



Cultivating Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Pedagogies

Question: How do we *cultivate* culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogies, rich school-family connections, and biliteracy development?

Cultivating culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogies involves creating learning environments that foster

life-long bilingualism and biliteracy and promote rich and meaningful interactions between schools and families.

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy

A culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) seeks to create spaces for teaching and learning that are derived from the lived experiences *all* students bring to school. A culturally sustaining pedagogy is grounded in the principle that *responsiveness* to promote equity and inclusion is insufficient because it keeps minoritized students in the margins rather than including their experiences as central to school experience.

CSP considers the impact of racism, sexism, misogyny, classism, and xenophobia on education, development,

and identity in schools. Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to break down flawed dichotomies, such as those linking the Latinx student with an expressly Spanish-based language background.

For multilingual learners, a culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy supports repositioning the student as central to the teaching and learning instead of in a marginalized position on the fringe. The pedagogy fosters rewarding and celebrating the multiple literacies and rich cultures the learner brings to the school and community.

Teaching about Language

Language is essential for effective pedagogy, and *metalanguage* is one term used to describe educators' knowledge about language. Berry (2005) distinguishes further between *metalanguage* and *metalinguistic awareness*. According to Berry, metalinguistic awareness is "often seen as synonymous with

knowledge about language and not knowledge of metalanguage" (p. 11). He argues that "Metalanguage [...] seems to be indispensable in teacher (re-) education" (p. 16). Ultimately, Berry's work supports the idea that each person possesses unique metalanguage about their personal linguistic repertoire.

Another important perspective comes from García (2008) and her work on Knowledge about Language (KAL) in teacher preparation. García notes that “beyond teaching second language learners, most children in the world today speak languages at home that are different from that which the school system calls the ‘standard.’ Thus, I would argue that all teachers need to have specialized

1. Language awareness for language teachers
2. Awareness of language for all teachers
3. MLA for teachers with multilingual populations (all teachers)
4. MLA for bilingual teachers in bilingual/multilingual schools
5. MLA for sole bilingual teachers.

García suggests that educator preparation programs could nurture multilingual awareness by conducting observations of emergent bilingual learners, sending

knowledge about the social, political, and economic struggles that surround the languages, about the pedagogical practices surrounding bilingualism, and about bilingualism itself” (p. 389). García proposes a new concept called *multilingual awareness* (MLA), and she described the following continuum “from least to most complex MLA needed for different kinds of teachers” (p. 392):

educators into communities to explore and “describe richly the ‘linguistic landscape’” (p. 395), and review the language and literacy practices of various school settings.

How do we “Cultivate” Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Pedagogies?

Exploring language use in schools provides opportunities to apply Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Pedagogies. We suggest that educators consider engaging in culturally and linguistically sustaining pedagogy with their students using a case studies approach. First, educators can help students document how their communities participate in language interaction, multiple literacies, numerical competence, scientific proficiency, artistic facilities, and other kinds of expertise.

Second, educators can examine particular curricula and educational materials to expose how they often reflect a monolithic discourse and register. We recommend that educators invite their students’ engagement with materials, types of ‘content’, language(s), acts, and values that transcend the limitations of textbooks. In addition, educators can encourage students to describe their own language, and the role it plays in their lived experiences in and out of school.

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