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Educating Emergent Bilinguals

Policies, Programs, and Practices for Multilingual Learners

THIRD EDITION

Ofelia García, Jo Anne Kleifgen,
and Claudia Cervantes-Soon

Foreword by Jim Cummins
Afterword by Ramón Antonio Martínez

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the concepts of multiliteracies, initiated by the New London Group; multimodality, as defined and elaborated by Gunther Kress; and social semiotics, the foundational theory proposed by M. A. K. Halliday.
2. What are some of the inequities that low-income and minoritized students face with regard to where and when they can use digital technologies?
3. What are some ways that generative AI might support emergent bilinguals? What do educators need to know about the opportunities and challenges that this tool presents?
4. Describe the four affordances offered by ICTs and give examples from the research of how they support emergent bilinguals' learning.
5. Select one or two of the practices described in the research and discuss how they illustrate more than one affordance for learning. For example, how might one technology implementation demonstrate both accessibility and retrievability? Interactivity and creativity? Other combinations?

CHAPTER 10

Signposts

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this concluding chapter, we will:

- Summarize what we have learned about:
 - » Who emergent bilinguals are and what educational programs exist for them,
 - » Language theory and research,
 - » Bilingual programs and practices,
 - » Curriculum and other practices,
 - » Family and community engagement,
 - » Assessment, and
 - » Affordances of technology.
- Offer signposts: a set of detailed recommendations for advocates, policymakers, educators, and researchers to provide a more equitable education for emergent bilinguals.

Throughout this book, we have presented the case for reconceptualizing English language learners in American schools as *emergent bilinguals*. This concept recognizes the value of the students' home language practices as resources for learning and as markers of their identity as individuals who have creative ways of knowing, being, and communicating. The term *emergent* emphasizes the "loopiness" of bilingual development and the internal connectedness of the linguistic/multimodal, the cognitive, the social, the emotional, and the lived bodily experience as students do language in meaningful interactions. The term *bilingual* challenges the current silencing of bilingualism in education; it also links the present battle against deficit thinking and raciolinguistic ideologies to the historical antiracist struggles of language-minoritized communities during the civil rights era of the 1960s. In repositioning these students from English learners to emergent bilinguals, we have been able to expose the dissonance between research findings on the best ways to educate them and the current educational policies and practices that have disregarded them.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

In Chapter 2, we began to address how emergent bilinguals have been identified and demonstrated the discrepancies in the way they have been counted and classified in federal, state, and even school district agencies. We identified problems with counting and sorting; for example, some agencies exclude from the count any bilingual students who have not been classified as English learners. What is clear is that the language-minoritized population is growing more rapidly than the monolingual English-speaking population; the number of bilingual students has increased dramatically. What the data also show is that most emergent bilinguals attend schools in high-poverty urban school districts where classrooms are often crowded, enrichment programs and material resources are lacking, and teachers are underqualified. Students in these schools have high incidences of health problems and absenteeism. Further, it cannot be assumed that because these students are speakers of languages other than English, they are all foreign born; three in four are native-born U.S. citizens. Finally, although we know that the majority of emergent bilinguals in the United States are speakers of Spanish, the census does not account for the fact that some of those categorized as such are actually speakers of the many Indigenous languages of the Americas.

In Chapter 3, we charted the types of educational programs that have been available in the United States for emergent bilinguals. These range from programs that require the exclusive use of English in the classroom to those that provide instruction and support in the home language along with English. But over the 55+ year history of language education policies, beginning with the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, inspired by the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, and continuing through ESSA (2015), we have seen a shift away from the bilingual end of the continuum to a largely English-only language policy for racialized minoritized students in U.S. schools. An exception to this trend has been the dual-language bilingual education (DLBE) program model, which has gained popularity in recent decades. This rise is largely due to its inclusion of English speakers and its status as a choice program. While these programs create new bilingual education opportunities for emergent bilinguals, they also introduce a unique set of challenges and tensions.

Against this backdrop, in subsequent chapters, we explored theories and research that support ways in which emergent bilinguals can learn both English and subject-matter content optimally and be assessed equitably. We considered the gaps between the research evidence and language education policies and practices for emergent bilinguals. Most importantly, we advocated for alternative policies and practices that have the potential to educate these students more equitably.

Language Theory and Research

In Chapter 4, we discussed key theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between bilingualism and learning. These interrelated frameworks have shown the cognitive, academic, and sociopolitical benefits of drawing on *all* home language practices, including those named English, as well as Haitian Creole,

Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and so on. Translanguaging scholarship (e.g., García & Li Wei, 2014; Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015) has argued that the distinction between named languages is social, not linguistic or cognitive: Bilingual speakers do language with their own complex language system or repertoire from which they select features guided by their *social* lives and experiences, and understandings of which features and practices might help them construct their message most successfully, given the nature of the interaction and the participants.

Scholars from an array of academic disciplines—including anthropology, education, linguistics, and psychology—have shown that language use varies in different contexts and have provided descriptive analyses of a wide range of language and literacy varieties. The research makes it clear that, in educational contexts, carrying on a simple conversation about everyday topics is not the same as discussing, reading, and writing about cognitively demanding ideas. We know from extensive research in schools in the United States and around the world that attaining competence in literacies for academic purposes requires sustained discussion, reflection, and practice. We also know that these literacies are bound up in relations of power and identity and that literacies entailing two or more named languages intensify questions of power and negotiations of identity. Skilled teachers can provide space in the classroom that empowers students to affirm their linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge even as they add to their repertoire of disciplinary knowledge and communicative practices. It is through these linguistic and literacy processes that students engage in identity work: They develop a sense of self through multiple language practices in different social situations (Norton, 2013). This is precisely what the notion of pluriliteracies addresses. As we discussed in Chapter 4, the term *pluriliteracies* describes the complex language practices that take place in multilingual communities (see García, Bartlett, & Kleifgen, 2007). It helps us understand young peoples' diverse literacy practices and values in and out of school; it also takes into account the intermingling of multiple languages and scripts as well as rapidly changing new technologies that further shape their use.

Added to this understanding is the recognition that the path to bilingualism is a dynamic process and not a linear one, as had been previously claimed. Emergent bilinguals expand their own repertoire, adding new features as they communicate and learn. Guided by social cues in an interaction, they select features and practices from their unitary repertoire to communicate. At times, they creatively use linguistic features that are socially categorized as belonging to one or another language to make meaning. By understanding what makes up a bilingual's repertoire and bringing this flexible and subtle understanding of language practices into the classroom, teachers open new spaces for optimal meaning-making, identity formation, and eventual academic achievement.

Large-scale evaluations and meta-analyses of studies on bilingual programs beginning in the 1970s and continuing into the present (Baker & Wright, 2021) have borne out these theoretical frameworks, showing that judicious use of different language practices in the classroom results in high achievement levels in both subject-matter content and English and other languages, sometimes exceeding national norms, provided that teachers and students are given adequate time to develop

students' ways of "doing" language. Bilingual education has been maligned in the United States despite the fact that the most carefully designed reviews of programs have shown positive educational outcomes. The political climate has overshadowed these empirical findings, and language has been treated as a problem rather than a resource. The problem does not reside in students or their languages but rather in classroom practices that have been shaped by misguided educational policies.

Language and Classroom Practice

We have seen that emergent bilinguals generally have not been in classrooms that apply theory and research findings on the benefits of using home language practices to support learning. Further, in classrooms where both languages are used, the home language and English generally are kept strictly separated (what we called compartmentalization in Chapter 5). This ignores the potential of dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging for *scaffolding*, when students require assistance to understand concepts while at the same time developing their bilingualism; *assessment*, so teachers can distinguish between students' content knowledge and language skills; and *transformation*, in order to promote students' raciolinguistic consciousness and self-identity. Unfortunately, the number of bilingual education programs has decreased dramatically, and most emergent bilinguals today are in English-only programs. Even ESL support is being curtailed in some states.

Our response to this sad state of affairs is to put forth a strong argument for all students—majority- and minoritized-language speakers—to be given the opportunity to reap the benefits of bilingualism in their education.

Curriculum and Other Practices

If we cast a light of social justice and linguistic human rights on typical curricular and pedagogical designs for emergent bilinguals, we see the inequities, because the elements of richness and creativity are missing. We described these inequities and considered alternative practices in Chapters 5 and 6.

Both Courtney Cazden in 1986 and Linda Darling-Hammond again in 2024 pointed to the fact that two kinds of curricula exist in U.S. schools: one that has well-designed, challenging content and engages students in creative and collaborative work, and another that only pays attention to basic skills. The latter is often the kind of curriculum that emergent bilinguals are taught. They are subject to deficit models of instruction—"remediation," tracking, mistaken placement into special education, exclusion from gifted programs, and reduced curricular choice because of a narrow focus on English language skills. Moreover, inequities begin early. Emergent bilinguals seldom get a favorable start through early childhood programs, despite the fact that these programs can contribute to later educational achievement.

Challenging and creative curricula can give emergent bilinguals access to rich classroom discourse and literacy experiences across subject-matter areas. It is sustained social interactions that affirm students' identities while helping them learn.

Teacher preparation is crucial to a high-quality education for emergent bilinguals. We know that effective teachers of these students have a thorough understanding of how language works. These teachers have studied child language development and bilingualism and have acquired the knowledge that is necessary to teach the students explicitly about how language is used in different content areas (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). Well-prepared teachers understand the importance of preschool for emergent bilingual children, emergent bilinguals' rights to be assessed for bilingual gifted-and-talented programs, and the need for those with disabilities to receive bilingual special education. They use culturally sustaining pedagogies and equitable resources to enhance students' translanguaging in classroom social interaction and literacy events—all with the goal of fostering learning with critical consciousness (Freire, 1970; Palmer et al., 2019). In addition, effective teachers have received preparation to reach out to parents of emergent bilinguals to form a partnership in students' education.

Family and Community Engagement

Effective teachers know that they cannot go it alone. As we discussed in Chapter 7, research tells us that parents are emergent bilinguals' primary advocates for an equitable education. Thus, their equitable collaboration as influential decision-makers in the transformation of schools provides the potential not only to support students' linguistic and academic needs but also to foster learning environments for them to collaboratively construct new knowledge and become change agents. Parents and community members possess distinctive funds of knowledge—ways of knowing that their children learn at home (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Moll et al., 1992). These too often go unrecognized in the school; worse, these endogenous competencies—home language and literacy practices, practical skills, and values—are considered by some to be inferior and inconsequential to schooling. This deficit view of home language practices requires intervention—in teacher education as well as ongoing professional development—for critical reassessment based on research demonstrating that students' home language practices are a powerful resource for learning. These home language practices are not the same as simply talking about one home language.

Even in cases where schools recognize the value of students' funds of knowledge, including linguistic knowledge, they may avoid applying some of the more "difficult" or uncomfortable funds of knowledge, which are perceived either to be too sensitive or to clash with the curriculum, such as transnational students' experiential knowledge garnered through crossing borders, learning about documentation, or fearing that a parent might be detained or deported. In fact, such experiences can be a source of dialogue and writing, with the support of a teacher, as well as an educative tool for critical thinking and problem solving.

Often, parental education programs are designed to teach parents how to educate their children; some of these programs operate in a deficit model, implicitly suggesting that parents lack adequate parenting skills (Goodall, 2021). Alternative models view family engagement as a responsibility shared among the school, the

community, and the family (Rosenberg et al., 2009). Bilingual communities, including immigrants, are looking for more genuine dialogue with school personnel (Olivos, Jiménez-Castellanos, & Ochoa, 2011) and demanding access to bilingual programs for their children (Jaumont, 2017), while at the same time they are up against the pressure for “school choice” such as dual-language programs that may favor elite families. Parents of emergent bilinguals are also working within the community to demand that outside groups support their parental rights and are establishing their own grassroots organizations with an aim to reform school programs for their children. In sum, a decolonial approach regarding parental engagement is needed to challenge dominant Eurocentric paradigms and to reestablish parents’ autonomy with respect to their children’s education.

Assessment

Testing is the gatekeeping device that often prevents emergent bilingual students from gaining access to further education and eventually an excellent quality of life. All students, including emergent bilinguals, are over-tested under current government mandates, and some educators have applied testing data in ways that reinforce deficit perceptions of African American and Latine students’ abilities (Bertrand & Marsh, 2021). For emergent bilinguals, testing is especially burdensome because they are essentially being tested for their language proficiency rather than for their knowledge of subject-matter content. Moreover, not only are the tests given in English, but they also have been normed on monolingual student populations; they do not take into account English learners’ developing bilingualism or bilingual use. Finally, although performance-based assessments are an improvement over traditional tests, they still rely on teachers’ interpretations of the results, which can reflect biased perceptions of minoritized emergent bilinguals (Ascenzi-Moreno & Seltzer, 2021).

In Chapter 8, we suggested several alternatives to the way emergent bilinguals are currently tested. They involve changing the ways that students take the tests or how others score them, or developing different assessments altogether, such as tests in the home language or tests that use the students’ translanguaging practices as a way to tap into and assess what students know (Ascenzi-Moreno, García, & López, 2024; García, 2009a; Gottlieb, 2017). The most promising alternatives continue to be close observations of student learning in the classroom, dynamic bilingual assessments, and performance-based as well as biliterate assessments. But for testing to be effective and fair, it requires professional development around teacher beliefs and judgments in interpreting the scores of minoritized test-takers.

Affordances of Technology

Over the past several years, there has been a conceptual shift in understanding literacy not as a static, standardized, and monomodal (written) *product* but as a plural, creative, and multimodal *practice*. Multimodality entails many semiotic resources: both spoken and written communication in multiple languages, along with other modes on

which people draw to make meaning. This expanded notion of literacy practices has its impact in classrooms where students can use multiple modes to study and learn.

As we have seen in Chapter 9, digital competence is essential for learning, working, and living in today’s world. Yet poor and minoritized students still have less access to computers and the internet than their more privileged counterparts. Despite advances in the availability of multimodal resources as a result of the expansion of new media technologies, some emergent bilingual students still do not have access to these tools to support their learning (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Poushter, 2016). This is truly unfortunate and inequitable, especially for emergent bilingual students, since many of the nonlinguistic modes or resources for learning can act as scaffolds for the development of the spoken and written linguistic modes. And, as we have argued throughout this volume, multiple linguistic modes also can be mutually elaborative for learning, particularly for emergent bilingual students.

In Chapter 9, we also noted that the era of generative artificial intelligence has brought with it responsibilities on the part of educators and students alike to understand its promises and pitfalls for education. A chatbot, simulating human communication, can rapidly produce well-designed texts in response to user instructions or prompts. But because chatbots cannot think or distinguish between true and false information, teachers need to guide students in designing sophisticated prompts and in critically assessing the strengths and weaknesses of these tools (Kalantzis & Cope, 2024). When used judiciously, AI can support emergent bilingual learners with additional applications such as digital translation, speech recognition tools, and intelligent language tutors.

Information and communication technology (ICT) offers accessibility to a growing archive of information with the following affordances: no limitations of space or time; retrievability of materials for further study and deeper understanding; interactivity with powerful ICT applications and among learners for collaborative work in the classroom or around the world; and creativity by assembling meaning-making resources to design something new, that is, to learn. These affordances promote the educational achievement of emergent bilinguals. Leadership on the part of school administrators is needed to resource all schools with ICTs. We also need well-prepared classroom teachers who understand bilingual students’ translanguaging, as they offer careful guidance in opening up translanguaging learning spaces on the internet.

Our analysis of a wide variety of issues in the education of emergent bilinguals shows an ever-growing dissonance between the research and inappropriate educational programs and instruction, limited curricular resources and funding, exclusion of parents and the community, faulty assessment procedures, and inequitable access to digital technologies. We now conclude this book by offering a series of hopeful signposts—a set of recommendations for a more equitable education for emergent bilinguals.

SIGNPOSTS: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for transforming the education of emergent bilinguals take on greater urgency today given the increase in the number of students—citizens and noncitizens alike—coming into classrooms who speak a language other

than English. Some of these recommendations can be carried out by advocacy groups and grassroots organizations; some need the leadership of government at the federal, state, and local levels, and school officials to move forward; others can be enacted by educators in their schools and classrooms; yet others belong to the realm of researchers.

For Advocates

Many people from outside the field of education—citizens, parents, other professionals, and grassroots organizations—are important advocates for emergent bilinguals and can take steps such as the following to transform education.

- Educate the U.S. public through the media, including social media, about the nature of bilingualism.

There are folk theories in the United States that “other” languages and speakers of “other” languages are somehow abnormal and in need of repair. The media and the internet could play an important role in disseminating essential knowledge about language and bilingualism to the general public. Advocates could post online articles, start blogs/vlogs, videos, and/or use other social media to offer discussions about ways in which bilingualism facilitates learning in school and creates work and social opportunities in life, especially for racialized language minoritized populations. In this way, people would come to an understanding that in acquiring English, language-minoritized students become bilingual, and thus, English language teaching helps foster bilingualism. In addition, language-majority parents would understand the advantages of bilingualism in their own lives and those of their children.

Furthermore, through the portrayal of bilingual Americans in movies and television shows, and the representation of bilingual minorities as loyal and hard-working Americans, the public would come to recognize bilingualism as a normal feature of U.S. society. The mainstream media can play an important role in bringing the sounds of languages other than English and bilingualism to all Americans.

- Educate the American public through the media about the benefits of bilingualism as an individual and national resource.

With the help of a wide range of media, the public can come to an understanding about the cognitive and creative value of bilingualism for *all* Americans. Peoples’ use of the internet is ubiquitous, and they can easily be persuaded about the advantages of multilingual communication for work and education in today’s globalized world, where the movement of people, goods, information, and services is no longer bound by national borders.

- Publicize the efforts of good schools and programs for emergent bilinguals, including the role of school leaders, educators, and the community in this work.

Advocates can promote exposés on schools where emergent bilinguals are learning and where school leaders and educators are making a difference. An example is the book by Kleyn and her colleagues (2024) about a school called *Dos Puentes*. The media can be convinced that portraits of school success can pique the public’s interest, perhaps more than stories of failure and conflict. These and similar media presentations can help dispel negative stereotypes about bilingualism and linguistic diversity.

- Urge federal funding for high-quality schools, educational programs and resources, and teacher education programs for emergent bilinguals.

Advocates can emphasize that fair funding needs to be given to educate emergent bilinguals. They can also urge that funding not be tied entirely to test results and that other factors be taken into account so that schools, programs, and teachers who serve language-minoritized communities can be adequately supported. High-quality schools are not always those that have the best test results, but high-quality schools are safe, clean, and have adequate instructional material and resources. They enjoy teams of teachers generously committed to teaching emergent bilinguals and prepared with knowledge about how students learn and develop proficiency in English for academic purposes. Equal educational opportunity for emergent bilinguals should be the focus of the advocacy.

- Keep the federal government and state and local educational authorities accountable for the education of emergent bilinguals.

Although there has been a major focus on accountability for school leaders and teachers, there are weak accountability measures for federal and state government and educational authorities. Questions can be raised about the irrationality of the federal government imposing unfunded mandates on state governments. Questions can also be raised about the ways in which state governments and local educational authorities report their services to emergent bilinguals, as well as how they assess them and report the test scores.

- Urge federal funding for the development of valid and reliable assessment instruments for emergent bilinguals—assessment that takes into account the difference between testing academic knowledge and testing linguistic knowledge, while recognizing the value of multiple indicators of students’ achievement.

Advocates can insist that the testing industry be made accountable by exposing how testing scores are being used to exclude emergent bilinguals. Advocates can urge that assessment be put back into the hands of educators. To that end, they should call for funding tied to assessment development that is user-centered. If test-makers were to spend time in classrooms, they would learn from educators what it is that emergent bilinguals can do and how they learn. Thus, test-makers would be

able to work with teachers to develop tests that can adequately evaluate emergent bilinguals and help teachers understand the students' strengths and weaknesses.

Advocates could urge federal funding for the development and testing of new assessment initiatives that rely on students' bilingualism. New assessment tools should differentiate between testing students' general linguistic performance for academic purposes and testing their understanding and application of specific linguistic features. Funding might also support projects that enable schools and teachers to design their own assessments, as well as research on how teachers are using the assessment data to develop understandings about their own teaching, and about emergent bilinguals' lives and learning potential.

For Policymakers

- Develop a definition of an English learner that is stable across federal and state lines. The federal government should require stable and accurate data reporting and classification.

It is imperative that agreement be reached as to what constitutes a learner of English. Policymakers could call on scholars of bilingualism to explore how to measure and assess the English practices needed for success in schools. To be accurate, the measure should include students' home languages and their bilingual abilities. Policymakers could demand that this measure not define a category from which students exit and move to a "proficient" category, but designate points on a continuum of emergent bilingualism that require different kinds of educational programs and different levels of academic intervention.

- Design educational policy based on current theory and research regarding the benefits of an equitable education for emergent bilinguals.

The research evidence supporting the use of emergent bilinguals' home language practices in their education is incontrovertible. Policymakers could become well versed in this research and empirical evidence so that this takes center stage in developing policy.

- Support and expand educational programs that have demonstrated success in providing a challenging, high-quality education, and that build on the strengths children and youth bring to school, particularly their home linguistic and cultural practices.

Policymakers could discontinue portraying categories of educational programs as if they were in opposition to each other—ESL or bilingual, for example. Instead, informed policymakers could support the students' translanguaging and leverage it in educating emergent bilinguals in all programs. They could support and encourage educational programs that follow research findings to the extent that the community situation permits.

- Support and expand student access to high-quality materials, including new technologies, especially in high-poverty schools, to facilitate access to the changing communication mediascape and give students a better chance to reach academic attainment.

Policymakers need to provide schools with multimodal, including multilingual, resources—books as well as digital audio and video materials. Access to technology infrastructure for fast connectivity to the internet, one-to-one access to computers, and high-quality interactive tools including carefully curated generative AI with intelligent language tutors, digital translation, and speech recognition capabilities are especially important for emergent bilinguals. Policymakers should ensure that these resources are readily available in all classrooms so that students can read, write, and carry out research and creative design using all the languages and other meaning-making modes at their disposal.

- Start bilingual educational support early through meaningful bilingual early childhood programs.

Policymakers should ensure that multilingual early childhood programs are available and that early assessment and intervention, when appropriate, are done following children's home language practices. Language-majority children could also benefit from these multilingual early childhood programs, participating and becoming familiar with different linguistic and cultural practices early in life.

- Pay particular attention to the middle school years.

Emergent bilinguals who are supported in elementary schools—through either ESL or bilingual programs—often receive fewer services when they reach middle school. Policymakers must pay particular attention to the middle school years, because students who continue to be categorized as English learners after having received five to six years of education may face serious educational barriers. These students cannot be educated in the same ways as emergent bilinguals who are newcomers; educational programs have to be designed to meet the needs of these middle school emergent bilinguals.

- Support strong programs for emergent bilinguals at the secondary level.

Emergent bilinguals need challenging educational programs at all levels, but especially at the secondary level. Policymakers should require that schools provide these adolescents with the challenging academic content they need and with guidance to take Advanced Placement courses. A rigorous academic program that can also develop advanced English literacy is essential to make these adolescents college-ready.

- Support bilingual families and communities in the development of more flexible structures for bilingual education programs.

Bilingual families often prefer a bilingual education program for their children. Bilingual education programs hold much promise in developing the bilingualism not just of those classified as English learners but also of English-speaking children growing up in bilingual homes or of those who identify with ancestors who spoke languages other than English, and even of those who do not. However, because of the ways in which many dual-language bilingual education programs in the United States have been constructed with a strict definition of what is considered "two-way," many children are left out of a bilingual education experience. Flexibility is needed in the implementation of bilingual education programs. Policymakers need to support all families in the development of bilingual education programs for all children in U.S. schools, especially for those who have been racialized and minoritized.

- Require all school leaders, teachers, and other school personnel to be well versed in issues of bilingualism and to understand the importance of the home language and culture for children.

Policymakers could make understanding bilingualism and translanguaging a requirement for teacher certification and employment. Beyond teachers who specialize in ESL and bilingual programs, all teachers should be required by policymakers to demonstrate an ability to work with emergent bilinguals and their families.

- Promote strong preservice/in-service education and professional development that prepares teachers to work with emergent bilinguals.

Given the growing numbers of emergent bilingual children in American schools, policymakers could require that all teacher education programs include coursework on bilingualism and the education of emergent bilinguals. Policymakers could also require that all teachers receive professional development that specifically targets emergent bilinguals as part of their professional commitment.

- Provide incentives for the preparation and hiring of additional bilingual staff—from school leaders and teachers to paraprofessionals, school psychologists, school counselors, therapists, and the like.

Because it is more difficult to recruit, prepare, and retain bilingual school staff, policymakers should provide financial incentives to those institutions of higher education that prepare bilingual staff and to schools that hire them. Financial incentives should be targeted to members of language-minoritized groups who are particularly needed in the teaching profession. Incentives for community members to become paraprofessionals are especially important, as are programs in which these paraprofessionals could then extend their preparation and eventually become teachers. The inclusion of family and community members who can contribute their endogenous local knowledge to the life of the school would be a value-added policy measure.

- Provide incentives for bilinguals to join specialized professional organizations such as Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE) or attend conferences like La Cosecha or the New Mexico Translanguaging Institute.

Bilingual individuals who can become ESL and bilingual teachers need to be offered incentives to become acquainted with the profession and join professional organizations. Different states and regions may offer incentives to encourage attendance at their conferences and meetings.

- Require all teachers to develop some learning experience as emergent bilinguals themselves.

Academic study of an additional language is a worthy aim. However, a richer experience could be considered. Teacher education programs could arrange for prospective teachers to experience a period of time abroad or in an ethnolinguistic community in the United States other than the teacher's own.

- Promote the integration of ESL/bilingual education programs so that all ESL teachers would know about bilingualism and translanguaging, and all bilingual teachers would be experts in developing the English literacy and the biliteracy of their students.

Policymakers could require that, with the exception of the coursework required of bilingual teachers in teaching content in the home language, the preparation of ESL and bilingual teachers be the same. Being in classes together would ameliorate the divisions between programs that often exist. All teachers should know how to teach content in English to emergent bilinguals, as well as support the development of their academic English practices. Additionally, all should understand how to leverage the students' translanguaging in educating them.

- Require schools to recognize the funds of knowledge that exist in emergent bilingual students' families and communities, be accountable to them, and achieve closer mutual engagement for a higher-quality education.

Policymakers could also require that all teachers have coursework on how to work with families of emergent bilinguals. This coursework might also include information on how community-based organizations can serve as catalysts in building school-family-community partnerships. The coursework ideally would require that all teachers learn an additional language to maximize the bilingualism of the U.S. teaching force in the 21st century. In addition, the coursework would make teachers aware of what they could learn from the funds of knowledge of the community and parents by developing the prospective teachers' skills in ethnographic observations and interviews. This specialized coursework would help teachers design

assignments that build on the families' funds of knowledge in ways that do not place additional burdens on their parents.

For Educators

- Consider the whole child.

To be effective, teachers would not focus narrowly on the language of the student but instead "cast [their] inner eye on a particular child," as Carini (2000a, p. 57) would say. Teachers can follow Carini's advice about paying attention to students' physical presence and gesture, their disposition and temperament, their connection to other people, their strong interests and preferences, and their modes of thinking and learning.

- Consider students in the context of their communities.

Effective teachers become familiar with the community in which the children live and with the histories of the cultural practices and knowledge systems in which the children and youth are immersed at home and in the community. If the community has a large immigrant population, educators should understand their histories of (im)migration, their cultural practices, their religion, their language practices, and their knowledge systems. They could also become familiar with community-based organizations that support language-minoritized groups and with after-school and weekend community bilingual programs that the students might attend.

- Observe and listen to language practices closely.

Effective teachers are listeners and observers of their students. Teachers should listen to the students on the playground, in the gym, and in the cafeteria. They might also listen to the parents as they pick up their children or to the youth as they make their way home when the school day is over. What languages are they speaking? What are they saying? Teachers could pay attention to the signage in the community and around the school. Are signs written in other languages? Other scripts? They might also inquire about TV programs, computer games, social media, and other digital media that children and youth engage with, sometimes in languages other than English.

- Learn something about the home languages and linguistic practices of students.

Teachers could ask parents to teach them how to say simple phrases such as "Good morning," "Good afternoon," "Thank you," "Please," and "Good-bye." They might experience what it means to write in a nonalphabetic script. Elementary school teachers can try to learn a short song (or obtain a recording) in an additional language to teach the children in the class to sing. Families can be asked to bring in

multilingual materials and devise classroom signage in different languages so that the classroom can become a multilingual setting.

- Speak, speak, speak. Read, read, read. Write, write, write.

Language is learned through practice in different contexts. Teachers can give students opportunities to use the English language richly—by listening to different discourses on various media, by reading broadly across both fiction and nonfiction, and by writing different genres frequently. Teachers should give students opportunities to leverage their home language practices by taking up translanguaging pedagogy. A school's access to the internet can facilitate these practices; teachers can use computers and whiteboards in the classroom to promote digital literacy, collaborative online research, and projects using multiple language and other modal resources. Finally, teachers should encourage generative dialogue and opportunities to engage in lively, thoughtful, high-quality interactions.

- Engage in ongoing reflection, individually and collectively.

Given the pervasiveness of raciolinguistic ideologies and deficit thinking, it is imperative that teachers remain reflexive about their own beliefs and practices and about the ways in which dominant discourses about racialized emergent bilinguals—including students with disabilities and students from low-income backgrounds—are constructed.

Reflexivity helps teachers recognize and challenge biases within their schools and their own classrooms that can lead to unequal treatment and lower expectations for racialized emergent bilinguals. It can also help identify ways in which certain policies, materials, assessments, discourse structures, and other practices can lead to unequal power relations among students and families on the basis of language, race, gender, ability, and other categories. Reflexivity requires humility and observation; it fosters ideological clarity and can help educators grow as advocates and agents of change.

- Encourage students to think critically about language practices and the power of language.

Emergent bilinguals need to become language architects (Flores, 2020)—comfortable analyzing language practices, developing metalinguistic skills, comparing named languages, thinking aloud about languages, and critiquing the way languages are used in print and digital media, as well as in public life. They also should have sustained practice learning content and selecting the features from their repertoire that are most appropriate in different contexts. In addition, emergent bilinguals need to become aware of the different powers of named languages in society and in their schools. Teachers can support this development by ensuring that their pedagogy is collaborative and culturally and linguistically relevant. A critical multilingual awareness curriculum would help students develop the ability to analyze social and political issues of language that are relevant to their lives.

- Use bilingual instructional practices and translanguaging pedagogy as a sense-making mechanism.

Instead of compartmentalizing English and excluding home language practices from instruction, all educators should engage in bilingual instructional practices—to render one assignment in the other language, to authorize students to conduct research in that language, to use what they have learned in one language in the service of the other, and/or to discuss and think in any language as they read and write in another. This is important for ESL teachers and bilingual teachers. Furthermore, educators should understand the implications of the concept of translanguaging for the instruction of bilingual students. Teachers need to view bilingual students' language system as unitary, helping students add new linguistic features and appropriate them, and helping them select those that are most appropriate to successfully participate in the task at hand. Teachers should empower emergent bilingual students to use their translanguaging as sense-making in the service of deeper understandings and more advanced development of English and other languages.

- Provide a challenging and creative curriculum with challenging and relevant material.

Teachers should elaborate the instructional sessions for emergent bilinguals by providing different scaffolds. This does not mean teachers should simplify; they should search for instructional material that is challenging. Whenever possible, they should provide opportunities to read and write in the students' home languages, enabling the development of complex ideas that can be expressed better in a language one knows while the other language is still being developed. Teachers should encourage the use of technology and the internet because these can be important resources for students to find challenging material written in their home languages, material that is relevant to students' lives, and because this encourages positive identity development and engages them with complex ideas. Educators can leverage ICTs to empower their students to create digital content that showcases the strengths of emergent bilinguals and engages with bilingual communities on topics of interest and advocacy. This approach allows students to become agents of change, all while engaging their creative and bilingual skills through writing, drawing, acting, game creation, and audiovisual design. Additionally, it promotes media literacy and connects students with real bilingual audiences globally in culturally sustaining ways. At the same time, educators should inculcate in their students a critical and judicious use of AI, especially by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the material generated by AI.

- Provide differentiated instruction for emergent bilingual students with different educational profiles.

Some emergent bilinguals are new to the school language; they have come to school from homes in which English is not spoken or is spoken in ways that are

different from the language practices in school. They also may come from schools in other countries where instruction was in a language other than English. Some of the newcomer students have well-developed literacy practices in their home language, but others do not. Many have had their education interrupted by war, poverty, and other social conditions. Still other emergent bilinguals have been in U.S. classrooms for a long time and yet have failed to develop academic literacy in English. And there are also bilingual students who have been labeled as disabled. Educators need to be aware of these differences and provide students with appropriate lessons and pedagogy. They should also advocate for computer use in their classrooms to enable online access for differential learning and to unleash students' diverse interests and creativity.

- Become an advocate of emergent bilinguals and their instruction.

Individuals and groups outside the school system are not the only ones who can become advocates. Besides parents, effective teachers know what the best academic path is for emergent bilinguals. Teachers should use the data generated from standardized assessments but supplement it with their own close observations, performance assessments, and professional judgments. They should resist educational decisions made for emergent bilinguals that are based on one score on a standardized test. They should be advocates for what these students need when communicating with other school professionals, other teachers, the school leadership team, and the community.

- Develop a strong relationship with students' families.

Teachers should learn as much as they can about and from families of emergent bilinguals and the community's funds of knowledge. When it comes to newcomers to the United States, teachers need information regarding whether the family or other relatives were separated because of immigration, with whom the children/youth immigrated, and who was left behind. They can encourage parents and other community members to participate in classroom activities, inviting them to give presentations about their cultural and linguistic histories and practices. Above all, they can promote greater family and community engagement by inviting parents to learn more about the school's structures and processes and by listening to parents' and the community's demands for alternative educational practices.

- Inculcate in emergent bilingual students a hunger for inquisitiveness, and model dreams of inclusion, equity, and social justice.

Teachers should be particularly focused on high expectations for emergent bilingual students, as well as ways of releasing their imagination. At the same time, teachers should convey their convictions about the need for acceptance and social justice to build a more inclusive and just world.

For Researchers

- Study the cognitive and creative advantages of bilingualism.

Neurolinguistic research that focuses on the cognitive and creative consequences of bilingualism has just begun to emerge. This research needs to be advanced.

- Develop assessments that differentiate between language and content knowledge and that distinguish between general linguistic performances and language-specific performances. Take translanguaging into account in the design of assessments.

Assessment is the most serious gap in research on emergent bilinguals' education. Researchers—in particular, neurolinguists, psycholinguists, and sociolinguists—need to join with psychometricians and educators in developing assessments for bilingual children that reflect their complex language practices rather than simply reflecting monolingual practices.

- Develop measures of dynamic bilingual proficiency.

As researchers recognize the fallacy of a linear conception of bilingualism, it becomes necessary to develop ways of assessing the complex dynamic nature of language practices and bilingualism. Research in this area needs to be strengthened.

- Conduct research on the effects of translanguaging for the teaching and learning of emergent bilinguals.

Past conceptions of bilingualism were constructed based on monolingual notions of language practices. As a result, English compartmentalization has been a preferred instructional approach in the United States. But, as studies of bilingualism begin to rest on heteroglossic (Bakhtin, 1981) notions of language use, translanguaging has become a more accepted concept. More research is needed in this area.

- Strengthen research on bilingual acquisition and evaluation of education for emergent bilinguals by conducting, for example, more multidisciplinary and mixed-method studies that will help educators and school officials in making informed decisions about the fit between children and programs and practices.

Research on the education of emergent bilinguals, focused on the students themselves and the teachers' pedagogies and practices (rather than on whether bilingual or ESL programs are more adequate), needs to be encouraged.

- Interrogate the assumptions present in traditional research methodology and design research that takes into account different epistemologies and translanguaging.

Felix Ndhlovu (2018) reminds us that the world cannot be fully understood “through the use of methods that arose out of a colonial metropolitan reading of the world” (p. 10) and that *decolonizing research approaches* are necessary when working with people who have been oppressed by colonial legacies and whose knowledges have been silenced. Instead of asking what language is spoken, by whom, to whom, and when, translanguaging researchers are asking: “How are these speakers deploying their linguistic repertoires to make meaning for themselves and others?”

EDUCATING EMERGENT BILINGUALS: ALTERNATIVE PATHS

As we have tried to demonstrate in this book, current policies and practices for the education of emergent bilinguals remain largely misguided. They contradict what theory and research have concluded and what scholars and educators have maintained. They also diverge from the realities of engagement in a globalized world with its growing multilingualism. However, despite restrictive educational policies, we see, on the ground, reflective educators who continue to use a commonsense approach in teaching the growing number of these students by building on the strengths of their home language and cultural practices. Educators, however, should not be left alone—or even worse, forced to hide what they are doing—when implementing practices that make sense for the students and the communities they are educating. For emergent bilinguals to move forward and not be left behind, educators need to be supported by policy and resources that bolster their expertise and advance their teaching. Educators need to be given time and space at school to observe students closely and document their work and learning *with* and *through* language, instead of being required to focus only on their performance through poorly designed tests and assessments. They need the opportunity to teach individual students instead of seeing teaching as a master plan of scores. With better preparation on the nature of bilingualism and translanguaging, teachers can find ways to work with the good aspects of governmental policy at the federal, state, and local levels.

Educators, and all who are concerned about this growing student population, should advocate for changes in aspects of the policy that make no sense for emergent bilinguals. For changes to be effective, the different levels of policy must work in tandem with educators and language-minority communities. Only then will we begin to close the gap between levels of abstract policies and local realities through which most disadvantaged students, such as emergent bilinguals, fall. We must start closing the gap of inequity for emergent bilinguals by naming the inequities, as we have done in this book, and then taking action to support their meaningful education.