I believe Suoto-Manning was getting at: the ability to speak multiple languages opens up huge opportunities for students, not just economically and professionally, but also socially and as a way to understand themselves in the context of the world. I see the other way of looking at promise as a kind of contract or agreement, whether that be between the teacher and the student, the family and the school, or just communities in general. Looking at language as a promise demonstrates the necessity of being able to understand one another within a living and learning community. I think "language as a promise" could be seen as a commitment made to understanding each other, meeting students where they are, and creating a curriculum to support growth in all languages.

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Re: DP 3

by **Josie Cosentino** - Saturday, 21 September 2024, 3:18 PM

Hi Zoe!!

I am absolutely in love with the use of the word "promise" here and especially appreciate the way you use readings to strengthen your points. I like that you emphasize the ways promise is a word of action rather than a stationary description. "Language as a promise could be seen as a commitment" is something that really resonated with me. I am wondering what it would look like to promise or to commit to learning each others modes of communication. Its hard not to feel that the world would undeniably be improved if we could all meet each other where we were linguistically, rather than imposing the standards of one language as a means for communicaiton.

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Re: DP 3

by **Annabella Hernandez** - Sunday, 13 October 2024, 9:40 AM

I am so interested in this concept of "language as promise" especially in your second interpretation which is where language as promise is a "commitment made to understanding each other, meeting students where they are, and creating a curriculum to support growth in all languages." I think this really highlights the ideal relationship that should occur between teachers and not just EMLs, but all students, where educators are committed to understanding their students' learning styles and life circumstances in order to best assist them in learning. This goes to show that helping a disadvantaged group almost always helps other people who are not disadvantaged in that way as well (of course thinking about "disadvantaged" as something EMLs are made into by a monolingual system of education and not as something their language inherently makes them).

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ARTIFACT 3:

PROBLEM/RIGHT/RESOURCE

DISCUSSION POST

This particular discussion post felt like it was of so much value, and I found myself returning to it as the semester went on. First and foremost, I found the question to be really interesting; language and the teaching of language absolutely exceed the confines of labels like “problem,” “right,” or “resource,” so it felt really important that we were able to extend beyond these three definitions.

I think that this discussion post really shaped the way I approached the rest of the course, particularly in how I thought about the assigned readings in relation to real-life experiences, whether that be in my fieldwork or otherwise. Before this discussion post, I don’t think I was completely grasping the connection between the theory and the practice. When I began thinking about how the way people in power view language can shift and change the content or pedagogy being taught, I couldn’t stop seeing the connections. I’ve always been a little bit skeptical about the number of labels in the education field—sometimes it just feels a little bit overly complex to me—but this consideration of problem/right/resource really concretized the ways in which labels are crucial in order to give students the care that is needed.

This discussion post thread also felt indicative of one of the most meaningful aspects of this course to me: the communication with my classmates. I was so struck by the thoughtful manner in which Josie and Annabella responded to my post, and how their interpretations of my idea expanded and broadened it in such an amazing way. I found their questions and connections to be so thought-provoking, which is completely in line with how I’ve experienced all my classmates in this course.

ARTIFACT 4: INDIVIDUAL

INQUIRY PROJECT

For this project, I worked to replicate a spread from Booklist Magazine, a magazine many librarians use to order books for their school library.

I found the Individual Inquiry Project to be one of the most engaging projects I've worked on in college so far. Because I had a fairly broad understanding of what I wanted to work on, I loved that I was able to narrow down my questions as the project went on and land on something that felt relevant and important to the things I'd been thinking about throughout the whole course. If I hadn't been working on this project, I don't think I would've been so intentionally attuned to the book and resources that were available for the students at my fieldwork placement. So much of my understanding of my fieldwork site was due to the observations I had about their materials, so I think I would've missed a huge aspect of importance had I not been doing this project.

Although I came into the class share with most of the content of my project solidified, I found the conversations I had with my classmates to be transformative. One of the main changes I made was making my font size bigger; someone pointed out that the size of the font I had started with wasn't necessarily the most accessible. I also changed some of the wording in my introduction paragraphs and content objectives/activities based on the conversations I had. Although I wasn't able to actually make this change given the time frame and resources I was working with, I had a few conversations about translating the whole article into other languages, which I would've loved to be able to implement.

ARTIFACT 4: INDIVIDUAL INQUIRY PROJECT CONTINUED

This project succeeded in bringing up far more questions for me than it answered. As I was creating the project, different aspects and avenues that I hadn't considered kept popping up in my head and have certainly lingered since then, especially after having the opportunity to discuss them with the class. I absolutely believe that picture books are a hugely important way to engage with multilingual learners and represent their experiences and languages in a concrete way, but I've been wondering what it means to ask an English-speaking teacher or librarian to read a book out loud that's in another language. I think what it primarily means is that the teacher must opt into doing some work; while it wouldn't necessarily be realistic to expect a non-Native speaker to fluently and seamlessly read a picture book in another language, I do think that an effort would have to be made in order to not completely butcher the language. During my discussions in class, some people pointed out that this could be a moment to rely on student voices, which I thought was a really valuable suggestion.

I've also been thinking a lot about the authors of these books. I did my best to select books that are written by people in the culture they're writing about, but was faced with the question of if a book is valuable and has important things to teach, but is written by someone outside of the culture, is it still okay to use? This was the case with *The Pet Dragon* by Christoph Niemann, a really beautiful book about Chinese pictography written by a white man.

Overall, I found this project to be so important and eye-opening, and it's left me with a huge number of things to consider going forward in my teaching career.

ARTIFACT 5: 10/28 CLASS

NOTES

Date 10/28/24

Imagine yourself as an educator:

- 1st grade, maybe SPED
- I love the idea of community walks, dialogue journals
- home visits: opt-in framework, offer different settings for a meeting

Content Objective:

- tells what students will know or be able to do by end of lesson
- tied to standards
- often drawn from curriculum maps or frameworks
- should be written in student-friendly language + shared orally
 - ↳ sheltered immersion observation protocol

SLOP: content and language (how they demonstrate what they know) objective

- ↳ no separation between content and language teachers
- public schools: requirement to display objective

Writing one:

- from "competencies" category on content map
- 1-2 lessons max - sliver of the "competencies"
- SWBAT (students will be able to)
 - ↳ verbs need to be active and observable - not "learn"
 - ↳ list, identify, locate, memorize, review, label, describe, name, match, recall, reproduce, demonstrate, predict, compare, solve, apply, combine, compose, test, choose, select, justify, defend, support

Westmont 3rd Grade SS

- Identify positions of authority at school and community
 - ↳ identify different jobs associated with community authority figures

Bloom's taxonomy → remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, create

many curriculums
(esp. for minorities) only
exist at these levels

ARTIFACT 5: CLASS NOTES

Learning about content and language objectives was one of the most transformative moments in this course for me. As much value as I found in the theoretical material (and it was a lot of value), having the opportunity to put that theory into practice and begin to understand what it actually entails to be a teacher of emergent multilingual learners was a deeply important experience for me. The concrete language of “tells what students will know or be able to do by the end of the lesson” was really helpful for me in terms of conceptualizing what an objective actually is, and it is language I’ve returned to through the rest of the course to ground myself in specific expectations.

I don’t know if I would’ve gotten the same value out of the course as a whole if we hadn’t spent time talking about content and language objectives. It gave me a totally new perception at my fieldwork, where I found myself looking and listening for clues as to what the teacher’s SWBAT might be, and it feels like a specific, measurable step I now have in my toolkit.

The other biggest aspect of this was Bloom’s Taxonomy. I’d never seen this concept before, and I was immediately struck by how helpful it was, and by the fact that my initial inclination is always to make objectives that exist on the lower levels of the hierarchy, and how much harder I have to work to push the objective to the levels of analyze, evaluate, or create. I used Bloom’s Taxonomy a huge amount while creating the SWBATs in my Individual Inquiry Project; I had to constantly be reminding myself to push further and further. I found the taxonomy to be a logical representation of the things I’ve been thinking about in terms of “possibility” and having high expectations for my students: I want to always push myself to see students beyond their ability to regurgitate knowledge, especially for emergent multilingual learners.

CONCLUSION

I don't think I'm ever going to be able to put into words how transformative this course was for me. Coming from a place of immense privilege, I simply hadn't taken the time to consider multilingual learners as a group, and now I don't feel like I'm ever going to be able to stop considering. This work is going to deeply inform all my future work at Haverford and beyond, so much so that it's opened me up to the idea of working with emergent multilingual learners as an educator.

First and foremost, I'm going to take with me the immense empathy and understanding that's required of teachers when students are coming from backgrounds that don't align with their own. There's something irreplaceable about every individual student's life experience, and there is so much care and consideration needed to help students bring those experiences to the classroom. Not only do I feel more equipped for this kind of empathy after taking this course, but I also feel like I have an understanding of some of the practical steps that can be taken to ensure inclusive communities, particularly in regard to communication with family and understanding of prior communities and experiences outside of school.

I'm left with a huge number of questions that I truly can't wait to explore. Mainly, I'm wondering about what it means to be a white, monolingual teacher of emergent multilingual learners. I don't think it's possible to distill that experience into one answer, and I think there are countless ways to approach that role, but as of right now, I believe that a primary factor in being an inclusive teacher when coming from this position of privilege is to be a good listener, and to get to know your students as people outside of an academic setting.

CONCLUSION CONTINUED

I would also be curious to explore a bit more about the intersections emergent multilingual learners have with other groupings, particularly what it looks like to be a multilingual learner and someone placed in a special education classroom. I'm curious about what policies and structures schools have in place for this situation, and if one factor (either language or ability) is pushed to the side in order to focus on the other.

Coming into this class, I felt like I knew exactly what my teaching career would look like. Coming away from it, I now have a completely different vision for my life and the kind of teacher I want to be, and I can't wait to get started!