CHAPTER 6

Curriculum and Other Pedagogical Practices

> When we narrow the program so that there is only a limited array of areas in which assessment occurs and performance is honored, youngsters whose aptitudes and interests lie elsewhere are going to be marginalized in our schools. The more we diversify those opportunities, the more equity we are going to have because we're going to provide wider opportunities for youngsters to find what it is they are good at.
>
> —Elliot Eisner, 2001

In this chapter, we will:

- Review theoretical constructs that support curricular opportunities and practices for emergent bilinguals:
  - » Orientation of social justice and linguistic human rights,
  - » A curriculum that is challenging and creative,
  - » Pedagogy that is transformative and culturally sustaining, and
  - » Learning that is collaborative and agentic.
- Identify inequalities in curricular opportunities and resources:
  - » Inequitable curricular opportunities: lack of early childhood programs, remedial education and tracking high-stakes accountability pressures, special education placements, exclusion from gifted and AP classes;
  - » Inequitable resources: inadequate instructional materials, school facilities, and funding; and
  - » Inequitable access to high-quality educators.
- Consider some alternative practices:
  - » A challenging inclusive curriculum that starts early, and
  - » Preparing caring, creative, and qualified teachers.

In this chapter, we focus on curricular opportunities and practices affecting the education of emergent bilinguals. Gándara and Contreras (2009) say: "The problem of English learners' underachievement . . . is more likely related to the quality of education that these students receive, regardless of the language of instruction" (p. 145). We consider here the *quality* of the education that emergent bilingual

students are receiving, beyond the issue of language or other meaning-making modes of instruction; in doing so, we continue to give attention to the central question in this book: *What does research tell us about how best to educate and assess emergent bilingual students? Are we using accepted theories and evidence in the education of these students?* Just as we observed a gap in Chapters 4 and 5 between language education theory and practice, we note in this chapter a gap between accepted theoretical foundations for curricula and practices and the classroom realities for many emergent bilinguals. We conclude the chapter by laying out alternative practices that can do much to accelerate the academic achievement of these students.

THEORETICAL CURRICULAR AND PEDAGOGICAL CONSTRUCTS

In this section, we identify three theoretical constructs that promote equity in both curriculum and practice for emergent bilinguals—an orientation of social justice and linguistic human rights, a curriculum that is challenging and creative, and a pedagogy that is transformative and collaborative.

Social Justice and Linguistic Human Rights

The idea of teaching for social justice has roots in U.S. social history of democracy and oppression. Consistent with defending the basic human rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution, educating for social justice also requires that teachers and students act in the construction of a socially just world. This was the case, for example, in the Freedom School movement of the 1960s, when Black students in the segregated South participated in programs that not only engaged them in a rigorous academic curriculum but also in a citizenship curriculum, enabling them to understand their rights and their role in bringing about change (Hale, 2011; Morrell, 2008). Movements to teach for social justice have been inspired by the work of the Brazilian scholar Paolo Freire, who urges educators to engage students in a dialectal praxis so that they can act upon the world in order to transform it.

Rights to education are at the core of these social justice efforts. In this regard, UNESCO (1960) has been most influential. In the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (adopted December 14, 1960 and entered into force May 22, 1962), Article 1 reads:

> For the purposes of this Convention, the term "discrimination" includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality or treatment in education. . . .

The focus on social justice and human rights, coupled with the rise of critical theory on the role that language has played in asymmetrical power relations (see

García et al., 2017; García et al., 2021), has led to increasing calls for linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, 2017). Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1994) identify two categories of linguistic human rights that are important to consider in educating emergent bilinguals:

- Individual rights, including the right to identify with one's own language and to use it both in and out of school, and the right to learn the official language of the state; and
- Community rights, including the right of minoritized groups to establish and maintain schools and other educational institutions and to control their curricula.

Taking these categories into account, we can argue that in the United States, linguistic human rights are not fully observed. For example, although many languages other than English are spoken, the use of these languages in everyday situations is sometimes considered suspect (Lippi-Green, 1997). Most of these languages are excluded from schools; in high schools, classes to learn and develop languages other than English may be offered, but these usually only include Spanish and French and to a much lesser degree German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese (American Councils for International Education, 2017). And most dual-language bilingual education programs are in Spanish, followed by Chinese, leaving numerous U.S. peoples such as speakers of Arabic, Diné, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese with little opportunity to develop their bilingualism and biliteracy. As for minoritized groups' linguistic rights, although these groups have the right to establish their own complementary schools where their languages and cultures are taught after school and on weekends, they do not receive state funding (García, Zakharia, & Otcu, 2013; Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001). One of the questions for educators, then, is how to extend these language rights to all students in the curriculum. Social justice and linguistic human rights are the philosophical values that motivate a challenging and creative curriculum for emergent bilinguals.

A Curriculum That Is Challenging and Creative

Research on teaching and learning indicates that all students need to be given opportunities to participate in challenging yet supportive academic work that promotes deep disciplinary knowledge and encourages higher-order thinking skills. Goldenberg (2008) summarizes:

> As a general rule, all students tend to benefit from clear goals and learning objectives; meaningful, challenging, and motivating contexts; a curriculum rich with content; well-designed, clearly structured, and appropriately paced instruction; active engagement and participation; opportunities to practice, apply, and transfer new learning; feedback on correct and incorrect responses; periodic review and practice; frequent assessments to gauge progress, with re-teaching as needed; and opportunities to interact with other students in motivating and appropriately structured contexts. (p. 17)

And yet, as Gibbons (2009) points out, "the development of curriculum distinguished by intellectual quality and the development of higher-order thinking has in reality rarely been a major focus of program planning for EL learners" (p. 2).

Many have called attention to the importance of maintaining high expectations for emergent bilinguals and of providing them with challenging academic work (Carrasquillo & Rodríguez, 2002; Walqui, 2006), while simultaneously providing the necessary supports for them to be successful (Walqui & Bunch, 2019). As with all students, emergent bilinguals require practice in complex thinking; they deserve teachers who engage them in combining ideas to synthesize, generalize, explain, hypothesize, or arrive at some conclusion or interpretation (Walqui et al., 2004). Speaking about the importance of an action-based perspective of language for emergent bilinguals, van Lier and Walqui (2012) explain:

> Language is an inseparable part of all human action, intimately connected to all other forms of action, physical, social and symbolic. Language is thus an expression of agency, embodied and embedded in the environment. . . . In a classroom context, an action-based perspective means that ELs engage in meaningful activities (projects, presentations, investigations) that engage their interest and that encourage language growth through perception, interaction, planning, research, discussion, and co-construction of academic products of various kinds. During such action-based work, language development occurs when it is carefully scaffolded by the teacher, as well as by the students working together. (n.p.)

Gibbons (2009) advances seven intellectual practices in the education of emergent bilinguals:

1. Students engage with the key ideas and concepts of the discipline in ways that reflect how "experts" in the field think and reason.
2. Students transform what they have learned into a different form for use in a new context or for a different audience.
3. Students make links between concrete knowledge and abstract theoretical knowledge.
4. Students engage in substantive conversation.
5. Students make connections between the spoken and written language of the subject and other discipline-related ways of making meaning.
6. Students take a critical stance toward knowledge and information.
7. Students use metalanguage in the context of learning about other things.

Alongside challenge and richness, it is important to provide students, especially emergent bilinguals, with a creative curriculum that provides space for them to experiment and innovate (Greene, 1995). Learning how to make and communicate meaning in another language is in itself a highly creative and innovative activity (Ward et al., 1997). But when additional meaning-making resources—other modes—such as those made available through the arts and technology—are combined with the spoken and written modes and incorporated into the learning

process, students can experience a much more empowering and engaging curriculum. Over the past two decades, an increasing body of research has highlighted the advantages of multimodality for emergent bilingual students, such as broadening linguistic skills (Kim, 2018; Smith et al., 2021), and empowering identity expression and criticality (Ajayi, 2015; Cimasko & Shin, 2017). From reading, writing, and performing Mexican *corridos* (de los Ríos, 2018), creating digital aboriginal Dreamtime stories (Mills et al., 2016), or incorporating play and traditional dances (Ascenzi-Moreno, Espinosa, & Lehner-Quam, 2022; Machimana & Genis, 2024) to using spoken word poetry (Burton, 2023) and graphic novels in the critical analysis of social issues (Barter-Storm & Wik, 2020; Chun, 2009), multimodal practices can also transform English-centric classrooms by challenging conventional views on language and literacy and centering students' voices and funds of knowledge, which are typically disregarded or subjugated (Smith et al., 2021).

In sum, responsive schools will not only provide emergent bilinguals with a challenging and rich curriculum but also with a creative one. By having teams of multicultural and multilingual students, who work collaboratively as equals using all their linguistic and cultural resources to address educational challenges presented to them, schools can foster the creative conceptual expansion of all students. To do so, schools must have teachers who can deliver a transformative and culturally sustaining pedagogy, the subject of our next section.

Pedagogies That Are Transformative and Culturally Sustaining

Many scholars, working to redress the educational inequities affecting minoritized students, have advocated several practices, all with the potential to transform society. We have already referred to the potential of translanguaging as part of that transformation.

Focusing on teaching by building on the ethnolinguistic identities of language-minority students, other scholars have advocated a *culturally relevant pedagogy* (CRP) for minority students (Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Valdés, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Paris and Alim (2014) have gone beyond the "relevant" aspects to propose what they call a *culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP)*. They explain the difference:

> CSP seeks to perpetuate and foster—to sustain—linguistic, literate and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling and as a needed response to demographic and social change. CSP, then, links a focus on sustaining pluralism through education to challenges of social justice and change. (p. 88)

Culturally sustaining pedagogies' foundational tenets can help shape the curriculum in transformative ways. First, they seek community agency in the development of activities, units of study, and other classroom/school practices and decision-making processes. Second, they integrate the authentic language practices of students and their communities and challenge the monolingual standardized English-centric ideology of schools, which, as revealed in our extensive discussion in previous chapters,

is inherent in translanguaging pedagogy. Third, they incorporate cultural and historicized content that centers nondominant voices, narratives, practices, and perspectives in the literature, multimodal texts, and classroom discourse and practices.

Thus, culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks not only to promote equity across communities but also to ensure access and opportunity by demanding that outcomes not be centered only on "[w]hite, middle-class, monolingual and monocultural norms of educational achievement" (Paris & Alim, 2014, p. 95). This brings attention to the fundamental role that schooling plays in assuming and ascribing students' identities, the significance of language in shaping identity, and the students' own agency in negotiating them (Crump, 2014; Chávez-Moreno, 2020). As previously mentioned, research on emergent bilinguals has emphasized the importance of affirming students' identities through the curriculum and language practices of the classroom (Cummins, 2000; Nuñez, Villarreal, & DeJulio, 2021). Nevertheless, there is a risk of conceptualizing identity as a process devoid of political significance, an uncomplicated validation of student experience (Giroux, 1988). Therefore, besides aligning classroom experiences with the students' cultural and linguistic practices, culturally sustaining pedagogies attempt to counteract inequitable power relations in society and empower minority students to use their own repertoire of practices (Giroux, 1988). Along these lines, scholars in the field of bilingual education have emphasized the need to foster critical consciousness for education to be truly transformative (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017; Heiman et al., 2023), noting that it can be traced back as the propelling force in the race-radical roots of bilingual education (Darder, 2012; Flores, 2016; Pacheco & Chávez-Moreno, 2022). The emphasis on critical consciousness can help shape what knowledge systems, language practices, materials, texts, objects or topics of study, histories, narratives, assessments, and activities are prioritized and/or interrogated and the kinds of interactions that are cultivated.

Race, language, gender, social class, ability, immigration/citizenship status, and other social categories place us at various levels of social hierarchies depending on the unique sociopolitical relations and histories of our local contexts. In U.S. contexts, even within bilingual programs, not all students or teachers embody the same degrees of privilege or critical consciousness. Thus, instead of regarding minoritized emergent bilingual children as passively accepting school knowledge, treatment, and discourses without question, Pacheco and Chávez-Moreno (2022) posit that these youth are already actively involved in critically evaluating how power dynamics, language, identities, and school environments impact their daily experiences. They emphasize the importance of acknowledging and building upon the critical evaluations made by minoritized youth, advocating for what they term *bilingual education for self-determination against oppression (BESO)* (p. 253). Additionally, they argue that students express their critical assessments within the classroom, and it is the responsibility of educators, researchers, and others to recognize and respond to them. Therefore, if critical listening is to be practiced in the classroom, some voices, experiences, and perspectives, typically those characterized by privileged normative whiteness, should step down from the center, while the voices and knowledges that are typically disregarded or silenced should be granted thoughtful

attention. This also means that critical listening involves paying thoughtful attention to how minoritized emergent bilingual students manifest their critical appraisals, even if silently, and to provide the tools and space for their interrogation of power to be heard. These are only a few examples of how the curriculum can be infused with actions toward critical consciousness and for the self-determination of minoritized emergent bilinguals.

Collaborative and Agentic Learning

Research on teaching and learning has also validated the importance of pedagogy that builds on meaningful collaborative social practices in which students try out ideas and actions and, thus, socially construct their learning (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, language is not only a means of communication but also a tool for thought. In this context, language serves as a vehicle for agency; that is, for the individual's ability to act intentionally, make choices, and exert influence over the environment by interacting with others and participating in cultural practices. In language learning, agency is evident in the active engagement of learners as they use language to communicate, solve problems, and negotiate meaning within social contexts. Learners exercise agency when they initiate conversations, ask questions, express opinions and feelings, and negotiate interpretations of texts or experiences. Agentic learning thus entails the capacity of learners to make choices and impact the manner and content of their learning experiences, thereby enabling them to enhance their skills across various domains including social and academic interactions, emotional development, cognitive abilities, cultural understanding, and physical activities (Adair & Colegrove, 2021).

Lave and Wenger (1991) describe learning within a given social group as a process of participation that moves gradually from being "legitimately peripheral" to being fully engaged in what they call a *community of practice*: "a set of relations among persons, activity and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice" (p. 98). This social view of learning and pedagogy takes the position that emergent bilinguals do not come to "possess" or "have" English or any other language; rather, they learn by "doing" and "using" practices and features associated with English repeatedly over the course of a lifetime in communities of practice. As van Lier (2000) explains:

> The ecologist will say that knowledge of language for a human is like knowledge of the jungle for an animal. The animal does not have the jungle; it knows how to use the jungle and how to live in it. Perhaps we can say by analogy that we do not have or possess language, but that we learn to use it and to live in it. (p. 253)

A collaborative agentic pedagogy relies, then, on a great deal of practice of talk, or what Tharp et al. (2000) call *instructional conversation* or what Padrón and Waxman (1999) call *teaching through conversation*. We know, for example, that high-quality instruction for emergent bilinguals must include "efforts to increase the scope and sophistication of these students' oral language proficiency" (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 448). That is, a focus on reading and writing alone is insufficient to develop emergent bilinguals' abilities to use and live in English or to understand the world in which they live.

To build this community of practice, groups of students need to be engaged in *cooperative learning* (Kagan, 1986; Kagan & McGroarty, 1993). The National Literacy Panel review found that having students work cooperatively on group tasks increases the literacy comprehension of emergent bilinguals (August & Shanahan, 2006). However, in order for this collaborative learning to be agentic, it should be fostered by consistent opportunities that empower students to pursue their interests and utilize their own sense of urgency, curiosity, and enthusiasm to engage with content and with each other (Adair & Colvegrove, 2021).

Despite research that shows the importance of having curricular programs that emphasize social justice and that are academically challenging and creative, and pedagogy that is culturally sustaining, collaborative, and agentic, emergent bilinguals are often excluded from meaningful educational programs and rigorous instruction. We discuss these inequitable curricular and pedagogical practices before proposing what can be done about it.

INEQUITABLE CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Curricular, pedagogical, and educator-quality issues result in inequities in the education of emergent bilinguals. And because high-quality instruction does not happen without adequate resources, funding is needed to provide high-quality education for emergent bilinguals.

Inequitable Curricular Opportunities

It all starts early. The transition to kindergarten tends to be a time of great vulnerability for many emergent bilinguals, as their families are faced with the challenge of navigating a school system and language that are new to them. Because emergent bilingual kindergartners cannot understand English well enough to be assessed in English, from the very beginning they are often placed in remedial education. Therefore, this transition to kindergarten acts as the foundation for persistent gaps in educational achievement, as even minor variations in early learning tend to magnify over the course of K–12 education, particularly for students from low socioeconomic status and minoritized groups (Ansari & Crosnoe, 2018).

It has been shown that early childhood education programs can help narrow gaps in preparation for elementary school, especially among poor children (Haskins & Rouse, 2005; Takanishi, 2004, in Capps et al., 2005). Additionally, researchers have demonstrated the benefits of early childhood education programs that contribute positively to children's health, emotional adjustment, and cognitive functioning (E. García & Gonzalez, 2006; Karoly & Bigelow, 2005). For example, in a study of the effects of a preschool program on poor children in Ypsilanti, Michigan, a control group received no preschool services. At the age of 40, those who had attended preschool had

not only increased earnings but also decreased reliance on public assistance and had lower rates of criminal activity and substance abuse (Nores et al., 2005). A study in North Carolina obtained similar results—the group that had attended preschool had higher IQs, increased levels of high school graduation and college attendance, as well as decreased rates of grade retention and rates of special education classification than a control group that did not attend preschool (Barnett & Masse, 2007).

The benefit of preschool education for Latine emergent bilinguals has also been demonstrated (Ackerman & Tazi, 2015). Gormley Jr. (2008), for example, showed that Latine emergent bilinguals in a prekindergarten program did better in all aspects of the Woodcock-Johnson Test and the Woodcock-Muñoz Battery—assessing letter-word identification, spelling, and answers to applied problem items. Tazi (2014) has likewise shown the value of bilingual education programs for these young students. Very young Latine children who participated in bilingual instruction were evaluated by their teachers as more socially competent, more interested and prepared for early academic skills such as literacy and numeracy, and more ready for school. When allowed to use their entire language repertoire, Latine kindergartners schooled bilingually also showed greater use of language and facility in expressing their ideas.

And yet, emergent bilinguals are less likely than their monolingual counterparts to be enrolled in early childhood programs (Espinosa, 2013b). Some research suggests that attending preschool can boost emergent bilinguals' language development and skills in kindergarten (Cooper & Lanza, 2014). If bilingual instruction is provided, not only can the home language be developed by building expressive vocabulary skills, but also other academic and cognitive skills would be advanced, such as the quantitative reasoning competence that is necessary for building foundational mathematical skills (Partika et al., 2021). Therefore, we know that the best form of early childhood education for emergent bilinguals would be one that builds on the linguistic and cultural strengths that students bring from home (Restrepo-Widney & Sembiante, 2023), and such programs are extremely rare (Figueras-Daniel & Li, 2021; García & Gonzalez, 2006). Due to early childhood teacher demographics, fluent speakers of the students' home language usually work as assistants, not lead teachers (Whitebook et al., 2018), and when these languages are used, it tends to be mainly for purposes other than instructional ones (Jacoby & Lesaux, 2014).

Overall, states have done little to support emergent bilinguals in preschool. Illinois in 2010 and Texas in 2012 became the first states to mandate the use of home language practices to educate emergent bilinguals in prekindergarten. The passage of the ESSA (2015) marks the first time in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that some attention has been paid to early childhood education. It includes provisions to strengthen early childhood funding, especially for children of low- and moderate-income families. It remains to be seen whether these programs will support the bilingual practices of very young children.

Deficit thinking, remedial education, and tracking. The concept of *deficit thinking* refers to an ideology that attributes students' academic challenges to their internal factors such as intelligence or other aspects of their identity, and to external factors like family dysfunction (Valencia, 2010, 2012). Deficit thinking places the burden of

challenges and inequalities faced by students from historically marginalized groups squarely on their shoulders (McKay & Devlin, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Valencia, 2010, 2012). This belief system ultimately upholds dominant systems and neglects to hold oppressive structures, policies, and practices within educational environments accountable. Deficit thinking is also one major reason why emergent bilinguals and other historically marginalized groups are perceived as lacking the necessary skills, intellectual capacity, language proficiency, discipline, and other attributes necessary to receive a challenging, agentic, creative, and innovative education.

For example, because emergent bilinguals are seen only as English learners from whom little is expected, their schooling often consists of *remedial programs* that emphasize drill and remediation (De Cohen et al., 2005). In their 2017 study of early childhood classrooms across Texas with predominantly Latine immigrant student populations, Adair and colleagues found that educators tended to justify discriminatory and limiting practices by invoking the "word gap" discourse—that is, by arguing that their students lacked the language competence and vocabulary to engage in agentic learning practices. The concept of the *word gap* originated from research in the field of early childhood education and developmental psychology conducted in the early 1990s, which found that children from higher-income families were exposed to significantly more words and language-rich environments compared to children from lower-income families, leading to variations in vocabulary size, language development, and ultimately, academic achievement (Hart & Risley, 1995). While this research and the notion of the word/language gap has been extensively debunked (e.g. García & Otheguy, 2020; Johnson, 2015; Johnson & Zentella, 2017), the harmful effects of denying children agentic learning experiences on the basis of deficit-oriented ideas persists. This is especially true when assessments continue to take place predominantly in English, denying emergent bilinguals the opportunity to demonstrate their learning, and reinforcing deficit thinking among educators (Ascenzi-Moreno & Seltzer, 2021).

As a result, the learning of emergent bilinguals is frequently about compensating for their assumed limited English language skills (Harklau, 1994; Kim, 2017; Olsen, 1997). These students' placement in remedial literacy and mathematics courses and lower-level core academic courses is well documented (Gándara et al., 2003; Parrish et al., 2002).

Emergent bilinguals are often given multiple periods of classes in ESL instead of meaningful content, a product of the emphasis on developing English. This is exacerbated in the high-intensity English language training provided in states such as Arizona, where students spend many hours studying decontextualized language structures. Other times, in order to focus on English acquisition at the expense of other content-related learning, emergent bilinguals are often taken from their regular classes for "pull-out ESL," creating further inequities (Anstrom, 1997; Fleischman & Hopstock, 1993). Furthermore, although it is widely accepted that a balanced approach to literacy that incorporates more time to discuss, create, read and write is central to literacy development (Birch, 2002; Calkins, 1994; Honig, 1996), many emergent bilinguals are taught to read through heavily phonics-based approaches instead of more balanced ones. This trend toward phonics-based approaches has

gained ground under the influence of what is called the science of reading, which does not take into account reading research in different languages and scripts or by bilingual students. Advocates of the science of reading reduce meaning-making to the mastery of grapho-phonemic relationships without any meaningful consideration of the sociocultural or sociopolitical dimensions of the reading process. This is the considered critique of Tierney and Pearson (2024), who also affirm "the moral imperative to ensure curricular and pedagogical equity and relevance . . ." (p. 111).

For academic courses other than English, emergent bilinguals are also regularly tracked into courses that do not provide them with challenging content (Callahan, 2003, 2005; Oakes, 1990; Palmer & Henderson, 2016). In fact, many times, their learning of content-area academics is delayed until they have acquired English proficiency (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Alternatively, when newcomers are taught subject matter exclusively through English, instruction often takes on a slower pace and less content is covered (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992).

This results in an inferior education, because by the time the emergent bilinguals develop their full proficiency in English, they have not taken the appropriate high-level courses compared with their grade-level English-speaking counterparts, and thus they score lower on college admission tests (Mehan et al., 1992; Pennock-Román, 1994; Umansky, 2016). For example, a report from the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics and Office of Civil Rights (2020–2021) notes that Algebra I is considered a "gateway course" due to its pivotal role in readying students for advanced studies in mathematics, science, and computer science. Early exposure to Algebra I, typically by eighth grade, grants students additional time to enroll in the advanced mathematics coursework frequently mandated for college majors in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Given that even at the high school level, only 7% of designated English learners were enrolled in Algebra I compared to 19% enrollment of all students in the 2020–2021 academic year, the chances of pursuing a STEM college career are slim for many emergent bilinguals (U.S Department of Education, 2020–2021). As the Washington, D.C., Superior Court noted in a major test case on the viability of curriculum tracking as an educational practice (*Hobson v. Hansen*, 1967), sixth-grade students who are taught a grade 3 curriculum are likely to end the year with a third-grade education (Gándara et al., 2003).

Dual-language bilingual programs, which emphasize high academic achievement and "enrichment" rather than remediation, and where students' home language practices can be more deliberately affirmed and used for instruction and assessment, can potentially help reduce the risks of the deficit connotation that is attached to students designated as English learners. Pimentel (2011), for example, describes how a child who had mastered most of the pre-K curriculum was considered "at risk" when enrolled in a remedial transitional bilingual program, simply for being a Spanish speaker, but when moved to a dual-language bilingual program, he was reclassified as "gifted." Pimentel recognizes that it is the language ideologies guiding the program implementation that lead to such deficit ideas. However, as we have said, dual-language bilingual programs are not shielded from raciolinguistic (Rosa & Flores, 2017) and monoglossic ideologies that guide literacy and content

assessments, English learner classification processes, and power relations in social interactions among students and educators. Research shows that even in dual-language bilingual programs, there is a danger of continuing to view minoritized emergent bilinguals as deficient, leading to persisting inequalities (Cervantes-Soon et al., 2017). García-Mateus's (2023) study of a second-grade dual-language bilingual class in a gentrifying neighborhood, for example, reveals that racialized emergent bilinguals from low-income families (who often serve as language brokers for their families) tend to be perceived as not having enough expertise in any language and as struggling learners. These perceptions have material consequences in their learning opportunities, for it leads to educators positioning emergent bilinguals as inferior to their English-speaking peers and often results in grade-level retention.

In sum, deficit thinking is an underlying ideology that affects almost all aspects of schooling, and it results in low expectations and the placement of students into a perpetual remedial track.

Little attention to content other than language. The curriculum for emergent bilinguals focuses on language and literacy, and then mathematics, subjects that are heavily tested. Thus, their understandings of the world, of science, of social studies, and of history are severely limited. Many scholars have pointed out the little attention that these subjects receive in emergent bilinguals' education. When these subjects are taught, the emphasis is again the development of vocabulary and what is seen as disciplinary literacy without taking into account the richness in knowledge production that these understandings would bring. Among the exceptions has been a group of science/engineering scholars who have challenged the limited approach to science education for emergent bilingual students (González Howard et al., 2023, 2024; Pérez, 2021; Pérez et al., in press; Suárez, 2022). We will discuss their alternative approaches later in this chapter.

High-stakes accountability. High-stakes accountability refers to assessments, typically standardized tests, that have significant consequences or implications for individuals, schools, or districts based on the results. High-stakes testing rose to prominence in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, spurred by education reform movements and reports such as *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), which advocated for increased accountability measures like standardized testing to address perceived flaws in the U.S. education system. As we saw in Chapter 3, the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 was pivotal, mandating standardized testing in reading and math for grades 3–8 and tying federal funding and penalties to schools' test results, heightening the significance of standardized testing in education policy. This focus on accountability drove the expansion of the standardized testing industry, with companies developing various assessments, including state exams and college entrance tests, and solidifying standardized testing's role in education. States aligned academic standards with these tests, using them to gauge student proficiency and hold schools responsible, while market-driven education reforms reinforced the importance of high-stakes testing in evaluating school performance and promoting accountability.

In practice, high-stakes accountability typically involves tying school funding, teacher salaries, or school accreditation to student performance on standardized

tests. For students, the consequences may include decisions about grade retention or promotion, remedial education, and graduation eligibility. For example, under policies like the No Child Left Behind Act and its successor, the Every Student Succeeds Act, schools may face penalties or interventions if their students consistently perform poorly on standardized tests. Similarly, teachers' job evaluations and compensation may be influenced by their students' test scores.

High-stakes accountability policies are supposed to help improve educational outcomes by incentivizing schools and educators to focus on raising student achievement. However, researchers have argued that these policies can lead to teaching to the test, narrowing of the curriculum, undue stress on students and educators, the exacerbation of inequalities (Au, 2022; Darling-Hammond, 2018; McNeil, 2009; Valenzuela, 2005), and an overall culture of fear among students and educators (Counsell & Wright, 2018; DeJaynes et al., 2020). Additionally, there are concerns about the fairness and validity of using standardized test scores as the primary measure of educational quality and teacher effectiveness.

High-stakes testing poses significant challenges for emergent bilinguals due to several factors. These students, still acquiring English proficiency, may struggle to understand and demonstrate content knowledge in standardized tests (Blaise, 2018). Cultural references and assumptions in these tests can be unfamiliar to emergent bilinguals from diverse backgrounds, hindering their ability to engage with the material as intended. Moreover, the standardized format of assessments may not accommodate the linguistic diversity of emergent bilinguals, including their use of translanguaging practices, which are not recognized in most standardized testing environments. The pressure associated with high-stakes testing, such as grade promotion and graduation implications, can exacerbate test anxiety among emergent bilinguals, leading to underperformance or disengagement and other negative consequences on students' well-being (Li et al., 2018). Moreover, limited accommodations tailored to their linguistic needs further disadvantage these students and may impact the validity of test results.

High-stakes tests often prioritize certain academic skills, neglecting the cultural and linguistic assets, social-emotional development, and critical thinking skills of emergent bilinguals. It is then not surprising that this kind of testing often perpetuates deficit thinking about emergent bilinguals' academic abilities, stigmatization, and low expectations from educators and peers (Bertrand & Marsh, 2021). The pressure to increase test scores often leads low-performing schools to adopt and enforce the teaching of prescriptive curricula, thus denying opportunities for culturally sustaining pedagogies, meaningful curricula, and agentic teaching and learning (Acosta et al., 2021; Back, 2020). It has also resulted in educational policies with reduced attention to supporting students' home languages, as well as in the altering of bilingual programs to prioritize English instruction in order to help students pass the test (Menken & Solorza, 2014). It is thus essential for educators and policymakers to adopt inclusive and culturally responsive and socially just assessment practices to better support the diverse needs of emergent bilingual students in ways that value their whole selves. We will discuss assessment practices with emergent bilinguals, including more appropriate and holistic alternatives in Chapter 8.

Special needs and disability. Both over- and under-identification of emergent bilinguals with disabilities present significant concerns (Golloher et al., 2017). Over-identification leads to ineffective interventions and a label that exacerbates deficit perceptions with detrimental consequences (Cioè-Peña, 2021). On the other hand, under-identification, which is especially acute in early childhood education, means that there are students who are struggling, not being seen, and not receiving the supports that they need (Takanishi & LeMenestrel, 2017).

Since the 1960s, emergent bilinguals have tended to be overrepresented in some categories of special education (Ortiz, Fránquiz, & Lara, 2020), particularly in specific learning and intellectual disabilities and language and speech impairment classes, and most especially at the secondary level (Artiles et al., 2002; Umansky et al., 2017). The overrepresentation of emergent bilinguals in the learning disability and speech/language categories suggests that many educators may have difficulty distinguishing students with disabilities from those who are still learning English (Zehler et al., 2003). While overrepresentation of emergent bilingual learners may be less prevalent in the primary years, Samson and Lesaux's (2009) study revealed that they became more prominent by third grade, implying that educators tend to delay special education referrals until students attain English proficiency. Gándara et al. (2003) have shown that emergent bilinguals who have low proficiency scores in both English and their home language are even more vulnerable. They are 1.5 times more likely at the elementary level, and twice as likely at the secondary level, to be diagnosed as speech impaired and learning disabled. Emergent bilinguals who are in bilingual programs are less likely to be in special education than those students who are in English-only programs (Artiles et al., 2002).

According to Zehler et al. (2003), approximately 9% of the total population of emergent bilinguals in public schools had been placed in special education classes in 2001–2002. Of these, 61% were male, indicating an overrepresentation of male emergent bilinguals with disabilities, since only 51% of all emergent bilinguals were male (Zehler et al., 2003). Most emergent bilinguals in special education programs were at the elementary level (50.5%), followed by middle school (22.8%), and then high school (18.6%) (Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003).

In Zehler and colleagues' 2003 study, Latine students represented 80% of the total special education emergent bilingual population, indicating that they are slightly overrepresented in special education programs compared to English learners overall. This could relate to cultural biases against Latine students. However, it may also have to do with the abundance of assessment instruments in Spanish compared to other languages, which makes it possible to diagnose these students. There are also more Spanish–English bilingual special education teachers and school psychologists, meaning that more programs for Spanish speakers may be available.

On the other hand, even when students are correctly identified as having special needs, emergent bilingual learners with disabilities tend to experience limited access to bilingual special education services. In some cases, this has had to do with the scarcity of teachers with both bilingual and special education expertise (Wang & Woolf, 2015). Students in self-contained special education classrooms are less likely to receive instruction in their home language or English-language development

supports (Hulse, 2021). Simultaneously, emergent bilinguals with disabilities may be excluded from bilingual education programs (Hulse, 2021). Under the fallacy that English-only instruction will prevent linguistic confusion and academic difficulties, educators often discourage parents of emergent bilinguals with disabilities from enrolling them in bilingual programs (Cioè-Peña, 2020; Guiberson, 2013). Bilingualism is viewed as a commodity (Cervantes-Soon, 2014), and thus it is seen as a privilege rather than a right (Cioè-Peña, 2020), and emergent bilinguals with disabilities are framed as falling short of what it takes to develop it.

Exclusion from gifted programs and Advanced Placement. The other side of the coin when it comes to accessing the most challenging educational programs is the emergent bilinguals' underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs and Advanced Placement courses.

In 2016, fewer than 3% of students who were designated gifted and talented in 2013–2014 were emergent bilinguals (U.S. Department of Education and Office for Civil Rights, 2016). Mun and colleagues' (2016) comprehensive review of the literature on gifted emergent bilinguals noted identification procedures and policies as the central issue. However, a quantitative assessment of data by the National Center for Research on Gifted Education (NCRGE, 2016) from three states with mandated gifted identification policies affirmed that emergent bilinguals were typically underrepresented in gifted and talented programs, even in states with such mandates. The NCRGE thus conducted a systematic qualitative study to address the issue and found that the primary obstacle was a widespread reluctance among teachers, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders to refer emergent bilinguals for evaluation (Gubbins et al., 2018). This reluctance has the potential to delay or completely hinder the identification of ELs as gifted and talented and manifests across all grade levels. There are also very few bilingual gifted and talented programs, assuming that giftedness is only the purview of monolingual students.

In addition, according to data from the U.S. Department of Education and the Office for Civil Rights, the proportion of emergent bilinguals in advanced math and science classes and enrolled in one Advanced Placement (AP) class was less than 5% in 2016, as shown in Table 6.1. The data suggest that because of emergent bilinguals' performance on invalid standardized tests, they are too often judged unfit for mainstream college-preparatory classes (Koelsch, n.d.).

The "English learner" label that many emergent bilinguals carry often plays a major role in this exclusionary tracking, as it prioritizes remedial English language development/ESL courses. Thus, when emergent bilingual students encounter schedule conflicts between their ESL courses and crucial core academic subjects like English language arts (ELA), math, science, or social studies, they frequently end up taking remedial courses. This separation from their English-dominant peers can hinder their progress along the paths toward college and career readiness (Callahan & Humphries, 2016; Callahan & Shifrer, 2016; Umansky, 2016).

Dual-language bilingual education programs have the potential to increase emergent bilinguals' likelihood to be placed into more advanced courses during their later secondary school years, in contrast to their peers enrolled in ESL programs (Morita-Mullaney et al., 2020). Nevertheless, dual-language bilingual

Table 6.1. Emergent Bilinguals and Advanced Math and Science and AP

Subject	% of students in schools that offer course	% of students enrolled in course
Algebra II	5%	4%
Calculus	5%	1%
Physics	5%	4%
AP (one course)	5%	2%

Source: U.S. Department of Education and Office for Civil Rights, 2016

programs operate within established institutional frameworks, including a master schedule that reflects longstanding practices and associated beliefs among guidance counselors, subject area leaders, and administrators who decide how factors such as academic performance (testing and grades), student characteristics (such as being an English learner), and specific programs (such as ESL, DLBE, or gifted and talented programs) influence course placements. These institutional "equity traps" create a distinct form of exclusionary tracking for even high-achieving emergent bilinguals from dual-language bilingual programs, which deprive them of access to advanced-level mathematics, science, engineering, and elective courses in high school (Morita-Mullaney et al., 2020).

Inequitable Resources

As has become quite evident throughout this book, emergent bilingual students have not received their due in terms of equitable resources for academic achievement in U.S. classrooms. Here, we cast further light on the lack of curricular materials and technology, poor school facilities, limited educational funding, and inequitable access to well-prepared teachers.

Instructional materials. Oakes and Saunders (2002) have argued that there is a clear link between appropriate materials and curriculum and student academic outcome. Emergent bilinguals need developmentally and culturally appropriate materials to develop and use English, but they also need appropriate rich content materials in their home languages. However, more often than not, emergent bilinguals do not have appropriate instructional resources. Only 25% of teachers surveyed in an American Institutes for Research (AIR) study reported that they used a textbook for emergent bilinguals that was different from that used for their English proficient students, and only 46% reported using any supplementary materials for them (Parrish et al., 2002). More than one-quarter of the teachers in California reported not having appropriate reading material for emergent bilinguals, and almost two-thirds of those with high percentages of emergent bilinguals in their classes had few instructional materials in Spanish or other languages (Gándara et al., 2003). Teachers with high percentages of emergent bilinguals also reported more frequently that their textbooks and instructional materials were meager, and that they and their students had less access to technology (Gándara et al., 2003; see also Chapter 9).

Bilingual teachers are often left to their own devices to translate material produced in English, taking time and energy from their attention to students and families. Even when translations are adequate (which many times they are not, for teachers are not translators), this translated material is not always culturally or experientially appropriate, failing to engage emergent bilingual students with meaningful histories, concepts, stories, and dreams.

Although federal regulations require states to have English language proficiency standards that are aligned with the state academic content standards, the alignment of instruction for emergent bilinguals with state standards is much poorer than for English proficient students (Gutiérrez et al., 2002; Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003b). There are also few instructional materials to support this alignment (Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003b).

School facilities. Emergent bilinguals attend the most impoverished and under-resourced schools, which is clearly related to their growing isolation and segregation within the public educational system (Orfield, 2001). Research has shown that classrooms for emergent bilinguals are often located on the periphery of, in the basement of, or outside of the school building (Olsen, 1997). Emergent bilinguals also go to schools in buildings that are often not clean or safe. For example, in a survey of 1,017 California teachers conducted in 2002 by the Lou Harris polling group, close to half of the teachers in schools with high numbers of emergent bilinguals reported that their schools had unclean bathrooms and that they had seen evidence of mice, compared to 26% of teachers in schools with few, if any, English learners (Gándara et al., 2003).

In 2006, a report concluded that new school buildings were needed across the country and that minoritized students, in particular, were attending schools with decrepit facilities (BEST, 2006). Despite unprecedented spending and growth in school construction since then, resources for school construction have not been equally available in all school districts. For example, between 1995 and 2004, school districts with high levels of minority student enrollment invested only $5,172 per student in school construction, while school districts with predominantly white student enrollment spent the most ($7,102 per student) (BEST, 2006). In addition, high-minority school districts used the money to fund basic repairs, such as new roofs and asbestos removal, whereas schools in wealthier districts funded science labs and performing arts studios.

Inequitable funding. One of the most important equity issues surrounding the education of emergent bilinguals has to do with the ways in which programs are funded. Today, funding for education programs for emergent bilinguals comes mostly from local and state sources.[1] In fact, the federal education funding on average represents about 11% of what local school districts spend overall (Sánchez, 2017).

Until 2002, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided funding for projects and services for emergent bilingual students at the state, district, and school levels on a competitive basis—that is, they were *discretionary grants* that states and districts applied for and used to fund schools and programs serving emergent bilinguals.

In contrast, under Title III of No Child Left Behind, and continuing under ESSA, there are *formula grants that the federal government awards directly to the states.* Under No Child Left Behind, these federal grants to the states are determined by two factors that are weighted differently in the formula:

1. The number of English language learners (80% of the formula), and
2. The population of recently immigrated children and youth (relative to national counts of these populations) (20% of the formula).

The expectation under ESSA was that Title III funding would be increased. But actual funding depends on appropriation from Congress, and this promise has not been fulfilled. Since 2002 the total appropriation has remained mostly unchanged, despite the growth of this population (Vazquez Baur, 2023; Najarro, 2024).

Because Title III grants are deemed insufficient to provide adequate funding for emergent bilinguals, states provide additional funding to school districts. But even across these states, emergent bilinguals are not funded equitably or in the same way.

A report by the Education Trust authored by Morgan (2022) discovered that districts with the highest numbers of emergent bilinguals receive about 14% less state and local funding compared to districts with lower emergent bilingual enrollment even after providing extra funds for emergent bilingual education in addition to basic per-pupil allocations (Villegas, 2023). Furthermore, per-pupil funding figures assume that schools target funds to those emergent bilinguals who need services and distribute funding somewhat evenly among them. In reality, however, the money allocated for each school is given directly to the principal in one lump sum, and the principal decides what to do with it. Little information exists on how these funds are allocated at the school level.

Striving for transparency is a central part of seeking equitable funding. Since 1991, when the press for higher standards and more accountability became more intense, courts, state legislatures, and education advocacy organizations have requested "costing out" studies in order to obtain more information on how to fund students, including emergent bilingual students, equitably. Such research helps inform the legal movement to seek adequate funding for groups deemed in need of additional resources, including emergent bilinguals (AIR, 2004; Rebell, 2007, 2009).

Most studies have shown that it costs more to educate emergent bilinguals than it does to educate English speakers (Baker et al., 2004; Parrish, 1994), although a few studies have argued otherwise (AIR, 2004). Still, estimates of these additional costs per emergent bilingual student vary greatly and range from 5% more to 200% more than the cost of educating mainstream students (Baker et al., 2004; J. Crawford, personal communication, March 17, 2007). In other words, there is great variation in this literature on the cost of a meaningful education for these students. Jiménez-Castellanos and Topper (2012) conclude that there is overall agreement that current funding levels are insufficient. Despite the differences, some consensus on the cost of providing high-quality education to emergent bilinguals is beginning to emerge.

Determining the exact cost per pupil to educate English learners (ELs) is complex and varies significantly across different contexts due to a variety of factors, including the instructional model used, geographic location, the size of the emergent bilingual population within a school or district, and the level of linguistic diversity. It is also influenced by the specific needs of emergent bilingual students, which can vary depending

on their English proficiency level, grade, how recently they arrived in the country, and whether they have experienced interrupted schooling. Moreover, the emergent bilingual population in the United States is becoming increasingly diverse, and funding mechanisms have struggled to keep up with these changes (Villegas, 2023).

The cost of programs for emergent bilinguals is also significantly influenced by the role of specialized teachers and class sizes (Sugarman, 2016). Self-contained grade-level emergent bilingual classes often do not require additional staff since the primary teacher handles both language and subject instruction, though costs can rise with smaller class sizes. Conversely, pull-out or push-in strategies, or co-teaching models involving both general and specialist teachers incur higher costs due to the need for extra staff. It is anticipated that, as more general education teachers gain certification to support emergent bilinguals, some expenses may be reduced. Overall, it has been established that emergent bilinguals require additional personnel at rates of approximately 20 students with one full-time teacher and one or more instructional aide per teacher (Baker et al., 2004).

Programs for emergent bilinguals also bear costs for additional learning opportunities, staff for language assessment and academic counseling, efforts to attract and retain qualified staff, materials in students' languages, and professional development. In addition to linguistic and academic assistance, school systems frequently offer various socioemotional supports to newcomer students, which may include mental health services, mentoring, and connections to additional social services. Assisting immigrant parents in understanding and engaging with their children's education may also entail additional expenses, particularly if parents are unfamiliar with the American school system or need translation or interpretation services to communicate with educators (Sugarman, 2016).

Clearly, there is a need for additional funding to provide emergent bilinguals with the educational services they require and deserve. However, before anyone can establish precisely how much more is needed for their education, it is necessary to carefully examine the local context in which these emergent bilinguals are being educated and the goals for their education.

Inequitable access to high-quality educators. Teacher and principal quality are two of the most important factors in determining school effectiveness and, ultimately, student achievement (Blase & Blase, 2001; Clewell & Campbell, 2004). But few school leaders and not enough teachers are well versed in issues surrounding bilingualism. Additionally, there is high turnover among both administrators and teachers of language-minoritized students. It is even more difficult to find high-quality teachers and school leaders for emergent bilingual students than it is for students in general. In 2016, 32 states reported having shortages of teachers who could work with emergent bilinguals (Sánchez, 2017). The issue has become more prevalent in recent years. The Office of English Language Acquisition (2023) found that while the emergent bilingual population increased 2.6% in the 2019–2020 year, the number of certified or licensed teachers in emergent bilingual education decreased 10.4%. Thus, ESL and bilingual education jobs were among the top three teaching positions with the highest vacancy rate.

Although principals and teachers at schools with large numbers of English learners are more likely to be Latine or Asian, these principals and teachers also tend to

be less experienced and have fewer credentials than those at schools with few or no emergent bilingual students (De Cohen et al., 2005). Forty percent of Asian teachers and 45% of Latine teachers nationwide teach in schools with high levels of emergent bilinguals (De Cohen et al., 2005). These Latine and Asian teachers are more likely to be bilingual and knowledgeable of the students' cultures, thus enabling the support of the students' languages and identities. And yet, teachers in schools with high numbers of emergent bilinguals have fewer credentials on average than teachers at schools with few or no emergent bilinguals (De Cohen et al., 2005). Although only slightly more than 50% of teachers in schools with high levels of emergent bilinguals have full certification, almost 80% of teachers in other schools do.

States have much difficulty in finding qualified personnel to teach emergent bilinguals, with California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois having the greatest need (OLEA, 2023). Nonetheless, other states not perceived as traditional immigrant destinations, such as Alaska, Delaware, and West Virginia, have had large shares of recently arrived children (Sugarman, 2023). Schools in these and other states like Wisconsin, for example, which have seen their emergent bilingual population triple in recent decades, must adapt to accommodate new and diverse groups of students, often lacking the necessary expertise or resources that are available in states with more established immigrant communities (Lowenhaupt & Reeves, 2017).

The lack of credentialed teachers to work with emergent bilinguals is quite dire. While about 65% of all teachers in the year 2017–2018 had at least one emergent bilingual in their class, only about 5% of all teachers had a major, minor, or certificate in ESL education (OLEA, 2023).

Beyond teacher certification in specialized areas, most teachers in the United States have not had any preparation on how to teach emergent bilinguals. In 2009, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that nationwide, less than 20% of teacher education programs required at least one course focused on English learners and bilingualism, and less than a third exposed their students to any fieldwork experience with emergent bilinguals.

The inadequate preparation of teachers on issues affecting language-minoritized students negatively impacts their ability to teach these students. It has been found that teachers who are certified in ESL or bilingual academic development, as well as those who are bilingual, have more positive attitudes toward the bilingualism of the students and their own teaching (Lee & Oxelson, 2006). However, according to U.S. Census data, teachers are disproportionately monolingual. Nationally, only 13% of teachers are bilingual, compared with at least 21% of children. A report from the Century Foundation shows that in California, one of the states with the largest emergent bilingual populations, only 14% of teachers are bilingual compared to 40% of the K–12 student populations (Williams, 2023). Bilingual programs often struggle to recruit qualified teachers. This is particularly true in the growing dual-language bilingual programs located in new immigrant gateway states, which have to source teachers from other countries. These teachers, while fluent in the language used in the program, are often not familiar with bilingual issues or living bilingual lives. These teachers are undergoing a difficult process of acculturation and understanding of the U.S. school system themselves,

and they often lack the necessary sociocultural knowledge about the U.S. racialized emergent bilinguals as well as the preparation necessary to teach them in culturally sustaining ways and to develop a sense of agency to advocate for them (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Babino & Stewart, 2018). Moreover, due to dominant beliefs in their home countries; differences in race, language practices, and social class; and insufficient preparation, they may also internalize the hegemony of English and adopt conventional monolingual, raciolinguistic, and deficit-thinking ideologies, contributing to persistent inequalities (Dorner et al., 2021; Martínez, Hikida, & Durán, 2018).

According to Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll (2005), there is a shortage not only of qualified teachers but also of school professionals to assist emergent bilinguals. Bilingual speech pathologists are sorely needed, and guidance counselors with bilingual skills are also in short supply. In California, less than 8% of the school psychologists are bilingual and capable of conducting an assessment in the home language of an emergent bilingual.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that emergent bilinguals have to contend with much more than language inequities. And yet, issues in their education are often reduced to purely linguistic ones. In this regard, and focusing on Latine students, Gándara and Contreras (2009) have said:

> Although Latinos have suffered many of the same inequities as blacks and other minority groups in schooling—inadequate and overcrowded facilities, underprepared teachers, inappropriate curriculum and textbooks, and segregated schools—the civil rights focus in education for Latinos has been primarily the issue of language. (p. 121)

The fact that 80% of emergent bilinguals are Latine students means that more attention has been paid to the inequities of language use instead of the inadequacies of the educational opportunity they have been given. And yet, to offer equitable curricular opportunities to emergent bilinguals would require a fundamental change in the ways in which we view the students' ways of using languages other than English, as well as their dynamic bilingualism.

ALTERNATIVE CURRICULAR PRACTICES AND PREPARING CARING EDUCATORS

A Challenging Inclusive Curriculum That Starts Early

Emergent bilinguals are fully capable of developing ways of using English for academic purposes if given the same socioeducational opportunities as wealthy white children. "The same," however, does not always mean integrated educational programs in which emergent bilinguals could be overlooked, or worse, discriminated against. An equitable curriculum and pedagogy for emergent bilinguals must adapt to their needs. A challenging inclusive curriculum for emergent bilinguals must be ecologically adaptive, as students' bilingualism and biliteracy emerge.

In *early childhood*, emergent bilinguals must be given the opportunity to engage with caring adults who not only speak their home languages and understand their linguistic and cultural practices but also can guide their bilingual development by providing opportunities for them to practice listening to and speaking English, as well as their home language repertoire. The beginnings of communication around print must include children's home language practices, the ways in which they use language to make meaning from print. Chumak-Horbatsch (2012) provides a plethora of recommendations for linguistically appropriate practice with young immigrant children.

Although it may be necessary to provide a separate instructional space away from English-only students to develop an emergent bilingual's literacy, care must be taken to also provide integrated spaces where emergent bilinguals can interact with other children whose repertoire at home includes English. This can happen during the time for snack or lunch, play, nap, music, art, dance, or any of the range of activities in which very young children are involved. These integrated spaces must function as catalysts not only of English language acquisition for emergent bilinguals but also of acquisition of other linguistic and cultural practices for young English-speaking monolingual children.

It is of primary importance that culturally and linguistically relevant early childhood programs with bilingual instruction be developed for very young emergent bilinguals (E. García & Jensen, 2009; Tazi, 2014). And it is crucial that this preschool education be state funded and provided free of charge to all 3- and 4-year-olds. An investment in bilingual preschools for all emergent bilinguals would correspond strongly with improved language development by the time the children reach elementary school.

In Chapter 5, we discussed alternative practices that foster the development of English academic literacy through complex language use. Much has been said about the ways in which a *challenging academic curriculum* can be delivered to emergent bilinguals while also developing their spoken language use in academic contexts, as well as their academic literacies (Celic, 2009; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Freeman & Freeman, 2008; Gibbons, 2002, 2009). But in order to provide inclusive educational spaces and curricular opportunities for emergent bilinguals throughout schooling, home language practices cannot be considered suspect. An inclusive and equitable society would provide the means by which emergent bilinguals are assessed for gifted-and-talented programs with the language practices they use and know best. In turn, these gifted-and-talented programs would then include these different ways of using language and make the development of bilingualism and biliteracy a goal for all the children. As we have seen, bilingualism and biliteracy are important for improved cognitive functioning, creative performance, and critical awareness. Thus, gifted-and-talented programs would include emergent bilinguals and at the same time would make spaces where bilingualism and biliteracy would be a goal for all.

The limited teaching of *science and engineering* to emergent bilinguals is increasingly being challenged. By taking up the concept of translanguaging, some science educators are showing how curriculum can move from being based on what

is called "the language of science" to a "*language for science*" (Gonzalez Howard et al., 2023). Even after the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) demanded that students follow the practices of scientists and engineers in making sense of real-world phenomena and designing solutions, educators focused on teaching the language of science—the technical vocabulary and terms, use of the passive voice, and impersonal use instead of first-person accounts. But by emphasizing the language for science, emergent bilinguals are free to draw upon all their language resources and practices to explore scientific phenomena and engage in scientific sensemaking (Andersen, Méndez Pérez, & González-Howard, 2022; Pérez, 2021; Pérez, González-Howard, & Suárez, 2022, in press). For example, Enrique Suárez's work has explicitly addressed how young bi-/multilingual students' translanguaging enhances their explanations of how electricity flows through circuits (Suárez, 2020, 2022), how sounds are produced (Suárez & Otero, 2024), and how to engineer objects that float (Suárez & Sousa, 2023).

If all students' language practices were given their rightful place in the U.S. curriculum as important tools for sociocognitive and academic development, more *advanced classes and Advanced Placement classes* would be taught through languages other than English. New York State policy mandates translation of some math, science, and social studies graduation exams into five languages—Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Russian, and Haitian Creole. The policy has resulted in a more challenging high school curriculum for emergent bilinguals because students who were previously relegated to ESL, music, art, and physical education classes are now included in content classes taught in these languages. Today, many high schools are also teaching AP classes in languages other than English. In one high school we know, for example, AP Biology is taught in Spanish for Latine emergent bilinguals. Although the students read the advanced biology text in English, they discuss and do experiments and scientific work in Spanish. In another high school, the teacher makes the advanced biology text available in both English and Spanish; students work collaboratively in small groups and are encouraged to use all their meaning-making resources to make sense of the text. In this classroom, the bilingual students' translanguaging is leveraged so that all can participate in accelerated classes, even those taught in English. Students are given responsibility to use all their communicative resources to research and learn advanced content.

Finally, with deeper understandings of bilingualism, educators may take a more nuanced approach when considering recommending *special education placement* for those students who have not yet developed English practices deemed as academic. Educators would know that the development of bilingualism and biliteracy takes practice over a lifetime and that using English for academic purposes to perform school tasks comes with time and practice. Moreover, it is important to understand that home language instruction is an essential support for students with disabilities and that bilingualism is a crucial aspect of their daily lives and identities and not simply a form of "enrichment" or commodified resource. This would then mean that educators may be better advocates for ensuring that emergent bilinguals with disabilities have access to a bilingual special education program that supports their linguistic, neurodiverse, academic, and cultural development.

Preparing Caring, Creative, and Qualified Educators

Perhaps no other area is so crucial to the improvement of education of emergent bilinguals as the preparation of educators for these students—school leaders, teachers, and professionals such as school psychologists, guidance counselors, therapists, and paraprofessionals. In fact, all school leaders today need to become experts on bilingualism and the education of emergent bilinguals (Reyes, 2006). Not just specialized bilingual and ESL teachers but also "mainstream" teachers have to understand issues of bilingualism in education and how to include emergent bilinguals in a high-quality and challenging education (Lucas & Grinberg, 2008). A study by López, Scanlan, and Gundrum (2013) found that states that mandate specialist certification along with requiring all teachers to possess some level of knowledge to effectively work with emergent bilinguals experienced the most successful outcomes in terms of emergent bilingual academic achievement. Moreover, López and Santibañez's (2018) analysis of teacher preparation in Arizona, California, and Texas found that over time, more rigorous training also results in improved teacher self-efficacy, which is an important factor for job satisfaction, commitment to the profession, more positive interactions with students, and confidence to teach emergent bilinguals. In general, more preparation is better for both teachers and emergent bilingual students.

With the intensified migrations of peoples and convergences of languages and cultures in today's globalized world, there cannot be language teachers on the one hand and content teachers on the other (Téllez & Waxman, 2006). All language teachers must have some expertise in the content area, just as all content teachers must have some expertise in language. To achieve this, teacher education programs would have to change significantly, making a commitment to include courses on bilingualism and language development in all curricula, and ensuring that their prospective teachers have clinical experiences with emergent bilinguals (Grant & Wong, 2003).

Teacher apprenticeship models have sprung up where prospective teachers team up with experienced teachers for a year of teaching, while pursuing university courses in partnership with the school district. One such model is that being pursued by the Internationals Network for Public Schools in New York City (see Chapter 3). Prospective teachers have a yearlong teaching apprenticeship in high-performing international high schools. The program is designed around the tenet that, like students, teachers learn best when they apply the theories and content of teaching in an authentic learning context and develop teaching abilities by practicing alongside an experienced teacher.

Teachers who provide emergent bilinguals with a challenging and creative curriculum are those who are committed to the development of language-minoritized communities, both socially and academically. A way to capitalize on this commitment would be to attract prospective teachers from the language communities themselves (Clewell & Villegas, 2001; Valenzuela, 2016). Valenzuela (2016) offers a vision for how to implement their Grow Your Own initiative, which builds bilingual teacher capacity by tapping the very communities where these teachers are needed and nurturing critical consciousness from the bottom up.

The engagement of the community is crucial to ensure that there is a supply of committed and qualified caring and creative teachers.

EDUCATING EMERGENT BILINGUALS: EMBRACING CHALLENGE AND CARE

It is evident that providing an equitable education to emergent bilinguals is not only an issue of language. And yet, unless the students' home language practices are accepted in schools and not considered suspect, there will continue to be ways of excluding emergent bilinguals from the equal educational opportunities that they deserve. Given the ways in which schools are structured, only a language rights orientation based on principles of social justice will ensure that emergent bilinguals are given equitable curricular opportunities and are included in advanced courses and gifted-and-talented programs. But language rights have to be balanced with socio-educational rights, which insist that emergent bilinguals have equitable resources, equitable funding, and equitable access to high-quality teachers. Social justice for emergent bilinguals includes providing them with a challenging inclusive and linguistically and culturally relevant curriculum that empowers them to counteract the linguistic and social oppression in which they often live.

Study Questions

1. What is social justice? How is social justice related to language rights? What do you think about language rights?
2. What are the characteristics of a challenging and creative curriculum for emergent bilinguals? Describe inequities in curricula that emergent bilingual students face.
3. How would you define a transformative pedagogy? What are the differences in conceptualization between culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally sustaining pedagogy? In what ways are culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies transformative?
4. How can critical consciousness help reduce inequities and deficit thinking? How can it be fostered in the classroom through the curriculum, student interactions, and instructional practices? How can it be cultivated among educators and other adults in the school community?
5. How do deficit-oriented beliefs, such as the notion of the "word gap" or "language gap," hinder agentic opportunities for students? What are the consequences? What classroom practices would offer students opportunities for increased agency?
6. Why are emergent bilinguals often classified as special education students? Why are they often excluded from advanced courses and gifted-and-talented programs? How could this exclusion be remedied?

7. Discuss how instructional resources are often inadequate for emergent bilinguals. What would be necessary to alleviate this situation?
8. What is the situation regarding funding of high-quality educational programs for emergent bilinguals? What do "costing out" studies say?
9. Why are many educators inadequately prepared to serve emergent bilinguals? What would be a way of attracting and preparing caring, creative, and qualified teachers of emergent bilinguals?
10. Discuss what would be the characteristic of an inclusive and just curriculum for emergent bilinguals.