

## Chapter 6

# Multilingual Youth Perspectives on Humanizing Core Practices

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### ABSTRACT

*In this chapter, the authors draw upon the teaching practices multilingual youth identified as important to their learning in the classroom, to add to the field's understanding of core practices for teaching multilingual learners. This qualitative study highlights various strategies that secondary immigrant multilingual youth recommend teachers use when supporting learning in the classroom, some that bolster the existing research base on learning English as an additional language, and others that were relatively new contributions based on youth perspectives. A close examination of the multilingual youth perspectives and experiences has implications for creating and sustaining humanizing and equitable pedagogical practices in the classroom.*

### INTRODUCTION

In the US, many states in the south and mid-Atlantic region have seen unprecedented growth in the population of secondary immigrant multilingual youth in public high schools within the past decade (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). With this significant increase in secondary immigrant multilingual youth—many who are older, unaccompanied, and without legal documentation—teacher educators and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teachers grapple with how to be responsive to the rapidly shifting demographics. At the same time, novice ESOL teachers grapple with how to connect theory to practice as they engage with multilingual youth in their initial teaching experiences. Indeed, learning to teach is a complex process; yet, this is necessary work that must be addressed through a combination of theory, practice, and reflection. This process should also involve feedback from the different stakehold-

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ers involved in the preparation of novice teachers—including teacher educators, ESOL teachers, novice teachers, and multilingual PK-12 youth who receive classroom instruction from ESOL teachers.

In the past decade, the focus of many teacher education researchers has been on the use of core—or high leverage—practices that novice teachers most need to learn to support complex, ambitious, and equitable classroom instruction (e.g., Ball & Forzani, 2009; McDonald et al., 2013), though there is a recognized need for a better understanding of core practices for teaching multilingual youth (e.g., Peercy, Kidwell, et al., 2019; Peercy, Tigert, et al., 2019; Von Esch & Kavanagh, 2018). At the same time, scholars have also called for additional approaches to and enactments of humanizing pedagogies—or instructional practices and orientations that are student-centered, asset-based, and advance equity and social justice in youths’ daily learning opportunities (Carter Andrews & Castillo, 2016; Kinloch, 2018). However, there is little research on how to support novice teachers to engage in humanizing practices in the classroom (Peercy et al., in preparation). Here we build upon our earlier work to identify core practices for teaching multilingual youth, and explore the perspectives of secondary immigrant multilingual youth to contribute to a more humanizing and equitable approach to the preparation of novice ESOL teachers. Specifically, we ask the following question: *What practices enacted by novice ESOL teachers do secondary multilingual youth identify as supporting their learning?* The focus of this chapter will be on secondary immigrant multilingual youth perspectives and experiences and how they contributed to our understanding of what core practices should be utilized in classrooms.

## **BACKGROUND**

Providing multilingual youth with an equitable education requires that all teachers are exceptionally well-prepared to support youth learning needs. Recent teacher education scholarship suggests that effective preparation of novice teachers requires more meaningful opportunities for novice teachers to engage in specific intentional practices than has historically been the case in most US teacher preparation programs (Brownell, et al., 2019). Research also demonstrates the lack of preparation for teachers who serve multilingual youth (Faltis & Valdés, 2016; Viesca & Teemant, 2019) though there is a growing body of scholarship that has offered some guiding frameworks, principles, practices, and strategies for educators serving such learners (Bunch, 2013; de Jong & Harper, 2005; Lucas et al., 2008). Utilizing sociocultural theories of learning (Johnson, 2009; Vygotsky, 1978) and calls to humanize approaches to instruction with minoritized learners (e.g., Bartolomé, 1994; Bartolomé & Trueba, 2000), this study contributes a perspective of core practices as providing a foundation for novice teachers to understand, enact, and reflect on effective pedagogical practices across a range of content-areas, grade levels, and teaching contexts. The larger goal of this research is to support social, emotional, and content-based learning for multilingual youth through intentional, skillful, and humanizing teaching.

## **Core Practices**

A focus on core practices for teaching reflects a shift from knowing *about* teaching to knowing *how* to teach learners—by “appropriately using and integrating specific moves and activities in particular cases and contexts, based on knowledge and understanding of one’s pupils and on the application of professional judgment” (Ball & Forzani, 2009, p. 497). Drawing from the idea that there are a limited number of teaching practices that are central to the daily work of responsible teaching and key to supporting youth

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