PART I

DYNAMIC BILINGUALISM AT SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1

Translanguaging Classrooms: Contexts and Purposes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define translanguaging
- Explain how translanguaging can be used by teachers in different types of classroom contexts
- Summarize the four purposes of translanguaging and how they serve the overarching purpose of social justice
- Give concrete examples to illustrate translanguaging purposes in practice
- Begin to profile your classroom

One of the best ways to understand translanguaging is to see and hear it in action. Many of the teachers we have worked with have "aha moments" when they stop and listen to the ways students use language in their classrooms. For example, two students negotiate in Spanish over a math problem posed to them in English. One student with more experience in English quietly explains the directions to a newly arrived student from China. A group of students joke with one another using word play and English/Spanish puns. Once you take up this new lens for observing your bilingual students, you will notice new and exciting things about the way they language, which can guide the ways you plan, teach, assess, and advocate for their needs. Our use of the verb "to language" (e.g., "languaging," "translanguaging") reflects our understanding of language use as a dynamic communicative practice.

A translanguaging classroom is any classroom in which students may deploy their full linguistic repertoires, and not just the particular language(s) that are officially used for instructional purposes in that space. These classrooms can be developed anywhere we find students who are, or are becoming, bilingual. This includes classrooms that only use English as the official language for instruction (i.e., English-medium classrooms, including English as a second language [ESL] classrooms, whether **pull-out**, **push-in**, or **structured English immersion** programs), as well as bilingual (i.e., dual language, transitional) and world language or heritage language classrooms. We refer to the

students in translanguaging classrooms as *bilingual students*, by which we mean **emergent bilinguals** who are at the early stages of bilingual development, as well as more **experienced bilinguals** who can use two or more languages with relative ease, although their performances vary according to task, modality, and language. Our use of the term *emergent bilingual* in this book includes students who are officially designated by schools as "English language learners ("ELLs")," as well as English speakers who are learning other languages (e.g., Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin). We do not use the term *ELL* because it renders the languages other than English (LOTE) in the emergent bilinguals' developing linguistic repertoires invisible. We do, however, use this term when it refers to the official school designation.

TRANSLANGUAGING CLASSROOMS

A **translanguaging classroom** is a space built collaboratively by the teacher and bilingual students as they use their different language practices to teach and learn in deeply creative and critical ways. The term **translanguaging** comes from the Welsh *trawsieithu* and was coined by a Welsh educator, Cen Williams (1994, 2002), who developed a *bilingual* pedagogy in which students were asked to alternate languages for the purposes of receptive or productive use. For example, students might be asked to read in English and write in Welsh and vice versa to deepen and extend their bilingualism.

Since Colin Baker translated the Welsh term to English in 2001, translanguaging has been extended by many scholars to refer to both the complex language practices of bilingual and multilingual individuals and communities, as well as the pedagogical approaches that draw on those practices.[1] García (2009) explains that translanguaging "is an approach to bilingualism that is centered not on languages as has been often the case, but on the practices of bilinguals that are readily observable" (p. 45). From a linguistics perspective, Otheguy, García, and Reid (2015) define translanguaging as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages" (p. 281). According to Flores and Schissel (2014, pp. 461–462):

> Translanguaging can be understood on two different levels. From a sociolinguistic perspective it describes the fluid language practices of bilingual communities. From a pedagogical perspective it describes a pedagogical approach whereby teachers build bridges from these language practices and the language practices desired in formal school settings.

Our focus in this book is on pedagogy, by which we mean the art, science, method, and practice of teaching.

Bilingualism is the norm in translanguaging classrooms—regardless of the official language of instruction of the class. We put forward a translanguaging pedagogy that shows educators how to **leverage**, or use to maximum advantage, the language practices of their bilingual students and communities while addressing core content and language development standards. We illustrate this pedagogy in action with three particular cases that together represent the kinds of diversity we find among students, teachers, language policies, program types, and grade levels in schools. As you read we encourage you to think about the actual language practices of your students relative to the official language policy of your school.

[1]For more on translanguaging, see García and Li Wei, 2014. See also Lewis, Jones, and Baker, 2012a, 2012b.

Carla's Elementary Dual-Language Bilingual Classroom

Carla teaches a 4th-grade dual-language bilingual[2] class in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where all of the students are from Spanish-speaking homes. This elementary school program aims for bilingualism, biliteracy, and academic achievement in two languages. Carla was born in Puebla, Mexico, and she came to New Mexico at the age of 10 with her family. She is bilingual and studied Spanish in high school and at college as she pursued her bilingual education certification.

Most of Carla's students are Spanish-speaking bilinguals, though their individual profiles are very different. ***Moisés,*** for example, emigrated from Mexico to the United States two years ago, and is considered a newcomer. Moisés is officially designated as an ELL, but we refer to him as an emergent bilingual. Though Moisés is developing his Spanish and English practices in Carla's classroom, he prefers speaking Spanish. ***Ricardo***, like Moisés, is considered a newcomer, and is officially designated ELL. Ricardo is in the process of learning English. At home he speaks Spanish and Mixteco, the language he spoke with his family and community in Mexico. At different points on the bilingual spectrum are ***Erica*** and ***Jennifer***, who were both born in the United States. Erica prefers to speak English, though her family does speak some Spanish at home, while Jennifer, a more experienced bilingual, feels comfortable using both languages to carry out academic tasks. As we can see, not all of Carla's students are classified as ELLs or are, as we call them, emergent bilinguals. Her students' bilingual performances are varied and the students have a wide range of strengths within and across languages.

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been adopted by the state of New Mexico, and New Mexico is, at the time of this writing, part of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) consortium. Carla's instruction must therefore be aligned with the CCSS and students must demonstrate proficiency on PARCC assessments. New Mexico is also a member of the WIDA consortium. Carla's instruction for emergent bilinguals who are officially designated as ELLs must therefore align with the WIDA English language development (ELD) standards, and these students must demonstrate English language proficiency on the test developed by WIDA, Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) for ELLs. At this time, New Mexico also gives their emergent bilinguals the LAS Link Español, a diagnostic assessment of Spanish language development. Furthermore, all students in the dual-language bilingual program must demonstrate learning relative to the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy. This school district uses the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to assess reading in English and the Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura (EDL) to assess reading in Spanish.

Although Carla was always comfortable translanguaging and saw its value in intercultural communication, she was taught never to use it for instruction.

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[2]We use the term **dual-language bilingual education** intentionally. In New Mexico, this type of bilingual program is often referred to as **one-way dual language education.** In some education districts, this type of program is referred to as a developmental bilingual education program, or as a developmental-maintenance bilingual education program. We do not use the term "one-way" because in practice we find tremendous variation in the ways that emergent and experienced bilingual students from the "same" language background use languages in their everyday lives. We also include the word *bilingual*, which has largely disappeared from discussions about dual language education in response to the backlash against bilingualism and bilingual education. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear bilingual educators say that dual language education is not bilingual education, a stance with which we disagree. Our use of bilingual emphasizes that dual language education is bilingual education.

Her teacher education program in bilingual education advocated that unless there was a clear and separate space for Spanish, English would take over instruction and Spanish would not be maintained. In studying the dual language model she was told that teachers were never to put the different language practices alongside each other. She was taught to make sure that writing in English and Spanish never appeared together, dedicating different parts of the room to the two languages. At the beginning of her career, she taught strictly in Spanish in the morning and in English in the afternoon, and corrected students when they spoke the "wrong" language at the "wrong" time. She never brought multilingual resources into the classroom—she used Spanish resources during Spanish time and English resources during English time.

When Carla discovered the concept of a translanguaging pedagogy for the first time, she questioned and resisted it. However, she quickly realized that despite all her strict rules about English here and Spanish there, her students were always using features from Spanish and English to make meaning, albeit surreptitiously. For example, during English time, they often whispered to each other in Spanish, and when Carla approached, the discussion would simply stop. Carla decided to bring the students' language practices to the forefront and build on them in the classroom. Instead of "policing" which language was used where, she encouraged students to use their entire **language repertoires** to learn and demonstrate what they had learned. Though she maintained an official space for English and an official space for Spanish to provide the appropriate opportunities for language development, she now allowed some flexibility in student language use.

At the center of Carla's literacy and language instruction during her (bi)-literacy block is the sharing of human experiences, and especially those of the neighborhood and land, el barrio y la tierra, which she sees as interrelated. The experiences of the New Mexico barrio where Carla's school is located are deeply connected to the tierra because many of her students' parents are farm workers. Carla introduced a translanguaging space into her dual-language bilingual classroom through what she called "Cuéntame algo," which she describes as a time for bilingual storytelling when a translanguaging literacy activity takes center stage. Her instructional unit, *Cuentos de la tierra y del barrio,* focuses on stories of how students, families, and the local community are tied to their land and, by extension, to their traditions. Students discuss cuentos written by Latino bilingual authors about land and traditions, as well as those told to them by family and community members, including abuelitos and abuelitas, grandparents whom Carla invites to her classroom. They also discuss the video clips that they watch, as well as their own experiences, and those of barrio residents, with the land.

Stephanie's High-School Social Studies Class

Stephanie is an 11th-grade social studies teacher in New York City, and English is the official language used for instructional purposes in her classroom. Thus, Stephanie's classroom provides an example of a translanguaging classroom in an English-medium context. She is of Polish descent and, though she knows some Spanish words that she has learned from her students, she does not consider herself bilingual. Stephanie was trained as a history teacher but found that once she entered the classroom she also had to teach content-area literacy.

The linguistic diversity in Stephanie's English-medium classroom is rich. Most, though not all, of Stephanie's students are Spanish-speaking Latinos who perform differently in language and literacy in Spanish and English. A few of her students are officially designated as ELLs. Some of these emergent bilinguals (to use our preferred term), like ***Noemí***, are newcomers with solid

educational backgrounds and strong oracy and literacy in Spanish. Other newcomers, like ***Luis***, have had interrupted or poor schooling in the countries they came from and struggle with literacy and numeracy in any language. Other emergent bilinguals, like ***Mariana***, have received most or all of their education in the United States but were labeled as ELLs when entering school and have yet to test out of this status. Although Mariana is now classified as a **long-term English language learner** (LTELL), she generally uses English at school; in fact, many of her teachers do not even realize she is still officially considered an ELL.

It is important to emphasize that we also find considerable linguistic diversity among Stephanie's "English-speaking" students. Most of her students are bilingual Latinos, but because they are not designated as ELLs their bilingualism tends to go unnoticed. Stephanie, however, knows that these students have a wide range of experiences with oral and written Spanish and English. Some, like ***Eddy*** and ***Teresita*** were born in the United States and have different degrees of comfort with using Spanish. The few students who are not Latinos in her class are African Americans, some from the Anglophone Caribbean, and their English also includes features that are not always considered standard or appropriate for academic purposes.

In 2010, New York State adopted what it called the P–12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, and for Mathematics. These are based on the CCSS, with a few additions. This means that Stephanie's instruction must be aligned with New York's CCLS and that all students in her class have to demonstrate proficiency on assessments aligned to the CCLS. In addition, New York State has standards for science and social studies in place. Academic achievement tests for graduation (the Regents Exams) are translated into the five most common languages of students—Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Spanish—although students also have to pass the English Regents exam. Furthermore, all students who are designated as ELLs in New York State must demonstrate English language proficiency on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).

New York launched the Bilingual Common Core Initiative (BCCI) in 2012, which is intended to help all teachers differentiate CCLS language arts instruction and assessment for the bilingual students in their schools. At the heart of this initiative are the New Language Arts Progressions (NLAP) and Home Language Arts Progressions (HLAP). Unlike the English language proficiency and development frameworks used by other states, the BCCI explicitly acknowledges that students' home languages are a valuable resource to draw on and that the new and home languages are inextricably related in learning. These progressions are flexible and can be used by teachers as a first step toward understanding how students use their new and home languages to learn. In fact, emergent bilinguals at the early stages of ELD are allowed to demonstrate their understanding of content in their home languages. Teachers can use formative assessments to approximate the new and home language development levels of their students along these progressions (Velasco & Johnson, 2014).

When she first started teaching, Stephanie realized quickly that her students were capable of thinking critically and understanding deeply. But she also knew that the English language through which the content was taught was a real challenge for some of her students. How could she work with the students' strengths and creativity *and* make the content comprehensible? When she learned about translanguaging, she realized that she could use translanguaging strategies with her students to leverage the many different language resources in her class. Without knowing it, she had already set up her classroom in ways that made it possible to capitalize on translanguaging. She had always organized students into groups that had mixed strengths so they

could help each other in the project-based activities of her thematic, often interdisciplinary, units. In these groupings she noticed that peers helped each other using Spanish as well as English. She realized she could encourage this kind of translanguaging interaction to enable all students to engage with the learning activity.

Since learning about translanguaging, Stephanie has made a strong effort to build a robust **multilingual ecology** in which all her students can thrive. For example, although her classroom is not officially bilingual, Stephanie works with bilingual staff members and student volunteers to translate and create multilingual materials and actively seeks out Spanish language resources. Stephanie also has a shelf full of bilingual dictionaries and picture dictionaries that students can use at any point in the lesson. She has been successful in securing iPads, which newcomers use frequently to access the Spanish version of their history textbook, and she also uses apps like Google Translate.

Stephanie is passionate about helping her students see connections across different content areas. While schools separate topics into categories like social studies or science, Stephanie believes that one cannot be understood without the other. Thus, many of Stephanie's units focus on history but bring in interdisciplinary connections. For example, one of Stephanie's interdisciplinary units, *Environmentalism: Then and Now,* is a historical study of the U.S. environmental movement. Students learn about the history of this social movement by reading their textbooks and many supplemental readings from websites, newspapers, and magazines. They also listen to podcasts and radio interviews, watch clips from documentaries, and look at visual art. Stephanie also invites in community experts, for example the 11th-grade science teacher and the leader of a local nonprofit.

Though the textbook does not focus heavily on the environmental movement, Stephanie places this movement within a larger historical context, from its beginnings during industrialization, to social action campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s, to today's political conversation on climate change. Because she knows that her students excel when their understanding is "brought home," the unit culminates in students designing a plan of action that would make the school or local community more environmentally sound and/or sustainable.

Justin's Role as a Middle-School English as a Second Language Teacher

Justin provides push-in ESL services in English-medium middle-school math and science classrooms in Los Angeles, California. Justin speaks English and Mandarin Chinese (following two years of studying Chinese in Shanghai). His students are speakers of many languages, including Spanish, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Mandingo, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Pular (Fula). The students who speak Fula and Mandingo also speak French, the colonial language of West Africa. Because there are multiple speakers of Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Tagalog and Vietnamese in this classroom, Justin groups students according to their home languages and mixed English language abilities. But there is only one Korean student in the class, ***Jeehyae.***

Although most students in Justin's class have at least one other student with whom they can collaborate to make meaning of the texts, there is great diversity among students, even among those with the same language background. For example, ***Yi-Sheng*** arrived recently from Taiwan. Unlike some of the other students from mainland China, Yi-Sheng has not received any instruction in using Latin script, so she needs lots of writing practice. ***Pablo*** came not from Mexico, the country of origin of most of the Latino students in the class, but from Argentina, and attended private English after-school classes before coming to Los Angeles. ***Fatoumata*** came from Guinea not long ago.

She had only gone to school irregularly in Africa, so she struggles with literacy in French, the language of instruction in Guinea. She is not the only Pular-speaking student in Justin's classroom, although West African children in the class often speak to each other in French, the colonial language.

California has adopted the CCSS, and is a member of the Smarter Balanced consortium as of this writing, which means that Justin's instruction needs to align with the CCSS and that all of his students need to demonstrate proficiency on the Smarter Balanced assessments. California has also developed the Common Core en Español, which is a translation of the CCSS from English into Spanish that also addresses concepts that are specific to Spanish language and literacy. All students in California who are officially designated as English learners (ELs) have to demonstrate proficiency on the state-developed California English Language Development Test (CELDT), based on the California ELD Standards.

Justin's role in the content classrooms has been to support the students so that they could meet the demands of the California CCSS and the California ELD Standards. He often obtains supplementary written material in the languages of the students and brings it to class. He uses Google Translate to write worksheet instructions in the students' languages. Justin also encourages students to use iPads to look up words and translate passages, and he often uses the iPad to make himself understood in students' languages. Because Jeehyae is the only Korean student in the class, Justin spends lots of time using Google Translate, trying to make the material accessible to her. He also makes sure to help her translanguage on her own, telling her to use her intrapersonal inner-speech to brainstorm, and he encourages her to prewrite and annotate texts in Korean. Though Justin won't understand what Jeehyae writes, he makes it clear that the language she brings with her is useful and necessary to her learning and her development of English. Justin also often seeks help from other Korean-speaking students in the school. Because students in this classroom often write in their home languages, Jeehyae has discovered that she knows some of the Chinese characters the Cantonese and Mandarin speakers use because she learned some of them in her Korean school.

Although these three teachers' classrooms are different with respect to their students' language practices, the official language policy in their classes, and the different state-mandated standards, they all use translanguaging in their classrooms.

It is important to remember that translanguaging classrooms can be of any type—bilingual (whether dual language or transitional) or English-medium (whether ESL programs or mainstream classrooms). Translanguaging also can be used by any teacher, whether bilingual or monolingual; whether an elementary, middle school, or high school teacher; whether officially a language teacher (English or a language other than English) or a content teacher.

PURPOSES FOR TRANSLANGUAGING

The translanguaging pedagogy we put forward in this book is purposeful and strategic. We identify four primary translanguaging purposes:

1. Supporting students as they engage with and comprehend complex content and texts
2. Providing opportunities for students to develop linguistic practices for academic contexts
3. Making space for students' bilingualism and ways of knowing
4. Supporting students' bilingual identities and socioemotional development

These four translanguaging purposes work together to advance social justice. That is, when teachers effectively leverage students' bilingualism for learning, they help level the playing field for bilingual students at school.

Supporting Student Engagement with Complex Content and Texts

When we make space for students to use all the linguistic resources they have developed to maneuver and navigate their way through complex content, myriad learning opportunities open up. Rather than watering down our instruction, which risks oversimplification and robs students of opportunities to engage in productive grappling with texts and content, translanguaging better enables us to teach complex content, which in turn helps students learn more successfully.

Moll (2013) describes the importance of working with bilingual students in what he calls the **bilingual zone of proximal development**, in which assistance is offered to students bilingually to mediate their learning and stretch their performance. As we will see, there are many ways of doing this. Students can work in home language groups to solve difficult problems or analyze a complex text. They can talk to one another about content using their own language practices in ways that help them better understand that content. Because learners develop knowledge *interpersonally*, it is important for them to enter into relationships with others whose language repertoires overlap with theirs so that they can deeply understand the classroom texts. Knowledge is also developed *intrapersonally*, as students try out new concepts and new languaging in internal dialogue and private speech. Because bilingual students have a voice that includes their home languages, they need to be encouraged to draw on all of the resources for learning in their linguistic repertoires.

Unfortunately, we don't often find LOTE being used as resources for learning challenging content and engaging with complex texts in U.S. classrooms serving bilingual students. Instead, teachers generally tell students to only use English; bilingual students (and particularly emergent bilingual students) often learn that only English counts. This is especially the case for Spanish-speaking students who are told: "speak English," "don't speak Spanish"; "think in English," "don't think in Spanish." As a result, Latino students often learn to see Latino cultural and linguistic practices only as home and community practices that are not to be used in academic environments. In so doing, bilingual Latino students are often silenced, using only part of their linguistic repertoires and accessing only a small portion of the adults, peers, and texts that are important to them in acquiring content knowledge. Leveraging translanguaging interpersonally and intrapersonally can help bilingual students overcome this silence and engage with and understand complex content and texts.

Schools need to find ways of ensuring that all students, not just those whose language practices align with those used in school, understand challenging content and texts. Translanguaging enables educators to more equitably provide opportunities for students to engage with complex material, regardless of language practices. In this way, translanguaging at school is inextricably linked with social justice.

For example, in a lesson from the *Environmentalism: Then and Now* unit plan that Stephanie designed for her 11th-grade English-medium class, students were asked to analyze some statistics about air pollution and asthma, issues that disproportionately affect Latinos and other residents of urban areas, as well as make a connection to the previous day's lesson on the Clean Air Act of 1970. Stephanie included statistics about asthma rates among Latinos, as well as the map in Figure 1.1 that illustrated which counties did not meet standards for air pollutants.

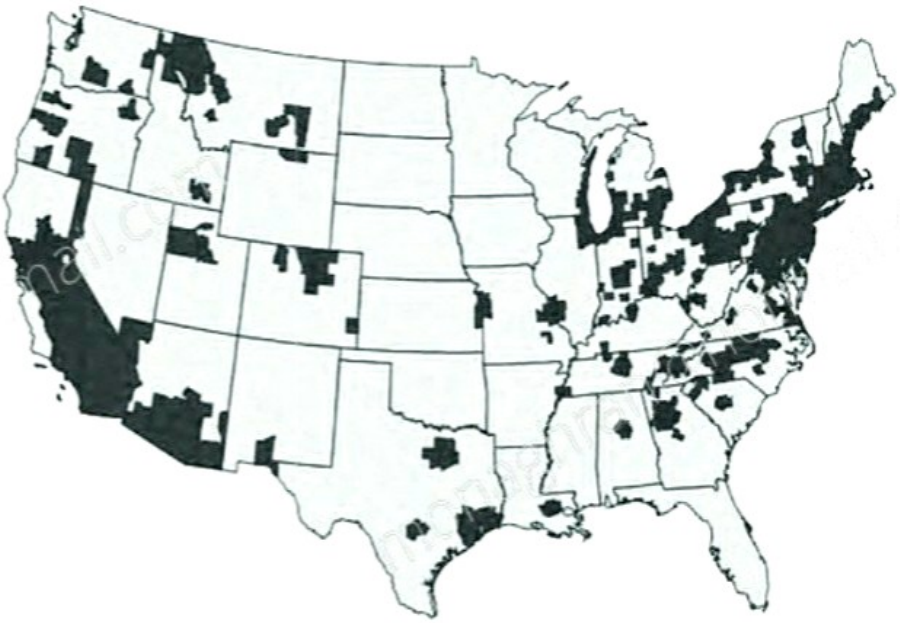

Figure 1.1 Counties that do not meet standards for air pollutants, based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency data. (Retrieved from http://www.nrdc.org/health/effects/latino/english/latino_en.pdf)

After analyzing the two different forms of data, Stephanie asked students, organized into small groups, to come up with some kind of connection—how did these two sets of data tell a story about the issue? Although the official language of instruction was English, Stephanie told students that they could discuss the statistics, the map, and the answers to her question in English and/or Spanish and could write their responses in English and/or Spanish. She also told students they were expected to share with the whole class. This vignette shows us what happened next:

> After examining the map and discussing it with his group, Luis, who recently came to the United States from El Salvador, shared in Spanish with the whole class that "las áreas oscuras están cerca de ciudades como Nueva York y Los Ángeles. Muchos Latinos viven en esas ciudades." [The dark areas are near cities like New York and Los Angeles. A lot of Latinos live in those cities.] Mariana, who was in Luis' group, eagerly added: "Yes, Latinos live in the dark areas on the map. Like in New York and Los Angeles." Some students nodded and others wrote down the comment in Spanish or English next to their own in their notebooks. Eddy added in English that "cities have more pollution than other places." Stephanie then summed up the two comments in English, restating, "It sounds like what you're saying is that if most Latinos live in cities, and cities have more air pollution than rural or suburban areas, that this might be a cause of increased asthma in Latinos." Students nodded and voiced their agreement.

The kind of linguistic flexibility we see here—using both languages to discuss, negotiate, and finally write down connections; sharing out their learning in both languages—helped all of the students in Stephanie's classroom engage with English texts, synthesize a complex issue, and demonstrate their learning. As we can see from Luis', Mariana's, and Eddy's comments, the translanguaging they had done in groups allowed them to access the content, despite the fact that, for example, Luis was a less experienced English user than Eddy. Without translanguaging, which was both an explicit part of Stephanie's

instructional design and a naturally occurring phenomenon among students in their small groups, this kind of intellectually rich conversation would not have taken place.

Carla also uses translanguaging to engage her bilingual students with complex content and texts. However, because an important goal of Carla's instruction is biliteracy, translanguaging in her classroom looks quite different from what we saw in Stephanie's class. During Cuéntame algo, students engage in studies of Latino bilingual authors who translanguage to make experiences and characters come to life. Students are encouraged to use all their language practices, which include English and Spanish, to discuss and evaluate these stories. Sometimes texts are chosen with English as the main language but other times Spanish is the main language of the text. Besides reading and discussing, students are encouraged to design texts (orally and in writing) that reflect the dynamic bilingual language use of communities, both when they communicate among themselves and when they communicate with others who may not share their language practices.

For example, in a lesson from her unit on *Cuentos de la tierra y del barrio*, Carla and her students used the Cuéntame algo space to do a read-aloud and shared reading of *Three Wise Guys: Un cuento de Navidad* by Sandra Cisneros:

Carla read en voz alta:

> The big box came marked *do not open till xmas*, but the mamá said not until the Day of the Three Kings. Not until Día de los Reyes, the sixth of January, do you hear? That is what the mamá said exactly, only she said it all in Spanish. Because in Mexico where she was raised, it is the custom for boys and girls to receive their presents on January sixth, and not Christmas, even though they were living on the Texas side of the river now. Not until the sixth of January.

Carla engaged students in telling her about *el Día de los Reyes*. Some of the students did so in English, some in Spanish, and some in both languages.

To get students to engage with the text in a deeper, more nuanced way, she set forth the following activity:

Carla took [a] large sheet of chart paper and drew la corriente del Río Grande. On one side she wrote a sentence the author had written in English. She then asked the groups to translate into Spanish what the author would have said if she were on the Mexican side of the Río Grande. While they worked, one group grew louder. Carla asked what was the matter and one of them said: "Maestra, es que mi familia on the other side also speaks English. And on this side también hablamos español." A whole class discussion then ensued about bilingual language practices in the borderlands and when and how to use them.

Rather than stop with simple comprehension of the story, the shared reading of this class was the jumping-off point for students' engagement in Cisneros' book. Carla's explicit focus on the language of the book, and how different contexts and characters use different language practices, helped students connect with the story on a much deeper level. Carla also tapped into students' bilingualism, asking them to translate sentences from the book from one language to the other. This not only helps students with the close reading of a text; it also helps them to learn new vocabulary and make connections between their languages. Carla encourages students not to produce a literal translation, but to transform the text as they render it in the other language.

When students came to the realization that their familia on both sides of the border spoke both languages, they began a larger, critical conversation about language practices in borderlands like Texas. This connection and intellectual exchange would not have been possible without the translanguaging that students experienced in the Cuéntame algo space. Similar to Stephanie's lesson, Carla's explicit use of translanguaging helped her students engage more deeply with a text.

Providing Opportunities for Students to Develop Linguistic Practices for Academic Contexts

"Academic language" is a term we encounter over and over again. Following Valdés (2017), we wish to reframe this term, imagining that what some call academic language is simply one of many forms of languaging that students must take up to be successful in school. Translanguaging can help us teach the types of linguistic practices that are deemed appropriate for academic contexts. For example, translanguaging supports bilingual students' ability to use language to gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, using text-based evidence, as the CCSS (or any other 21st-century standards) require. Translanguaging also helps students develop the ability to use language to persuade, explain, and convey real or imaginary experience. Because translanguaging requires collaboration, it also bolsters students' ability to use language socially through cooperative tasks, another language requirement of the CCSS.

Encouraging students to use all the features of their language repertoires, including lexical (words), syntactic (grammar), and discourse (larger chunks of text that hang together as a unit) features, gives them something on which to "hang" new linguistic features—what García has called translanguaging "hooks." When learning a new language, translanguaging can help students make connections and comparisons, ask deep questions, and practice and play with language. Translanguaging can also demystify what some call academic language, showing students that using the highly valued language practices for academic purposes is actually just adding another set of **language features** and practices to their growing repertoires.

When translanguaging is not allowed in schools, bilingual students are placed at a disadvantage because they are assessed on only a portion of their linguistic repertoires and are taught in ways that do not fully leverage their language resources. Furthermore, the new language features that bilingual students learn at school do not always become part of their own linguistic repertoires, continuing to represent a "second" language that belongs to others. Thus, this translanguaging purpose is also linked to social justice because it creates the space for fair educational and assessment practices for bilingual students—without the linguistic prejudice that accompanies accepting only the linguistic features of standard English—the language of power.

The following example from Stephanie's lesson on air pollution illustrates how she and her students use translanguaging to strengthen students' linguistic practices for academic purposes. The focus is on the asthma rates among Latinos, specifically Puerto Ricans.

Stephanie projected the following statistics up on the SMART Board and asked one student to read through them aloud:

- Puerto Rican Americans have twice the asthma rate as compared to the overall Hispanic population.
- Hispanics are 30 percent more likely to visit the hospital for asthma, as compared to non-Hispanic Whites.

- Puerto Rican children are 3.2 times more likely to have asthma, as compared to non-Hispanic Whites.
- Hispanic children are 40 percent more likely to die from asthma, as compared to non-Hispanic Whites.

After the student read the statistics, Stephanie checked the class' comprehension of the English used. Luis said: "Maestra no entiendo" (and pointed to the phrase "more likely"). Stephanie asked students to translate it for Luis, and this turned into a heated discussion. Some translated it as "más me gusta" [I like it more]. Others as "más como" [more like]. Finally, Stephanie asked Luis to use the translating app on a class iPad, and he immediately came back with "más probable." Stephanie annotated the text on the SMART Board with this Spanish phrase. Now all students in the class knew not only what it meant in English, but also how to say it in Spanish.

This simple classroom vignette illustrates two important points. First, bilingual students may think they know the meanings of a word or phrase (e.g., more likely) in an academic text because they know each of the words in other contexts, but this is not always the case. This vignette also illustrates ways that students' existing language practices are valued and channeled into learning new practices, such as those deemed important in academic contexts. Because Stephanie is not a Spanish speaker, she encourages her students to help one another and to use resources such as translation apps to better understand this and other texts in English. By annotating an English text with a Spanish phrase, Stephanie is also helping students grow as bilingual and biliterate people, even if she herself is not bilingual and this is not a "bilingual" class.

Furthermore, Stephanie encourages her African American students to think about differences between ways they use language among their friends and at school. She often discusses language in hip hop and compares it to written social studies texts that students have to read. Stephanie observes that her African American students are also picking up some Spanish words, while her Latino students are learning about features of African American English and of, for example, Jamaican Creole, spoken by some of the Anglophone Caribbean students in the class. Stephanie's time and focus on language in her content-area classroom demonstrates her belief that teaching students to use language in academic contexts is as important as learning social studies content.

Making Space for Students' Bilingualism and Ways of Knowing

In addition to improving teaching and learning, translanguaging contributes to the creation of a new kind of classroom, one that takes bilingualism and the bilingual understanding of language as the norm, putting bilingual people at the center. Shifting focus like this makes space for students to learn and make choices about language that help them traverse the uneven waters of communication in our society. Rather than viewing languages according to rigid power hierarchies, translanguaging can help our students understand languages as practices that are used in different social contexts for different purposes.

This kind of bilingual lens fosters **critical metalinguistic awareness**—an understanding that there are social, political, and ideological aspects of language (Fairclough, 1995). Students learn that language use is not neutral, but regulated by different social groups for their own purposes. This space—the intentional moment when teachers allow students to use their entire language repertoires—can help all students become more aware of their expressive potential and how and why we make choices about language. When students

gain this kind of awareness they can challenge linguistic hierarchies and rules and tap into seeing the world through their creative and critical bilingual or multilingual perspective.

Thus, translanguaging makes possible the educational inclusion of bilingual students' ways of knowing and languaging. In giving expression to other ways of being and knowing, translanguaging has the potential to build a more socially just world. For example, during a different day's Cuéntame algo, Carla and her students read *Lluvia de plata* by Sara Poot Herrera, a story about Mariana, a young woman who visits the Tarahumara region in Chihuahua, Mexico and experiences a cultural and language transformation. To help them better comprehend the story, Carla had students place illustrations onto a backdrop that she created of la Barranca del Cobre [Copper Canyon] overlooking la sierra Tarahumara.

Moisés placed his illustration card on to the backdrop and shared the following:

> Esta parte que leí me gusta porque los trabajadores que construyeron el ferrocarril le llamaban al tren que venía de Kansas a Chihuahua "si te cansas." Yo creo que no sabían cómo decir Kansas, entonces para recordar cómo decirlo solamente mencionaban "si te cansas." [This part that I read I liked because the workers that built the railroad would call the train coming from Kansas to Chihuahua "si te cansas" ("if you get tired"). I think they did not know how to say Kansas, so to remember how to say it they would mention "si te cansas"].

[Everyone starts laughing.] Moisés explained how railroad workers adapted the word Kansas [/kǽnzəs/] to a Spanish word that was similar in pronunciation, cansas [/kansas/]. Although other students laughed, some immediately joined in: "En mi casa nosotros usamos este tipo de palabra. . . ." [We use this type of word at home.] And another, "Sí es cierto; he oído algo así también en mi casa." [Yes, it's true; I've heard this also at home.] Some students acknowledged that at home Spanish was often used to remember the sounds of English words. The teacher asked how this was so. The students then shared that, for example, the Spanish word gel [pronounced "hel"] for hair gel was used to remember how to pronounce the English word help. The Spanish word flor [flower] was used to help recall the pronunciation of the English word floor.[3]

The play-on-word jokes or chistes that emerge from words that sound nearly the same in Spanish and English are more than just entertaining; to find a word that creates a chiste takes linguistic and cultural knowledge *across* languages and cultures. The students found the translanguaging moment amusing, yet the humorous moment reflected the complexity of their understanding of language use across contexts and languages. Further, Carla invited this complex understanding into the classroom as a strength and asset on which her students could draw. By using a text that is culturally and linguistically relevant and that builds on students' translanguaging practices, Carla's students could hear and see themselves and their communities in the text and feel safe enough to experiment with and explore translanguaging.

Our earlier discussion of Carla and her class' shared reading of *Three Wise Guys: Un cuento de Navidad* illustrated how a focus on bilingualism and bilingual language practices can foster students' critical metalinguistic awareness. In the next vignette, we see how Carla's focus on the author Sandra Cisneros' translanguaging helped students engage with a complex text by drawing on their own bilingualism and ways of knowing.

[3]This example is developed further in Johnson and Meyer, 2014.

Students continued to read the story in guided reading groups beyond what Carla had read out loud, and Carla asked them to pay careful attention to the words Cisneros had chosen to include in Spanish—chicharras (insects), urracas (black/white birds), comadre (woman relative). In their groups, they reflected on and discussed why these words and not others were rendered in Spanish and why the author might have made these choices. Carla then instructed the students to select other words they would have rendered in Spanish if they had been the author.

As bilingual people, Carla and her students have the ability to discuss Cisneros' translanguaged text in a more nuanced, complex way. By drawing their attention to the author's language choices, Carla helps her students grow more critical about language, which in turn helps them grow as bilingual thinkers and writers themselves. The students commented that comadre was probably rendered in Spanish because it is a word from their own culture and community. A discussion ensued about why Cisneros had used urraca and chicharras. One student immediately said: "Because of the beautiful rolling double r." They then explored other words in Spanish that had a double r. They looked through the text to see if there were other words in English that would have an equivalent in Spanish that had a double r. This kind of critical metalinguistic analysis of a translanguaged text also demonstrates to students that bilingual languaging is rich and intentional, not messy or impure. When they discussed Cisneros' translanguaging, Carla and her class were also reaffirming their own translanguaging and drawing on their bilingualism to understand a complex text.

Supporting Students' Bilingual Identities and Socioemotional Development

Translanguaging fosters bilingual students' identities and socioemotional development, which promotes social justice. First, translanguaging enables all bilingual students to participate actively in daily classroom life. For many students whose ways of languaging differ from the status quo ideal of those considered "native speakers," classroom learning can be difficult and alienating. By making space for students to language on their own terms and participate fully in academic conversations and work, we are modeling the kind of active participation needed for the creation of a more just world. Second, translanguaging helps students to see themselves and their linguistic and cultural practices as valuable, rather than as lacking. By teaching students to see their languages as part of a whole, contingent, and ever-changing performance, we are challenging a monolingual version of society and breaking the socially constructed fronteras that stand between languages and create hierarchies of power.

We return to Stephanie's *Environmentalism: Then and Now* unit to see this translanguaging purpose in action. To help students build background on the topic of air pollution, Stephanie started the day's lesson by showing students a public service announcement (PSA) about asthma. The PSA, which ran about 30 seconds, depicted a young Latino male suffering from an asthma attack. Stephanie played the clip twice, once in English and once in Spanish, and asked students to share any questions or connections they had regarding the video clip:

Eddy shared in English that his brother had really bad asthma and has had to go to the hospital several times. Luis jumped in saying, "Me too! My brother. . .él. . .in El Salvador. . ." Sensing that Luis was having trouble continuing in English, Steph-

these activities, students learn how translanguaging and translating are transformative acts, changing not only the text but also the text's ability to engage others and give them voice. The students' translation of part of the text into Spanish was not merely an academic exercise; it enabled the students to imagine and hear the Spanish-language voice of the mother who cannot say anything in the story itself. Thus, translanguaging allows us to hear voices that may have been excluded. It gives students an understanding of how language use is tied to power, how its use is often employed to produce and reproduce social inequalities, and how bilingual students can rewrite texts to include diverse contributions and perspectives.

CONCLUSION

A translanguaging classroom is purposeful and strategic, not chaotic and messy. Of course, the ways that teachers design their translanguaging pedagogy will vary according to their own bilingual experiences and relative to the school and community context in which they work. Translanguaging classrooms are powerful, equitable learning environments for bilingual students that enable these learners to (1) engage with complex content and texts, (2) strengthen linguistic practices for academic contexts, (3) draw on their bilingualism and ways of knowing, and (4) develop socioemotionally with strong bilingual identities. When teachers effectively leverage students' bilingualism for learning, they can level the playing field and advance social justice.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. What are the challenges that translanguaging presents to your understanding of bilingualism or how bilingual students are taught?
2. Compare and contrast Carla's and Stephanie's uses of translanguaging. Why do you think those differences occurred? You might think about their personal backgrounds, the grade levels they teach, and their classroom contexts.

TAKING ACTION

1. Begin a preliminary profile of a translanguaging classroom. This can be your own classroom or it can be one that you are focusing on for action-oriented classroom research. Use the profiles from Carla's, Stephanie's, and Justin's classes as models.
   - Who are your bilingual students? Choose several bilingual students that together reflect the range of linguistic variation in your class. Describe each of their sociolinguistic histories/practices.
   - Who is the teacher? Describe his or her sociolinguistic history and practices.
   - What language(s) are used for instructional purpose in the class?
   - What are the content, language, and literacy goals for the instructional program serving these bilingual students?
2. Investigate the type of program for emergent bilinguals implemented in your context. (You can find definitions of different types of programs in the glossary.)
   - What is the official language policy?
   - What content and language development standards are used?
   - Who are the target populations?
   - What are the goals of the program?
   - How is the program structured to meet those goals?
   - How are students performing relative to those goals?

anie asked him to finish his sentence in Spanish. Luis continued in Spanish, explaining that his brother, who still lives in El Salvador, worked construction and that the dust from the worksite gave him asthma attacks. Stephanie listened, and when Luis was finished, she asked another student in Luis' group, Mariana, to translate what Luis said. Though Mariana understands Spanish, she has told Stephanie that she feels more comfortable speaking English. However, she is a very competent translator, a skill for which, as Stephanie knows, she is often praised by her family.

In this short excerpt, we interpret Stephanie's comfort with linguistic flexibility and translanguaging as an act of social justice and a way of supporting her students' socioemotional growth. To understand what we mean, we only have to put forth a different image, one we have seen in far too many English-medium classrooms: Luis, stymied by his emerging English practice, gets frustrated and falls silent, putting his head down on his desk. Other students who are not comfortable sharing in English stare out the window, doodle, whisper to one another, and sneak looks at their phones underneath their desks. Instead of this image, Stephanie's classroom is one of engagement and shared learning. All students are encouraged to use all their languages to share their ideas, which helps Stephanie understand what they know and can do. In addition, students' out-of-school lives—their stories and skills, such as Mariana's experience as a translator—are honored and drawn on to learn new content. Translanguaging, then, becomes a way of working against the kind of classroom experiences that render many students mute. By enabling them to use all their languages, they are able to be themselves, help one another, and succeed academically.

The few African American students in Stephanie's class also relate well to the PSA. Many join in the discussion and share their families' struggles with asthma. Together, the African American and Latino students in Stephanie's class become aware of the toxins in the neighborhoods where they live. They start questioning why. This is not only the beginning of a research project on environmental toxins where students worked through English and Spanish, but also of a letter-writing campaign to their elected officials where students used their voices in both English and Spanish.

Meanwhile, after reading the story *Three Wise Guys: Un cuento de Navidad* in Carla's bilingual class, she asks students to work on translating a piece of the story from English into Spanish: "The mother in the story doesn't speak English. Write the story in a way that the mother would understand." Once student groups had worked together on translating, Carla told them to

Reflect on the language practices of the characters in the story—the Spanish-speaking mother; the bilingual children, Rubén and Rosalinda; and the father who speaks English but cannot read it. As you discuss, feel free to use features from both English and Spanish to recapture the bilingual voice of the family in the story and to integrate your own language practices, as the narrator of the story has done.

Through the translation activity and the ensuing discussion, Carla encourages bilingual students' use of translanguaging to make meaning, to develop a bilingual voice in writing, and to deepen their understanding about how all their language practices work together. To this end, Carla has students analyze the ways in which English and Spanish are used in a literary piece written primarily in English, and she has her students practice translation. Through