

TRANSLANGUAGING:  
Defining It and Putting It Into  
Practice with Second  
Language Learners

Marybelle Marrero-Colon-CAL©2022  
Mmarrero-colon@cal.org

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# Translanguaging: Defining it and putting it into practice with second language learners

## Warm-Up: Survey, Think, & Note

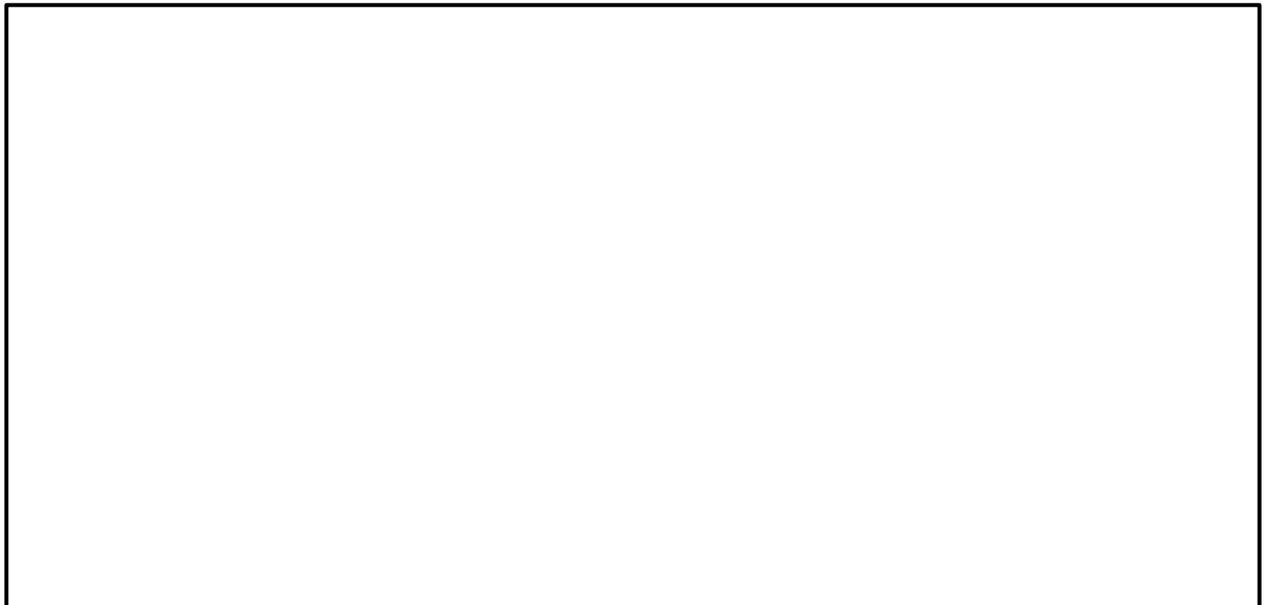
**Survey** the following example of translanguaging being used in the classroom

**Think** about how language is being used

**Make** note of how this type of support can assist Multilingual learners

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Mrs. Simpson, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school teacher, assigns her students an independent reading book for which they need to complete a written book report. Mrs. Simpson allows her students to use their stronger home languages as a scaffold for accessing their second, less proficient language. In the case of Josue, his receptive skills exceed his productive skills in English. He is able to read the book in English, but makes all his annotations and writes out his notes in Spanish for better comprehension. Josue writes his first draft in Spanish since that is his more proficient language. He then rewrites the book report (not a translation) in English using the same key ideas, examples, and citations, thereby using Spanish as a tool for English language development. Mrs. Simpson strategically uses code-switching, along with a variety of other instructional strategies, to scaffold instruction for Josue's emerging bilingualism.



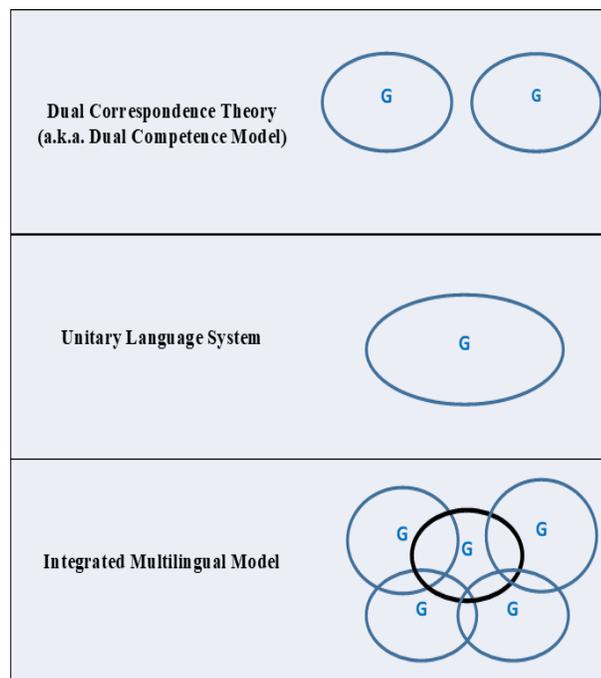
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## Brainstorming: 2 Minute Reflection

1. What is your definition of translanguaging?
2. How is translanguaging used in daily communication?
3. How is translanguaging used in the classroom?

## Translanguaging Debates<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ There are various theories of translanguaging which are debated across different fields of study. One such debate is that of dual correspondence theory vs. unitary theory of language use.
- ✓ In other words, is our language knowledge based on two language systems or one? What do you think?



<sup>1</sup> MacSwan, J. (2017). A Multilingual perspective on translanguaging. *American Educational Research Journal* 54. 167–201. doi:10.3102/0002831216683935

## Where do we implement & use translanguaging?

- ✓ **Everyday life...**
  - ✓ Multilinguals translanguage on a regular basis.
  - ✓ They connect with their various languages based on the social setting and situation, other language groups that surround them, or their command of conversational fluency and academic language fluency (Cummins, 2017).
- ✓ **General Education/Tier 1 Classroom; Classrooms where English is the medium of instruction have four types of English learners:**
  - ✓ Students who are eligible for EL services because they have not yet met exit criteria
  - ✓ Students who have reached proficiency levels as per state language proficiency assessment
  - ✓ English proficient students who come from bilingual homes
  - ✓ Students whose parents have opted out of English language support services
  - ✓ In these instances, the teachers' use of translanguaging strategies supports their students' language systems, builds their self-esteem, and gives students the sense that their home languages are a viable resource for achieving academically (Garcia, 2014; 2018)
- ✓ **English as a Second Language Classroom**
  - ✓ The ESL teacher, or the general education teacher working in an ESL program, can set up collaborative structures in their classroom where students from the same language group are able to discuss or interact with the content concepts, tasks, and activities in their home languages, while still producing all products in English (Garcia, 2014).
  - ✓ An important consideration in the ESL classroom is that the students' need to communicate drives them to send and receive messages using all the resources at their disposal (García and Kleifgen, 2018).
  - ✓ Even if the language of instruction is English, the teacher can still provide students with the opportunity to make sense of the new language using their home language (Song, 2016).
  - ✓ The ESL teacher, or the general education teacher working in an ESL program, can set up collaborative structures in their classroom where students from the same language group are able to discuss or interact with the content concepts, tasks, and activities in their home languages, while still producing all products in English (Garcia, 2014).
- ✓ **Transitional Bilingual/Immersion Bilingual**
  - ✓ Translanguaging allows the teacher to adjust the linguistic complexity of the task at hand for newcomers, as well as for those who have higher second language proficiency.
  - ✓ Translanguaging builds the explicit connections that bridge language practices in the first language to those of the second language, thus enabling positive transfer (Garcia, 2014).
  - ✓ Translanguaging is used strategically so that what is learned in one language is then practiced and internalized in the other.

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- v The job of translanguaging is to not only facilitate the transition from the home language to the target instructional language, but also to transfer language and literacy skills from the target language back to the native language (Garcia, 2014, Cummins, 2017).
- v **Dual Language Classroom**
  - v Although in dual language programs the two target languages maintain separate spaces to ensure language acquisition, there is still room for the use and support of the native language to ensure content comprehension.
  - v Just as teachers allocate time to different content areas, but still make connections among them, teachers in dual language classrooms at certain pre-planned intervals, make connections among the different language practices (Garcia, 2014; 2016; 2018; Hesson, Seltzer, Woodley, 2014).
  - v The benefits of translanguaging in the dual language classroom for these emergent bilingual students include:
    1. the ability to build on their metalinguistic awareness by comparing and contrasting language forms and systems
    2. students' recognition that they can use different languages strategically to enable comprehension and production creating a bridge between the languages and content concepts
    3. student awareness and validation of the role language practices play in their lives at home, in school, and in the larger community
    4. the ability to address multilingual audiences and negotiate meaning across languages
    5. language resources to engage with complex and abstract content area information and material; to acquire content information and academic skills from different sources, and to self-regulate
    6. experimentation and interaction with language resources to develop/use divergent thinking and creativity.

### Now think about your own context

- v What can you do to add a little translanguaging into your own classroom?
- v If you are a coach or administrator, how can you encourage your educators to use translanguaging?
- v Make note of your thoughts.