Community Literacies *en Confianza*

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Dear Reader,

As a former high school teacher, I remember the frustration I felt when the gap between Research (and that is, by the way, how I always thought of it: Research with a capital *R*) and my own practice seemed too wide to ever cross. Research studies—those sterile reports written by professional and university researchers—often seemed so out of touch with the issues that most concerned me when I walked into my classroom every day. These studies were easy to ignore, in part because they were so distant from my experiences and in part because I had no one to help me see how that research could impact my everyday practice.

Although research has come a long way since then, as more and more teachers take up classroom-based inquiry, this gap between research and practice unfortunately still exists. Quite frankly, it's hard for even the most committed classroom teachers to pick up a research article or book, figure out how that research might apply to their classroom, convince their administrators that a new way of teaching is called for, and put it into practice. While most good teachers instinctively know that there is something to be gained from reading research, who realistically has the time or energy for it?
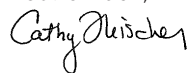
That gap informs the thinking behind this book imprint. Called Principles in Practice, the imprint publishes books that look carefully at the research-based principles and policies developed by NCTE and put those policies to the test in actual classrooms. The imprint naturally arises from one of the missions of NCTE: to develop policy for English language arts teachers. Over the years, many NCTE members have joined committees and commissions to study particular issues of concern to literacy educators. Their work has resulted in a variety of reports, research briefs, and policy statements designed both to inform teachers and to be used in lobbying efforts to create policy changes at the local, state, and national levels (reports that are available on NCTE's website, www.ncte.org).

Through this imprint, we are creating collections of books specifically designed to translate those research briefs and policy statements into classroom-based practice. The goal behind these books is to familiarize teachers with the issues behind certain concerns, lay out NCTE's policies on those issues, provide resources from research studies to support those policies, and—most of all—make those policies come alive for teacher-readers.

This book is part of the sixth series in the imprint, a series that focuses on teaching English language learners. Each book in this series focuses on a different aspect of this important topic and is organized in a similar way: immersing you first in the research principles surrounding the topic (as laid out by the *NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners*) and then taking you into actual classrooms, teacher discussions, and student work to see how the principles play out. Each book closes with a teacher-friendly annotated bibliography.

Good teaching *is* connected to strong research. We hope that these books help you continue the good teaching that you're doing, think hard about ways to adapt and adjust your practice, and grow even stronger in the vital work you do with kids every day.

Best of luck,

Cathy Fleischer

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As authors of the various books in the Teaching English Language Learners strand of the NCTE Principles in Practice (PIP) imprint, we have made a concerted effort to use consistent terminology in these volumes. All of us have thought long and hard about the ways in which we label and describe bilingual and ELL students and the programs that often provide these students with additional support. Even so, readers will notice some variation in terms used to describe students, classrooms, and teaching practices. The concern over terminology is part of a long-standing discussion and trends in the labeling of these students, as well as of the fields that conduct research on teachers and students working across languages to teach and learn English. Often the shifting among terms leads to confusion and contention for teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and policymakers.

To address this confusion and tension, we begin each book in this strand with a glossary of common terms and acronyms that are part of current discussions about meeting the needs of these students in English language arts classrooms and beyond. For many readers, the terms themselves and the ongoing shift to new terms can be alienating, the jargon dividing readers into insiders and outsiders. But often the shift in terms has a great deal to do with both policy and issues of identity for students. For example, up until the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, most educational documents referred to these students as *bilingual* or *ESL*, both of which acknowledge that English is a second language and that a student has a first language as well.

The term *English language learner* was adopted with NCLB and brought into our schools and the larger public discourse. In fact, in 2002 the US Department of Education renamed the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs. It became the Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, now identified simply as the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). The change indicated a shift away from acknowledging students' home languages or bilingual abilities. Close to two decades later, the term *English language learner* remains prominent in educational policy and in many textbooks geared toward teachers and teacher educators. Its prominence and familiarity in the literature makes it an accessible way to talk about these students. Yet, as we have heard from many students through the years, the term *English language learner* can also be limiting. As one student asked, "When do I stop being an English language learner and get to just be an English language user?" The term also works against efforts to acknowledge the competencies and linguistically sophisticated talents these students have as translators, bilingual speakers, and cross-cultural negotiators.

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In these PIP volumes, we use the term *English language learner* as a way to reach out to readers who see and hear this term regularly used in their schools, in their hallways, and in other helpful books in the field. However, some of us also use the terms *multilingual* or *bilingual* in order to encourage a discussion of these young people not simply as novice English learners but as individuals with linguistic and academic competencies they have gained from bilingual/multilingual experiences and literacies.

Glossary

Bilingual, multilingual, or plurilingual: These terms refer to the ability to use (i.e., speak, write, and/or read) multiple languages. For many ELL-designated students in US schools, English is actually the third or fourth language they have learned, making *bilingual* not necessarily an accurate term.

Emergent bilingual: This term has been proposed as a more appropriate term than *LEP* or *ELL*, because it points to possibilities of developing bilingualism rather than focusing on language limits or deficiencies (García, 2009).

English as a foreign language (EFL): Refers to non-native English-speaking students who are learning English in a country where English is not the primary language.

English as an international language (EIL) or English as a lingua franca (ELF): These are terms used to refer to global conceptions of English, or English used for communication between members of various nations.

English as a second language (ESL): Readers may be most familiar with this term because it has been used as an overarching term for students, programs, and/or a field of study. Currently the term usually refers to programs of instruction (i.e., study of English in an English-speaking country); however, *ESL* was used in the past to refer to English language learning students.

English language learner (ELL): In keeping with the terminology used in the *NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners (ELLs)*, this PIP strand employs the term *ELL*, which is commonly used in secondary schools as the short form of *English language learner*. The term refers to a complex, heterogeneous range of students who are in the process of learning English.

English learner (EL): This is the preferred term of the California Department of Education (and, increasingly, other states). California is the state with the largest number and percentage of emergent bilingual students enrolled in public schools. Over the past twenty years, California has moved from *LEP* to *ELL* and, most recently, from *ELL* to *EL*.

First language (L1) and second language (L2): *L1* has been used to refer to students' "mother tongue" or "home language" as they learn additional languages (referred to as *L2*).

Generation 1.5: This term, originally used in higher education, often refers to students who have been long-term residents in the United States but who were born abroad (al-

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though the term is sometimes also used to refer to US-born children of recent immigrants). The designation of 1.5 describes their feelings of being culturally between first- and second-generation immigrants; they are often fluent in spoken English but may still be working to command aspects of written English, especially academic writing. As long-term residents, these students may reject *ESL* as a term that has been used to refer to recent immigrants to the United States.

Limited English proficiency (LEP): This abbreviation may be used in some educational contexts to refer to a designation used by the US Department of Education. Many scholars see this as a deficit term because of its focus on subtractive language (language that implies a deficiency) under a monolingual assumption of proficiency.

Long-term English language learner (LTELL): Currently in use in some states, this term refers to K–12 students who have been enrolled in US schools for many years and continue to be stuck with the ELL designation long past the time it should take for redesignation. Like Generation 1.5 students, LTELLs may have spent most if not all of their education in US schools. For a variety of reasons, including family mobility, inconsistent educational programs, and personal reasons, they have not had opportunities to learn academic language sufficiently to pass English language proficiency tests and other measures of proficiency for redesignation (Olsen, 2010).

Mainstream: This term is increasingly antiquated due to shifting demographics in the United States. In practice, it often refers to nonremedial, nonhonors, nonsheltered classes and programs. Sometimes it is used to refer to native or monolingual English speakers as a norm; changing demographics, however, mean that schools increasingly have a majority of culturally and linguistically diverse students, so it's been argued that a linguistically diverse classroom is the "New Mainstream" (Enright, 2011).

Monolingual: This term is used to refer to people who speak only one language, although often this label masks speakers' fluent use of multiple dialects, or variations, of English—an issue of particular concern when working with culturally diverse students who use other varieties of English (such as Hawai'i Pidgin or African American Vernacular) in their lives outside of school. The monolingual English label can mask these diverse students' need to learn academic English just as much as their immigrant classmates do. Much of what this PIP strand discusses is relevant to students who utilize multiple varieties of English; teachers can support these students by acknowledging their multilingualism and helping them learn to use English for academic and other purposes.

Native or non-native English speakers (NES, NNES): Some materials contrast native English speakers (NES) with non-native English speakers (NNES). As with *monolingual*, the term *native speaker* is increasingly unclear, given how many long-term ELLs speak English fluently without a "foreign" accent and yet technically have another world language as their home or first language.

Newcomer: Some school districts have separate one-year programs for "newcomers," or students who are newly arrived in the United States, in which students learn not just "surviv-

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al" English, but also how school works in the United States. As the position statement discusses, it's sometimes argued that newcomer programs benefit "low-level literacy immigrant students" and/or students with interrupted formal education who may have limited literacy in their first language (L1). Other newcomers may be fully literate in L1, especially by high school, and may or may not benefit from being isolated from the mainstream curriculum. For older students, the challenge is to move away from "low-level" ideas of literacy assessment that may discount the literacies of these students.

Resident or local bilingual, multilingual, or plurilingual: These terms are sometimes used to refer to students who reside in the United States (in contrast to those who are on student visas). Resident students may or may not be US citizens, others may not have permanent resident status, while still others may not have immigration documentation at all.

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Community Literacy Pedagogies: From a Translingual View

Sixteen-year-old Kevin,[1] who was originally born in Mexico but had lived in Kentucky for most of his life, remembered learning English with the Kentucky United Latinos (KUL, pronounced "cool") bilingual after-school group when he was younger. In an autobiographical piece of writing he read during a KUL meeting, Kevin described his early literacy struggles in elementary school and how he had overcome them to thrive as a bilingual student:

> I remember when I started school in the US and had to read English in front of the class, *y no hablaba inglés* [and I did not speak English]. My heart dropped because I just started school four months previously, so I still only knew a few words. The teacher didn't know I didn't know how to speak English. Everybody started laughing. *No le entendí* [I did not understand her]. Yeah, *eso me hizo enojado* [that made me upset] so that I started to read out loud and slightly right. *Estaba practicando y practicando.* [I was practicing and practicing.] From that day on, I said to myself that I was not that bad, so I started to try my hardest to learn English and do my best in every class. Now look at me in high school and reading like never before.

Kevin's traumatic memory of this "round-robin"-style class read-aloud as he was just learning English represented a common experience among bilingual students in the KUL after-school group. Indeed, researchers point out that such teaching practices too often shame and alienate students learning English (Opitz and Guccione). The memory of class "read-arounds" left several other KUL members feeling humiliated in front of classmates, but many, like Kevin, used the event as inspiration to work harder, to practice, as they learned English.

Kevin was representative of many of the after-school students as he occupied a space between English and Spanish. Kevin admitted that he now reads and writes better in English and uses Spanish "when I'm talking to my mom or family, but hardly at all to write." Kevin, like other KUL students, also admitted that sometimes older members of his family and community said he would lose his Mexican identity if he did not use Spanish more.

Such ethnic identity questions can cause stress, and stress caused by language differences can indeed affect relationships between not only family members but communities, as well. For emergent bilingual youth, perceptions of negative status attached to their home languages can push them to disidentify from their bilingualism with peers and in school in favor of speaking like a monolingual so-called "native." And yet, because of their backgrounds, this push can be problematic. Fourteen-year-old KUL member Ana wrote about her disappointment in not feeling "authentic" like a monolingual Mexican Spanish or American English speaker:

> When I began school and interacted with English speakers, they would assume I spoke only Spanish. I never felt bad about that, and it would actually make me feel happy, like I was more Mexican even though my Spanish wasn't that great. *Tengo pena* [I am ashamed] because of my so-so Spanish. All my family speaks it, but I can't spell correctly in Spanish, and when I try to speak it, I tend to add English words. I mix them a lot too. I struggle to express myself correctly due to not being able to find the right words. I don't have this problem as much in English, though.

It was clear to Ana that because of her appearance, people assumed she could not speak English, at least not like a monolingual English speaker. But she also felt judged because of her lack of fluency in Spanish, particularly when it came to orthography and spelling. Like Kevin, Ana attached language to identity and used different languages, depending on the context and audience.

Even if she mostly expressed herself in English, Ana noted that she thought bilingually: "I mix them a lot too." Her movement across languages was influenced by considerations of audience, vocabulary, definitions, synonyms, and word choices; yet, like many creative and intelligent students, she would not give herself credit for her ability to use two languages. Instead, she compared herself with her monolingual classmates, despite the fact that she was not a monolingual student.

These insights from Kevin and Ana are important, not only because they demonstrate how emergent bilingual students transition to writing exclusively in English, but also because they illustrate the ways in which students strive to learn English, even at the expense of the gifts of their home languages. No doubt, this pursuit of monolingual-level proficiency in English literacy overshadowed their bilingual gifts.

Both students were able to share their experiences with the KUL afterschool group, and thus to find a community of students and teachers who cared. Kevin and Ana used Spanish openly with KUL members and did not feel alienated because of their bilingual tendencies. In interviews, they described their growing confidence with English and how their language struggles marked them as different when they were confronted with monolingual audiences, whether Spanish- or English-speaking. Their stories remind teachers why it is important to listen to students, and to empower them by providing opportunities to share stories in communities of trust. Eliciting these stories is one of the most powerful aims of a literacy pedagogy that demonstrates care for students and honors the voices and lived experiences of individuals and communities in all languages. Cultivating a caring atmosphere in multiple languages, however, requires additional effort, guidance, and trust-building between teachers and communities.

It takes a community to raise a bilingual child. This assertion does not overstate the collective project of nurturing bilingualism: the *NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners* (reprinted at the front of this book) emphasizes that to be sensitive to the language and literacy needs of their emergent bilingual students, K–12 teachers must learn about students' families and communities while establishing connections of trust. This brief challenges K–12 language arts teachers to discover an orientation to literacy that removes barriers between languages, an orientation that recognizes the gifts of emergent bilingual students with assignments that engage their bilingual abilities. Such engaging assignments advance critical academic skills and support students' bilingual practices with sensitivity to their identities and communities. Our literacy pedagogies, therefore, must include openness to learning from students' communities—that is, "to teach bilingual learners, teachers must get to know their learners" (*English Language Learners* 4). Students come to the classroom with abilities to use all their languages in creative and important ways. How teachers approach these abilities depends on their research and use of "culturally relevant materials to build on students' linguistic and cultural resources, while teaching language through content and themes" (*English Language Learners* 4). I agree completely with the brief, but I challenge educators—including myself—to extend these ideas even further to develop a pedagogy that affirms emergent bilingual students' lived experiences. Learning about students' communities means investigating where and how

communities make spaces for themselves and for their voices to be heard. Indeed, the communities of our students are speaking, and we, as teachers, must always listen—even if the home languages they speak are not our own.

Before I move too much further, I have to offer a definition of what I mean by *community*. I define community as social inclusion based on interaction with other people, and a sense of social belonging through meaningful modes of involvement. Community involves both social and subjective feelings, and belonging can mean different things for different members. Community members can be motivated by any number of commonalities to align, organize spaces, and share interests. Schools are important community spaces, vital both for language learning and for raising community awareness of the power of literacy and social involvement.

I focus in this book on ethnographic case studies of two communities of students and families, KUL and Valle del Bluegrass Library (VBL). The communities are composed of emergent bilingual students and parents learning about schools as they learn English—in the case of VBL, students from preK to middle school, and in the case of KUL, high school students. The two communities illustrate how parents, teachers, and local volunteers in two different contexts organize around meeting schoolwork needs. In KUL and VBL, emergent bilingual students and their families collectively navigate school systems and the English language with the help of after-school programs and their networks of members, teachers, and volunteers. I draw upon my experiences with KUL and VBL to create portraits of bilingual after-school communities that offer relatable examples of how schools and teachers can partner and draw from community learning. I also explore what lessons we can draw from these portraits that could influence how we teach writing in school. This central focus on community, highlighted in NCTE's *The Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners*, puts the local knowledge and experiences of students and families in the forefront, and offers insight and hope for the future of such collaborations.

In this book, I argue that K–12 English language arts teachers must expand their knowledge of the literacy practices of English language learners by engaging with their students' communities, learning from their expertise with the trust of *confianza*. In English, *confianza* translates literally as "confidence," but in practice *confianza* means a reciprocal relationship in which individuals feel cared for. *Confianza* is built through an ongoing, intentional process that is centered in local communities and involves mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation (Delgado Gaitan; Zentella). *Confianza* is also a trusting exchange of acceptance and confirmation between adult mentors and emergent bilingual students, and it has extraordinarily positive effects on the academic attitudes of youths, especially in language-minoritized communities.[2] I will expand on this notion of *confianza* and learning about students and their communities, as well as

how openness to students' complete linguistic repertoires, in turn, affects their and their families' literacies and networks of bilingual support. I begin by asking these two questions: First, how can K–12 teachers emphasize more community connections in language arts pedagogy for emergent bilingual students? And second, why should language arts educators turn to community programs to develop bilingual learning programs? In the chapters that follow, I make specific suggestions for K–12 teachers about how to learn from the stories of emergent bilingual students in their communities as a means to help students become more confident readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. I recognize the challenges this task poses for teachers, knowing well that not all are fluently bilingual or have undergone formal professional development in teaching emergent bilingual students, and thus many may not feel adequately prepared to meet the needs of this growing demographic of linguistically diverse students.

Connections to the *NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners*

The Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners serves as a starting point for some of this important work. One point in particular grounds the community work in which I am involved: learning from community funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge are the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (González et al. 133). Funds of knowledge are bodies of local literacies, everyday knowledge learned through participation in home and community practices. Multilingual contexts become spaces to acknowledge, analyze, and engage community funds of knowledge that students bring to their language classrooms. *English Language Learners*, a policy research brief produced by NCTE, explicitly directs educators to locate community funds of knowledge: the "connections between academic content and [students'] funds of knowledge about home and community literacies can help students see these knowledges as resources for building academic literacy" (5). Those community connections are vital to the success of our emergent bilingual students and their families as they learn to navigate schools.

Why is it important for all teachers to build these relationships with communities? In part, it's because, while schools are powerful shapers of educational achievement and attainment, most of students' lives happen outside of schools—in homes, in neighborhoods, and among communities engaged with the activities of daily life—and for many of our students, in languages other than English. For students learning English, finding community becomes an important part of achieving a sense of belonging. The converse of belonging is feeling excluded, and

schools should never be agents of exclusion. Inclusive community learning, I've found, helps teachers discover ways to design pedagogies that make productive use of both the literacy repertoires students bring to schools and the students' senses of community languages, identities, differences, and social justice. As Angie Zapata and Tasha Tropp Laman advise bilingual-responsive literacy educators, "we must welcome family and community members, lift their ways with words for children to appreciate, and elevate the dynamic ever-changing nature of languages as resources for writing" (376).

While the NCTE policy research brief establishes the basis on which educators can and must act, I believe we need even greater emphasis on collaboration and how we might best achieve it.

Educators who adopt a stance that builds on the strengths of communities must

1. meet communities on their terms—that is, educators learning from communities must be humbled and become students as they build commitment and trust with communities;

2. develop and extend neighborhood networks beyond schools, and adopt an orientation to assessment that applauds the critical, innovative, and creative abilities of bilingual individuals and communities; and

3. provide sustained volunteer service to communities as service learning and teacher training.

When educators become participants in bilingual communities, they partake in a form of community membership, demonstrating a kind of role-modeling that will both engage emergent bilingual youth and build *confianza* with communities—despite language differences. Dialogue also fosters *confianza* between community after-school programs and educators (Martínez et al.). *Confianza*, in other words, is feeling and knowing one is cared for. Angela Valenzuela argues that the "cared-for individual responds by demonstrating a willingness to reveal her/his essential self, the reciprocal relation" (21). *Confianza* truly creates not only a sense of validation and support but also a sense of trust, resulting in open discussions about schools and the community. Not surprisingly, establishing *confianza* takes time, but it is vital for opening channels for collaboration with community literacy research and after-school programs, especially those working with emergent bilingual students.

Why is this notion of *confianza* so vital for working with emergent bilingual students and their families? Research shows us the importance of *confianza* for bilingual Latin American and Latino/a students and their families, suggesting that sustained, dedicated commitment within nonfamilial groups of adults and youth positively affects the academic outcomes of children and adolescents in immigrant families (Louie; Monzó and Rueda; Smith). The narratives I collected from two

after-school programs demonstrate the power of *confianza* as it links mentorship to schooling, especially for emergent bilingual students. The students involved in VBL and KUL come together through stories, and it is through these stories that the students make space to share their lived experiences. As collaborators connecting students, parents, and educators, the two after-school communities believe that emergent bilingual students can achieve higher educational goals with mentored, bicultural, and bilingual supports. These community partners inspire *confianza* through transformative visions for education and by building alliances among partners and activists.

In *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*, Angela Valenzuela argues that schools expect immigrant and minority students to give up—that is, "subtract"—their ethnic cultures and home languages, to erase these valuable supports for their educational development. Subtractive pedagogies, according to Valenzuela, "fracture students' cultural and ethnic identities, creating social, linguistic, and cultural divisions among students and between students and staff" (5). Through rigid standardization, subtractive schooling minoritizes the home cultures and languages students bring with them. By assessing the values of home language practices as "deficits," subtractive schooling disrupts relations within families, communities, and schools.

Subtractive schooling practices fail to recognize that emergent bilingual students come to schools with complex sets of histories, as members of diverse families and communities. Omitting these funds of knowledge from classrooms censors the lives of students from the curriculum. Regarding the alienating aspects of deficit perspectives, Kwangok Song writes, "Subtractive schooling approaches further create separation between school, home, and community, lessening the possibility of incorporating students' linguistic and cultural experiences into classroom practices" (342). To get to a place where multilingualism is valued, communities and educators need to move beyond language differences to build sustained trust across these differences, without fixating on supposed language barriers. In meeting the challenge of the NCTE policy brief, the instructors of today and tomorrow will become better acquainted with the everyday realities of bilingual families in monolingual-oriented K–12 schools. Supposed literacy "gaps" experienced by youth are often blamed on presumed deficits within the family and, by extension, the community. My fieldwork at KUL and VBL revealed something different, however. Rather than acting indifferently to education, communities of families and students were singularly preoccupied with overcoming linguistic obstacles. Indeed, some immigrant parents extended themselves in ways largely invisible to school authorities, because the social relations of *confianza* at these after-school community programs included these parents as stakeholders in the process. Of course, these parents were driven by fear of perpetuating economic hardship for

their children, but they were equally fearful of poor school performance perpetu-
ating economic hardship. They exhibited remarkable agency in their willingness
to help their children, shuttling them from one after-school program to another
around different neighborhoods. Yet, too often, their children's schools kept
parents from exercising this agency. When students encountered language prob-
lems at school, their parents' fears that they might not complete school increased.
Building relationships with parents helps us realize the commitment they bring to
the table. Building relationships helps us reassess deficit theories that suggest what
parents cannot or do not do, replacing them with new beliefs that recognize the
assets and strengths these parents and families bring. Building relationships helps
us undertake pedagogies that draw upon the strengths of communities and their
unique language histories.

 I want to share that I value what you do as teachers. As a university re-
searcher, I fully respect the literacy learning happening in your classrooms and the
valuable impacts you make on the lives of your students. But in this book, I want to
encourage you to find educational spaces that exist outside of the classroom; these
are the spaces where I personally find special relevance as a student and a writer. I
trust in educators who want to learn, and I encourage us all to become students of
our students. They are the experts on their lived experiences among their com-
munities beyond the classroom, and on how these communities reinforce much
of the work we do—although in different languages and using different ways with
literacy.

 Teachers, with or without bilingual experience, who enter, meet, and estab-
lish rapport with their students' communities on their own terms will always learn
from them. I emphasize that pedagogies validate friendships forged *en confianza*
between current and future educators and communities. These relationships can
be articulated through writing that inquires into students' communities, their lived
experiences, and how they use all their languages. In this book, I will take you into
after-school programs that focus on these kinds of additive literacy approaches
while building *confianza* between adults and children. After-school mentorship
offers one way of realistically aligning parents' goals with those of children while
facilitating communication across generational, linguistic, and cultural differences.
As Guadalupe Valdés suggests in *Con Respeto: Bridging the Distances between Cultur-
ally Diverse Families and Schools*, programs for immigrant families "must be based
on an understanding, appreciation and respect for the internal dynamics of families
and for the legitimacy of their values and beliefs" (203). The two programs I profile
in this book demonstrate understanding, appreciation, and respect for family and
community dynamics, while also building on the sense of care that comes with
confianza.

Translingual Public Writing: Communities and Schools Recognizing the Dignity of Students' Languages

Our schools stress that speaking and learning in one language is the norm, and that any variation from that is considered nonstandard. In the United States—despite the wide variety of languages spoken—we subscribe to a monolingual language ideology that links English to citizenship and economic success. Indeed, bilingualism can be tolerated in addition to English, especially for students learning languages like Mandarin, French, Latin, Greek, or German, but English must be the dominant language of communication. There are "tracks" for emergent bilingual students, in particular a college track for students who hope to gain insight into another culture, and who perhaps may even study abroad to learn the language via international travel and tourism. And then there are forced bilinguals, also learning to be bilingual in context while gaining insight into another culture, but having their existing culture stripped away at the same time.

But that does not have to be the only way of thinking about language. What if we instead saw language through a pluralist ideology, a counterideology in which understanding multiple languages was the norm? That is the essence of research that argues for translingual practices of reading, writing, speaking, and listening as creatively complex tools, rather than obstacles to English language learning (Canagarajah, *Translingual Practice*; Horner et al.). Thinking of multilingualism as translingualism celebrates the innovative and creative abilities of individuals to move back and forth among a variety of language resources, including academic English.

Innovation and creativity are essential to teaching and learning English, and in the context of a translingual pedagogy grounded in the trust of *confianza*, they can be used to honor the literacy practices of local communities and communities' rights to their own languages. Literacy researchers and educators who make inquiries into students' communities can develop and mentor critical and creative community projects that respond to language, identity, and local issues of social justice, collecting and publishing local knowledge and histories. In the next chapters, I describe more of this connection between research and pedagogy, drawing on students' creative and critical composition of texts based on ethnographic research into their communities, as well as my own documentary writing. Such movements between classroom learning and community literacies engage all of us in dialogues that are creative, critical, and open to all genres and languages.

Narrating After-School Engagement in Emergent Bilingual Communities

Each chapter of this book contains narrative-driven explanations and vignettes from the VBL and KUL after-school programs. The chapters offer lesson ideas and links to NCTE materials and statements concerning emergent bilingual student success and community-school partnerships. The chapters weave together interviews, writing, artwork, and stories to reflect on the theme of creating a translingual language arts pedagogy that establishes *confianza* with students' communities. I draw lessons from local literacy- and ethnography-based assignments that bridge communities and schools.

Chapter 2 introduces VBL and KUL in further detail, while emphasizing the importance of *confianza* for ethnographic research with emergent bilingual communities. I also offer a brief overview of the history of Latin American migration to Kentucky and the state's growing emergent bilingual population. Chapter 3 presents a translingual framework for understanding students' linguistic repertoires and translanguaging practices to show how community programs help cultivate bilingualism through projects like the creation of a student writing anthology or the painting of a mural. Chapter 4 presents the voices of several VBL and KUL students, narrating how they built their own bilingual communities through shared stories and dialogues. Through their accounts of how they used photographs and fieldwork in their communities to compose translingual texts in multiple genres, they clearly express the concerns of bilingual students. Chapter 5 moves toward reassessing and countering ideologies of English Only immersion that subtract the bilingual gifts of students and their communities. In dialogue with communities, teachers can both build *confianza* and gain insight into local funds of knowledge to develop assessment strategies that value these bilingual gifts. Chapter 6 turns to the voices of three teachers in dialogue with KUL students, and shows how students' stories affected these teachers' approaches to community involvement. The three high school teachers gained the *confianza* of the KUL students, who composed writing for the student anthology that explored their bilingual histories, senses of social justice, and undivided support for KUL. Chapter 7 concludes this book with a call to organize community writing projects and language learning. The examples provided here offer teachers ideas for helping students compose creative and critical texts that are based on their lived experience and explore their communities. I note that *confianza* moves across languages but finds its home in the shared commitments of members in safe community spaces.

Building on the strengths of students and communities means connecting them with the considerable resources available to universities involved in literacy research, local outreach, multilingual teacher training, and student mentorship

programs for future teachers. I call for community-school collaboration and expressive student literacy projects that treat the multilingual gifts of immigrant communities as sources of pride and identity. Students can be allowed to compose from their expertise as students—who spend many hours of their days learning to be students—in a school setting. But in after-school spaces, distant from the school context, they have the safety to critique schooling freely, opening windows into what schooling has been for them and what they envision it could be.

Teaching English Language Learners

(adapted from the *NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners [ELLs]*)

What knowledge and skills do mainstream teachers need in order to develop effective curricula that engage English language learners, develop their academic skills, and help them negotiate their identities as bilingual learners? This position paper addresses the language and literacy needs of these learners as they participate and learn in mainstream ELA classes. Specifically, it addresses ways teachers can help these students develop English as well as ways they can support their students' bilingualism.

The growing population of English language learners in our schools and the diversity of these students continue to challenge teachers. Federal, state, and local policies have addressed the education of bilingual learners by implementing different types of programs. Still, for a variety of reasons, the majority of ELLs find themselves in mainstream classrooms taught by teachers with little or no formal professional development in teaching such students. Although improving the education of ELLs has been proposed as a pressing national educational priority, many teachers are not adequately prepared to work with a linguistically diverse student population.

Connected to a strong research base, the position paper offers approaches to teaching that center on:

- Knowledge of Students
- Teaching Language
- Teaching Literacy: Reading
- Teaching Literacy: Writing
- Teaching Language and Content
- Selecting Materials

Access the full position paper at http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/teacherseducatingell.

Most teachers of English language learners are not fluently bilingual, and many don't receive formal professional development in teaching emergent bilingual students. Thus, they aren't always adequately prepared to meet the challenges of working with this growing demographic of K–12 students in US classrooms. So teachers' greatest resources, argues Steven Alvarez, are the students themselves, with both a facility in their home language and ties to their home communities.

After-school programs focused on English learners, Alvarez suggests, offer a way for parents, teachers, and volunteers to come together to navigate school systems and the English language, share stories, and work to develop facility in reading and writing across languages.

Community Literacies en Confianza: *Learning from Bilingual After-School Programs* directly addresses teachers who are learning about emergent bilingual students. Alvarez offers ideas for approaching, engaging, and partnering with students' communities to design culturally sustaining pedagogies that productively use the literacy abilities students bring to schools. Drawing on the *NCTE Position Paper on the Role of English Teachers in Educating English Language Learners (ELLs)*, Alvarez highlights the importance of building mutual trust, or *confianza*, between students, schools, and communities, both inside and outside of the classroom. Our students have as much to teach us as we have to teach them, as long as we're open to their experiences and stories as we learn and grow together.

Steven Alvarez is assistant professor of English at St. John's University. His research examines the languages and literacies of emergent bilingual Latino/a communities. Alvarez has a decade of experience teaching writing to students from kindergarten through college in communities across the United States, and more recently in China and Mexico.

NCTE National Council of Teachers of English