Welcome, muchachas from Teocaltiche, in this class we speak English refrito, English con sal y limón, English thick a mango juice. English poured from a clay juy, English sung, a recipe from Uruapan, English lighted by Oaxacan dawns, English spiked with mezcal from Tlacuixti, English with a red cactus flower blooming in its heart. Welcome, welcome, amigos del sur, bring your Zapotec tongues, your NahuaTL tones, your patience of pyramids, your red suns and
CONTRIBUTORS

OFELIA GARCIA is Professor in the Ph.D. programs of Urban Education and of Latin American, Italian, and Latinx Cultures (LALAC) at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has been Professor of Education at Columbia University’s Teachers College, Dean of the School of Education at the Broidy Campus of Long Island University, and Professor of Education at the City College of New York. Among her best-known books are Bilingual Education in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective and Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education (with Li Wei, 2015 British Association of Applied Linguistics Book Award recipient). She is a former elementary school teacher whose passion for children and social justice in education pushes her to fight for equity and full inclusion for children of diverse backgrounds and abilities. With a B.A. in English and a M.S.Ed. in teaching urban students with disabilities, María’s research focuses on bilingual children with disabilities, their families and their ability to access multilingual learning spaces within NYC public schools. Her interests are deeply rooted in language practices and disability awareness within schools and families. María is currently an Assistant Professor at Montclair State University. She enjoys all the challenges & rewards of her three children, two cats and five chickens in the back yard.

RACHEL TONCELLI is an Assistant Professor in the TESOL Program at Rhode Island College. She received a Master’s degree in Anthropology from the Università di Firenze and a M.Ed. in Teaching English as a Second Language from Rhode Island College. She is currently pursuing her doctoral program in Curriculum, Teaching, Learning, and Leadership at Northeastern University. Rachel began her career teaching ESL in Italy and has since taught university-level ESL, Italian, and a variety of courses in TESOL to graduate students. Rachel comes to RIC from Brown University where she was the Director of English Language Learning and Assistant Dean of the College. While at Brown, Rachel co-founded the International Writers’ Blog, a platform for international and ELL writers to explore cross-cultural experiences. Rachel speaks English and Italian and lives in Cumberland with her husband and three children.

MITCHELL SANDERS is a talented student of photography who specializes in portraiture and astrophotography. At 20, Mitchell has an unusual amount of experience in the field and has worked with well-known artist mentors. Currently based in southern Rhode Island, he attends Salve Regina University in Newport and is continuing his freelance photography business and artistic endeavors.

EDITORS

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ANKE STEINWEH is a member of the RITELL Coordinating Council and teacher at North Providence Schools. She also serves on the ELL Advisory Council of Rhode Island. She holds a master’s degree in Elementary Education from the University of Rhode Island and is a K-12 ELL Specialist. She received her undergraduate degree in English and Psychology from Rhode Island College where she was also an editor of Rhode Island College’s literary magazine many moons ago. Having originally come from Germany, she lives with her husband and three children, two cats and five chickens in the south of a beautiful state.

LAURA FARIA-TANCINCO is a member of the RITELL Coordinating Council and has taught Adult Ed ESL in universities & institutions all over RI. She has been in the ESL field for 20 years. She began her ESL journey in 2006, after a degree and professional attempt in Graphic Design left her wanting more. She moved to Quilts, Earth and Culture where she lived and worked for 2.5 years before backpacking around South America. After her return, she began adjuncting at colleges and universities around RI. She completed her M.Ed in TESOL from RIC in 2015 and is currently the Coordinator of the ESL Intensive Program and Project ECHO at RIC. She always looks for the best people in the world in her class room. She enjoys all the challenges & rewards that come with the profession.

NEWS & NOTES

RI-TELLER - Spring 2019

POEM CREDIT (front cover): English con Salsa by Gina Valdés

RECOGNITION

Mary Helldörfer-Cooney, the ELL teacher at Stephen Olney School in North Providence, received RITELL’s annual Nancy Carnevale Award during RITELL’s 2018 Fall Conference at Rhode Island College last October.

The grant will help Cooney expand a project she guided at the school, an International Night inviting students and families to Stephen Olney School to celebrate, explore and share the sights, sounds and foods of cultures represented in the community.

In her project description, Cooney noted that “English Language Learners at Stephen Olney School in North Providence come from six different countries around the world, and represent five unique languages...With an affective objective of welcoming our ELLs and their families into our Stephen Olney community, we will begin our project by focusing on their home countries.” As part of the project, each classroom selected a country to study over the Spring semester, beginning with countries represented by the ELLs at the school. Studies and activities involve language, literature, art, music, games and dance. From her description: “Olney students will be engaged in learning as they play a traditional game, learn how to say ‘hello’ in a new language, and create art based on the art of the country they are studying. Social studies lessons will include facts such as location, population and geography, and will be enhanced when students read historical fiction or folktales from that culture. Guest speakers will read stories originating from around the world (folktales), and bilingual students will be encouraged to read to their classmates in their native language.”

Another component to the project is to feature ELLs as “experts,” teaching their classmates from their own base of knowledge and experience. The International Night will include a “Journey around the World,” a parade of flags, games, food, music and dance. A PowerPoint presentation will showcase photos of learning in action, as students teach their friends and families how to say “hello” in various languages. Artwork will be displayed throughout the building.

Comments supporting Cooney’s nomination for the award noted that she “has been an integral part of our school’s mission to embrace students’ diversity, and to weave these cultures into the fabric of our school culture.”

International Night at Stephen Olney School

On Thursday, February 22, Stephen Olney School celebrated its 2nd annual International Night. Students from grades K-4 came in to celebrate the cultures of North Providence with their family and friends. Students opened the evening with a parade of flags, marching through the gym to the tunes of the national anthems of the countries they studied: India, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Nigeria, China and Italy. Each grade/class chose a country to study, based on the population of our English Language Learners (ELLs) in our school community.

Students were proud to show-off their work and projects, on display in each classroom and throughout the building. Families piled in and brought their favorite dishes from to represent their cultural cuisine, and were enjoyed by all.

The evening concluded with a slideshow of pictures of the students putting together their projects and displays, reading intercultural books, creating global art and playing traditional games. Guest speakers came throughout International Week, wearing traditional clothing and uniforms (U.S. military families) and shared their experiences with the children. In depth, cross-curriculum study was informative and FUN!

Thank you to RITELL for sponsoring this project.

Sincerely,
Mary H. Cooney, ELL Specialist, North Providence

RITELL Carnevale Grant Recipient

Adult Practitioner Award

Thomas Larabee, a Lead ESOL Teacher with Progreso Latino, received the 2018 RITELL Adult Practitioner Award, voted on by RITELL’s Adult Education Special Interest Group (SIG).

Larabee was honored for his inclusivity and insight in teaching English to all levels of learners. Comments nominating Larabee noted that his “respectful disposition, high expertise and kind mentorship make a great impact on teachers, students and the whole Central Falls community.”
**Using Home Language as a Classroom Resource**

**Photo Credits: Mitchell Sanders**

**Nancy Carnevale Award Winner**

**Translanguaging for Social Justice**

**Maria Cioè-Peña and Tom Snell**
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In speaking about newcomers who are identified as English language learners, teachers can at times be heard saying that these children come to school “with nothing.” What teachers mean by “nothing” can vary. The word can be used to express limited literacy or numeracy, as defined in the most orthodox fashion. However, more often this determination of something versus nothing is based on a student’s ability to communicate and produce work within the rigid standards of “academic English” and “grade-level.” It is for this reason that the use of translanguaging in all classrooms could be very beneficial to the way that teachers interact with their students and the way that student abilities are evaluated.

Translanguaging is the discursive practice, widely used among bilingual communities, in which linguistic features are adopted from fixed languages and combined into an integrated repertoire. Translanguaging, in an educational context, is situated within a constructivist and culturally responsive pedagogy that honors the richness, complexity, and fullness of students’ linguistic repertoires. Translanguaging creates a learning space for emergent bilinguals that more fully realizes the possibilities of social justice.

**INTRODUCTION**

When people in bilingual communities use language, the linguistic features at their disposal are adapted across what are considered separate languages. These features are used freely, interchangeably, and in novel combinations, and combined into an integrated whole that exceeds traditional language boundaries. We call this discursive practice translanguaging. Translanguaging recognizes experience as empowering, adaptable, relevant, and reflective of their own life experiences.

Social justice in education challenges us to expand traditional forms of thinking and use culturally responsive or culturally sustaining pedagogy to create greater equity in access and achievement for all learners. Translanguaging is an essential part of this approach.

Translanguaging is an organic response to a world in which objects, ideas, and actions can be described and captured in a multitude of varying language codes, styles and modes. Translanguaging in an educational context allows teachers and students to have access to the full range of their linguistic practices, as they share in the collaborative construction of knowledge. Because each person’s linguistic repertoire is unique, translanguaging brings all the potential of all those resources to bear as teachers and students co-create knowledge in the classroom. Thus translanguaging is firmly situated in the tradition of constructivist pedagogy, with its emphasis on learning through negotiation and social interaction, as students make their objects of study relevant to themselves. By honoring the richness, complexity, and fullness of students’ linguistic repertoires, translanguaging creates opportunities for deeper understanding, as learners produce new knowledge and claim ownership of their effort and its results.

**APPROACHES**

The use of translanguaging in any classroom is itself a socially just act because it shifts the discourse from a deficit model to an additive model.
translanguaging creates a space within their classrooms to create. More broadly, translanguaging allows students to explore their own experiences more deeply, by allowing them to construct an understanding of their own selves in a language that is deeply meaningful to them.

**Implications**

Translanguaging for social justice through education opens up a world of possibilities for emergent bilingual students. Translanguaging spaces can include multilingual and culturally responsive texts, small group collaborations, and performance-based assessments. The power of culturally-responsive texts can be accessed through resources such as a song, a website, a film or YouTube video, or a newspaper article. For example, teachers can introduce newspapers in a variety of languages which the students can collaboratively read to assess multiple perspectives regarding a major event or social issue. These ideas can be discussed and explored in a small group, which could then be developed into a collaborative project such as a poster or presentation. In small groups, students share responsibility for a final project, develop leadership abilities and cooperative working skills, and create a product that is reflective of their collective voice. Finally, when students share their small group work with their peers, teacher create an opportunity for authentic, performance-based assessment. It is authentic because students feel a real investment in their work and the understanding they have created; it is performance-based because it is grounded in their actual linguistic abilities and lived experiences. Teachers who want to extend these possibilities can use multilingual assessments to grant their students a higher capacity to show what they know. These assessments could be written papers in a variety of languages, mixed-media projects, or multilingual presentations.

These are just a few examples of how translanguaging can be used to preview, develop and assess academic capacities. The key here is for teachers to constantly be thinking about how to make learning more accessible, by opening up the possibilities inherent in the multiple languages students can use. This can and should be done regardless of the teacher’s linguistic repertoire. At its goals of translanguaging in this context are not grounded in the teacher’s ability to translanguaging the goals of translanguaging for social justice are being developed, and the goals and expectations inherent in the multiple languages students can use.

Note: This article has been reprinted with permission. It was originally published in Theory, Research, and Action in Urban Education. Cioè-Peña, M. and Snel, T. (Fall 2015). Translanguaging for social justice. Theory, Research, and Action in Urban Education, 4(1).
Bilingüismo, Translanguaging y Estudiantes Bilingües Latinx

Ofelia Garcia
The Graduate Center, City University of New York

In this short text, I extend some of the ideas that I presented at the fall RITELL conference where I presented on the differences between additive bilingualism and the concept of translanguaging. Here I am including my own translanguaged voice, as a Latina scholar, in the written text. I do so, to show some challenges that translanguaging presents, while highlighting the potential it has for all of us as listeners/readers, and the subsequent education of bilingual children.

El bilingüismo has been mostly studied desde una perspectiva monolingüe, in which las lenguas are said to be separadas, autónomas. Pero all speakers who regularmente usan two lenguas en comunidad know that this is impossible. Perhaps it works en la clase y la escuela, where la lengua is used artificiamente. But it doesn’t work that way for los millones de personas bilingües en el mundo.

The question then is: Cómo/How is bilingualism best developed in school? There is no answer that is separate from people and comunidad. If la educación bilingüe is to serve the comunidad bilingüe, then translanguaging approach que refleje el modo dinámico de usar la lengua of that comunidad is most apropiado. If however, the goal of la educación bilingüe is simplymente a addition una lengua foreign/extraña sin respeto nor conexión a una comunidad bilingüe en los Estados Unidos nor una identidad bilingüe, then translanguaging has a limited función.

For monolingües to become bilingües, translanguaging could serve as scaffold for understanding la instrucción, but nothing more. For children who live en comunidades bilingües, however, translanguaging has the potential to be transformative, allowing them voz and expression that uplift them en sus comunidades and permita la flexibilidad lingüística que acompaña thought, creatividad y criticality. Through translanguaging, children bilingües can speak as bilingües, advocate for themselves as bilingües and demostrar what they know, without the shackles of always having to do so en una lengua o la otra sin the intermingling of words and worlds that they experience.

So for me, the question/la pregunta es: What do we want of bilingual education? If our interés es la comunidad bilingüe en los Estados Unidos, then translanguaging in carrying out its transformative acto político is most important. However, if that is not our interés, then translanguaging loses, for the minoritized comunidad bilingüe, its potential to transform some of the ideologías lingüísticas that the comunidad holds as a result of escuelas — epistemologías of pureza lingüística with which la escuela opera y que mantienen las jerarquías de poder y las desigualdades estructurales en que many U.S. bilingües live.

Writing the above text is for me, and reading it is for you, an exercise in transgressing the limits of communication that have been imposed by national languages. Many bilingual Latinx students have access to this entire repertoire and activate it frequently in oral communication, especially in their homes and communities. But literacy is a function of school. And in U.S. schools, it is English-only literacy that is acknowledged, measured and privileged. In some bilingual schools, Spanish literacy is taught and developed, although illiteracy in schools is always defined as the ability to make meaning of a written text in the same language as that of the written text. Translanguaging literacy proposes, however, that for bilinguals to truly make meaning of written texts requires that they leverage their entire repertoire. This means, for example, discussing in Spanish a text written in English, or vice-versa. Or it means responding in written English to a text read in Spanish. Or it means just using in academic writing all the many features of one’s repertoire, whether verbal and considered English or Spanish, or visual and multimodal.

By disrupting the monolingual act of reading in the second to fourth paragraphs of the text, readers are differently engaged in two ways. On the one hand, it enables them to see in writing some of the ways in which bilingualism manifests orally among bilingual speakers. On the other hand, it makes them work on listening to bilingual speech. Changes to U.S. monolingual ideologies will not come about by forcing speakers to manifest their bilingualism. Changes can only occur if we transform how so-called monolinguals listen to bilingual speech. If every time we hear something in a language other than English we stop listening, then those who are deemed to speak differently will never be heard. If on the other hand, we learn to listen deeply, to engage in conversation, to ask for clarifications, to raise questions, to become comfortable with the incompleteness of all communication, there might come a time when U.S. bilinguals will not be viewed with suspicion. Only by developing a generous deep hearing, one that listens with generosity and without racialized ideologies, will we be able to transform the future of bilingual children in the U.S. This is especially so for bilingual children who come from Latinx communities and have been recently reduced to criminals, thieves and drug traffickers by our President.

Understanding the translanguaging of bilingual students has the potential to engage educators in pedagogical practices that can educate deeply instead of focusing on just getting the language “right.” But beyond the education of bilingual students, translanguaging can educate all of us to hear the sounds that have been hidden in homes and ethnic communities, “sounds of silence” that must be heard. By showing some of it in my writing, I begin to carve out a space for a different type of listening in which all of us must engage in our increasingly multilingual world.

I was thinking, what am I going to do with this problem? Solve it or try something different. First, I needed to keep myself calm. Breathe. What could be some other options?
Translanguaging in the Drafting Process: Writing across Cultural Style

Rachel Toncelli

Often when we think of good academic writing in the US, we think of conciseness, logically-sequenced sentences that merge into paragraphs, each of which generally expands upon a singular idea on the journey towards providing evidence for a thesis which has been explicitly and clearly stated at the outset. What we may not consider is that this linear definition of writing is just that, a definition. Unless we venture beyond traditional American writing style, we cannot see that the definition of good writing is very much a cultural construct. The more we know about cultural variations on good writing, the more we can support developing writing skills as a powerful means of communication among our emergent bilingual students.

If American academic writing is linear, what do other cultural writing styles look like? Kaplan (1966), in his landmark review of contrastive rhetoric, made the differences in cultural definitions of good writing visual: he presented linear American writing with a straight arrow while other cultural styles took on different shapes with the digressive styles of Romance languages represented by a meandering arrow and more circular and subtle Asian styles, a spiral (p. 15), thus denoting how academic writing that follows a linear path from introduction to conclusion is prized in the US, yet many other cultures prize alternative organizational and structural pathways. If teachers are not aware of varying definitions of good writing, they can easily mistake students making use of cultural style for poor proofreading or a lack of focus. For example, academic writers in Romance languages prefer more digressive writing pathways which favor longer, more complex sentence structure and encourage including what American writers would consider tangential information as a tool for showing breadth of knowledge (Bowe, Martin, & Manns, 2014).

In 2014, Martin and Manns (2014) proposed a number of recommendations for enacting linguistically and culturally flexible writing practices and resources:

1. Familiarize yourself with the rhetorical styles of the home language of your students.
2. Let thinking happen in any language.
3. Read and build vocabulary connections in multiple languages.
4. Let drafting occur in a variety of styles.
5. Create many opportunities for informal writing to occur.
6. Use samples to analyze form.
7. Consider your cultural positioning when giving feedback.

These recommendations have many significant points:

1. Familiarize yourself with the rhetorical styles of the home language of your students.
2. Let thinking happen in any language.
3. Read and build vocabulary connections in multiple languages.
4. Let drafting occur in a variety of styles.
5. Create many opportunities for informal writing to occur.
6. Use samples to analyze form.
7. Consider your cultural positioning when giving feedback.

Tips for Enacting Linguistically and Culturally Flexible Writing Practices... and useful resources

1. Review studies in contrastive rhetoric.
2. Look for patterns in writing.
3. Use your students as a resource for this information too.
4. Encourage students to talk before writing.
5. Brainstorming should occur in any language.
6. Write in a variety of genres/styles (on same topic) to create opportunities for thinking from different perspectives.
7. Use your students as a resource for this information too.
8. Encourage intentional choices about language used for final draft.
9. Consider your cultural positioning when giving feedback.

Some points made by Martin and Manns (2014, pp. 11-12) include:

- As cited in Fu, 2009, p. 27: they also engage more deeply with content and keep frustration at bay. Because their ability to write in English “doesn’t match their thoughts they yearn to convey” (Fu, 2009, p. 14), allowing access to ideas via home language can be a powerful tool for classroom inclusivity. Second, because students internalize “rules of good writing,” adolescent and adult learners often rely on the rhetorical patterns common in home languages (Fu, 2009) and it is easy for teachers to mistake a different rhetorical pattern for a lack of careful thought or organization. Third, and most importantly, dynamic bilingualism, our most current understanding of how languages are acquired, posits that all individuals have one set of linguistic resources, and encouraging emergent bilinguals to translanguate, or make use of all of the linguistic features within their repertoires, will actually support English language development and also the maintenance of bilingualism (García & Wei, 2014).

Cultural groups define good writing differently.

Where US academic writing is linear...

...others find digressive writing to be more academic.
RITELL: Tenets
As approved by the RITELL Coordinating Council, November 2018

1. Our mission is to inform, educate, and raise awareness among all stakeholders in Rhode Island as to best practices for the education of English Learners Prek-Adult. In doing so we aim to collaborate with other organizations in the state that are charged with serving English Learners/Emergent Bilinguals.*

2. Our primary goal is to support excellence in teaching and learning for English Learners/Emergent Bilinguals of all ages. The strengths and needs of ELL and bilingual communities are varied and complex, therefore we strive to support teachers and their learners through responsive professional development, networking, and advocacy.

3. We support:
   a. Fair and humane immigration policies for immigrant, migrant and refugee students and their families.
   b. Effective, research-based approaches for immigrant, migrant, and ESL programs.
   c. Adequate funding for education and support of programs for Emergent Bilinguals from early childhood to adults.
   d. Clear lines of authority and decision-making at the Rhode Island Department of Education for all Prek-12 programs serving ELLs, under the direction of the ELL Program Coordinator in the RIDE Office of Student, Community and Academic Support. As outlined in Chapter 16-54-Education of Limited English Proficient Students, this includes six program models designed to serve English Learners, including two bilingual (Bilingual Education, Two-Way/Dual Language).
   e. Monitoring practices that hold schools accountable for successfully educating ELLs, irrespective of district/program size or current personnel limitations. We aim to increase the visibility of English Learners’ experiences and emphasize multiple and effective pathways to college and/or career success.
   f. Advocacy efforts for Emergent Bilinguals and their families, collaborating with other educational and community groups and focusing on full access and educational equity.
   g. Language education as a part of all learners’ educational experience, collaborating with organizations that advance language competence in our state and beyond.

*Throughout our core tenets, we use the terms “English Learners” as well as “Emergent Bilinguals”. The use of both of these terms is intentional, in order to recognize the specific group of students deemed “English Learners” by the state for purposes of allocating services, while also recognizing students’ emerging bilingualism and multilingualism through the term “Emergent Bilinguals.”

References


