

## Equity and Dual Language Immersion: Curriculum

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### Introduction: Defining Curriculum

I have been tasked with considering questions of equity in the area of **Curriculum** in **two-way dual language bilingual education** (TWBE). TWBE programs are a specific and popular model of enrichment bilingual education in the United States that enrolls approximately equal numbers of students identified as dominant in English and in a target language (usually Spanish).<sup>1</sup> In these programs, children learn language through content and they learn content through both program languages. Programs follow structured language allocation policies, with various mechanisms for separating instruction in each language: some divide languages by teacher, or time of day, or content area, or day of the week. According to the most recent “Guiding Principles” for TWDL education produced by the Center for Applied Linguistics, TWDL programs share three program goals: “grade level academic achievement,” “bilingualism and biliteracy,” and “sociocultural competence” (Howard, et al., 2018)

Before I begin this exploration, I also need to define *curriculum*. I am not in the field of Curriculum Studies and in truth have given little thought to general questions of curriculum in my scholarship. So, I asked my colleague from the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Noah DeLissovoy, who is strongly situated in this area. Noah told me he thinks of curriculum as:

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<sup>1</sup> Because most of the TWDL programs in the US are Spanish/English programs, and because these are the programs I have spent my career working within, at times in this paper I will refer to Spanish as the target language of TWDL programs; at the same time, I want to recognize that TWDL programs exist in a wide range of languages.

The various ways in which knowledge is framed, becomes present, and is deployed in schools, as well as the ways in which basic orientations are formed and reproduced.

(DeLissovoy, email correspondence, October 2018)

This definition suits my exploration in the paper that will follow. I am concerned here with how we decide what knowledge is important, how we bring our students to become aware of important knowledge, and how our decisions around knowledge are shaped by our own (or others') sometimes unspoken ideologies. To put it plainly, I will be talking about the ways in which both “*what we teach*” and “*how we teach*” in a TWBE classroom need to change in order to be more equitable, and about the orientations or ideologies that underlie decisions related to what or how we teach.

***Critical Consciousness at the Core.*** Often, the practitioner-directed literature in TWBE boasts that the curriculum is “the same” grade-level curriculum as it is in every other school, merely delivered in the target language (e.g., Howard et al., 2018; Howard & Sugarman, 2007). The intention of this is to assert that the curriculum is not remedial in any way, that it is the same rigorous, grade-level material that English-dominant (presumably middle-class) students are receiving in other schools. Of course, this is certainly a valid and worthwhile assertion, and it is quite possible a necessary promise if we expect to continue to attract English-dominant middle-class students to TWBE schools. Students in a TWBE program deserve a rigorous, academically engaging curriculum that covers that required content for each grade; this is central to the success of any school program. Delivery of material in the program’s target languages also is imperative.

Yet at the same time, the goals and the population of a TWBE program are specific, and quite often different from a monolingual English program in the same context. To ensure equity, the curriculum needs to reflect these differences. More than merely providing the mainstream curriculum in two (or more) languages, a DLBE program must center its curriculum upon the voices and knowledges of the members of its own community, particularly the often-marginalized members of that community whose experiences will not necessarily be reflected in the mainstream curriculum. In addition, a TWBE curriculum must directly confront and call into question what Apple (1990) described as the “hidden curriculum,” the hegemony of our construction of important knowledge, embedded in selection of materials and media as well as in the incidental moments, relationships, routines, and sanctioned language practices in classrooms. Because equity is a core goal for diverse TWBE classrooms and key to the academic success of students who come from historically marginalized communities, TWBE curricula must explicitly teach critical awareness of oppression and hegemony, and center historically marginalized stories and voices, in terms of both the *content* and *delivery* of knowledge.

At the heart of the issue, indeed at the heart of every issue related to equity in TWBE, is the need for *critical consciousness* (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017), also referred to as *ideological clarity* (Alfaro & Hernández, 2018; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001). Educators, leaders, students, and parents must consider and push back against structural inequities in making every decision, in designing and delivering every lesson, and in every engagement or interaction in a TWBE school (Palmer, Cervantes-Soon, Dorner & Heiman, In Press). Critical awareness must be pervasive. Given the diversity of experiences and backgrounds of the students in a typical TWBE context, such a critical orientation helps ensure that voices often marginalized in US

school contexts, are centered. It helps to ensure that minoritized emergent bilingual children's educational needs and strengths are the focus of the program, which will ensure that the program's goals are met for *all* students. Students whose backgrounds reflect the dominant community will also benefit from this focus on critical consciousness; along with culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) language and content that will support their academic, linguistic, and sociocultural competencies, they will learn important lessons about living in diverse communities and becoming allies in the struggle against inequality in our stratified, racialized society.

*What is critical consciousness?* Paulo Freire defines *conscientizacao* as "the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence" (Freire, 2000). It is transformation that comes as a result of dialogue, in which the oppressed can embrace the liberatory power of education and become aware of the oppressive nature of the structures of traditional schooling and society. In recent years there has been a relatively broad and growing call in the field for teachers with "ideological and political clarity" to work with bilingual children. Most notably, Bartolomé and Trueba made this call (2000), stating: "the need to help teachers 'name' and interrogate their ideological stances is urgent...we propose a radical transformation in teacher preparation whereby political and ideological clarity are prioritized" (p.282). Alfaró and Hernandez (2018) similarly argued for "four tenets" that can "propel educators to potentially ask the tough questions that cause reflection:" Ideology, Pedagogy, Access, and Equity (p.488). For the purposes of this paper, I will use both terms, critical consciousness and ideological clarity; in terms of their applicability to TWDL education, I believe them to be essentially equivalent.

In this paper, I will attempt to focus upon ways in which a *critical consciousness* has potential to support equitable engagements related to curriculum. In fact, alongside the above calls for ideological clarity among teachers, there has been a call for increasingly critical, culturally sustaining pedagogies and curriculum for bilingual learners (Barbian, E., Gonzales, G. C., & Mejía, P., 2017; Paris, 2012), such that students can see themselves in the curriculum and can envision themselves as knowledge-producers.

Because “knowledge is framed, becomes present, and is deployed” by educators’ choices of *content*, *pedagogy*, and *classroom language use*, I place the following three **recommendations** at top of the list of urgencies related to curriculum:

1. Critically-oriented, culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) bilingual content that reflects the histories and experiences of marginalized communities served in TWDL schools.
2. Pedagogies of inclusion, such as structuring for participation of all, valuing contributions of minoritized voices, centering often marginalized interactional and discourse patterns (Martin-Beltran, 2010; Palmer, 2008b).
3. Deliberate language use, which encourages full engagement in both program languages, both separately *and* together, including bilingual – translanguaging – engagements, with an emphasis on valuing students’ own everyday language practices as tools for knowledge construction (Palmer & Martínez, 2013; Sánchez, García, & Solorza, 2017).

In the sections that follow, I will elaborate and explain each of these, and briefly review the literature that supports them.

At the same time and alongside these recommendations, I will also highlight the many current policies, structures and practices in public schools that run *counter* to the effort to bring in these urgent changes. These **problematic policies, structures or practices** undermine DLBE program equity and effectiveness. For example:

- Monoglossic curricular mandates, in which administrators require (and teachers lack experience or time to resist) rigid adherence to textbooks or externally supplied lesson plans.
- High stakes, mostly monolingual (but entirely monoglossic) accountability mandates.
- Monoglossic language policies that expect teachers and bilingual students to isolate program languages.

To briefly define a key term: *Monoglossic* refers to Bakhtin's conception of the 'centripetal forces' pushing toward uniformity, domination, and standardization in our language and semiotic practices, standing in sharp contrast to the *heteroglossic* forces of language variation, the "creative, style-shaping" constant evolution of the word (Bakhtin, 1998, p. 294).

Monoglossic curricular mandates, for example, are those that attempt to impose identical curricular materials onto wildly different communities of learners (and expect similar results).

Monoglossic high stakes accountability mandates are those that attempt to assess the knowledge or skills of different learners, who have different sets of life and school experiences, using one tool. Monoglossic language policies value standard, monolingual language practices above vernacular or hybrid language practices, and thus for example consistently demand that bilingual individuals narrow their selection of communicative practices to one standard named language at a time. Such a language policy imposes artificial and external limits on meaning-

making and expression for heteroglossic learners, and often judges them harshly for straying from monoglossic norms. I will define each of these issues within the context of the above recommendations, and discuss their implications in terms of the barriers they present to equity in TWBE.

**The knowledge that is valued and centered in a TWBE curriculum: critically-oriented, culturally sustaining bilingual content**

*Culturally sustaining pedagogies.* An equitable TWBE program that serves to educate students through two languages and prepare them academically and culturally to engage in our increasingly diverse world, necessarily engages students with critically-oriented, culturally sustaining (Paris & Alim, 2017) bilingual content that reflects and centers the histories and experiences of the wide range of communities served in the school. This in no way negates the need for academic rigor and challenge. Quite to the contrary, the curriculum should be at once rigorous *and* transformative. Transformative curricula, drawing on culturally relevant and critical multicultural children’s literature, provides material for rich conversations in classrooms, addressing standards while supporting children’s development of critical thinking and skills.

There is increasing evidence that children are aware of the race, class, and status differences among members of their classrooms, and will even exploit these for their own purposes (Fitts, 2006; García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; Palmer, 2009a). On the other hand, when educators maintain ideological clarity and explicitly teach students in two-way contexts to honor and appreciate the linguistic and cultural resources of their (minoritized) peers, positive outcomes have been documented (Kibler, Salerno, &

Hardigree, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Lindholm-Leary, 2016). By selecting counter-hegemonic materials, TWBE programs actively acknowledge and counter the histories of oppression that have led to large discrepancies in power and privilege, especially between speakers of Spanish and speakers of English in the US. If equity is a goal, this explicit acknowledgement must be part of the mission of a TWDL program that enrolls both English and Spanish speakers into the same classrooms. Resources with examples that richly illustrate rigorous culturally sustaining curriculum and practice include *Rethinking Bilingual Education* (Barbian, E. et al., 2017) and *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies* (Paris & Alim, 2017).

*Historicizing dual language education.* TWDL programs also need to acknowledge their own role in the history of bilingual education. The modern struggle for bilingual education in the United States has its roots in the Chicano Civil Rights movement. While TWDL became a more politically savvy version of bilingual education in recent decades, due to its explicit inclusion of the dominant majority, denying its connection to the initial goals and intentions of bilingual education moves TWDL programs further away from the struggle for equity. Specifically, original advocates for bilingual education programs in the 1960's and 1970's had enriching, critical visions for culturally and linguistically sustainable bilingual programming that in many ways resembles the vision we are currently shaping for TWDL. That history of advocacy and activism demanding strong developmental bilingual programs for Latinx students in public schools is exemplified by the work of long-time activist Tony Baez in Milwaukee, WI (Peterson, 2017b) and by ASPIRA and the Puerto Rican community in New York City (García, Menken, Velasco, & Vogel, 2018), among many others. For reasons of expediency and compromise, advocates and policy makers in the late 1970's and early 1980's often settled for compensatory



models such as transitional bilingual education, which were admittedly arrived at through long struggle and with the support of the courts as in cases such as *Lau v. Nichols (1974)* and *Castañeda v. Pickard (1981)*.

Meanwhile, although the first documented two-way dual language bilingual program began at Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, FL in 1963, TWDL programs really began to increase in number and popularity right around the same time period that developmental and transitional bilingual education was facing intense criticism in the public sphere: in the 1980's through the early 2000's. The history of struggle for permission to provide bilingual programming in public schools serving diverse communities – whether TWDL or other bilingual program models – can be explored as one narrative. Early activist struggles for developmental bilingual education are intimately tied to the privilege and high status that TWDL schools garner today. While middle-class English-speaking students may thrive regardless of the school's stance, I believe that the educational needs of emerging bilingual Latinx students will *only* be served if their schools embrace and link to this common history.

*Teachers as Curriculum Developers.* All curriculum that is selected for TWDL classrooms must be inclusive of diverse perspectives; the material sanctioned as school knowledge must ultimately reflect the voices of all members of the school community, and it must challenge the hegemony of traditional knowledge. Imagine a space in which the stories that live and breathe in the community served by a school are allowed into the classroom, in which the lived experiences of parents and leaders comprise the curriculum. If such a *Funds of Knowledge* perspective (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) drives teachers' selection (or creation) of content in TWDL settings, and if all children's stories and experiences are valued and contribute

to the school's curriculum, then all children within that school will see themselves in the sanctioned knowledge of the school. They will recognize the difference between their school's approach to knowledge and the approach in the world outside their school, and will have greater potential to become advocates for a better, more equitable world. For example, Peterson (2017a) describes the explicitly "multicultural, anti-racist" curriculum developed over time and continually revisited by the teachers at La Escuela Fratney, a TWBE school in Milwaukee, WI. He describes the locally constructed curriculum:

We developed four schoolwide themes, one for each quarter. The themes stress social responsibility, activism, and respect for our students' lives and heritage. These themes and subthemes help new teachers understand our underlying philosophy and encourage students, staff, and parents to work together on projects... (p.159).

DLBE schools can learn from examples like Fratney, but the innovative approach taken by Fratney's teachers may not suit every school; it is indeed something that must be reinvented for each local context.

Unfortunately, such innovation does not always feel like a viable option in TWBE schools. In many districts, particularly in schools with large numbers of EL identified students and schools with large numbers of students of color, teachers are mandated to use particular published mainstream curricular materials selected by administration. Administrators in many cases require rigid adherence to textbooks or to externally supplied lesson plans. The inherent heteroglossia of bilingual students instills fear among educators that they will risk lower test scores on monoglossic tests, and thus leads to more powerful enforcement of mandates

(Dorner & Layton, 2013; López & Fránquiz, 2009; Palmer & Snodgrass-Rangel, 2011). Such large-

scale mandated curricula, regardless of quality, fundamentally obviate student engagement because they are necessarily distant from the context in which they are taught.

Teachers must be professionally invested in the content and pedagogies they deliver, and students must be personally invested in the ideas they engage with. This comes most easily when teachers engage in designing or modifying the curriculum to suit their contexts. In the process they bring in voices and experiences of students, parents or community members to engage with their students. Teachers in TWDL programs inevitably find themselves inventing, creating, and adapting curricula on their own, or else working against inappropriate curricula. For instance, teachers may struggle to deliver content in Spanish that was originally developed in English or designed for an English-speaking audience. In some contexts (e.g. the Southeastern US; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Colomer, 2018), teachers may come from Spanish-speaking countries, with little understanding of the US context or respect for the cultural/linguistic experiences of US Spanish-speaking emerging bilinguals. Other contexts (such as Texas) boast many local bilingual teachers, but the subtractive ideologies of transitional bilingual education, in which the target language is undervalued and English acquisition remains the ultimate goal of the program, are deeply entrenched (Zuniga, Henderson, & Palmer, 2018).

The need to ensure that the curriculum reflects the community while simultaneously challenging students academically and cognitively necessitates that teachers in DLBE programs be prepared to develop curriculum; that they understand the work of situating critical, anti-racist, culturally sustaining lessons within larger scopes/sequences that are developmentally appropriate and rigorous and meet a school's overall goals. Unfortunately, such processes of

curriculum development is no longer assumed to be part of teachers' work in many teacher preparation programs (Sleeter & Flores Carmona, 2017, p. 2).

It is important for the project of equity in TWDL that teachers receive professional development and support in adapting and developing critical, multicultural, anti-racist content materials that support *all* students' bilingualism and biliteracy, high academic achievement, cultural awareness, and critical consciousness. An excellent resource for professional development and ongoing support for teachers in this area is the recent book "Un-standardizing curriculum: Multicultural teaching in the standards-based classroom," which provides the rationale, as well as resources, for teachers who are working to reclaim this aspect of their professional identities (Sleeter & Flores Carmona, 2017). Another tool is "Understanding by Design", useful both for preservice and in-service teachers in any context (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

### ***Delivering the TWDL Curriculum: pedagogies of inclusion***

Beyond the materials and ideas that are selected to receive focus in lessons, the participation structures we set up in the classroom make up a critical and often "hidden" (Apple, 1990) part of the curriculum. *How* we teach imparts lessons just as much as *what* we teach: from the structure of a lesson and the organization of a classroom, children may emerge from classroom experiences believing they already possess knowledge worth sharing; they may come away with the impression that their voice is not as important as others' voices; or they may ultimately be led to believe they cannot even talk appropriately for the classroom. In an

effort to support broader awareness of the hidden curriculum, I am calling for teachers to engage in *pedagogies of inclusion*.

One element of pedagogies of inclusion is developing an awareness of participation structures, and ensuring these are explicitly focused on equitable participation for all. Grounded in a sociocultural theory of learning, I assume that learning happens with engagement: when students talk about ideas and listen to others, they co-construct new knowledge; when students talk and listen to engaging new language practices, they acquire them. Teachers need to think carefully about turn-taking patterns in their classrooms: how are they ensuring all students' voices are heard in the classroom? (Palmer, 2008a, 2008b). Open-ended whole class discussions tend to favor participation by those who feel most comfortable in formal schooling spaces, usually members of the dominant (English speaking, middle class, US-born) community. Explicitly structuring a conversation with, for example, a "talking stick" or clear instructions for roles or turn taking, scaffolds children to learn to share the floor. Becoming more aware of details such as turn-taking and participation in classroom conversations is part of teachers' developing ideological clarity.

Across the board, TWDL literature calls for children to work together in groups in order to facilitate language and content learning and active engagement (Howard, et al., 2018; Lindholm-Leary, 2005). There is considerable literature exploring the patterns of engagement of children in "bilingual pairs" and groups in TWDL contexts (Angelova, Gunawardena, & Volk, 2006; Fitts, 2006; Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Lee, Hill-Bonnet, & Raley, 2011). While groupwork is crucial and children learn important lessons when they work together, merely putting children into groups does not guarantee equitable participation and engagement.

Groupwork is complex (Cohen & Lotan, 1995), and children must be explicitly taught the skills to engage equitably and learn together in pairs or groups. It has long been understood that ensuring equity in these spaces takes constant and deliberate work. Developing critical consciousness will help teachers to build and structure group activities that balance status along various dimensions, maximizing equitable interaction and learning opportunities.

Pedagogies of inclusion also refer to centering the interactional/discourse patterns, the voices, and the stories/contributions of those typically marginalized in our classrooms. Scholars in Linguistic Anthropology have explored and documented ways that children raised in different communities bring different communicative expectations to school with them (Heath, 1986; Heller & Martin-Jones, 2001; McCarty, 2005; Michaels, 1981). In their families and communities, children learn to hear and tell stories in unique ways; they learn to value certain literacy activities over others, and to express their ideas using different discourse patterns. By raising their own critical consciousness, teachers who are aware of these differences and open to different ways of knowing and expressing ideas have the potential to authentically engage with all of their students (Bang & Medin, 2010). Such authentic engagement with students' own community epistemologies and literacies will support students' construction of academic identities, crucial to their academic success (Palmer, 2008a)

### **Delivering the TWDL Curriculum: Intentional language engagement**

TWDL programs necessarily demand rich and sheltered opportunities for bi/multilingual language engagement throughout the curriculum. This necessity brings to the surface challenges on several levels as we consider what languages and language practices must or

should be included in the sanctioned languages of the classroom, and how they should be arranged.

Let us first consider the two (or more) named program languages, as conventionally defined: standard English, standard Spanish, standard Mandarin, etc. Given the presence of students who are learners of both (or all) program languages, teachers must constantly be aware of the language demands in all of their lessons. With such awareness comes a risk that teachers will succumb to simplification in their instructional practices - either of language or of content - in order to accommodate children from one or the other language background. This is a particular risk when teachers are instructing in a minoritized language, for several reasons.

First, it is the nature of language dominance that children who are the speakers of dominant languages assume they are entitled to understand what is said in a context. In the US we struggle constantly against the dominance of English, such that instruction in any other language is marked, noticed, and subject to questioning by members of the dominant community – even in the context of a TWDL program (Nuñez & Palmer, 2017). In other words, English dominant speakers in TWDL programs tend to push back against minority language instruction, and teachers must constantly struggle to maintain a space for non-English languages (DePalma, 2010; Palmer, 2009b). Second, due to societal dominance and the impact of their own schooling, even bilingual certified teachers are often themselves stronger in the dominant language and/or insecure about their bilingual competencies, making it easier for them to choose to teach in and through English (Ek, Sánchez, & Quijada Cerecer, 2013). Third, appropriate and more attractive materials are usually available in the dominant language. All of

these forces are set up against a DLBE program's goal of centering and honoring the "target" or non-English language (e.g. Spanish).

Now if we move beyond consideration of the two standard registers, beyond the dichotomy of the "dominant" and "minority/target" language, we arrive at another layer of complexity. In some cases, teachers are quite strong in one or the other – or both – standard registers of the target languages of a program, but they are not familiar with nor respectful of the local varieties or hybrid language practices of students and their families (Briceño, 2018; Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2015). These *monoglossic* ideologies, or ideologies of linguistic purism related to standard registers of named languages, can be detrimental for students whose home languages reflect hybridity or variation. In fact, most DLBE programs isolate program languages (e.g. English and Spanish) throughout the entire program, adhering rigidly to a separation of languages that implies exclusive focus upon standard registers of each language. Such rigidity can have the unintended consequence of undermining bilingual students' bilingual identities and devaluing their everyday hybrid language practices (Lee, Hill-Bonnet, & Gillespie, 2008; McCollum, 1999; Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, & Henderson, 2014). Furthermore, in contexts with strict language separation policies students have less opportunity to develop metalinguistic awareness, which is crucial for such bilingual practices as translation/interpretation and operating across language communities (Dorner, Orellana & Li-Grining, 2007).

How can TWDL educators resolve – or at least straddle – this obvious tension between the responsibility to develop students' skills in standard registers of both English and Spanish (especially Spanish); and the need to honor bilingualism and bilingual students' home



vernacular language practices and develop metalinguistic skills? There is no easy answer to this question; however, having explored the issue with strong and thoughtful simultaneous bilingual teachers (Palmer, Martínez, Mateus & Henderson, 2014), I propose the following.

First, it is clearly imperative that teachers support language and content learning simultaneously through a range of creative and active sheltering techniques, without reducing their expectations for either language or content learning (Gibbons, 2002; Walqui, 2006). The curriculum must offer children the chance to fully develop biliteracy and academic competence; no one questions this requirement in TWDL education. This requires deep attention to both language and content, in both program languages, throughout the program. I believe it is easiest to ensure such deep attention to both languages and all required content through an active and intentional plan for language use that matches the language backgrounds and needs of the population the program serves. Although we have traditionally defined our TWDL programs through blanket percentages, such as “50/50” or “90/10” (or “70/30” or “80/20”), there is no one recipe that suits all students or all programs, and at best these percentages merely serve to unify a community around their commitments to each of their program languages. There is no magic in these numbers.

What’s more, I caution educators to be suspicious of one-size-fits-all program models. I council caution in the face of of top-down, large-scale implementation plans, especially if they do not invest deeply in teachers’ professional preparation, or if they rigidly demand fidelity to a district- or state-provided recipe (Palmer, Zuñiga & Henderson, 2015). Promoters who tout these programs’ effectiveness for ‘all students’ are frequently defining success narrowly or painting with a broad brush. There is never an easy recipe for academic, linguistic, and

sociocultural success for a diverse population of learners; there is always a need for professional and community engagement, ongoing investment, and ideological clarity.

That said, we do have evidence about what types of programmatic structures have worked with certain populations. We know, for instance, from long-standing research by Dr. Lindholm-Leary, that (perhaps unsurprisingly) middle class English dominant students in TWDL schools learn more Spanish when they have more time in school focused upon that language (Lindholm-Leary, 2000). From this same longitudinal, large-scale study, as well as from several others over the past 20+ years, we also know that Spanish-dominant emerging bilingual students perform just as well in English when they learn in a program that provides a majority of their instruction in Spanish, as long as they are also provided excellent instruction in English (e.g., Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Rolstad, Mahoney & Glass, 2005). It is beyond the scope of this paper to review all that we know about the value of providing different students opportunities to learn in two or more languages; suffice to say that all students appear to benefit from this experience regardless of their personal linguistic, racial, or ethnic profile; they benefit in different ways, and for different reasons, and we have much remaining to investigate to fully understand the complexity of these relationships.

We also have increasing evidence that Spanish-English simultaneous bilingual students (who are more and more the population served in TWDL and other bilingual programs) thrive in their academic and linguistic development in a program of *paired literacy* (Escamilla et al., 2014) or *translanguaging pedagogies* (García & Kleyn, 2016; Sánchez et al., 2017). By “translanguaging pedagogies,” I mean a structured, planned and intentional use of two languages in the same space and often at the same time, with the explicit pedagogical intention

of developing emerging bilingual students' biliteracy and academic skills. The term has unfortunately been misunderstood by some to mean "a sort of linguistic free-for-all" (Fred Genesee, personal communication, November 2018). I quite agree with critics that while a "free-for-all" may ultimately result in powerful language and content learning for simultaneous bilingual students (we do not know, but I believe it might), it would most likely *not* be productive in a TWDL context. At least in the English-dominant context of the United States, Spanish would not thrive in a "free-for-all" with English-dominant speakers present.

Rather, what I am describing is a clearly structured language allocation plan that includes time for focused instruction on challenging, grade-level academic content in each of the standard registers of a program's target languages; *and* time for *bilingual* engagement, with activities such as translation/interpretation, bilingual discussions, or engagement with bilingual texts. During this bilingual time, teachers may explicitly ask students to draw on a text in one language and develop a response in another, or to draw on resources across both (or all) their standard languages to collaboratively produce a written or oral report (which could be bilingual or monolingual, depending upon the intended audience) (Celic & Seltzer, 2011; Sánchez et al., 2017). In other words, along with designating certain instructional periods or topics to be "Spanish focus" and "English focus," schools might explicitly designate a "translanguaging" or "bilingual focus" time during the school day. Sánchez, et al. (2017) offer an elaborate description of one possible model for a TWDL program that incorporates translanguaging pedagogies. Additionally, the CUNY-NYSIEB website (<https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/>) provides a tremendous wealth of resources and ideas for supporting bilingual development for students across the biliteracy spectra within TWBE (and other educational) programs.

I am asserting that without sacrificing students' opportunities to learn and practice standard language registers in both program languages, TWDL schools can and should develop new structures that engage children's developing bilingual skills. This will support positive identity development for ALL their students (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2017). However, given the lower status of vernacular and hybrid language practices in our society, the opportunity to think, talk, and work in one's full linguistic repertoire is most important for those who come from families and communities in which non-standard, non-middle-class language practices are the norm – in other words, for the students that bilingual programs were initially developed to serve.

Fundamentally, teachers need to develop the ideological clarity to understand that whether or not particular language practices are part of a standard register of any particular named language, a child's language practices are expressions of their culture, identity, and cognitive strength, and are therefore intelligent and creative and quite adequate to sustain academic thinking and to support learning (Palmer & Martínez, 2013). Embracing children's vernacular language practices, allowing children the space to talk about their ideas using their entire linguistic repertoires (even if this means drawing on two or more named languages at once), sends children the message that they are worthy and capable of participating in school conversations – that their knowledge counts in the classroom.

*The Challenge of Monoglossic High Stakes Accountability.* It is a tremendous challenge for public schools to value bilingual children's full linguistic repertoires and to maintain enriched biliteracy-oriented programs, in the midst of high stakes, mostly monolingual (and entirely monoglossic) accountability mandates. In a very tangible way, the only language

practices that truly “count” in US schools are standard English language practices. When assessment carries high stakes for accountability, curriculum tends to conform around it (Au, 2007). There is mounting evidence that due to their tendency to score lower in accountability measures bilingual children are particularly vulnerable to the narrowing of curriculum that accompanies high stakes testing (Diamond & Spillane, 2004; Palmer & Snodgrass-Rangel, 2011; Valenzuela, 2005). This includes both high-stakes state standardized tests in English, and standardized tests in Spanish or other home languages, as well as formative assessments in either English or home languages. This is due at least in part to students’ bilingualism, which is not well measured using tools in either language (Escamilla, Butvilofsky, & Hopewell, 2017; Shohamy, 2011).

Because of the inextricable connection between curriculum and assessment, if TWDL programs are to be permitted to thrive, then high stakes single-measure accountability systems must be replaced with multiple-measures, including measures of both/all program language development and bilingual measures of content understanding. We must develop and then use better ways to assess and understand the language and content knowledge of bilingual students (Shohamy, 2011). Professional educators need the autonomy to engage in a range of meaningful assessment processes that support rich and engaged *bilingual* learning. The critical multicultural curricula required to support diverse communities in TWDL programs also necessitates alternative and enriching forms of assessment, such as portfolios, student run conferences and culminating presentations (Miranda & Cherng, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

Questions revolving around the knowledge we value in TWDL, the structures we select for distributing this knowledge to and with students, and the language practices we honor in this process are central to considerations of equity. Cutting across all considerations is an overarching need to put critical consciousness at the core. If we center the historically marginalized as we select and organize the content of our language arts, math, science, social studies, etc., and we value the lived experiences of members of our own TWDL communities as an integral part of that content, we can support all students to meet academic standards while empowering them to transform their reality. If our classroom is intentionally organized to ensure all students have equitable access to learning experiences and academic identities, our students will learn to interact with one another in ways that produce greater equity, and hopefully take those skills with them beyond our classrooms, beyond our school, to transform our world. If we value the epistemologies, literacy practices, and hybrid/vernacular language practices of marginalized cultures and communities within the practices of our school, then our school can become a space for authentic, humanizing cross-cultural engagements that allow all students and their parents to become empowered.

TWDL presents us with a unique and amazing opportunity: to bring communities together under a banner of building equitable, multilingual, multicultural communities; to teach our children to lead the way into a better future. In order to realize this vision, we must pay direct attention to equity in every moment as we implement TWDL programs.

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