

matsol



Currents

MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Vol. 41, No. 1 Spring/Summer 2018



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President's Message

Summer 2018

As your incoming President, I look forward to the opportunity to work with all of you in MATSOL this coming year.

We take great pride in this organization, which promotes the very best in teaching and professional practices for ESL educators across Massachusetts in pursuit of our goal of providing access and equity for students of diverse cultures and languages throughout the state. We serve students from K-12 through higher education, including those in adult basic education and workplace programs.




I encourage each of you to participate actively in MATSOL. Member participation is necessary for the success of MATSOL Currents, our e-Bulletin, our MATSOLnews Blog, our special interest groups (SIGs), our professional development courses and workshops, our job bank, our fall social, and, of course, our annual conference and fall mini-conferences. See our "Get Involved" section (page 29 of this issue) for further information about how you can get involved in these activities.

We had a very successful 46th Annual Conference at the Sheraton Framingham from May 29 to June 1, with over 600 attendees each day, 133 presentations (including eighteen invited speakers), and 39 exhibitors, as well as three pre-Conference Institutes with some 200 attendees. In order to accommodate additional attendees, we added a third day to this year's Conference. We thank our generous Conference sponsors: National Geographic/Cengage learning & Educational Solutions, Inc. and Velazquez Press, who sponsored our Thursday night MATSOL Celebration and Awards Ceremony, and program sponsors Imagine Learning, Inc. and MAPA Translations, Inc. & Studio 3 English.

As I take on this new position, I am fortunate to have the support of our past president, Vula Roumis, our very capable staff led by Executive Director Helen Solórzano, and

[MATSOL] promotes the very best in teaching and professional practices for ESL educators across Massachusetts.

our dedicated and hardworking MATSOL Board. This will be quite a learning experience for me! At its best, education is a dialog, and I look forward to a full year of dialog with you, the membership of MATSOL.

We hope you will enjoy this Spring/Summer issue of MATSOL Currents. In our *MATSOL News* section you will find reports on our Conference, our newly elected MATSOL Board members, our professional development (PD) offerings, our successful advocacy effort (the LOOK bill and the Seal of Biliteracy), and the activities of our special interest groups (SIGs). Our *Reports* section contains reports on Adult Basic Education in Massachusetts, on NNE TESOL (our sister organization to the north), and an insider's review of TESOL's 52nd Annual Convention by MATSOL past president Kathy Lobo, who served as Conference Chair. Our *Articles* section offers three articles on teaching approaches in the ESL classroom, one on an educational project for pre-service teachers, and a report on the state of teacher preparedness in Massachusetts, based on a survey of 45 English Language Education directors. Our *Reviews* section includes reviews of two books for ESL professionals and one bilingual picture-story book for use with English Learners. 

HAPPY READING!

Yours sincerely,

Juanita Brunelle

MATSOL PRESIDENT

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MATSOL's 46th Annual Conference

MATSOL held its 46th Annual Conference May 29-June 1, at the Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center in Framingham, MA. Activities began on Tuesday, May 29, with three pre-Conference Institutes:

Andrea Honigsfeld, Ed.D. & Maria G. Dove, Ed.D., "Co-Teaching for English Learners: Collaborative Planning, Instruction, Assessment, and Reflection"

Dr. Li-Rong Lilly Cheng, "Speech and Language Issues among English Language Learners"

Dr. Annela Teemant, "The Six Standards for Effective Pedagogy"

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, Conference attendees chose among 46 different presentations each day, offered in five parallel time slots. Mini-networking sessions each day after lunch provided opportunities to meet and share ideas with others who have similar interests. Thirty-nine exhibitors displayed their wares and generously contributed raffle prizes for our daily raffle. And on Wednesday and Thursday, students from local Teacher Education Programs displayed posters of their work in the lower-level hallway.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

ANNELA TEEMANT, "CREATING A NEW GENERATION OF MULTILINGUAL SPECIALISTS"

Our keynote speaker on Wednesday was Dr. Annela Teemant, Associate Professor of Second Language Education at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. In her talk, Dr. Teemant argued that educators of English Learners must become advocates for radical change. The educational gaps we are concerned about have not improved: Latino, African-American, and native American students continue to lag behind their mainstream classmates.

[B]y accepting present conditions, we are perpetuating the status quo of persistent inequality.

Dr. Teemant urged us to identify inequities and find ways to interrupt them,

starting with what teachers control: instructional practice. During the past fifty years, we've learned a lot about the *what* of language teaching—about the process of language acquisition and development, about language standards and objectives, SIOP, academic language functions, assessment, and so forth. But when it comes to the *how* of teaching, we are still operating in the same old ways. Observation of literacy blocks in Indianapolis classrooms found that 86.2% of the time was spent in whole-class activities vs. 13.8% in small groups; 62% of the time was spent on tasks at the lowest level of Bloom's taxonomy (recalling facts and basic concepts) vs. 14% on the two highest levels (justifying a stand or decision and producing new or original work). We need less memorization of facts and more cognitive challenge, less individual work and more collaboration, fewer artificial tasks and more real-world application of the curriculum, less teacher talk and more dialog between teacher and students, less passive listening and more sustained language use by students. Professional development courses for teachers must exemplify the pedagogical practices we want to see in our classrooms. It is our responsibility to create change, Dr. Teemant told us. We must learn to be unapologetically political; by accepting present conditions, we are perpetuating the status quo of persistent inequality.



Annela Teemont, Wednesday's Keynote Speaker

CHERYL HAMILTON, DAN LAHARI, & REHEME WAKABUBA, "SUITCASE STORIES LIVE!"

Our Thursday keynote address was a presentation called "Suitcase Stories Live!," a traveling live-performance series that features foreign- and U.S.-born residents sharing immigrant and refugee stories.

The group originated through a collaboration between Massmouth storytellers and the International Institute of New England (IINE), a nonprofit organization that supports immigrants and refugees in Boston, Lowell, and Manchester, NH.

Cheryl Hamilton, the leader of the group, began the presentation by



Cheryl Hamilton, of Suitcase Stories Live!

telling the story of how she became involved in this endeavor, beginning 15 years ago when she was helping to resettle Somali refugees in Lewiston, ME. The Lewiston refugee population grew very rapidly, eventually adding over 5000 residents to the city. This led to some pushback, including an open letter from the mayor expressing his concern about the impact on local social services. In the end, however, Somali immigration to Lewiston has become a success story, leading to a drop in the crime rate, rising per capita income, and increased business activity. In 2015, Somali immigrant students led the [Lewiston High School boys' soccer team](#) to a state championship.



Dan Dahari, of Suitcase Stories Live!

Cheryl told us that Suitcase Stories originated as a response to the Trump administration's travel ban, when it became apparent that we need to raise the *profile* of immigrants and refugees and find ways for their stories to be heard. In their first four shows, the group raised \$86,000 for the International Institute of New England.

We heard next from Dan Lahari, an educator, writer, and chef who lives in the Greater Boston area. Dan was born in Mexico City and adopted from a Catholic orphanage by an American family. The adoption ran into difficulty when Mexican immigration officials refused to allow the child to be taken out of the country without written permission from his birth mother. The authorities were unmoved by his adoptive mother's plea that "He's my son; here are the adoption papers. *I'm* his mother." The family eventually found a woman to sign the required documents, which were then validated by a Mexican court and duly presented to the immigration authorities.

Throughout his childhood, Dan loved to hear the story of his mother holding him at the airport and exclaiming over



Rehema Rwakabuba, of Suitcase Stories Live!

and over again, “He’s my son. I’m his mother.” He was always able to get out of trouble by telling his parents, “You can’t be mad; you chose me.” As a person of color, he is frequently asked, “Where are you from?,” and he has no difficulty answering: “Where am I from? I’m from her.”

Finally, we heard from Rehema Rwakabuba, who immigrated with her family from Kampala, Uganda, to Lowell, MA, at the age of 14. Because she couldn’t speak much English, it was difficult, at first, to make friends. But then her ESL teacher encouraged her to join the track and field team, where friendship didn’t require such great language proficiency. Her team membership created some friction with her family; Rehema’s mother was worried when after-school practice made her late coming home from school. However, Rehema persisted, and when she joined the cross-country team and led the team to a state championship, her mother was prouder than anyone and attended the celebration in full African regalia. Rehema eventually won a four-year scholarship to Fitchburg State University, where she is now a junior, majoring in political science with a concentration in international affairs, economics, and peace studies.

MICHEL DEGRAFF, “WHAT CAN LINGUISTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION, AND VICE VERSA?”

In our Friday keynote address, Michel DeGraff, Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argued for the importance of home languages in children’s schooling. 40% of the world’s children are being taught in a language that is foreign to them, he told us, a situation that hinders creativity, leads to rote learning, and causes feelings of inferiority among otherwise bright children. “The use of ancestral and home languages in schools is integral to human rights in education,” he said.

As a child growing up in Haiti, Professor DeGraf was sent to elite schools where the use of his home language, Krèyol, was prohibited. Krèyol is “broken French,” he was told, not a real language; to be fully human you have to speak French. Only in the course of an internship in computational linguistics at Bell Labs did he come to realize that creole languages like Krèyol are real languages, with the



Michel DeGraff, Friday’s Keynote Speaker

same linguistic structure and subject to the same processes of historical change as other “real” languages such as French—which grew out of Latin by (what else?) the process of *creolization*!

Professor DeGraf is the founder and director of the MIT-Haiti Initiative, which is developing active-learning resources and methods for the use of Krèyol in teaching the STEM disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and math. He is also a founding member of the Akademi Krèyol Ayisyen (Haitian Creole Academy), a State institution dedicated to establishing conventions for Krèyol and promoting the use of the language in all sectors of Haitian society. He has collaborated with the Boston Public Schools in setting up a two-way immersion program in English and Krèyol at the Early Elementary School in Mattapan.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

The following award were presented at MATSOL's Celebration and Awards ceremony on Thursday night.

MATSOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Nicoletta Filimon, of International High School, Lawrence, was named MATSOL's Teacher of the Year. This award was established to recognize excellence in the education of English Language Learners, to include successful teaching, a long-term commitment to the education of ELLs, leadership at the school, district, and/ or state level, and a strong relationship with the community.

Nicoletta was introduced by her colleague, Christi Cartwright, who spoke of Nicoletta's devotion to her students and her generosity to her colleagues, including sharing her hotel room and meals allowance at TESOL! Nicoletta believes that no student is a lost cause; she says that working with ELs, especially SLIFE students,



Nicoletta Filimon, MATSOL's Teacher of the Year



Nicoletta is applauded by her MATSOL colleagues

has been the most rewarding experience of her life. She has been enormously successful with students; one of her former SLIFE students was recently given the opportunity to choose between Harvard and Columbia.

THE ANNE DOW AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE AND CREATIVITY

Eli Driscoll, Glenda Cohen, and Maria Lourdes Santo, of the Framingham Public Schools, were the joint recipients of this year's Anne Dow Award. This annual award was established in honor of Anne Dow, who was the director of ESL programs at Harvard for over 20 years. This year's award was designated, specifically, for work in empowering students.

Eli, Glenda, and Maria were introduced by Tom Griffith, of the Anne Dow Committee, who praised the work of the "Framingham Three" in attending not just to the academic needs of their students, but also to their status as immigrants. 25% of the Framingham student population consists of English Learners, some of whom are DACA recipients. Eli, Glenda, and Maria have taught their students how to be activists, by holding "Know Your Rights" sessions at the high school and setting up a club called the Student Immigration Movement (SIM), whose mission is to provide information on legal rights and responsibilities, encourage positive political activism, promote opportunities for college and career planning, and offer a supportive, safe space for immigrant students and their allies.



Tom Griffith, of the Anne Dow Award Committee, displays a photo of Anne Dow.



This year's Anne Dow Award recipients: Eli Driscoll, Glenda Cohen, & Maria Lourdes Santos, of the Framingham Public Schools

LINDA SCHULMAN INNOVATION GRANTS

The Linda Schulman Innovation Awards program supports projects that promote English language learning and embody the spirit of creativity, sensitivity, and community. Grants of \$500 to \$1000 are given to fund pedagogical projects that benefit English Language Learners by improving their language skills or



Linda Schulmann Innovation Award recipients

increasing their understanding of American culture. The winners of this year's grants, given out by the Linda Shulman Committee, were as follows:

Anna Burt, Brookside Elementary School, Milford: "Listening Lab for English Learners: Language Learning through Comprehensible Input and Structured Talk"

Christi Cartwright, Lawrence International High School, Lawrence: "Innovation for ELs"

Hannah Dingman, Stratton Elementary School, Arlington: "STEM Technology to Engage and Grow Language Skills in ELL Students"

Kristen Eschmann, Stoklosa Middle School, Lowell: "English is Everywhere"

Megan Gabellieri, Woodland Elementary School, Milford: "View-Master Virtual Reality for Building EL Schema"

Lindsey Mayer, Lawrence High School, Lawrence: "I Learn Lawrence: A Collection of Student Stories"

Maria Morong, Woodland and Field Schools, Weston: "Developing Academic Conversation and Writing Skills through a Mock Caldecott"

Leah Palmer, Martha's Vineyard Public Schools: "Teaching Social Justice through Complementary English Language Development and Sheltered Mathematics Content Curriculum Units"

Christina Rish, McAuliffe Charter School, Framingham: "Sophisticated Word Study"

Andrea Tobio & Maria Russo, Northeast Elementary School, Waltham: "Northeast ELL Writing with Technology Project"

Heidi Upton, Greenhalge Elementary School, Lowell: "Learning Language with Laptops"

CELEBRATION OF THE PASSAGE OF THE LOOK ACT

Our Thursday evening festivities ended with a celebration of the passage of the LOOK Act ("An Act Relative to Language Opportunity for our Kids"), which was signed by the Governor on November 22. The LOOK Act overturns Massachusetts' "English-Only" law (2002 Ballot Initiative Question 2), which mandated that, with limited exceptions, Massachusetts students should be taught only in English.

The new legislation encourages bilingualism by giving school districts greater flexibility in designing programs for English Learners and establishing a statewide Seal of Biliteracy to recognize students who attain a given level of proficiency in both English and another world language.

MATSOL's Executive Director Helen Solórzano told us that this year's success is the culmination of many long years of effort; attempts to overturn Question 2 have been made nearly every year since it was passed. In 2014, the Language



LOOK Act celebratory cake

Opportunity Coalition was formed, with representatives from MATSOL, MABE (Massachusetts Association for Bilingual Education), MaFLA (Massachusetts Foreign Language Association), MIRA (Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition), and others. The Coalition worked with legislators to revise and re-introduce the bill, which finally passed this year, with unanimous approval in the Senate and almost unanimous approval in the House. State education officials are now in the process of drafting regulations so that the new law can be implemented for the upcoming school year. MATSOL has been actively involved in submitting feedback on the formulation of the regulations and helping to put together a new EL guidance document and the guidance documents for EL Special Education and EL Parent Advisory Councils.

As part of our celebration, MATSOL awards were presented to Phyllis Hardy of MABE and Nicole Sherf of MaFLA for their tireless work on behalf of the Language Opportunity Coalition and for coordinating the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project. On June 4, the Coalition received the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network's annual Excellence in Advocacy award for their work in promoting the passage of this bill. (See the article on pg. 22 of this issue.) The Coalition



From left to right: Ann Feldman, Sara Hamerla, Megan Schantz, Laura Shall-Leckrone, and Zakia Sarwar show their support for the Seal of Biliteracy.



Phyllis Hardy (left), of MABE, and Nicole Sherf, of MaFLA, pictured here with MATSOL's Helen Solórzano, receive MATSOL's congratulations for their work on the LOOK Bill and the Seal of Biliteracy.



From left to right: Charles Glick, Charles Group Consulting; Arthur Cho, Velázquez Press; Nicole Sherf (center), MaFLA; Margalit Tepper, MIRA; Phyllis Hardy, MABE; and Helen Solórzano, MATSOL, celebrate passage of the LOOK Act and Seal of Biliteracy.

plans to stay together and continue to advocate for increased opportunities for learning English, developing native/heritage language, learning foreign languages, and ensuring that all learners have equal access to a high-quality education and professional opportunities.

We also expressed our appreciation to Charles Glick, of Charles Group Consulting, who was more than generous with his time and expertise during the long process of shepherding the LOOK bill through the Legislature. **C**

Many thanks to National Geographic/Cengage learning & Educational Solutions, Inc. and Velazquez Press, who covered the cost of our Celebration and Awards Ceremony. Velázquez Press has worked with Californians Together, the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE), and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) to promote adoption of the Seal of Bilingualism in 33 states so far.

MORE PHOTOS FROM THE CONFERENCE



Conference attendees plan their day's schedule.



Panelists (left to right) Fernanda Kray, DESE; Johanna Tigert, UMass Lowell; Heidi Perez, Haverhill Public Schools; Laurie Hartwick, Lawrence Public Schools; Michaela Colombo, UMass Lowell; and Christine Leider, Boston University, discuss "RETELL and SEI Endorsement: Where do we go from here?"



Conference arrivals check in at the registration desk.



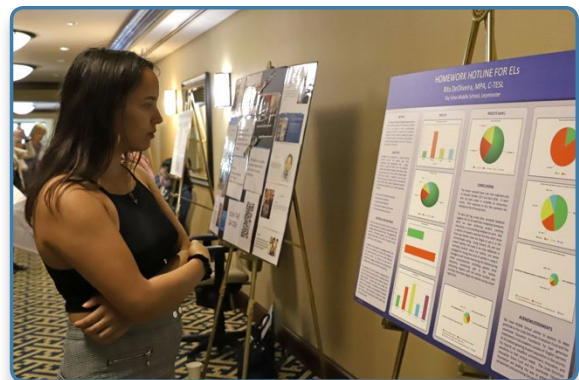
Robyn Dowling-Grant, Lexington Public Schools, makes a point.



A Conference presentation



The lunchtime audience attends to the keynote speaker and two overhead display terminals. Foreground (left to right): MATSOL Board members Jennifer Noorjarian, Mary Hughes, and Juanita Brunelle.



Luci Solórzano studies a poster display by Rita DeOliveira



MATSOL Board member Yuiko Shimazu speaks with a participant at her noontime networking session on cultural awareness.



Paul Aguiar, Director of Language Acquisition, DESE, delivers the State of the State Address.



Sheraton

FRAMINGHAM
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

Melody Feng, Boston Public Schools, describes strategies her district has used to engage EL parents.

Elections to MATSOL's Board of Directors

At our Annual Meeting on May 30 (the first day of the Conference), we expressed our gratitude to three departing MATSOL Board members: Jennifer Noorjanian, Allison Rainville, and Vula Roumis. Jennifer and Allison have served on the Board since 2015. Jennifer was an active member of our Outreach Committee, and Allison served as Chair of the Governance Committee, where she played an important role in developing our Strategic Plan and revising the Board's governing procedures. Vula has been a member of the Board since 2009; she served as MATSOL's president from 2016-2018.

FOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS WERE ELECTED AT THE MEETING:

Maria Campanario, Consultant/Retired Boston Public Schools. Maria brings a wide range of strengths to the Board, having spent over 20 years in the classroom and another 18 years in administrative positions. She has extensive experience in developing and planning for the implementation of programs, policies, and initiatives for English Learners. She will contribute a voice to the Board from the western side of Massachusetts, helping us to extend our influence all across the state.



Celeste Hoeg, Fall River Public Schools.

As an ESL teacher and English language acquisition coach within the Brockton Public Schools, Celeste was active in MATSOL and made professional presentations at both MATSOL and TESOL. More recently, she has been deeply involved with turnaround work at both the elementary and middle school level as a reading specialist, associate principal, and principal. She is presently a K-8 EL coordinator for the Fall River Public Schools and expects to bring a school and district perspective to the Board.




Priya Tahiliani, Boston Public Schools.

Priya has 17 years' experience in the Boston Public Schools as a classroom teacher, school-based administrator, and district administrator. As a child of immigrants, she was an English Learner herself. Her struggles and eventual success in navigating a strange language and culture became the source of her work ethic and inspired her to spend her life



...serving the needs of English Learners. She is excited about the passage of the LOOK Bill and looks forward to an era of positive change in Massachusetts.

Karen Terrell, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Karen's career has been devoted to creating access to mathematics for culturally and linguistically diverse students. She is committed to speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves. As an instructor in the SouthCoast region of Massachusetts, she would like to help bring more of a MATSOL presence to that area.

Our new MATSOL President, **Juanita Brunelle**, assumed office at our annual Board Retreat on June 23. Juanita holds a BA degree in Romance Languages from Clark University, an MA in French from the University of Rhode Island, and an MA in ESL from UMass Boston. She retired in 2012 from Massasoit Community College, where she was a Professor of Modern Languages, teaching ESL, French, and Spanish. She served as Coordinator of the Massasoit ESL Program for 15 years and initiated an ESL curriculum that consists of four college-level college-credit ESL courses plus a non-credit course called "Transitional ESL" that feeds into the credit courses. She directed a five-college consortium for two Title 6A federal grants and was president of the Massachusetts Council for International Education (MaCIE) from Spring 2006-Fall 2007. She has presented at MATSOL, TESOL, and MaCIE. She is currently teaching part-time at colleges in the Greater Boston area. 

Our new MATSOL President, Juanita Brunelle, assumed office at our annual Board Retreat on June 23.



An Update from MATSOL's Director of Professional Learning

Ann Feldman

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After a successful 2018 MATSOL conference—with three full days of professional learning opportunities plus a pre-conference institute—we look back with satisfaction on a year of serving our teachers and administrators in their quest to find better ways to educate our multilingual/multicultural population of students.

During the 2017-18 school year, we orchestrated the successful fulfillment of the SEI endorsement credential for eighteen cohorts of teachers and administrators in the state. We facilitated courses on academic discourse, the Next Generation ESL curriculum, and Massachusetts English language development standards, and offered classes for audiences of specialists and support staff, district administrators, early educators, coaches, vocational/technical professionals, and math and science teachers. We worked with large urban districts to offer teachers a strand of foundational courses in preparation for an ESL teaching license. And we designed and facilitated dozens of custom workshops and consultations based on the specific needs of district stakeholders.

An exciting year lies ahead of us. We will be offering a large number of regional, open-enrollment SEI endorsement courses, both in the spring and fall. In the fall, we will introduce a course on students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) that will present concrete promising practices that take student assets and background experiences into consideration. There will also be a course on teaching ELs with disabilities at the pre-K through grade 2 level, and an online course focusing on

In the fall, we will introduce a course on students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).

observational protocols in classrooms with ELs, using the SMART card tool. We are in the process of developing a course on TESOL's Six Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners. Finally, we are also planning a Fall Institute. Stay tuned for updates on our expanded professional development offerings! 📌

There will also be a course on teaching ELs with disabilities at the pre-K through grade 2 level.

For further information, please check MATSOL's course catalog at www.matsol.org/courses or send an email of inquiry to Ann Feldman at afeldman@matsol.org.

Language Opportunity Coalition Honored for Advocacy

The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN), the state's nonprofit trade association, has presented its annual Excellence in Advocacy award to the Language Opportunity Coalition for its work in advocating for the LOOK Act and Seal of Biliteracy. (See the related story on page 13 of this issue.) The award was presented at the Massachusetts State House on Monday, June 4, as part of MNN's annual celebration of Nonprofit Awareness Day: A Celebration of Nonprofit Excellence.

The Excellence Award in Advocacy recognizes a nonprofit organization whose work has resulted in significant progress on a public policy or awareness issue in the last two years. The Language Opportunity Coalition was founded in 2014 to bring together diverse organizations in Massachusetts to increase language learning opportunities for learning English, native, heritage, and world languages, and to ensure that all learners have equal access to a high-quality education and professional opportunities. The Coalition advocated for the expansion of bilingual program options for English learners through the LOOK Act, and opportunities for all students to pursue language study with the Seal of Biliteracy. It also coordinated the Seal of Biliteracy Pilot Project from 2014-2018, prior to approval by the state legislature.



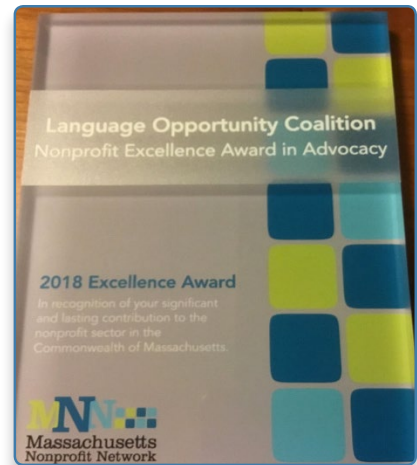
At the Awards Ceremony (left to right): Jim Klocke, Massachusetts Nonprofit Network; Helen Solórzano, MATSOL; Phyllis Hardy, MABE; Nicole Sherf, MaFLA; Rick Musiol, Citizens Bank

The LOOK Act with Seal of Biliteracy was signed into state law on November 22, 2017, representing a major victory for the Coalition and bilingual education advocates across Massachusetts.

“We are honored to receive this recognition on behalf of the educators and stakeholders who collaborated in the work of this Coalition,” said Helen Solórzano, Executive Director of MATSOL and Steering Committee Member of

the Language Opportunity Coalition. "We hope that this recognition will help spread the word about the Seal of Biliteracy, the value of multilingualism, and the opportunities for language learning in our public schools."

This year, MNN's independent panel of nonprofit and business leaders reviewed over 150 Excellence Award nominations that highlighted the incredible work of nonprofits across the state. The finalists range from large education providers to small arts organizations. These 27 nonprofits and individuals are improving communities across the Commonwealth, representing every region of Massachusetts from the Berkshires to the Cape. One finalist from each category (Advocacy, Collaboration, Innovation, Leadership, Small Nonprofit, and Young Professionals) was announced as a winner during the Nonprofit Awareness Day: A Celebration of Nonprofit Excellence event presented by Citizens Bank on Monday, June 4.



The Nonprofit Excellence Award in Advocacy is given to the Language Opportunity Coalition.

On hand to receive the award on behalf of the coalition were steering committee members Nicole Sherf (Massachusetts Foreign Language Association [MaFLA]), Phyllis Hardy (Massachusetts Association of Bilingual Educators [MABE]), and Helen Solórzano (MATSOL). 

Finalists for the 2018 Massachusetts Nonprofit Network Excellence Awards



A Report from MATSOL's English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC)

Ann Feldman

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The MATSOL English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC) is a leadership group open to MATSOL members who serve as PK-12 English Learner Education Program Directors or Coordinators in Massachusetts public schools. MELLC was formed in 2007, in response to a request from our ELL coordinators and directors for assistance and support with programming for their culturally and linguistically diverse students. Membership has now grown to nearly 100 professionals in the field. MELLC promotes best practices in the classroom and supports ELs and their families by validating our students' cultures and languages and advocating for an equitable and meaningful education for all students. MELLC meets four times a year, in Leominster, for full-day professional development and networking sessions.


MELLC members spent our March 16th meeting celebrating the recent passage of the LOOK Act and acknowledging the hard work that MATSOL and our partner organizations MABE, MIRA, MAFLA, and others have done over the course of the past few years to bring about this result. We spent some time exploring the proposed state regulations for the new law and compiling our individual comments. Helen Solórzano, one of MATSOL's lead advocates for the bill, conducted a brainstorming session focused on the English Learner Parent Advisory Councils that are mandated by this legislation.

Guest presentations at this meeting began with Hannah de Souza and Diana Garity, from the Somerville Public Schools, who shared their experiences in applying tools and collaborative practices from the [ESL curriculum development resource guide](#). They offered a recipe for developing content-aligned units incorporating linguistic considerations at the word, sentence, and discourse levels. Then Matthew X. Joseph, Director of Digital Learning at Milford Public Schools, guided us through an exploration of blended learning platforms and technological strategies. Among the resources he showed us were [Kahoot](#), [Today's Meet](#), [Edpuzzle](#), [Poll Everywhere](#), [Flip Grid](#), and [Popplet](#). In the afternoon, Christine Leider, of Boston University, spoke about the National

Professional Development grant's free [eWorkshops](#) which are available to districts meeting the criteria set up by the International Consortium for Multilingual Excellence in Education (ICMEE).

For our final MELLC meeting of the year, on May 18, 2018, Kathy Lobo, from Newton Public Schools, began by introducing our members to [TESOL's Six Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners](#). As a warm-up activity, she modeled a useful technique for ELs by showing us how to make tiered bookmarks for use in taking notes. We then heard from selected members of the Boston Public Schools parent engagement team (Vivian Tam, Josefina Peralta, and Phuongdai Nguyen) and translation/interpretation unit (Allen Dowling, Ivonne Borrero, and Andrea Jones Berasaluce). These presenters showed us how BPS is ensuring that all parents have a voice in their children's education and that they receive full translation and interpretation services in the nine major languages used by their district families. The parent engagement team has organized Immigrant and Know Your Rights workshops, information sessions about School Choice, Family Literacy programs, Technology Goes Home sessions, and Parent Led Committees (DELAC). Their [We Dream Together](#) website offers resources for supporting immigrant students and their families. The translation/interpretation team emphasized the importance of collaborating with the Special Education department and using technology with multiple options to support requests.

In the afternoon of our May meeting, we heard from Jody Klein (Newton Public Schools) and Rachel Kramer Theodorou (Brandeis University) who talked about co-teaching and collaboration between ESL and content teachers. They described several models of co-teaching that work in settings with ELs, focusing on the structures that need to be in place in order to ensure success. They warned that self-reflection and conversation are essential tools in avoiding conflicts among teachers. They referred us to Maria Dove & Andrea Honigsfeld's excellent book titled [Co-Teaching for English Learners: A Guide to Collaborative Planning, Instruction, Assessment and Reflection](#). Following this presentation, Tyler Ramey, Fall River Public Schools, gave a presentation entitled "Critical Thinking with English Learners in the Common Core Classroom." She recommended the [Critical Thinking Consortium](#) website and showed us some instructional techniques, including Sensograms, Launches, Ranking Ladders, and Dashboard Dials.

Next year's MELLC meetings will take place on the following Fridays: October 19, December 14, March 22, and May 17. For further information, please go to www.matsol.org/mellc. 

What's Happening in MATSOL's Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

MATSOL'S SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS) ARE MEMBER-LED GROUPS FORMED AROUND AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST

- The Community College ESL Faculty Network
- English Language Educators of the Cape & Islands
- Low Incidence Programs
- Private Language Schools/Intensive English Programs
- Students with Limited/Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE)
- Teacher Educators

SIG membership is open to all MATSOL members, at no charge. In addition to face-to-face and online meetings, most SIGs have e-lists to facilitate communication between members. For instructions about how to join a SIG or a SIG e-list, please go to our website www.matsol.org/member-groups.

HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MATSOL'S SIGS THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL FACULTY NETWORK

The Steering Committee of the Community College ESL Faculty Network has met regularly throughout Academic Year 2017-18.

We hosted a Community College Workshop on Friday, June 1, at MATSOL's Annual Conference, where we presented the results of our annual survey of ESL community college programs and services in Massachusetts. It is a priority of our Steering Committee to advocate for strong ESL programs in community colleges across Massachusetts. Our third annual Mini-Conference will be held on October 26, 2018, at Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, with Dr. Mya Poe as our Keynote Speaker. Please consider submitting a workshop proposal for this event. The call for proposals will be posted soon on the MATSOL website.

Following is a list of our Community College Steering Committee members, with their college affiliations and a listing of the community colleges for which they

serve as contact: **Darlene Furdock**: Middlesex, Northern Essex, North Shore; **Eileen Kelley**: Holyoke, Greenfield, Springfield Tech; **Bruce Riley**: Cape Cod, Bristol, Massasoit; **Madhu Sharma**: Mt. Wachusett, Berkshire; **Jennifer Nourse**: Mass Bay, Bunker Hill; **Anne Shull**: Quinsigamond, Roxbury. **Juanita Brunelle** serves as liaison to the MATSOL Board.

For information about the Community College ESL Faculty Network, please write Juanita Brunelle at jbrunelle@matsol.org.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATORS OF THE CAPE & ISLANDS (ELE-C&I)

ELE-C&I is a regional organization of PreK-12 ELL educators on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket which aims to provide ongoing support to educators in our area as they implement state and federal mandates for the education of ELs. Membership includes the following school districts: Barnstable, Bourne, Dennis-Yarmouth, Falmouth, Martha's Vineyard, Mashpee, Monomoy, Nantucket, Nauset Regional, Provincetown, and Sandwich.

The group is currently re-organizing and looking for a new leader. If you are from the Cape and Islands area and interested in helping to support this SIG, please contact Ann Feldman at afeldman@matsol.org.

LOW-INCIDENCE PROGRAMS (LI)

The goal of the Low Incidence SIG is to provide ongoing support to educators on best practices, state policies and procedures, current research, and upcoming events. We also gather and disseminate information, materials, and resources from MELLC meetings and DESE Low Incidence meetings.

Much of our time this year was given to the EL progress report project. Working in small groups, we reviewed multiple existing progress reports, decided on what to include, and developed several format designs for a new template. We plan to continue working on this project next year, by choosing a format and writing the English Language Development portion of the report. For more information about the LI SIG or to reach members of the planning committee, please contact Jennifer Fitzgerald at jfitzgerald@seemcollaborative.org.

PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS/INTENSIVE ENGLISH PROGRAMS (PLS/IEP)

On behalf of MATSOL's PLS/IEP Special Interest Group, I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to all who joined us at our Spring Workshop on May 3. Special thanks to Katja Davidoff from CELOP, who took time out of her schedule—and even rescheduled due to weather—to lead an enlightening interactive workshop entitled “Translanguaging and Role Plays.” This workshop explored the concept of translanguaging, ways to use translanguaging in the classroom,

and the differences between translanguaging and code-switching. Workshop participants shared their own stories of translanguaging and then practiced activities designed to show how translanguaging can be used in interactive activities in the classroom.

We are very excited that a number of our members representing private language schools were able to present at the MATSOL Conference, May 29-June 1. Keep up the great work!


Looking ahead, plans will be starting soon for another Fall Workshop as well as our annual Conference in November. For more information on the MATSOL PLS/ IEP Special Interest Group, please contact Joy MacFarland joymacfarland@gmail.com or Joshua Stone jstone@highpointenglish.com.

STUDENTS WITH LIMITED/INTERRUPTED FORMAL EDUCATION (SLIFE)

The SLIFE Special Interest Group (SIG) is intended for educators in PK-12 districts and adult education programs who serve students with limited or interrupted formal education due to war, civil unrest, migration, or other factors. The group is presently inactive because we do not have a group facilitator. However, we are re-activating the [SLIFE memberclicks E-LIST](#) while we look for a MATSOL member who would be willing to serve as facilitator. If you, or you and a colleague, have an interest in that position, please contact Ann Feldman at afeldman@matsol.org.

TEACHER EDUCATORS

The goal of the Teacher Educator SIG is to advocate for emergent bilingual learners and their teachers through ongoing research and effective practice. To this end, we work collaboratively on presentations and papers to inform the greater educational field about the strengths that emergent bilingual learners bring to the classrooms. We promote asset-focused language to discuss this diverse population of students, focusing on students' strengths (bilingualism and multilingualism), rather than only on their need to learn English. We bring teacher educators together to discuss effective instructional practices for preparing candidates to teach emergent bilingual learners and to disseminate practices that we have found to be effective.

During the academic year, we meet via Go-to-Meeting from 10:00-11:30 on the third Monday of each month. We also held a series of face-to-face meetings at the MATSOL Conference from May 29-June 1. For information about the Teacher Educator SIG, please contact Michaela Colombo at teacheredsig@matsol.org. 

Get Involved with MATSOL!

IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE GREATER PARTICIPATION BY OUR MEMBERSHIP, THE MATSOL BOARD HAS CREATED THE FOLLOWING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MATSOL MEMBERS:

MATSOL AMBASSADOR

MATSOL ambassadors help spread the word about MATSOL's mission and our values of professionalism, education quality, multilingualism/multiculturalism, collaboration, and diversity. You will join a small team of ambassadors with the mission to talk to teachers, support staff, and administrators who work with English Learners, and encourage all Massachusetts educators (not just ESL teachers) to take advantage of MATSOL's resources and support.

Who Should Apply: An educator or administrator who is willing to share their excitement about MATSOL with others, active on at least one social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or Instagram) and willing to post about our organization from your account, able to spend a couple of hours per month promoting our resources and offerings, and comfortable allowing MATSOL to use your photo or bio for promotional purposes.

Duties: Speak to colleagues one-on-one about the issues facing English learners and point them to MATSOL resources addressing those concerns; invite colleagues to enroll in MATSOL courses within their academic areas or areas of interest; introduce department heads, principals, and district administrators to the training MATSOL can offer their schools, districts, or regions; write a blog post prior to an upcoming event or conference about why you are attending and what you hope to get out of the experience; attend virtual meetings to network with other ambassadors and share ideas on how to disseminate information.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The MATSOL Publications Committee is responsible for editing and publishing two issues of MATSOL Currents each year (Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter).

Duties: Identify possible topics to pursue in future issues; solicit articles, reports, and reviews for publication in Currents; review submissions to determine whether they are suitable for publication; suggest editorial feedback to authors about the content of their submissions; edit selected articles for inclusion in the journal; proofread page proofs prepared by our graphic designer.

ISSUE BRIEF GUEST WRITER

Write a two-page issue brief on a topic related to English Learners for publication by MATSOL in print and online formats.

Duties: Write an issue brief, following the MATSOL format (to be provided), including descriptive information and list of links/resources; revise in response to editorial feedback; supply photos, if applicable.

Requirements: Expertise in the topic area of the issue brief; strong writing skills.

WEBINAR PRESENTER

Create and deliver a webinar on an area of interest to our members via GoToWebinar, with assistance from MATSOL staff or volunteers with the technical aspects of running the program.

Duties: Design and plan a 45-60 minute webinar; create PowerPoint slides and an outline of talking points; create handouts or other materials, if needed, to share with attendees; write a description to use in publicity; practice delivery with MATSOL staff or a volunteer; deliver the webinar. If appropriate, also consider writing an issue brief on the same topic.

Requirements: Expertise in the topic area of the webinar; comfort with delivering an online webinar, or the willingness to learn.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP LEADER

Work with colleagues to plan meetings and other activities for a MATSOL Special Interest Group (SIG).

Go to www.matsol.org/get-involved-with-matsol for additional information and application forms.

Submit to MATSOL Publications

MATSOL E-BULLETIN

The MATSOL E-Bulletin is published monthly. It includes short (one-paragraph) notices relevant to ELL/ESOL education in Massachusetts. Submission deadline: the 25th of each month for publication in the first week of the next month. For more details, see www.matsol.org/matsol-e-bulletins.

MATSOL CURRENTS

There's a lot going on in the world of TESOL and ELL education, and we'd like all of it to be reflected in *Currents*! We want reviews of books and materials, reports on meetings and events, and articles on everything of interest to MATSOL members: adult education, PreK-12 education, bilingual and dual-language programs, community outreach, ESL in higher education, educator-preparation programs, professional-development initiatives, Intensive English Institutes, private language schools, teaching ideas, profiles of and interviews with significant figures, and discussion of issues that our members should be aware of. We'd also love to publish stories from students—about their adjustment to life in New England and their experiences learning English in our English-language programs and elsewhere.

We welcome articles with scholarly content as well as those that share interesting experiences or give practical advice. If you have something to share, don't hesitate to send it to us at currents@matsol.org. We will work with you to get your article or report into good shape for publication. For more details and a copy of our submission guidelines, see www.matsol.org/matsol-currents or write to the editor, Mary Clark, at mclark@matsol.org.

TESOL's 52nd Annual Convention in Chicago: The Inside Scoop

Kathy Lobo

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The motto on the program book for TESOL's 2018 conferences states that "The world comes together at TESOL once again."

If you have ever been to a TESOL convention, you will know that this is really true! The TESOL community spans 161 countries and includes over 12,000 members from all over the world.

Thousands of TESOL professionals attend the conference every year, from elementary teachers to adult educators and from district supervisors to ministers of education. Present and future practitioners, administrators, researchers, and advocacy leaders come together to network and engage in conversations about language education and policy that expand our knowledge and professional expertise.




Three MATSOL presidents at TESOL (left to right): Past president Kathy Lobo, outgoing president Vula Roumis, and incoming president Juanita Brunelle.

This year, I had the honor of serving as the Chair of the Conference Professional Council, which means I was responsible for the planning of TESOL's annual convention on March 27-30 in Chicago. With the support of the TESOL central staff, we began planning almost two years before the actual convention. In fact, preparations for TESOL Atlanta (March 12-15, 2019) and TESOL Denver (March 31-April 2, 2020) are already actively underway.

The goals of the convention are to provide a forum for networking, dialoguing, and collaboration and for re-envisioning the work we do in teaching, research, training, and administration. This year's convention offered four keynote speakers, 30 pre-convention institutes, five site visits, forums for students pursuing doctoral research and Master's degrees, affiliate workshops and assemblies, open meetings for interest sections, "teas" with distinguished TESOLers, poster

sessions, and more than 900 educational sessions, including 19 invited speakers. There was also a preK-12 Day with 24 sessions spanning six strands.

Outside the convention, the city of Chicago offered a wide range of opportunities, including a 360-degree view of Chicago and four neighboring states from what the locals call Sear's Tower (a.k.a. the Willis Tower Sky Deck). Chicago is known for its unique architecture and award-winning restaurants. Conference-goers enjoyed window shopping along the Magnificent Mile, sight-seeing at Navy Pier, observing marine animals at the Shedd Aquarium, and viewing special exhibits at the Field Museum or Art Institute of Chicago.

This year was particularly special for me because, in addition to being the Conference Chair, I began a three-year term as one of eleven members of the TESOL Board of Directors. Being professionally active is so enriching! I hope that you will take advantage of everything that TESOL and our local TESOL affiliate (MATSOL) have to offer. 



Massachusetts attendees at TESOL (left to right):
Rachel Theodoro, Kathy Lobo, Jody Klein



TESOL's Annual meeting of the Executive Director and Board of Directors

TESOL's 52nd Annual Convention in Chicago

An Update on Adult Basic Education in Massachusetts: Preparing to Take a Major Step Forward

Jeff McLynch

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After several years of taking one small step forward only to take a step or two back, Massachusetts is poised to take a major stride toward ensuring adult educators and students have the resources they need. On July 26 of this year, Governor Baker signed the Fiscal Year 2019 state budget, which includes \$33.5 million for adult education, a \$3.72 million increase over last year. This constitutes an increase of more than 11 percent in the ABE budget line—the single largest one-year gain in funding since at least FY 2007. Funding of \$33.5 million—while less than the amount necessary to restore the purchasing power that ABE has lost over the past 18 years—will nevertheless allow programs to begin to address longstanding waitlists, continue to strengthen curricula, and improve working conditions for our skilled and dedicated administrators, instructors, and counselors.

As with any journey, the path to progress on ABE funding did not proceed in a straight line. The Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE) provided direction early in the budget process, hosting nearly 50 legislative offices for a briefing in January to promote a greater understanding of the importance of Adult Basic Education and the need to invest in the Commonwealth's shared future. Yet Governor Baker, in setting forth his version of the FY19 budget, actually proposed—for the third straight year—a reduction in state support for ABE. Fortunately, in April, the House of Representatives, led by Ways & Means Chairman Jeffrey Sanchez and Representative Bob Koczera, ignored the Governor's recommendations and approved an appropriation

Massachusetts is poised to take a major stride toward ensuring adult educators and students have the resources they need.

of \$32.73 million. The Senate, with Senate President Karen Spilka and Senator Jamie Eldridge playing key roles, displayed similar vision in May by supporting funding of \$33.35 million for ABE. In the reconciliation process, the two chambers settled on the \$33.35 million figure, and Governor Baker added his signature on July 26.

Of course, even as the annual budget process draws to a close, a number of policies that would affect adult students and the educators who serve them are still under consideration. For instance, both the Baker and the Trump administrations may soon attempt to institute regulatory changes that would have adverse consequences for many vulnerable families in Massachusetts. Here at home, the Department of Early Education and Care may impose new limits on the period of time for which adult students are eligible for childcare subsidies, and, on the federal side, many expect that the Department of Homeland Security will seek to alter the interpretation of existing law in such a way as to deter immigrant families from participating in federal health, nutrition, and other programs.

While Adult Education advocates should be ready to celebrate the policy progress that they've made in recent months, they should also understand the need to keep fighting—not only to secure additional victories, but also to stand against changes in the law that would make it even more difficult for adult students to build better lives for themselves and their families. **C**

[B]oth the Baker and the Trump administrations may soon attempt to institute regulatory changes that would have adverse consequences for many vulnerable families in Massachusetts.



Michele Diecuch, Christine Tibor, and Tye Graham speak at MCAE's briefing on adult education at the State House in January.

News from NNETESOL

Stephanie N. Marcotte

NNETESOL PRESIDENT

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NNETESOL is a tri-state TESOL affiliate representing Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. NNETESOL Board members come from these three states, as well as Massachusetts.

The Board is currently working on four projects: (1) updating the NNETESOL logo and developing our virtual presence, (2) developing community across the tri-state area, (3) drawing on local talent for our annual Conference, and (4) investigating the history of our affiliate.



BRANDING & ONLINE PRESENCE

With an organization spread across three states, NNETESOL depends heavily on our online presence via website, blog, and social media. While the choice of a logo might seem elementary, logos are a central element of outreach and branding. Having a new logo has allowed NNETESOL to update our outreach materials and spice up our online presence. We are in the process of assessing our website and social media sites by means of a GoogleSurvey that was recently sent out to the NNETESOL community

With an organization spread across three states, NNETESOL depends heavily on our online presence.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT


During the past year, the NNETESOL Board has added new representatives for all three states, along with two new webmasters. With the addition of new Board members, there has been an increased focus on community development.

We are currently surveying our Board members in order to pool their experiences, streamline Conference planning, and make plans for the future.

CONFERENCE PLANNING

As NNETESOL is a tri-state organization, our Conference moves from state to state each year. We are currently planning for the 2018 Fall Conference to be held on Saturday, November 3, at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH. We hope to draw local talent from within the tri-state organization. There are many talented TESOL professionals in our area, and we want to highlight their experiences, research, and contributions to the field. The keynote speaker for our 2018 Conference will be Raichle Farrelly, an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at St. Michael's College in Vermont.

INVESTIGATING NNETESOL HISTORY

The NNETESOL Board has created a committee to gather information about the history of our affiliate. To move wisely into the future, we need to understand our past. The results of this research are being posted to our website, along with a call for member to share what they know. 

To learn more about NNETESOL, please visit our website, www.nnetesol.org.

**We are currently
planning for the 2018
Fall Conference at
the University of New
Hampshire in Durham.**

Teaching Between Languages: Five Principles for the Multilingual Classroom

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I teach middle school language arts in an urban district. I have 31 students, including four official ELLs and a few more who don't receive services. They're from all over: Puerto Rico, Thailand, Congo, Eritrea, and Nepal. But I grew up speaking English, only occasionally overhearing Polish phrases from my grandmother. So I have no choice when it comes to the language of my classroom. **Wendy Carr,** middle school ELA teacher

People living in the United States today speak more than 1300 languages (U.S. Census, 2016), meaning that classrooms like Wendy Carr's are becoming more and more typical. In the last decade, some Massachusetts districts have become home to students representing as many as 140 different language groups (Jimenez, 2004). Some scholars call this *superdiversity* (Vertovec, 2007).

In many schools, this level of diversity is viewed as a problem, since it is unlikely that teachers will be able to speak the home languages of their students. However, in this article we will argue that superdiverse classrooms are spaces of great possibility and will suggest some ways that teachers—whether monolingual or multilingual—can organize their classrooms to teach *between* languages. In doing so, teachers can create an environment in which they are

learning with and from their students, and drawing on all the different meaning-making resources present in the classroom.

TEACHING IN SUPERDIVERSE CLASSROOMS

In the context of recent English Only policies, many teachers have felt restricted to using limited language supports like bilingual dictionaries and Google translate. But as 10-year-old Wilmer Quinones-Melo puts it, "It's hard to communicate with teachers [when] the only thing they say is, 'Grab a dictionary'" (Johnston, 2018). English-dominant approaches like these can restrict students' ability to express and develop their content knowledge and their ability to be seen as competent learners. When multilingual students are limited to using only the teacher's language, many of them struggle with word choice, use of expressions, and even ideas (Fu, 2009).

[T]eachers must find ways to engage students' multiple language varieties.

Students learn best when they can "use and grow." Their language repertoires expand when they have regular opportunities to use their full collection of meaning-making resources creatively, flexibly, critically, and intentionally in meaningful activities. This means that teachers must find ways to engage students' multiple language varieties as the class works together to interpret and produce writing, speech, visual, and tactile representations. In this article, we offer five principles for teaching "between languages" and supporting students' development as multilingual speakers, writers, and thinkers.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING BETWEEN LANGUAGES

First, understand that students' varieties of language are an important part of who they are. Try to learn about your students' prior knowledge and previous literacy experiences. This will give you new insights into your students' available resources and may provide opportunities for explicit language instruction in which you and your students notice and discuss similarities and differences in the ways meaning is made in various cultural and linguistic contexts (Gibbons, 2006). When students' cultural and linguistic

The first step is to let go of the idea that you need to understand everything your students are saying or writing.

knowledge is the starting point for instruction and this knowledge is both welcome and celebrated, students feel connected and can make more sense of their language learning experience (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017).

[M]ake writing an everyday part of your teaching.

Second, create a classroom culture in which your students are free to choose their language(s) of expression. The first step is to let go of the idea that you need to understand everything your students are saying or writing. This may be uncomfortable for teachers who are concerned about maintaining control; however, instead of seeing students' use of multiple languages as a loss of control, you can more productively see it as the creation of new knowledge. Knowledge production is social, and language is a social tool. Restricting your students' language to only that which you understand limits their potential to create new knowledge. Teaching between languages includes supporting your students' knowledge creation by normalizing multilingualism and destabilizing English supremacy. Your classroom environment, teaching practices, and assignments should reflect the diverse reality of life in the United States.

Third, make writing an everyday part of your teaching. Having a daily expectation around writing is beneficial for both content learning and language development, especially if much of the writing flows out of the curriculum. However, in accordance with the principles above, we recommend that teachers develop a more dynamic view of what counts as acceptable "writing." Generally, people make meaning by moving between and across different modes of communication (Gebhard, 2005). We suggest a view of writing that includes the use of graphics, images, and languages other than English, as well as both everyday and discipline-specific language. As you begin a daily writing practice and encourage students to use their full meaning-making repertoires, you may notice that some students who previously seemed unengaged begin communicating more creatively about themselves or the topic you are studying.

Fourth, embrace the idea that students are not writing only for you. Much writing students do is for evaluation (e.g., worksheets, homework, essays), but when we broaden the purpose to include thinking and expression, and the audience to include other students, community members, and *themselves*, writing can help

students build new knowledge, new language, and new identities.

Fifth and finally, collaborate! Connect with your students' other teachers, beginning with quick check-ins to share observations about specific students. When you see changes happening, even if they are not dramatic, share your observations with colleagues and brainstorm ways you can work together to continue to support particular students.

LANGUAGE, LEARNING, AND IDENTITY

Human beings think through language, and our language shapes our understanding of the world. To support our students as they develop new knowledge, we have to begin with their current understandings, which for many students is built up in a language different from that of the teacher. When we invite students' many languages into the classroom, we can build on their prior knowledge and create new avenues for learning about each other and our world.

[W]e encourage teachers to view linguistic diversity in the classroom as an opportunity rather than a problem.

Following Norton and Toohey (2011), we believe that every student has multiple identities and the potential to develop many more. When we open up our classrooms to other languages and cultures, we open up our students' potential to develop *all* their many identities.

A WORTHY INVESTMENT

In sum, we encourage teachers to view linguistic diversity in the classroom as an opportunity rather than a problem and to open-mindedly engage in the practice of teaching *between* languages. It may seem time-consuming to build a multilingual classroom culture, and you may worry that the teaching practices we recommend may take away from your ability to prepare students for high-stakes assessments. However, by tapping into your students' full linguistic repertoires and incorporating productive meaning-making activities into each day, you will create many more opportunities for assessing and nurturing their knowledge and skills. Over time, your students will begin to engage more and write more in shorter periods of time (Fu, 2009), providing rich evidence of both language development and content learning. **C**

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Brenda Muzeta is a teacher educator at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She focuses on language, culture, identity, and social justice and explores the experiences of African immigrant students in U.S. public high schools.

Kathryn Accurso is an applied linguist and former ELL instructor. She is currently a PhD candidate at UMass Amherst studying critical language-focused professional development for K-12 teachers.

Marsha Liaw is an experienced bilingual teacher, curriculum specialist, and administrator from Taiwan. She is currently a PhD candidate at UMass Amherst, where she studies the development of critical literacies among bilingual students.

Teaching Cultural Humility in an Online Intercultural Communication Program

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In Summer 2017, we facilitated an online language and culture program for students

from Shanghai University (Shanghai, China), Johnson & Wales University (Providence, Rhode Island), and Sejong University (Seoul, South Korea). We ourselves were stationed in Shanghai, where one of us (Dr. Spitzman) was teaching writing and public speaking classes at Shanghai University. We used email and Blackboard to communicate with the Johnson & Wales students and with the students from Sejong University, who were visiting at Johnson & Wales through an exchange partnership. The Johnson & Wales and Sejong University students had opportunities to interact with one another face-to-face, through a facilitated intercultural program at the University's BRIDGE Center.¹ The Shanghai University students had opportunities to interact with Dr. Spitzman during their class time with her. Below we describe the program curriculum and the exploratory research that we are conducting on the program.

We set up four weekly online modules, as follows: (1) a period of critical self-reflection, (2) an in-depth analysis of identity, (3) an analysis of power imbalances, and (4) a discussion about ways to speak up in the face of injustice. Underlying the program curriculum is the theory of critical intercultural communication (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010), which underscores the need to acknowledge the role of power in intercultural interactions. Historically, intercultural communication theories have assumed that there is a level playing field in interactions, but we now realize that there are often a variety

¹ BRIDGE stands for Building Relationships, Intercultural Dialogue and Global Engagement. Part of JWU Global, it provides transformative intercultural programming for the university's diverse student, faculty, and staff community.

of power dynamics that intervene in communication and it is essential to think about power in order to understand what is actually taking place in intercultural interactions (Halualani & Nakayama, 2010).

Spitzman (2014) showed that power-laden issues like race, socioeconomic status and gender do tend to impact intercultural communication between international and domestic students in higher education.


[I]t is essential to think about power in order to understand what is actually taking place in intercultural interactions.

In order to guide students to this critical analysis, we provided structured questions about self-exploration, examples of privilege and disempowerment in their schools, and actions they can take to foster equity going forward. We led the students through each of the independent learning activities and, as faculty facilitators, we participated actively by first modeling our own answers and analysis. We also created YouTube videos of ourselves explaining each module so that the students could receive the instructions in two different modalities.

We began with an analysis of culture, based on an identity-wheel activity that asks students to label components of their identities, such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth (adapted from the AAUW Diversity and Inclusion Kit). We then asked the students to analyze dominant and subordinate identities in their home countries. For example, some Chinese students shared stories of peers being treated unfairly because of one of their subordinate identities, such as body size (being perceived by peers as overweight) or sexual orientation (being homosexual). In the face-to-face writing and public speaking classes at Shanghai University, the students gave extemporaneous presentations involving these examples. They then shared their stories with their online partners and used question and sentence frames that we had provided in order to ask critical follow-up questions about one another's stories.

With IRB approval from Bridgewater State University, we administered a cultural humility survey (adapted from Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013) at the beginning and end of the course, and we also collected samples of student work to examine for increasing openness and empathy in their interactions with one another. Cultural humility is a process in which people first have to understand their own identities and biases before they can draw conclusions about others (Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013).

We are currently analyzing the data and are curious to see what it shows about the students' development of cultural humility during the program. One anecdotal observation is that many students had not previously explored their own societies through the lens of power and privilege, but they seemed open to the process and made some empathetic observations about peers. For example, one student shared how beauty ideals in China felt oppressive at times, especially for people who fall outside those standards. When this student shared this thought with our groups in Shanghai and Providence, students from all three universities were able to empathize with this feeling. Formal data analysis will inform our future program modifications.

We would be happy to share our curriculum and materials with interested readers. 

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Bilingualism Through the Public Eye

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As an educator who works with teacher candidates

preparing to work with emergent bilinguals, I try to give students a strong foundation in pedagogy and content (Shulman, 1983) and equip them with up-to-date research-based instructional and assessment skills (Valdes, Kibler, & Walqui, 2013). But prospective teachers also need to learn how events in the outside world impact our schools—how societal perspectives and national and local policy affect our students' experiences in ESL, SEI, and bilingual education classrooms. In this paper, I will share an assignment that I developed to encourage students to consider how national discourse can filter into their own instructional decisions and those of their peers.

Bilingualism Through the Public Eye (BPE) is a student-centered weekly assignment that allows teacher candidates to engage in dialogue on sociopolitical issues related to bilingualism. The assignment is described in the syllabus as follows:

During each class session, one or two student(s) will be responsible to briefly present a recent piece of media that portrays bilingualism in the public eye. Examples might include mainstream news articles, YouTube clips, blog posts, or institutional briefs that discuss a recent public, social, or educational policy related to bilingualism; op-ed pieces on the dual-language movement or immigration policy; or other instances in which bilingualism is discussed or represented to the general public. Policies, movements, and trends do not need to be limited to the United States or K-12 setting. The purpose of this activity is to develop an active awareness of global perspectives and events related to bilingual children and to lead a small discussion where you and your peers engage in a discussion of your particular topic. When it is your turn to lead, you must post a link to your article and two discussion questions to Twitter at least three days before class.

In response to this assignment, one or two teacher candidates in each class session lead the class in a 10-12 minute discussion about the BPE material they have posted. While it can be challenging to adhere to such a short time limit, this discipline helps my students learn to streamline their thinking.



Image 1. News Clip BPE Example


Since both the content and medium of BPE is open, BPEs range from news articles, blog posts, and magazine articles to audio/visual media, including TedTalks, podcast episodes, and news clips from YouTube. An example from one of my Fall 2017 courses centered around a YouTube news clip (Image 1) from an incident that occurred in a New Jersey high school, where a teacher told students “They’re not fighting for your right to speak Spanish, they’re fighting for your right to speak American.” The student who led this discussion brought the following discussion questions: (1) *How does the phrase “speak American” differ from the phrase “speak English?” Is there an underlying message that the teacher was trying to deliver when she opted for the former?* and (2) *Often, in an educational setting, students feel ashamed or isolated for being bilingual because it sets them apart from their peers. Later on in their lives, many will find the idea of bilingualism to be more desirable/beneficial. Why do you think this is? How much of an impact do you think the teacher in the video had on the students?*

This BPE led to a discussion of the connotations of “Americanization,” the fact that English is not an official language of the United States, and ways teachers can welcome students’ home language(s) into the classroom.

“They’re not fighting for your right to speak Spanish, they’re fighting for your right to speak American.”

My goals for the assignment are for students to become more aware of how bilingualism and related issues such as immigration are portrayed in the media and how media portrayal influences the general public’s understanding of bilingualism and, by extension, education policy and programming. I have also found that the way students craft their questions can serve as an informal assessment of how they are currently thinking about issues of racism, linguistic,

and social justice, thus helping to guide my own instruction and discussion. Finally, I have found that the BPE can serve as an organic link to content and pedagogy. This particular BPE was shared on the same day that we introduced translanguaging pedagogy (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016), so we were able to connect the conversation about students' home language(s) with our discussion of bilingual instructional practices.

I have implemented this assignment across all my courses, including research courses, ESL methods courses, and the SEI Endorsement course. It is my hope that fellow teacher educators who are looking to provide more space for unpacking dispositions and perspectives can adopt this assignment in their own courses. 

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Boston University School of Education student Claudia Hui for agreeing to share her Bilingualism through the Public Eye media and questions. Hui completed BI535: *Literacy Development for English Learners: Instruction and Assessment* in Fall, 2017.

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Teaching into a Soundproof Booth

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Imagine that you need to teach a new concept to your students.

Your message is vital to their understanding of the content, but your students are in a soundproof booth. They can't hear what you are saying. How will you communicate the concept that you want to teach them?



This is a powerful metaphor that has driven my instruction and my instructional coaching over the past several years. It was inspired not by intense study of pedagogy nor by years of careful research during my master's program in ESL, but by interaction with my teenage daughter who, being a teenager, often screams frantically at me across the house and down two floors, "Mom!"—followed by gibberish that I can't hear. She moves a little closer, repeating her cry. I, also, move closer, shouting, "What?!" We usually end up with her at the top of the stairwell and me near its bottom. But since I still can't fully hear her, even from there, she motions to her hair and scrunches her hands along her scalp to simulate hair washing. When I shout, "What?" again, she holds an imaginary shampoo bottle and shakes it out. "Oh! I'll add shampoo to the grocery list. Thanks." She rolls her eyes and huffs away.

Funny how such a mundane family interaction could spark a new way of working with teachers in my day job as an ESL instructional coach. Enlightened by this experience, I began asking mainstream teachers, "What if, when you spoke to your students, it was as if they were in a soundproof booth? What *other* ways could you get your message across?"

"Well, I'd turn on the Smart Board and bring up some pictures."

"I'd use physical gestures to clarify what I mean!"

"I'd create a poster to illustrate commonly used terms with matching pictures."

"I'd use charts and organized lists to differentiate non-examples and examples."

“A-ha!” The light-bulb moment! It’s the coveted moment that instructional coaches and teachers hold dear.

Secondary teachers are usually content experts. They have vast knowledge to share with their students, which flows out of their mouths, into the air, and, sometimes, onto reams of fresh notebook paper. But do our students understand the information we are trying to impart? Some of them will grasp the information the first time it is presented, but many students, particularly our EL students, cannot hear what we are saying. It’s as if they were in a soundproof booth. They need to see, feel, experience, and experiment with new ideas before they can fully understand. Techniques that feel unnatural and a little over the top to us, as fluent speakers of English, may be necessary to communicate new concepts.

This message seems to be having an impact on my teaching staff. For example, I worked recently with a middle school social studies teacher, “Ms. T,” who was teaching a unit on ancient civilizations and struggling

[D]o our students understand the information we are trying to impart?

to communicate the concept of sundials. In the initial lesson I observed, Ms. T showed a PowerPoint presentation with pictures of sundials and explained at length how they were used by ancient people in Egypt and Rome. The students were somewhat engaged with the pictures, but seemed puzzled by the term “sundial” itself and how on earth sundials could be used to tell time.


After our coaching session, I observed Ms. T’s next lesson. This time, to communicate the concept of “sundial,” she led the students in creating their own sundials with paper plates and golf pencils. As she created a model, she labeled each part of the process with the correct word. Students followed her, step by step, experimenting with the shadows cast on their own plates as they worked. Throughout the activity, she checked for student comprehension with a quick “thumbs up” or “thumbs down.” As I circulated around the room and asked the students what they were doing, nearly all of them were able to use the term “sundial” and explain how a sundial worked. After the lesson, the teacher acknowledged that she had been underestimating the power of physical modeling.

In a sheltered high-school algebra classroom, Mr. W led his students through a

unit on solving multi-step equations. During my first observation, I could sense his frustration. “Guys, it’s like a BALANCE! Both sides have to have the same VALUE!” A few of the students seemed to grasp the point he was making, but many others looked confused. After the lesson, I met with Mr. W, who was clearly frustrated. “Balance is a *cognate*! This should be easy!” he said.

When Mr. W invited me to a class a few days later, I was pleasantly surprised to see the words “balance” and “value” clearly displayed on the wall. Not only that, but several pan balances with weights of varying sizes were visible in the classroom, with groups of students surrounding them. I asked a student what the task was. “We are solving equations,” they told me. As I observed the student groups, I heard students arguing, “No, this equation is not balanced. We need to subtract from this side,” and in another group, “They still don’t have the same value.”

In our post-observation meeting, Mr. W told me that he had never thought about using realia in math class. He admitted with some chagrin that he assumed math was a universal language. As I continued the coaching cycle with him, the students became more comfortable asking him for non-verbal clarification. He reported that his students scored higher on his exams and that he was trying to integrate non-verbal strategies into all his lesson plans.

As we plan new units and lessons, we need to ask ourselves, “What if my students couldn’t hear my words? How else could I get this message across?” We need to find ways to communicate even with students who are sitting in a soundproof booth. 

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Heather Bobb has worked with EL students and teachers in Massachusetts for the last decade. Much of her work was in the Lynn Public Schools, where, after teaching in a Sheltered English Immersion cluster, she became an ESL Instructional Coach for the district. She currently works as an ELL teacher at Everett High School. She lives in Lynn with her husband, three teenagers, their cat, Hamlet, and their rabbit, Claudius.

The State of Teacher Preparedness to Teach Emergent Bilingual Learners: Perspectives of 45 English Language Education Directors

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After five years of Rethinking Equity and Teaching English Language Learners (RETELL),

how well prepared are Massachusetts educators and school districts to teach emergent bilingual learners? To get an answer to this question, we administered a survey to 45 English Language Education (ELE) directors at the November 2017 meeting of the Massachusetts English Learner Leadership Council (MELLC).

RETELL PD

Since 2014, teacher candidates applying for initial licensure have been required to complete a Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) endorsement course approved by MA DESE, and since 2016 all core content teachers and the administrators who supervise them have been required to complete the relevant RETELL course. The RETELL PD (Professional Development) program for in-service teachers consists of an initial 45-hour course that engages participants in research-informed sheltered English instruction (SEI) strategies for teaching emergent bilingual learners. Topics include oral language development, vocabulary, reading, and writing. RETELL PD is also required for administrators, consisting of a 15-hour overview of the strategies that teachers of emergent

bilingual learners should be implementing in their classrooms.

The structure of the RETELL course conforms, in many ways, to the criteria that scholars believe is likely to result in changes in teaching practice: It is ongoing—45 hours across 15 weeks (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), context-embedded—as teachers develop, implement and reflect on lessons (Panuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi & Gallagher, 2007), and often provided to cohorts of teachers from the same district, resulting in collective participation (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001).

OUR SURVEY

To understand the state of teacher preparedness five years after the implementation of RETELL PD and one academic year after the 2016 mandate, we developed a survey to measure ELE directors' perception of the preparedness of their teachers to meet the needs of emergent bilingual learners, including students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE), students with English proficiency levels at WIDA Level 2 ("Emerging") or higher, and students with disabilities.

A high number of participants indicated the RETELL training was regarded merely as a “box to be checked.”

Our survey began with questions about demographics (total number of students, number of emergent bilingual learners, number of SLIFE, and number of newcomers), which were recoded as scale variables (<10%=1, 11-20%=2, and so on). The remainder of the survey contained 19 Likert-scale statements regarding RETELL completion rates and teacher preparedness in the directors' districts. Prompts to gauge participants' perceptions of the quality of the RETELL course and opportunities for ongoing professional development were included at the end.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Only 38 directors responded to a question about the total number of students in their district, suggesting that the question may not have been clear. Given the small student population numbers (less than 200) given for some districts, it also appears that some directors included only the schools that were under their immediate direction. Of those who responded, 34.2% reported total student populations under 1000, 15.8% reported 1001-3000 students, 23.7% reported

3001-5,000 students, and 18.4% reported 5,001-7,000 students. Only 7.9% of directors reported more than 7,000 students in their district.

All 45 ELE directors responded to the demographic questions about emergent bilingual learners, students identified as newcomers, and students identified as SLIFE. Seventy-one percent of the districts had fewer than 10% emergent bilingual learners, while 26.7% had between 11-30%. These figures are consistent with MA DESE data about the overall incidence of emergent bilingual learners in Massachusetts schools (10.2%, MA DESE, 2018). One participant reported having 51-60% emergent bilingual learners, which may have been school-level data or perhaps an error.

All ELE directors reported SLIFE in their districts. The vast majority of directors (97.8%) stated that the total SLIFE population in their districts accounted for fewer than 10% of the total population of emergent bilingual learners. Only one ELE director reported that SLIFE students comprised 11-20% of this population.

The percentage of newcomer emergent bilingual learners was more variable, with 57.8% of ELE directors reporting that newcomers represented less than 10% of the total emergent bilingual learner population. Newcomers represented 11-20% of emergent bilingual learners in 15.6% of districts, 21-30% in 20% of districts, 31-40% in 4.4% of districts, and 41-50% in only one district.

RETELL TRAINING

We asked the ELE directors about the approximate percentage of teachers and administrators who had completed RETELL training in their districts and converted their responses to points on a Likert scale as follows: <20%=1, 21-40%=2, 41-60%=3, 61-80%=4, 81-100%=5. The results show a high level of completion among teachers (Mean=3.87) and an even higher level of completion among administrators (Mean=4.53). This bodes well for emergent bilingual learners, as the principal plays a key role in fostering academic success (Stufft & Brogadir, 2011). We believe that the lower number of teachers who were reported to have completed RETELL may reflect the fact that non-core content-area teachers are not subject to this mandate.

PERCEPTIONS OF RETELL IMPACT

Because we know that initiatives that are valued and are consistent with school goals are more likely to “stick” (Sackney, Walker, & Hajnal, 1998), we next explored ELE directors’ perceptions of the value and impact of RETELL PD.

Directors responded to two prompts, choosing their responses along a four-point Likert-scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=somewhat agree and 4=strongly agree). A high number of participants indicated that RETELL training was regarded merely as a “box to be checked” in their district (Mean=3.02). It is not surprising, then, that directors generally disagreed with the previous statement: “The RETELL initiative has made a significant difference in instructional practices within my district” (Mean=2.33).

We also asked ELE directors to rate the overall quality of the RETELL training for teachers and administrators, from 1 to 4 (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent). Both the teacher and the administrator training were rated as fair to good (Mean=2.68 for teacher RETELL; Mean=2.74 for administrator RETELL).

PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHER PREPAREDNESS

In the next section of the survey, ELE directors were asked to rate their agreement with 12 statements (Table 1) focusing on teachers' preparedness to teach various subgroups of emergent bilingual learners. The items in this section were scored from 1= strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree.

When asked whether teachers had improved their instructional strategies to teach emergent bilingual learners, responses were mixed (Mean=2.51), but stronger than those for the next

[T]he lowest ratings were for preparedness to teach SLIFE students.


item, which asked about teachers' preparedness to teach all proficiency levels of emergent bilingual learners (Mean=1.98). We suspect that while teachers were generally perceived as prepared to teach WIDA proficiency levels 2-5, they were likely less prepared to teach newcomers, therefore lowering the rating for overall preparedness. Unfortunately, we neglected to include a survey item focusing specifically on teacher preparedness to teach newcomers. Since the demographic questions revealed that 26.6% of the districts had significant numbers of newcomers (more than 21% of all emergent bilingual learners), this would have been an important point to investigate.

Among the subgroups we asked about, the lowest ratings were for preparedness to teach SLIFE students (Mean=1.51 for elementary; Mean=1.49 for middle school; Mean=1.34 for secondary). Across the board, elementary teachers were rated as best prepared to teach all subgroups, followed by middle-grade teachers and, finally, secondary teachers. However, secondary teachers received a higher rating (Mean=2.15) for their preparedness to teach emergent bilinguals in advanced academic classes.

Table 1. Teacher Preparedness.

Survey Item	Responses	Mean	Std. Error
Regular education teachers who have completed RETELL training have improved their instructional strategies to teach ELLs.	45	2.51	0.133
Regular education teachers who have completed RETELL training are prepared to teach ELLs at different proficiency levels.	43	1.98	0.118
Elementary grade teachers are prepared to teach ELLs with overall WIDA proficiency levels greater than 2.	45	2.76	0.101
Elementary teachers are prepared to teach SLIFE.	43	1.51	0.102
Elementary teachers are prepared to teach ELLs with disabilities.	45	2.07	0.116
Middle grade teachers are prepared to teach ELLs with overall WIDA proficiency levels greater than 2.	42	2.36	0.127
Middle grade teachers are prepared to teach SLIFE.	43	1.49	0.139
Middle grade teachers are prepared to teach ELLs with disabilities.	43	1.98	0.113
Secondary teachers are prepared to teach ELLs with overall WIDA proficiency levels greater than 2.	42	1.93	0.125
Secondary teachers are prepared to teach SLIFE.	41	1.34	0.119
Secondary teachers are prepared to teach ELLs with disabilities.	41	1.78	0.113
Secondary teachers are prepared to teach ELLs in academically advanced courses.	40	2.15	0.132

CONCLUSION

The results of this survey indicate that while the RETELL PD course represents an initial step in preparing administrators and content-area teachers to educate emergent bilingual learners, it has not yet made a sustainable and lasting difference. To achieve this result, the course must be perceived as integral to the mission of the district, rather than a box to be checked. In our view, the RETELL course represents a minimal level of preparation but is not sufficient, by itself, to create equitable educational opportunities for emergent bilingual learners. Given the apparently inadequate preparedness of teachers who have completed the full RETELL course, the current relicensure requirement that teachers complete an additional 15 hours of PD over a five-year period is not likely to be sufficient to prepare them to educate the diverse populations of emergent bilingual learners in our schools—students with varying levels of English proficiency, students with special needs, and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). 

LIMITATIONS

Readers should be aware that the participants in this survey were a select group (MELLC members) and do not necessarily represent the views of all ELE directors across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Future research should include surveys of teachers themselves, along with classroom observations of instructional practice.

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Understanding English Language Variation in U.S. Schools,

by Anne H. Charity Hudley & Christine Mallinson. New York: Teachers College Press, 2011. 170 pages. ISBN978-0-8077-5148-0

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Anne H. Charity Hudley is Assistant Professor of English, Linguistics, and Africana Studies at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia; Christine Mallinson is Assistant Professor in the Language, Literacy, and Culture Program and Affiliate Assistant Professor in the Gender and Women's Studies Program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). In this book, they argue that an understanding of language variation is essential to effective teaching in American schools. In a foreword to the book, William Labov, Professor of Linguistics and Director of the Linguistics Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania, explains that “[This] book is for teachers who ask, ‘Do these [variations] stand in the way of our students learning to read and write? . . . and if so, ‘What do we do about it?’” (p. xiii). According to the authors, “Issues concerning language, student achievement, and student opportunity are critical to . . . narrowing the achievement gap in the United States” (p. 4).

[A]n understanding of language variation is essential to effective teaching in American schools.

The book is divided into five chapters: *Valuable Voices*, *What is Standard English?*, *Southern English: A Regional and Cultural Variety*, *African American English: An Ethnic and Cultural Variety*, and *Assessment and Application*. The information is directed to parents, K-12 teachers, reading specialists, speech and language pathologists, school psychologists, guidance counselors, and school social workers.

The chapters of particular interest to me were Chapter 1: *Valuable Voices*, Chapter 2: *What is Standard English?*, and Chapter 5: *Assessment and*

Application. In Chapter 1: *Valuable Voices*, the authors explain that “[B]ecause language is always changing, language differences naturally arise. These differences are not the same as language deficits, errors, mistakes, or confusions. Nonstandardized varieties of English are as rule-governed, patterned, and predictable in their linguistic structure as are standardized varieties... [but] despite these linguistic realities, there is abundant evidence that people often hold opposite, negative attitudes about nonstandardized varieties of English” (p. 2). This chapter provides insight into the ways in which language affects the achievement of bilingual students and speakers of nonstandardized varieties of English, based on observations from the educators who work with them.

“[P]eople often hold negative attitudes about nonstandardized varieties of English.”

Chapter 2: *What is Standard English?* provides important information regarding the conventions of Standard English, the particular features of school English, and how to teach language standards within a multicultural approach. Chapter 5: *Assessment and Application* addresses the linguistic issues that pertain to standardized testing and other standardized educational assessments. The authors explain that “language-related issues rooted in test design and test preparation can be major contributors to systematic differences in test scores and educational achievement for students who speak nonstandardized varieties of English” (p. 110). An understanding of linguistic differences and how they impact bilingual learners and speakers of nonstandardized dialects is critical for educators; English learners, as well as students who speak Southern English and African American English often face educational inequality, which may lead to illiteracy and poverty (pp. 114-115).

The authors provide key information regarding the challenges that bilingual students and speakers of nonstandardized dialects may face in the American K-12 classroom, and they suggest a multitude of effective strategies that teachers can implement in their classrooms. I highly recommend this interesting, engaging book to parents, teachers, educational specialists, and others who are interested in learning how to help bilingual learners and speakers of nonstandardized dialects succeed in the classroom. **C**

Race, Empire and English Language Teaching: Creating Responsible and Ethical Anti-Racist Practice,

by Suhanthie Motha, Ph.D. New York, NY: Teachers College Press (Multicultural Education Series). 184 pages. ISBN 978-0807755129.

Reviewed by Karen Hart

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Suhanthie Motha is an assistant professor in the Department of English at the University of Washington, Seattle. Born in Sri Lanka and raised in Australia, she reflects on an essential dilemma in the teaching of English—namely that, in many cases, English will supplant the students' native language. Some of the most memorable parts of this book are Motha's descriptions of her own experiences as a young child. "I remember a childhood of trying desperately to ignore the fact that I was not White," she says, "as if by denying it I was somehow going to convince everyone around me that I had another heritage, a White heritage. While I was in elementary school when I was asked where I was from, I would stubbornly reply, 'Australia, Australia,' in order to refute any association with a nation of origin in which most people were Brown" (p. 91).

In this book Motha entwines an account of the experiences of four first-year American-public-school ESOL teachers with an examination of the ways in which questions of race and "Empire" cast a shadow over the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. Motha did not directly mentor these teachers, but she observed and recorded them and gave them a space to discuss their experiences together weekly (over tea). In the book, she argues that the structural arrangements of ESOL exert a power over the way people think about empire, race, and language. This influence extends not only to ESOL students, but also to their classmates, their teachers, their family members, and others within the local and global communities.


Motha describes an observational visit to the classroom of one of the high school teachers ("Alexandra") that was separated from the rest of the school by a short hallway. Was this separation—symbolized by the hallway, but including the broader issue of ESOL students being taken out of the regular classroom at all—a positive or negative thing? ESOL teachers regularly describe their classroom as a "haven," "refuge," or "sanctuary," "a safe island cut off from the perils of a larger school community." But Alexandra's students asked her to shut the blinds, because they were embarrassed to be seen in the ESOL class. Other

students, including former ESOL students, sometimes flicked the lights as they walked by and shouted, “You can’t speak English!” Motha argues that “[t]he jeer solidifies the boundary around this club of Empire and underscores ‘English Speaker’ status as a necessary prerequisite for admission to the club” (pp. 46-52). One of the following sections is entitled, “So Alexandra Drew the Blinds: Responding to Postcolonial Shame.”

This resonated with me, although I thought it more of a first-year-teacher mistake to not demand respect from the passing students. I have seen ESOL teachers in Massachusetts public schools being expected to teach in icy, unheated classrooms, in corridors, in laundry rooms, in storage closets, and in alcoves under the stairs. But on the other side, I have seen ESOL kids visibly relax as they walk into these spaces, however undesirable. There are many benefits to having a separate space: fewer people, less pressure, less noise, a slower pace, and the simple pleasure of being in a place where questions are allowed and encouraged.

Motha says, “This book makes the case that the mere act of teaching ESOL reproduces racism.” This is a very controversial statement; I would have said exactly the opposite. Over several months I have come to see that people in some situations might strengthen their own culture by turning away from English. However, in America, our laws, our government, and our educational system are all in English, and that is unlikely to change. Knowledge is power and teaching English in America is a way of giving people power.

While Motha raises many worthwhile questions, she does not give us answers. She says, “In this exploration I do not provide, nor did I set out to develop, facile solutions to any of the challenges the teachers faced, and I did not expect them to resolve the numerous dilemmas they encountered . . . I simply sought deeper insight into the teachers’ experiences as they struggled with and negotiated the complexities nestled at the nexus of race, language, power, and learning in their teaching lives with the hope that the sense they made of their own experiences might inform other TESOL professionals, including myself” (p. 12).

This, I think, is one of the flaws of the book from an ESOL teacher’s perspective. Because we have a limited amount of time to read, we tend to read things we can immediately put to use. This book does not provide immediately usable information. In addition, Motha’s language is often esoteric and I sometimes had to read a sentence multiple times before I understood it. I look forward to the day when Dr. Motha writes a book for teachers instead of doctoral students! 

Islandborn, by Junot Díaz. New York, NY: 2018. 48 pages. ISBN 978-0-7352-2986-0

Reviewed by Jacqueline Stokes

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Junot Díaz's first children's book, *Islandborn*, beautifully details the story of Lola, an inquisitive young girl who immigrates from her native island at such a young age that she cannot fully remember her life and surroundings there. When Lola is asked to

complete a school assignment that asks her to draw what her island was like, she struggles to complete the assignment, as she feels she has forgotten almost all of it. But with the help of her grandma and her community, Lola puts the pieces of

her beautiful island back together and comes to understand why her family left such an exquisite place. This book is also available in Spanish, titled *Lola*.


[Lola] cannot fully remember her life and surroundings [on her native island].

I first learned of this book in a bilingualism class at Boston University. My professor brought the book to a class session as an example of a book we might use in an ESL or bilingual education setting. We read the book as a group, taking turns in English and Spanish, and I realized that I could do the same activity with my students. The book has captivating illustrations that show the magic of Lola's island but also the darkness that forced her family to relocate to the United States. The book also highlights family and community relationships, the experiences of immigrants, the daily life of a young girl, and peer dynamics in a mainstream classroom in the U.S.

It is not easy to find books that reflect immigrant students' diverse backgrounds, so I was very glad to be introduced to this one. *Islandborn* is a fantastic book to use with any group of students, as it has themes that are relevant and interesting to all children. I teach elementary students who have immigrated from Caribbean islands such as the Dominican Republic, who could surely empathize with Lola's experience of loving where she is from but forgetting some of it, too.

We read the book as a group, taking turns in English and Spanish.

I plan to read this book with my kindergarten-through-fourth-grade newcomer immigrant students, many of whom look and talk like Lola.

It's great to know about a book like this one, which illustrates the daily life of an immigrant student and entwines the story of her formal schooling with memories of her heritage culture. The book doesn't explicitly state that Lola is Dominican, but there are subtle hints, including flags and maps at her house. This makes the book relatable to a wide audience, but also assures that a Dominican student will feel validated in her experience. Afro-Latinos are largely underrepresented in children's literature, making *Islandborn* a wonderful addition to any classroom library. 

I plan to read this book with my kindergarten-through-fourth-grade newcomer immigrant students.

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