

***Teacher Preparation for Bilingual Student Populations:
Educar para Transformar (2011)***

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Bilingualism has taken a swing on the pendulum in a negative direction when it comes to education. Programs are being dissolved and are disappearing at startling rates, meanwhile the population of bilingual students continues to grow on a daily basis. In *Teacher Preparation for Bilingual Student Populations: Educar para Transformar*, Belinda Bustos Flores, Rosa Hernandez Sheets, and Ellen Riojas Clark (2011) create an argument aligned to the need for reform in teacher preparation programs with a focus on bilingual education and bilingual learners in particular. The purpose of this book is thus to raise awareness about the need to incorporate culturally responsive pedagogy, including bilingual and bicultural pedagogy, multiculturalism, and multilingualism, into the curriculum, beginning at the University with teacher candidates and feeding down into K-12 schooling. The authors problematize current teacher preparation programs by focusing on how such programs might be reformed in order to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. The authors present a new educational model, *Educar para Transformar*, which is designed to be implemented by teacher preparation programs in an effort to address the ever-changing landscape of schools in the United States. Specifically, they propose that *Educar para Transformar* offers teacher preparation programs, especially those in areas with highly diverse populations, new possibilities for meeting the needs of students.

In demonstrating how many educational programs are failing to effectively meet the needs of a diverse student population, this collection aims to bring greater awareness to educators by providing sound, research-based curriculum and instruction to this change in demographics. In particular, the authors suggest that authentically meeting the needs of a diverse body of students requires cultural awareness in the form of self-reflection, praxis, social justice, and social activism. Understanding different ways of knowing and being is of the utmost importance, and the authors address epistemologies of student and teacher selves through social contexts and a sociopolitical frame. Conceptually, this kind of thinking allows teachers to decenter the knowledge implemented by the school system and the curriculum, and thereafter, validates students and their funds of knowledge.

For example, Flores, et al. (2011) highlight the importance of empowering educators through the process of *educación* (learning provided by home, school, and community, not necessarily a formal curriculum), rather than through schooling (learning to promote socialization and control) (p. 3). Empowerment comes through opportunities to use authentic teaching through strategies like teacher-research by teacher candidates to bring community into the school. There are also several examples provided within the text of student-teacher dialogue where the authors analyze the dialogue between the two, to build an understanding of how the strategies being implemented through the use of questioning are effectively being used. Authentic assessment is also promoted in this text to help teachers gauge student learning in a way that will be useful and not just used to find funding for schools nor to track students. This focus on empowerment creates a space for learning that promotes cultural awareness and competence, critical consciousness, and social activism through culturally responsible teaching and learning.

This book provides an organized and concrete explanation of the *Educar para Transformar* model in a format that is easy to follow and purposeful for those who either teach in a teacher education program, are teacher candidates, or serve as administrators and specialists within the field of education. The collection is organized into 5 sections that each follows a logical sequence from the micro to the macro-level for educators. The first section, *transformación*, focuses on a rationale for addressing bilingual learners in teacher preparation programs, while the second section, *iluminación*, discusses the importance of self-reflection amongst teachers and teacher candidates. In *praxis*, the authors address the relationship between theory and praxis in the classroom through a discussion of curriculum, curriculum design, instruction, and assessment. *Concientización*, on the other hand,

focuses on issues of policy and practice toward social justice, while the final section, *revolución*, calls for greater social activism, transformation, and reform of current educational policy. In addition, the collection further breaks down each chapter into three parts: 1) an explanation of the study or idea presented; 2) recommendations for teacher preparation programs; and 3) recommendations for future-research. This scaffolding throughout the text provides accessibility to the reader and allows the text to flow.

In the era of English-Only policies that have led to the demise of bilingual education programs and the increasing segregation of students of color in U.S. schools, the content of the text speaks to the efficacy of teacher preparation programs in meeting the needs of bilingual learners. This text positions itself in a pro-bilingual education platform to promote the efficacy of these strategies in meeting students' need, while at the same time critiquing the way this issue is being addressed at the university level through teacher preparation programs. Of utmost importance, however, is that this collection strives to further the reader's understanding of the different risk factors facing students and their families such as low SES, parent literacy rates, single vs. double parent households, etc., and how these factors contribute to the achievement gap. In line with the premise of this book, the authors further emphasize the role that teacher education programs play in preparing educators to effectively help at-risk students by providing a framework that addresses these factors within teacher preparation and teacher preparation programs. In addition, the authors provide a scaffold that challenges teacher candidates to reach a greater sense of cultural awareness and means of culturally responsive teaching through the education they receive in their preparation programs.

The overarching theoretical framework informing the authors' work is Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural learning theory. The authors adopt this framework to make meaning and promote the importance of using language, culture, and education from the home and the community in the classroom to promote cultural awareness and student achievement. They believe that through the incorporation of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977), students will be more apt to be successful when it comes to understanding curriculum and performance on standards-based assessments. In addition, they pull from Vélez-Ibáñez (1995) and González, Moll, & Amanti's (2005) "funds of knowledge" theory to showcase the importance of understanding families, their communities, as well as their ways of being and knowing and using these funds in the classroom to make curriculum more comprehensible to bilingual learners. They look to research on identity and identity formation from researchers like Erikson (1950) and Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain (1998) to create a framework for teacher candidates to not only practice self-reflection in terms of their own identity and identity formation but also to analyze how their own biases might impact student identity and identity formation. Finally, they use Kincheloe's (2008) critical pedagogy to problematize education for bilingual learners so that teacher candidates, as well as students, can begin to question their circumstances and find ways to work to transform their education and educational policy as a whole.

This book provides the field with a positive and practical framework for addressing the changing demographics in the U.S. and for addressing the change through praxis in K-12 schools and in teacher preparation programs. The text is well written and organized in a rational sequence, as it takes the audience from the impact on teacher candidates to the impact on communities and educational policy. Additionally, the collection provides both graphics and illustrations that visually illustrate the framework and program model proposed to address bilingual and bicultural pedagogy in teacher preparation programs. The book also provides a consistent outline from chapter to chapter to provide the reader with new information and suggestions for future programs and research.

What is missing, however, is comparative information on how current teacher preparation programs are working to address issues of bilingual and bicultural pedagogy in their curriculum. Such a comparison could potentially create a link between the importance of applying the proposed framework to teaching all students, not just bilingual learners. The focus on bilingual learners in the text may discount the importance of such theory and praxis on all student populations and on all teacher candidates, despite the population they intend on teaching. Focusing on how these strategies are best practices for all learners will promote the impact of this book on the field of education as a whole.

Overall, this text serves as an excellent resource for university teacher preparation programs that not only benefits students, but also professors in the field, teacher candidates, administrators, specialists, and active

teachers, especially those working with diverse populations. As discussed above, the ideology presented across the text is beneficial to the field of education and to all types of learners despite their cultural or language background as diversity comes in many different shapes and forms. The book is also useful in providing teacher-researchers with ideas on topics of study for research within their organizations.

In conclusion, *Teacher Preparation for Bilingual Student Populations: Educar para Transformar* provides the field with an excellent tool for teaching and learning and provides educators with an education model that is useful to teacher candidates, educators, and all stakeholders within the field of education. This book provides a useful resource for educators who want to promote education reform, advocacy, cultural awareness, and culturally responsive education in the K-12 school system and beyond. The information contained within provides understandings for a transformative model of education that promotes cultural sensitivity and social justice for students, families, and communities throughout the education system.

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