



## Introduction

Dear Colleagues:

I am proud to present you this special issue of *Idiom* entitled “Innovative, Collaborative and Transformative Bilingualism/Multilingualism for All”, which was a joint call between Bilingual Basics (TESOL International) and *Idiom*. Inspired by the growing interests of ESL teachers in engaging the translanguaging practices and other biliteracy skills of their multilingual students discussed at last year’s TESOL Convention, this joint initiative is an opportunity for teachers to explore the interface between ESL teaching, bilingual education, and educational equity as a concerted effort to share experiences and consolidate resources in a historically under-resourced community of practice. The current issue provides diverse accounts of what it means to take a multilingual stance in diverse TESOL fields and explores ways to navigate the complexity of leveraging students’ cultural and linguistic resources as a tool to build an equitable learning environment for all.

Incorporating relatable aspects of students’ cultural and linguistic resources into class content across a wide array of disciplines remains an uphill battle. As bilingual education is gaining fresh appeal to the public when widely rechristened as “dual language immersive programs”, a monolingual mindset still dominates the public perception of college education. Hence it is uplifting to see bilingual instructional practices in its various forms have gained increasing acceptance and credibility at the level of higher education, where language ideologies remain part of the “hidden curriculum”. Pujol-Ferran, DiSanto, Rodríguez, and Morales in this issue share their experience of supporting dynamic plurilingual instructional practices in content area instruction. Their work illustrates the varied and exciting possibilities of moving bilingualism/plurilingualism through the school curriculum.

Since the publication of García and Li’s *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* in 2014, translanguaging has been widely employed as a conceptual framework for framing the bilingual debates and as a tool to advocate for an enriched view of bilingualism. The work of authors such as Xin Chen, Sharon Tjaden-Glass and Jennifer A. Lacroix signals a critical shift in the evolution of translanguaging; in addition to embracing it as ideological stance, they examine it as classroom practice. Guided by questions such as “What does translanguaging pedagogy look like in the classroom?,” “Where is the available evidence on its effectiveness in supporting student academic success?,” their articles shed important insights on translanguaging pedagogy as a practical classroom strategy.

This current issue also demonstrates how teachers engage their students’ bilingual practices by



tapping into their own bilingual repertoires. Positioning themselves as a co-learner in the knowledge construction process with their students or children, authors such as Clara Bauler, Rebekka Eckhaus, and Gabriella Solano set out to understand the complexity of bilingual children's literacy practices. Their articles show how we can learn through reflecting on our language practices and expand our knowledge base about equitable pedagogy.

I urge you to see this issue as a continued effort to work more strategically and collaboratively to engage bilingual children's total linguistic repertoire and unleash their plurilingual resources in order for bilingual education to be transformative for all.

Last but not least, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to each author who has responded to our call for submissions, and special thanks to Genie Smiddy, the *Idiom*'s editor, for her generous support in this initiative.

Sincerely,

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*Promising Practices* – This is an ongoing column featuring advice for effective teaching. Please send article submissions to the column editor, Ann C. Wintergerst, St. John’s University at [promisingpractices@idiom.nystesol.org](mailto:promisingpractices@idiom.nystesol.org)

## Goal Setting for Reading Development

**By Gabrielle Kahn**

Psychologists write about the usefulness of goal setting in our lives. In order to be successful at something, it can be helpful to create a road map that allows us to measure steps forward. Following Cumming (2006), who argues that goal-setting activities can promote students’ ability to regulate their learning in addition to improving their writing performance, I encourage my students to set goals for the quantity and quality of their reading. As they set and achieve their goals to read more and read better, I have watched students who enter my community college ESL classroom fearing or avoiding books emerge from the course with a changed view. Reading in English becomes a meaningful activity, and often, a joyful one.

### Setting Goals for Reading Quantity

A consensus is building by second language acquisition researchers about the importance of fluency for developing the ability to read well, and to become more fluent readers, learners should read a lot (Stoller, Anderson, Grabe, & Komiyama, 2013). To this end, in addition to the required readings in my academic ESL classes, students are asked to set goals for reading self-selected books outside of the course curriculum. I set the overarching goal: completion of a minimum of three books by the end of the semester, and, drawing from Atwell and Atwell Merkel (2016), work to build a reading culture in my classroom by assisting students in reading books of their own choosing based on their personal interests and language abilities. We have shelves set up in our college’s tutoring center of largely young-adult fiction (e.g., John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*) and non-fiction texts (e.g., *Martin Luther King* by Alan C. McLean) for this purpose, but students could also be encouraged to take out books from their local library or purchase their own texts. Students take their time “shopping” for books that they are curious about and—importantly—that do not require their reliance on a dictionary or other outside resources to comprehend.

Once books are selected, students set individual goals for how many pages they plan to read in a week and write this information down in a pocket notebook that they keep solely for the purpose of tracking their reading progress. I dictate suggested language for this: “My reading quantity



goal for next Friday, (date), is to read \_\_\_ pages in (book title) by (book author).” Each week I devote part of a class period to reflecting on goals previously set and setting new goals to come. Were the intended number of pages completed? If not, why not? We applaud those students who have completed their intended pages and brainstorm ways to assist those who didn’t. For many, books were too challenging or time constraints got in the way. Students are invited to choose new books if they are struggling and are encouraged to fit reading time into their schedule even if in small increments—e.g., while on the subway, or just before bed. To help motivate students to complete their books, they are also asked to share brief summaries in groups and to rate their texts. Students who give their books a four or five-star rating present highlights to the class, and these books are added to a Recommended Book List for others to refer to. Whenever possible, I invite students to read their self-selected books during class, and after circulating to check in with students one-on-one about their reading progress, I read my own pleasure book alongside them.

### **Setting Goals for Reading Quality**

In addition to asking students to attend to the quantity of their reading pages, I also encourage students to improve upon the quality of their reading processes. Students set goals for developing their reading practices across a variety of required course texts—e.g., news articles, non-fiction books, short stories, textbook excerpts—throughout the semester. To ground this work, we use questions on a Reading Quality Survey adapted from items on The Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002):

1. Do you guess the meaning of new words when you read?
2. Do you re-read?
3. Do you read out loud?
4. Do you take notes on what you read?
5. A. Do you ask yourself questions before you read that you would like a text to answer?  
  
B. Do you think about these questions while you read and try to answer them?
6. Do you go back and forth to look for relationships between ideas or information in a text?

Every two weeks, we make a different number on the Reading Quality Survey a focus for goal setting. We begin this work on the first day of class when I ask for a show of hands in response to the Survey’s first question: “Do you guess the meaning of new words when you read?” and



followed by: “Can you share an example of when you tried this recently? Do you think that this helped you as a reader? Why? How?”

Explaining that L2 research has shown the importance of this strategy for reading comprehension and vocabulary development, I challenge students to achieve a short-term goal: guessing the meaning of three new words in our ESL 101 course syllabus. Students write the goal down: “My reading quality goal for today (date) is to guess the meaning of three new words in Professor Kahn’s syllabus.” As they read the syllabus, they mark their texts in any way they wish about what the unknown words they selected might mean. Emphasizing that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers—only active attempts at making guesses—I ask students to review their notations in pairs and then as part of a teacher-fronted discussion: What did their notes look like? What clues did they use to guess word meanings? Did they use notations other than possible synonyms (e.g., symbols for connotative meaning)? I invite students to use an English dictionary to check the accuracy of their guesses, and we discuss whether or not precise understandings were needed to grasp the text’s most important ideas. These conversations lead to the creation on the board of a list of possible “best practices” around vocabulary guessing which learners refer to and reflect upon as they set goals based on this strategy in future classes as recorded in their pocket notebooks.

As they work through our Reading Quality Survey questions throughout the term, I direct students towards setting specific goals that can be measured and accomplished—and that emphasize process over product. More important than guessing a vocabulary word correctly, using accurate pronunciation when reading aloud, or finding the “right” answer in a text to a pre-reading question is their growing self-awareness and engagement as readers in English.

## **Conclusion**

Asking ESL students to articulate an ongoing vision for their development as readers not only gives them a sense of ownership over their learning process but it also helps make reading in college less intimidating. While aspects of our goal-setting work can be uncomfortable to learners at first, over time I have watched students challenge themselves and their peers in new ways in the inquisitive, focused, and celebratory spaces we create around reading. As they accomplish the goals they set for reading quantity and quality within our classroom community, students develop increased proficiency and confidence as they read in English. And, perhaps most importantly, they learn to like it.



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## **Adopting a Translingual Approach in Teacher Feedback to Enhance Reader-Writer Dialogue for Meaning Making**

**By Xin Chen**

The sharply increasing number of international students in the U.S. in recent years has warranted more research into the academic literacy development of multilingual students, many of which find it difficult fitting into the new discourse community of the American university. The translingual orientation to literacy development suggests that multilingual students bring with them the awareness of intercultural communication and the competence of translanguaging between different discourse communities (Canagarajah, 2010; Lu & Horner, 2013), which prepares them to learn the new linguistic and rhetorical forms of writing in their L2. However, most students from EFL countries (e.g. China and Korea) subconsciously abide by the norms of Standard English, which seems against the ideology of translanguaging because translanguaging emphasizes the writer's agency to write across different languages and contexts. Is translingual pedagogy applicable to writing classes for multilingual students in college? For students from the countries where English training relies fundamentally on the grammar-translation approach, their English writing is heavily influenced by their L1 at the sentence level as well as a rhetorical level. Then how can writing teachers address those students' needs of adapting to standardized academic English writing while also developing their ability to negotiate language differences and to write proficiently in different contexts?

Translingual pedagogy does not mean neglecting the conventions of Standard English writing. Instead, it encourages multilingual writers to draw upon all their linguistic and rhetorical repertoires to negotiate with the mainstream conventions and write proficiently in different contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to familiarize novice English writers with mainstream conventions before effective translingual writing can be practiced. Additionally, by interviewing two writing teachers of multilingual students in college and analyzing their comments on students' written drafts, this study discusses how a translingual approach can be adopted in teacher feedback to aptly help those students with their English writing. It is proposed that rather than explicitly teaching translingual practices to multilingual students in academic settings, it will be more useful for teachers to integrate a translingual orientation into their writing pedagogy so as to help the students make informed decisions about their own language use for writing in different contexts.

### **Teacher Feedback with a Translingual Approach**



Despite the skepticism about the value of introducing translingual writing in academic settings, a great deal of research on teacher feedback to students' writing has advocated for the reader-writer dialogue and encouraged meaning negotiation between the teacher and the student (e.g., Anson, 1989; Kroll, 1980; Williams, 1981), which are exactly the essence of a translingual orientation. A translingual approach does not mean to neglect the basic rules and mainstream conventions of academic writing. Rather, it aims to explicitly tell the students that there are competing ideologies of English language use and they as writers have the control of their own writing. Accordingly, this paper proposes that a priority of multilingual students in writing classes is to familiarize themselves with the western writing conventions essential for their university studies in the U.S. However, what teachers can do in these students' writing classes is to equip them with the capabilities of being critical about the language use according to different ideologies and inform them that they can make decisions for their own writing. This study examined two teachers' feedback to their multilingual students in a writing course at a research university in the U.S. The writing course has the objective to help multilingual students learn "the conventions related to academic writing in western traditions and consider how those conventions function cross-culturally" (course description). Therefore, the teachers understand that their job is not only to teach the western writing conventions to those multilingual students but also to provoke them to think whether and to what extent they should conform to the conventions in different writing contexts. Moreover, both of the teachers are multilingual writers and their teaching philosophies are also influenced by translingualism. Although they are from different cultural backgrounds and their teacher feedback has different focus which represents their respective teaching styles, the findings reveal the possibility of integrating a translingual approach into different types of teacher feedback to enhance reader-writer dialogue for meaning making and enable multilingual students to employ the writing knowledge as well as skills they learned in an American university more strategically.

Carrie (pseudonym) is from China and learned English as a foreign language in her home country, where she was trained with a grammar-translation approach in English. Although she noticed that most multilingual students, especially those from East Asian countries, like China and Korea, will expect teachers to correct their grammatical errors and to comment on their writing in an authoritative tone, Carrie prefers leaving the students with some space to ponder on their language choices in writing and then decides its appropriateness themselves. For example, rather than telling the students how to correct their sentence-level errors, Carrie usually just points out the problems with very brief comments like "Grammar" or "Problem with the language" and asks the students to revise their language themselves (See Appendix A for an example of Carrie's comments on her student's essay). Moreover, she often uses questions in her commentary to provoke the students to reconsider their linguistic and rhetorical forms, e.g.,





“[w]hat do you mean by Arabic?” and “[h]ow would you prove this?” Even when she explicitly makes suggestions to the students, e.g., “[i]t would be better if you can show your readers some images to prove your point,” she speaks from the perspective of a reader rather than a dictatorial instructor. Carrie explained in the interview that she felt sympathetic for those students who were struggling to pursue the “nativeness” of English writing but she would still prioritize the goal of familiarizing them with the conventions of Standard English academic writing.

Susan (pseudonym) is from Singapore with English as her first language. Different from Carrie, she comments less on the sentence-level issues in students’ essays but gives more feedback on students’ rhetorical strategies, which indicates the different emphasis of teachers in their commentary on students’ writing (See Appendix B for an example of Susan’s comments on her student’s essay). Nevertheless, Susan would also ask questions about the student’s language use when the meaning making is not successful. For instance, she put a question mark on the word “fellowship” to give a hint to the student that she had some problem understanding the expression. In addition, as Carrie did, Susan responded to students’ writing more as a reader than as an instructor. The comment “[y]our readers can tell that this point counter-argues the previous one” would serve to help reinforce the student’s audience awareness. Another thing to be noted is that the majority of Susan’s feedback is positive. Her intention is to make the students more confident in their writing and more comfortable to employ their writer’s agency.

As can be seen from the examples, questions were used in both teachers’ feedback to suggest the potential problems of meaning communication in their students’ essays, but neither of the teachers commented in an authoritative tone. Both of them responded as a reader rather than a dictator in writing. The purpose of such an approach is to give students the meta-knowledge to analyze their own writing and make better choices in language use. Carrie and Susan also reported that in the follow-up conferences with the students on their writing drafts after the teacher feedback was received, most students seemed very willing to discuss the points that the teacher as a reader failed to get and then make decisions for revision themselves. It proves that such a dialectic approach in teacher feedback encourages students to reconsider their choice of language use and to negotiate meaning with the audience, which aligns with the translingual orientation in writing pedagogy.

Canagarajah (2013) contended that meaning had to be co-constructed through collaborative strategies so we should treat texts “as affordances rather than containers of meaning” (p.43). A writing pedagogy with a translingual orientation should also include teacher feedback that “allows students to question their choices, think critically about these choices and their assessment, and develop metacognitive awareness” (Marshall & Moore, 2013, p.494). In this light, making the unconscious translingual competence conscious to the students will help them



be more critical about their own writing strategies and equip them with the skills to shuttle between different languages. Horner, Lu, Royster and Trimbur (2011) have called for a translingual approach in writing instruction, which “acknowledges that deviations from dominant expectations need not be errors; that conformity need not be automatically advisable; and that writers’ purposes and readers’ conventional expectations are neither fixed nor unified” (p.304). In the two writing teachers’ classes, revising drafts based on teacher feedback is an essential way for multilingual students to improve their writing. The teachers would point out the “problematic” sentences or ask questions to push student writers to think for themselves what the problems are and whether it is necessary to revise them. Besides, individual writing conferences also give the students the opportunities to explain or defend their “unique” use of English and negotiate meaning with the audience. Furthermore, translingualism sees the linguistic deviation from mainstream expectations not as problems but as resources for meaning production and it corresponds to the current situation of academic writing where more and more multilingual writers are striving in the field. Thus, the writing instruction to multilingual students should aim to develop students’ ability to negotiate language differences and to write across contexts with all the linguistic resources available. This paper suggests that a translingual approach can be integrated into different-styled writing pedagogy through teacher feedback and pertinently help multilingual students. Although most of them are novice writers of English academic writing with the prior need to adapt themselves into the new discourse communities of non-conforming Standard English, a translingual approach in teacher feedback recognizes those students’ efforts to comply with the standardized norms and at the same time leaves them with the space to negotiate the dominant conventions, which prepares them to become proficient writers across contexts.

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Bio:

## Appendix A

### An Example of Carrie's Comments on Her Student's Essay

*An excerpt from a student's essay:*

Graffiti makes great contribution to the society as it has been transited from “underground art” to “ground art” (Whitehead, 2004). EL Seed, a famous graffiti artists (1) who has been learned (2) about how to write and read Arabic which is a small language from south Africa (3) and attract more people from other places to know this culture by drawing vivid images on walls to translate the message of hope and peace and making every people feel connected (El seed, 2015). Another example of the graffiti contribution can be seen from Ferrell's (1995) article, graffiti artists helped governments to advocate maintaining the society order, like painting suggestions about war, AIDS and drug to make people have awareness about those things (4). Thus, the graffiti now not only are visual enjoyment, but also people will get benefits from the information in those images (5). At the same time, graffiti artists cooperated with business to sell T-shirt and pants which had the tag of graffiti to promote the deep social bonds with society (6). Therefore, with the rise of graffiti art, it brings lots of benefits to the society, spreading people's belief, keeping society order (7).

*Teacher feedback:*

- (1) Grammar
- (2) Why using passive voice?
- (3) Really? What do you mean by "Arabic"? Are you talking about one dialect in Arabic?
- (4) It could be better if you can show your readers some images to prove your point.
- (5) Grammar
- (6) How would you prove this? Any sources or examples?
- (7) Problem with the language



## Appendix B

### An Example of Susan's Comments on Her Student's Essay

*An excerpt from a student's essay:*

Selfie activism encourages contribution by allowing everyone to raise his or her voices for a cause. With online activism, anyone can easily form an organization, become a leader and obtain a sense of accomplishment and emotion of making an impact. Haudan (2014) reveals four essential roots of engagement in his article. According to his article (1), people in an organization are motivated to engage when they feel fellowship (2), a sense of belonging, wish to achieve meaningful purpose and when they know they are making a difference. Online activism ultimately provides these four essential factors that motivate people by offering them opportunities to easily build a community, promote message, and make an impact. It therefore mobilizes general and public participation. By displaying a selfie on the social media, it is seen by a great number of people who are able to see others' commitment to a cause and are inspired engage themselves which in turn builds a network and a force of collaboration among people. This makes activism towards a cause to be stronger and wider (3). Nevertheless, some people view online activism as a lazy, naïve, and token away of supporting an issue and does not display passion compared to traditional activism even though online activism entices people's commitment (4). Hill (2014) claims that any type of online activism such as petition and campaign does not display passion compared to traditional activism (5). He states that traditional activists in the 1940's and 50's were doers, not watchers like today's activist. He further claims that in the 60s' and 70's, streets were full of protesters risking their lives for civil rights and changes that they yearned for. However, this claim does not dispel the vitality of online activism especially as it is being increasingly demonstrated in present times. Online activism is rapidly producing positive results and overwhelmingly engaging the public more than the traditional medium (6).

*Teacher feedback:*

- (1) Delete
- (2) ?
- (3) Great point!
- (4) Your readers can tell that this point counter-argues the previous one.
- (5) Good!
- (6) You've reinforced the ideas as expressed in the evidence.

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## **Confissões de uma Mamãe Bilingue: Three Lessons I Learned from my Bilingual Children during a Trip to Brazil**

**By Clara Vaz Bauler**

Bilinguals are not perfect. Empirical and theoretical research on bilingualism have emphasized over and over again that bilingual children do not speak their two (or more) languages “perfectly” (Cook, 2016; Grosjean, 2000). However, society is less lenient about this fact and demands perfection, especially concerning pronunciation, from bilingual children as if learning two or more languages were automatic. It is not uncommon to hear people say that “children learn languages so fast!” Or “children are like sponges; languages come so easily for them” (Lightbown, 2008). Yet, what I have studied, researched, and experienced is that bilingualism is a complex feat that cannot be under or over estimated (Shin, 2018). My recent trip to the country I grew up in with my two children has made me experience first-hand the struggles and successes my bilingual children went through to keep speaking their two languages. As a mother and researcher, fighting for my children to exercise their right to be bilingual, I am humbled by their strength. Thus, I felt the need to share the lessons I learned with teachers, researchers, and other parents interested and invested in sustaining and supporting bilingualism.

My husband and I moved to the U.S. in 2008 and 2007, respectively. We had our first son in California in 2013. We moved to New York in 2014, and our daughter was born in Brooklyn in 2016. Presently, they are six and three years old. We speak mostly Portuguese at home, but we do not limit ourselves to speaking Portuguese only with them. As my husband and I are multilinguals and have researched language acquisition, we have a firm belief, based on the literature we have read and our life experiences, that multilinguals use all of their languages all the time, and that the separation of languages is an artificial one (Cook, 2016; García & Otheguy, 2019). This belief has framed our interactions with our children, so we code-switch or translanguage (Canagarajah, 2012; García & Wei, 2013) consciously and unconsciously constantly. In spite of New York City’s diversity, exposure to Portuguese is very limited. Because of that, we try to go to Brazil once a year. Observing, encouraging, and supporting my children interact in Portuguese, a language that was once their first, strong “mother tongue,” led me to confirm three lessons about bilingualism.

### **Lesson 1: Appreciate the Bilingual Accent**

As a mother, I would always be puzzled: Why would my children have a “foreign” accent in their first language (Portuguese) as both I and my husband speak the variety of Portuguese we grew up with in Rio de Janeiro? When speaking Portuguese, my son tends to reproduce a





retroflex “r” sound in words such as “trabalho,” which is pronounced by most people that live in Rio with a rolled “r.” Both my son and daughter add an aspiration to initial “t” sounds in words such as “tubarão” and “túnel,” showing the influence of English in their pronunciation of their initial “t” before “u” in Portuguese. There are many other examples that make my children’s “American” accent stand out when speaking to others in Brazil. Nevertheless, my son does not seem to care about how people find his accent “bonitinho” (cute) or when they laugh about it. My daughter, on the other hand, is not that understanding. She gets very upset when she is laughed at. Linguistic discrimination is one of the most hidden forms of bigotry (Lippi-Green, 2012). I am painfully aware of my son’s and daughter’s resilience when it comes to being laughed at when speaking Portuguese. What many people do not realize is that there is a tremendous amount of thinking, courage, and willingness to communicate behind every word a bilingual child says. Something to be celebrated, not taken for granted. We need to stop as a society to value “having a native-like accent” as the main feature of what is considered good language learning because having an accent does not, most of the time, impede communication (Canagarajah, 2007). In contrast, what having an accent does is show that the person is different, which is publicly displayed negatively when the person with an accent is laughed at. Many children stop speaking one of their languages because of that humiliation. Instead of being tapped on the back for speaking up, they are often shut down for having an accent. If we, as a society, want multilingualism to thrive, we need to start appreciating accents as being the most visible proof of linguistic diversity.

## **Lesson 2: Foster Conceptual Thinking through Multilingualism**

Although there is still much controversy around this topic, the bilingual child seems to have one system that encompasses all of their vocabularies and grammars in all of their languages (García & Otheguy, 2019). This is the reason why bilingual children are constantly making choices, which can be an exhausting process. When it comes to academic language development, this task becomes even more complex as the language of the disciplines, requires a different set of vocabulary, syntax, and discourse (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). The types of connections we need to make when developing ideas using an academic register is better accomplished in the language(s) one feels more comfortable with because this process requires deeper understanding, inference, application, categorization, etc. (Gee, 2008). Conceptual understanding is facilitated when the child can engage in complex and analytical thinking through the positive use of their dynamic and multiple linguistic repertoires, making active use of their “bilingual powers.”

For example, when my mother tried to make a thorough account of how “digestão” (digestion) happened in our bodies in Portuguese, my son verbalized his understanding in English, translating the explanation of the phenomenon to his most dominant and comfortable language,





even though he had heard the concept and account in Portuguese first. The same happened when my son and I tried to figure out how a “pedalinho” (pedal boat) worked. We jumbled our two systems of language together using a mix of English and Portuguese to understand the physics involved in putting the boat in motion. Indeed, recent classroom-based research says that engaging bilingual children in translanguaging in the classroom, tapping into all of their linguistic resources actively, helped foster greater metalinguistic awareness while empowering bilingual identities (García, Sylvan, & Witt, 2011; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). This finding directly contradicts what is popularly recommended in bilingual rearing - the stark separation of languages to better assimilate them. Allowing bilingual children to make sense of the world intentionally using all of their linguistic assets propels their ability to advance their knowledge and understanding of complex disciplinary ideas (Kang, Swanson, & Bauler, 2017).

### **Lesson 3: Focus on Fluency rather than Mistakes**

One of the greatest lessons I have learned during our trip was to be very patient with my son’s and daughter’s grammatical abilities in Portuguese. Knowing how to skillfully manipulate morphological and syntactic structures in both languages seamlessly proved to be a slow process, requiring much trial and error. As Portuguese entails multiple verb conjugations and the distinction between feminine and masculine nouns, my children have grappled to internalize and produce these morphological requirements. When they speak Portuguese, they say things such as “eu sabe” and “uma macaco,” which are perceived as gross mistakes by native speakers of Portuguese who cannot seem to understand why they do not say “eu sei” (I know) and “um macaco” (a monkey). No matter how much I or anyone else corrected them, they continued to make those same grammatical mistakes. At the end of our trip, my children were making a lot fewer grammatical mistakes, and I, for once, decided to stop correcting them and letting them speak freely to develop fluency. There is something magical about bilingualism. We need to have faith that children will get it eventually, but, for that to happen, we need to give them time. If we keep correcting them from the beginning, halting their self-expression, they too, will focus on the mistakes instead of the purpose of communicating ideas.

I always tell my son that the most real and concrete superpower is to be bilingual. This superpower enables an individual to navigate different worlds, making connections across cultures and perspectives. This superpower is not about perfection, though. In order to be recognized, the bilingual superhero needs to be able to exercise his or her super powers free of judgment. The super bilinguals need to be recognized for their strengths, not their weaknesses. When that happens, bilinguals will finally be able to save the day!



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## **Plurilingual Pedagogies across the College Curriculum: Four Case Studies<sup>1</sup>**

**By Mercè Pujol-Ferran, Jacqueline M. DiSanto, Nelsón Núñez Rodríguez, and Angel Morales**

About 63% of the students enrolled in our small community college, located in the South Bronx, speak a language other than English (LOTE)<sup>2</sup> at home, Spanish being the most widespread.

More than 85% of first-year students need a remedial course in reading, writing or mathematics, and one-third needs remediation in all three areas. Students not only struggle with the acquisition of academic English, but they also display serious hardships in completing college requirements in their content courses (García, Pujol-Ferran, & Reddy, 2013). They often become frustrated, and approximately 40% of first-year students drop out before their second academic year<sup>3</sup>.

In an effort to help students raise their academic confidence, stay enrolled, and learn the content of their courses in English, we, four bilingual professors, investigate plurilingual pedagogies across the college curriculum, in science, humanities, education, and linguistics courses. Our four case studies illustrate how we utilize our repertoire of linguistic resources in two or more languages to teach in flexible ways and tap into students' unique linguistic and cultural pluralities (Cummins, 2007; García & Sylvan, 2011) in multilingual classrooms. Plurilingual pedagogies (Cummins, 2009; García with Flores, 2012) embrace students' and faculty's dominant and less dominant languages with all their linguistic skills and competencies. They consist of translanguaging (Creese and Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009; Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012) or translanguing practices (Canagarajah, 2013), which incorporate the dynamic mixing of languages in various pedagogical contexts. Students can read a passage in one language and write about it in another. They may use bilingual dictionaries to master vocabulary in two languages, or they may converse in their dominant languages or code-switch from one language to another when learning. In the college, our plurilingual pedagogies co-exist with English-only instruction. This combined practice may benefit students' learning. Students do well in our courses (See Table I in Pujol-Ferran et al., 2016), and this raises their motivation to stay enrolled.

The following four case studies illustrate and represent the plurilingual approaches we examine: translation, code-switching, cross-linguistic analysis, and the use of the students' dominant languages.

**Núñez-Rodríguez - Teaching chemistry using students' personal and cultural narratives**



I have taught Chemistry and Biology in Cuba, Argentina and the United States in English and Spanish for more than 20 years. I currently teach Chemistry for Science majors in English to college students who are mostly dominant in Spanish, Asian, and African languages. I use this classroom diversity as an opportunity to foster academic English and another language, the scientific one, which ultimately is a new language for my students.

I take advantage of students' life experiences in another culture and their literacy skills in their dominant language to build discipline-specific academic literacy in English. Students share personal narratives related to the course topics and work in small groups, speaking French, Chinese, Spanish, or English. Students examine their daily eating habits, frequently related to their culture in their own narratives using their dominant language. Words like *frito* and *frit* (Spanish and French for fried), *plátanos maduros* (Spanish for ripe banana), *sancocho* (Spanish for a typical Dominican stew), *calor* and *chaleur* (Spanish and French for heat) are shared. These conversations lead to defining homogenous or heterogeneous mixture in Chemistry, or the amount of energy involved in a chemical reaction and its proportions. Subsequently, I introduce appropriate scientific terminology and definitions such as Enthalpy, Entropy, Joule, composition, or reaction in English. Thus, students understand concepts without the potential barrier of discussing initial Chemistry terminology in English. Overall, letting students tell narratives and translate concepts in their dominant languages creates a valuable learning atmosphere and an equal opportunity for all my students to learn Chemistry, regardless of their level of academic English.

### **Morales - Mixing students' dominant and less dominant languages in a college drama course**

As a bilingual professor (Spanish/English), I have found that one powerful way for English Language Learners (ELLs) to improve their English is through acting in the classroom. In the course, Acting 1, ELLs and English speakers are given scenes from world literature mainly in Spanish and English to rehearse and perform. Students learn scripts and plays in the language they were written. However, students are also given the option to learn the scripts in their dominant languages (English, Spanish or French) first and then translate important words, phrases, or scenes into the language the scripts were originally written or into their less dominant languages. Thus, they work collaboratively, translate words, and explore meanings in depth. Finally, they perform the scenes verbally in more than one language and physically through body language and movement.



Translation (Cummins, 2008) and code-switching (García with Flores, 2012; Zentella, 1981) are effective multilingual pedagogies in the acting course. Translation happens explicitly or implicitly; students translate a scene from one language into another and perform it in more than one language, depending on the students' dominant languages (explicit). A character can pose a question, in Spanish, for instance, and another character can respond in English (implicit). The students who do not speak Spanish in the class can figure out the question by listening to the answer in English. The following improvised script illustrates code-switching and implicit translation:

A: Where did you go last night?

B. Fuí al cine.

A: To the movies? What movie did you see?

B: Harry Potter. It was great! Me gustó mucho.

Rehearsing roles in more than one language makes students feel less apprehensive since roles give them a degree of safety; ELLs are not afraid of making mistakes in English (Bolton, 1985) and gain confidence in themselves and in their English competencies.

### **DiSanto- Combining plurilingual pedagogies and learning styles in an education course**

As a former Spanish teacher now working with pre-service teachers, I feel comfortable combining students' perceptual modalities of learning (Dunn, 2003) with students' dominant and less dominant languages in a Foundations of Education course. Translanguaging is a valid pedagogical practice for my students as they master course content with enthusiasm and confidence.

First, I encourage students to dissect key vocabulary words into prefixes and suffixes, and identify cognates by translating them. An example is defining terms like development and proximal in a lesson on cognitive growth in young children. Students draw comparisons to cognate words in their dominant languages (développement and prochaine in French, desarrollo and próximo in Spanish). They also break them into recognizable root words in English such as develop-ment, develop-mental, un-develop, proxim-al, proxim-ity, or ap-proxim-ate. This instructional practice is effective and has a lasting effect in students' memory.

Second, I allow students to use their dominant languages to complete assignments in English. Students must write a research paper on a current issue in education. Within their preferred





grouping (Dunn, 2003; Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010), they take notes, summarize articles, translate vocabulary, or even write their first drafts in their dominant languages. Although the final version must be in English, students must submit all their previous notes and drafts. They develop confidence in their ability to write in English by drawing on their dominant languages, translation equivalents, and each other's English-language skills. Plurilingual pedagogies are powerful because they fully engage students in the course and stimulate them to master content well.

## **Pujol-Ferran - Engaging students in cross-linguistic analysis in a Comparative Linguistics course**

I have taught ESL and Linguistics in the college for more than two decades, and translanguaging has been an active practice in my education and my teaching. I am a plurilingual speaker of Catalan, Spanish, French, and English.

The bilingual pedagogy that I present highlights cross-linguistic analysis in a Comparative Linguistics (English and Spanish) course. Students are bilingual and benefit from each others' different degrees of proficiency. They compare and contrast the sounds, grammar and structures, and vocabulary in English and Spanish, always presented in meaningful texts. Students discuss similarities and differences they encounter and reflect on instances of positive transfer or interference in their interactions and written work. For instance, I recently presented the theme, The Bilingual Advantage; students shared what they knew about the topic in either language and read two articles (Kinzler, 2016; Sáez, 2015), one in each language. Then, I introduced the lesson's focus, Spanish and English Adjectives, by presenting an excerpt (see a couple of sentences below), from each article. Students were asked to circle the adjectives and discuss similarities and differences in small groups.

... Bilingual children enjoy certain cognitive benefits such as improved executive function... (Kinzler, 2016)

...Los adultos bilingües tenían más sustancia gris en las regiones implicadas en el control ejecutivo del cerebro... (Sáez, 2015)

Students quickly encountered some differences. Adjectives in English are invariable (in form) and are placed before the noun ( e.g: bilingual children, cognitive benefits); in Spanish, however, they agree in gender and number with the noun and go after (e.g: el control ejecutivo, las regiones implicadas). A dominant Spanish speaker eagerly reflected, “ ‘Nosotros somos personas bilingües’, but if I translate this, tengo que poner atención; pues I can't say, ‘we are bilingualS people.’ Verdad, profe?”



Cross-linguistic analysis is an effective bilingual pedagogy that uses translanguaging to enhance students' metalinguistic awareness and biliteracy.

Our case studies explored four plurilingual pedagogies across the college curriculum: translation, code-switching, cross-linguistic analysis, and the use of students' dominant languages to complete assignments in English. Plurilingual pedagogies embraced students' full linguistic repertoires, enabling them to reason and express themselves in their dominant languages; created a safe and collaborative learning environment to share cultural experiences and examine content vocabulary and translation in various languages; and enhanced students' meta-linguistic and bilingual skills by reflecting on instances of positive transfer and interference.

We believe that our instructional practices increased students' confidence, made academic content and language accessible to students, and encouraged them to stay enrolled. This can be seen in our college where minority students, especially Latinos, who are at high risk of dropping out, do well in our courses (See table I in Pujol-Ferran et al, 2016). Certainly, more studies are needed to evaluate plurilingual pedagogies across the college curriculum, but we hope that our work can shed light on effective, flexible and innovative ways to teach language and content to minority students in multilingual classrooms.

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<sup>1</sup>This article is an abridged version of a lengthier one we published in 2016, but the examples we present now are all new.

<sup>2</sup>We borrow the term used by García and Fishman (2002).

<sup>3</sup>College statistics are based on two documents, the College Annual Report of 2013-2014 and the College Strategic Plan of 2011-2016.

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## Be the Outlier

**By Gabriella Solano**

I have been involved in bilingual education my whole life. I am the child of Costa Rican immigrants; I was an exchange student in Argentina; I got my masters in education with a bilingual education certificate, and I am currently in the process of renewing my teaching certificate after four years teaching Spanish and English to a group of culturally and linguistically diverse students in a dual language school. I have experienced bilingual education in the home, as a student, and as a teacher and have found that very little has changed.

As a child, I remember stories of how my mother had to struggle to find her way in school as a recent immigrant expected to simply catch on. As a young student most educators did not acknowledge my culture or inquire about my heritage. If they had any training in culturally responsive teaching, it was not apparent. As a pre-service teacher, I observed teachers of diverse students discuss how to ‘fix’ their lack of English instead of incorporate, embrace, and utilize the diverse set of skills and experiences their students had. As a master’s student, I conducted a research project about ELL education and found statistics showing general education teachers without an ELL-related endorsement or certification account for the largest number of teachers of ELLs (46,093). Fourteen districts collectively reported having more than 2,000 teachers who were ESL/bilingual endorsed or certified but not teaching ELLs. About half of the responding districts indicated that they either have an ELL teacher shortage or anticipate one in the next five years (Uro & Barrio, 2013). Now as I begin to renew my certificate and reflect on the past four years as a lead teacher I see how my prior experiences and those of my family remain prevalent today. The requirements for ESOL re-certification are minimal. the rhetoric and practices dominating many classrooms and school districts imply that Ell students are deficient (Thomas & Collier, 2002), and the statistics I researched as a masters student have indicated this has changed only marginally.

Despite this reality, I remain as motivated as I was when preparing to enter the teaching profession because what also remains unchanged are the exceptions to these unfortunate patterns and the hope that these outliers can become the norm. Thinking back to my life as a bilingual education student and teacher it is true that my mother had to struggle in school without any ELL programs, but it is also true that she still remembers Mrs. Stern’s second grade classroom because Mrs. Stern encouraged her to write in Spanish and proudly displayed her work on the wall. It is true that most teachers refused to discuss my culture or any culture besides Western Europe, but it is also true that my high school teacher was fascinated by my time abroad as an exchange student





and encouraged me to share my experiences and educate my peers, which was one of my first steps toward finding my passion for education. There is both quantitative and anecdotal evidence that current teachers walk into diverse classrooms every day without training, but it is also true that I hear ELL students correcting their teacher's Spanish in the hallway because I have colleagues that set aside time for their Spanish speaking students to teach them Spanish. It is true that I see more hands go up at trainings asking for materials in student's native language. All this makes me believe that ultimately it is true that teachers might be untrained, but that does not mean unwilling. We can't wait for districts to require formal training. We have to learn from the outliers who might not have had the right textbook or may never have done professional development, but did see all their students as valid contributors to the classroom community. Instead of seeing a language barrier, they saw an opportunity to learn more and facilitate their student's development into confident and proud bilingual and multicultural students. How is this done? I believe what we need are less scripts and more prompts. Less question and answer, and more conversations. Less test score data and more observations and reflections. How do we figure out how to guide a student of any background? We get to know them. While instruction should be well planned, strategic, and focused on building academic skills and conceptual understandings, rapport with students should reflect a natural and genuine interest in who the student is and how they are growing (Claessens et. al, 2017). Of course all teachers need ongoing professional development and training and should be receiving high quality education specific to ELL education and culturally responsive teaching, but are we to wait for district policies to improve? We simply can not afford to. Change begins with the Mrs. Sterns of the world. The power of talking to students and asking about not only where they come from, but also who they are should not be underestimated (Classens et. al, 2017).

Instead of waiting for the opportunity to become an expert on ELL best practices, the focus should be on becoming an expert on your students and their specific literacy needs and how those needs are situated within their cultural and linguistic trajectories.. This requires study of one's own perceptions of ELL students as well as identification of critical literacy skills, interest in student's identities, and investigation of the cultural background that influences their unique characteristics and needs. Then with this insight teachers can and should pursue opportunities to learn and use research-based practices. Studying the needs of individual classes lends itself to the teacher constantly seeking out professional development and re-examining their own perspectives on ELL education. These processes not only increase their personal growth as teachers but also prepare them to respond to the continually changing needs and skills of their students.

We must believe in the value of bilingualism and biculturalism. It is not a question of mending





an ‘issue’ or ‘deficit’, it’s about ensuring the opportunity to be bilingual is encouraged and facilitated through effective teaching and assessment. Regardless of content, grade, and district policy true change for students and teachers begins with a genuine investment of time getting to know individual students and possessing an authentic interest in who they are.

I don’t know if in another four years the statistics will look different and unjust policies will improve, I certainly hope they do. What I do believe is that the only way they will change is if we as educators change and strive to be the outliers, to curate our own professional development, to support and educate each other, and most importantly, show up every day and make it clear to students of all different nationalities, languages, and socio economic statuses that they are the priority and have just as much to teach as they do to learn.

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## The Myth and Implications of “Balanced Bilingualism” for English Language Programs

By Rebekka Eckhaus

The other day, I was chatting with other faculty members in the corridor at the university in Japan where I currently teach in the English language program. About half of my colleagues are English speakers from Anglophone countries, and the entire faculty has varying bi/multilingual competence. Since many teachers have children receiving education here in Japan, questions often arise about educating bilingual children. On this particular day, the conversation turned toward the myth of the “balanced bilingual.”

“The myth of the ‘balanced bilingual?’” asked one colleague. Another language instructor explained what Grosjean (2012) eloquently describes as the view that “bilinguals [must] have equal and perfect knowledge of their languages” (p. 19). In extension, “equal and perfect knowledge” would imply that “bilinguals are (or should be) two monolinguals in one person” (Grosjean, 1989, p. 3).

Surprised, the first colleague, whose children were learning both English and Japanese, replied, “Yeah, a ‘balanced bilingual.’ Isn’t that what we’re all trying to do with our kids?” Little was he aware that a “balanced bilingual” is extremely rare and debatably considered an impossible pursuit (Haugen, in Grosjean, 2012).

My colleague holds a belief commonly held in popular culture: A bilingual can *and should* have equal capacity to comprehend, produce, and function—not only in two languages, but in two cultures (Grosjean, 2012). This image of a multilingual, which is based on a monoglossic judgment of a native-speaker, perfect ideal (Fuller, 2018; García & Tupas, 2018), places unrealistic and unachievable expectations on multi-language users (De Houwer & Ortega, 2018b; Grosjean, 1989, 2012; May, 2014b).

The above anecdote illuminates one of the biggest challenges in the area of bi/multilingualism: lack of knowledge about what it truly means to be multilingual. As language teachers, we try not ascribe to the popular myths about language learning and use. However, at times even we may allow subconscious misconceptions to affect our teaching, administration, policy building, and, in this case, parenting.



## **How then could the myth of the balanced bilingual affect our teaching and administration on a more practical level?**

In my previous job, I worked as a coordinator in a U.S.-based university English language program in Japan. As a newly established program, we had the task of implementing English language placement tests to incoming students, the majority of whom were Japanese-English bilinguals, Japanese being their dominant language. We offered three program tracks: an academic Intensive English Program (IEP), a general English program, and a program for business professionals. According to our stated mission, students were guided after placement to a specific track or combination of tracks depending on their individual goals.

Very quickly, an issue emerged with the placement procedures. Our in-house placement tests consisted of three separate parts, grammar and listening, a writing sample and an oral interview. Each part was scored separately and then aggregated for a final determination of the student's level. However, since students received a distinct score on each part, how should we place those students who had widely divergent scores or demonstrated different strengths in their English competencies? In other words, what should happen to a student whose skills were “unbalanced”?

In our context, this “imbalance” was usually found in a very strong speaker with weaker writing skills or a strong writer with weak speaking and listening. The policy was clear—a student could only be placed at or slightly above the level of their weakest area.

Discussion ensued among the faculty. Was the policy fair to students? What if a student only wanted to improve specific skills? Was it necessary to have a balanced placement? How would changing the policy affect classroom dynamics for the teachers or other students?

## **How was the policy adapted?**

Eventually, the survival of the school forced the policy to change. Some students were dissatisfied with their placements. For example, in the original system, a strong speaker who wanted to improve his or her speaking skills had no option but to improve their weak writing before taking a speaking class. Not only were the writing classes expensive and time consuming, but they were also potentially irrelevant to the student's goals.

In order to retain students, the policy had to account for these so-called “exceptions.” Therefore, an allowance was introduced—students could be placed based on the skill they wanted to improve on a case-by-case basis. The change essentially applied to part-time students outside of the IEP. The original policy remained intact for the IEP because all English language skill areas



were considered essential for academic success in university studies taught in English.

While the policy was adjusted for the reality of the school's context, the process of deciding whether to allow for "imbalanced" English language competencies was fraught with lively discussion and plenty of disagreement. Without a doubt, adapting an ESL program based in an Anglophone context to an EFL context in which English is not the majority language is a complex process. However, a closer look at a foundational attitude regarding multilingual students may help inform future administrative and instructional practices.

### **What does this mean for teachers and administrators?**

In this case, the initial placement decision was founded on at least one basic misconception: all aspects of a bilingual's language must be balanced in order to be considered truly competent in that language. Moreover, the language benchmark for English (and, therefore, also for Japanese) was the same as a highly skilled monolingual in academic register and style. In other words, our administration set a very narrow monolingual standard as the "perfect" or "ideal" language user (Grosjean, 1989).

The impossibility of directly comparing a bilingual to a monolingual in each language has been criticized extensively in modern multilingual research (Cruz-Ferreira, 2010; De Houwer & Ortega, 2018a; Fuller, 2018; Grosjean, 1989, 2012; May, 2014a; Ortega, 2014). When teachers and administrators embrace a monoglossic deficit posture toward our bilingual students, we may limit the ways in which we can adapt our programs and lessons to meet their needs, and we might drive our students to imagine themselves in a perpetual game of catch-up with their monolingual peers—regardless of whether they can successfully accomplish tasks utilizing their diverse linguistic and/or cultural resources.

As educators, a better approach would be focusing less on what our students *cannot do* in English and more on how well they *can* communicate and express themselves in the specific contexts and/or registers in which they need. From there, we can help them build their language resources so that they can more efficiently and effectively achieve their goals. Cook (2002) recommends moving away from the detrimental notion of "language learners" to a more constructive approach, regarding multilinguals as "language users" (p. 4).

As administrators and teachers then, perhaps we should give the particular needs and goals of our students more weight when designing curricula, including questions of course goals, material selection and development, assessment, and placement.

In order to realize change as a profession, our first adjustment must be attitudinal. We must



understand bi/multilingualism as a separate phenomenon from monolingualism (Grosjean, 1985).

We should make efforts to establish administrative and instructional expectations that match the needs and goals of the multilingual individuals who attend our classes. The second adjustment is practical. We must ensure that our policies and practices reflect a research-based approach to multilingualism, eschewing pop culture myths about speakers of multiple languages.

Despite the demands of powerful stakeholders who may not embrace an inclusive approach to multilingualism, educators have a duty to establish a more objective method of analysis, which in turn will lead to a more equitable process of decision-making. We are all susceptible to subconscious biases that may affect the impartiality of our decisions. Therefore, we must engage in a reflective learning process, first recognizing our own beliefs, identifying and correcting any errors of understanding, and then espouse evidence-based approaches. In the area of bi/multilingualism where myth is often confused for fact, we must become advocates dedicated to enriching our students' education and promoting a deeper understanding of multilingualism in broader society.

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## **Promoting Intercultural Listening Skills in a Multilingual Classroom**

**By Sharon Tjaden-Glass and Jennifer A. Lacroix**

Open any yoga journal and you can read many program descriptions for radical listening or learning how to be a more effective listener. National Public Radio features stories around the holidays on how to be a better listener during heated family conversations. Listening is an automatic skill that adults seemingly take for granted and children seemingly develop implicitly. But as the world continues to expand and the role of English as a Medium of Instruction continues to grow, how humans learn to effectively communicate in various international and intercultural contexts continues to be convoluted. When communication is in one's second, third, or *n*th language, it can become even more complicated as sensitivity to pragmatics and cultural context affect performance and understanding. In many ways, what constitutes effective intercultural communication is not just strong speaking skills (e.g. sounding intelligible and knowledgeable), but also listening skills. Yet, how one demonstrates intercultural competence via listening in a multilingual classroom remains an open question.

Many second language acquisition scholars agree that effective listening skills involve intricate cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective processes (Chen, 2013; Field, 2004; Goh, 2014; Graham, 2017; Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; Yeldham & Gruba, 2014). In fact, much research exists on the role of speaking in intercultural communication, such as the role of pronunciation instruction at the segmental and suprasegmental levels (Baker, 2014; Couper, 2017) and various discourse strategies for effective communication such as discussion skills (Holmes, 2004) to combat perceived challenges leading and participating in discussions as well as speaking clearly (Caplan & Stevens, 2017). True, intercultural communication skills require strong speaking and listening skills, but our knowledge of what effectively composes the role of listening competence in intercultural communication is limited. In this article, we will connect theories from the field of intercultural communication to the second language classroom and highlight some practices that teachers and students can use in a multilingual classroom to improve their intercultural listening skills.

### **How do people develop intercultural competence?**

The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) is the most widely cited model of intercultural competence development because it distills the knowledge and experiences of many scholars in the field of intercultural communication into a unified theory.



However, in this article, we will focus on Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012), as they speak more directly to the importance of consciousness-raising, which enables multilingual learners to recognize and access their funds of knowledge in intercultural situations.

Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) view the development of intercultural communication competence in terms of flexibility, achieved through increased consciousness-raising and intercultural sensitivity. In their Staircase Model of Intercultural Communication Competence, Ting-Toomey and Chung explain that different levels of awareness and sensitivity to intercultural communication manifest in personal knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

When L2 teachers of multilingual classrooms teach within their own cultural context, consciousness-raising can be particularly challenging. They may have conceived of intercultural competence as a set of knowledge and skills to learn in order to help them understand *people from other cultures*, without recognizing the need to critically reflect on their own cultural lens. However, Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) point out that flexible intercultural communicators need to have an awareness and appreciation for the fact that everyone, including themselves, is a unique cultural being.

In their Principles of Process Consciousness, Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) provide eight key points pertaining to the nature of intercultural communication that, when kept at the forefront of intercultural experiences, can help increase intercultural communication flexibility. These principles direct attention to and reflection on a range of factors that influence communication, including (1) interlocutors' expectations, (2) bias, (3) encoding and decoding messages, (4) goals, (5) communication styles, (6) culture clashes, (7) context, and (8) the embedded nature of intercultural communication. In summary, by increasing awareness of the intricacies of intercultural communication, teachers and students can improve their ability to adjust their communication to diverse audiences and contexts.

### **How can culture influence interactions?**

To help multilingual learners find a middle ground in intercultural situations, Starosta and Chen (2000) propose Third Culture Theory, which employs a “double-emic listening” approach, in which, “interactants ... are aware that their own Culture One is a theory; that another’s views could provide alternate views; and that information is needed to grow and survive as a global citizen” (p. 290). In this view, effective intercultural communication requires that interlocutors move toward “a space-between” cultures, where they can more fully engage in cultural perspective-taking and reach agreement on, “an interpretation that belongs to neither party” (p.



279). This restructured view of the world in which values are “negotiated and adjusted among parties so as to render them mutually palatable” (p. 291) encompasses Starosta and Chen’s notion of Third Culture Theory. Using Third Culture Theory to inform classroom approach and lesson design is particularly useful in a multilingual classroom, where learners from different cultures must continually navigate the spaces between cultures. When learners are able to conceive of their communication as emerging from a shared cultural space, mutual respect, learner autonomy, and ownership of language follow.

### **How does our individual cultural lens color our interactions?**

Gaining cultural knowledge and being tolerant of the Other is not enough for effective intercultural communication (Gorski, 2008). A healthy amount of cultural self-awareness is also needed. In an increasingly globalized and multilingual world, Hybrid Theory (Babha, 1994; Holliday, 2018) advocates for self-reflection that helps learners understand that, “hybridity is how we *all* are” (Holliday, 2018, p. 6, emphasis in the original). In addition, helping learners see their own cultural hybridity helps them also reconcile the fact that, although we may reside within cultures, our cultural boundaries are not fixed. Indeed, we may sometimes feel that we share more in common with people from other cultures than we do with people from our own. What intercultural communicators need to be effective in an increasingly globalized world is to find ways to be “new selves in new domains” (Holliday, 2018, p. 6). In this view, the role of the teacher is to help students (1) recognize the interconnectedness and relationships with people and (2) “understand their positionality in the wider world” (Holliday, 2018, p. 6).

Therefore, while *responding or giving feedback, asking questions, and using nonverbal communication* (Fontana, Cohen, & Wolvin, 2015) contribute to listening competence, promoting effective listening skills in a multilingual classroom requires preparing learners for intercultural interactions through building knowledge about intercultural competence development, an awareness of the complexities of intercultural communication, and cultural self-awareness.

### **What types of activities can teachers use to promote effective intercultural listening?**

TABLE 1: Overview of classroom listening activities to promote Intercultural Communication (IC)

IC Goal	Activity
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Using listening strategies	Practice active listening. Model how to ask questions that show you're listening and the provide the speaker opportunities to clarify meaning or intention.
Increasing knowledge about intercultural communication	Help learners articulate the values and beliefs that guide their interpretations of the world. See Berrardo & Deardorff (2012) for examples of activities.
Creating a Third Space for multilingual students to engage in intercultural communication	When discussing controversial topics, provide learners time to write down their reflections on how their beliefs and values may influence their position on the topic. Provide space and time for all learners to express their viewpoints. Guide students in short post-discussion debriefings that focus on raising their awareness of how their cultures may influence their decisions and how cultural may influence others to arrive at different positions.
Applying knowledge about intercultural communication / Raising cultural self-awareness	Reflection journals: Provide questions to learners that direct them to make connections between what they are learning about intercultural competence and communication and what they are experiencing in their intercultural interactions.
Raising cultural self-awareness	Create activities that guide students in unpacking their cultural identities. See Berrardo & Deardorff (2012).
Raising cultural self-awareness	Use self-assessment surveys that gauge learners' awareness of intercultural communication. See Ting-Toomey & Chung (2012) for a variety of self-assessment checklists and surveys.

In summary, promoting effective intercultural listening in the classroom requires a balance of explaining how to develop intercultural competence, modeling communication strategies, and guiding learners in reflection to make sense of their own interculturality. Taken together, these skills and concepts promote the development of IC listening skills that embrace multilingualism as an asset in any classroom, whether virtual or traditional.





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