



# Preface

*Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: from Principles to Practice* explores linguistic and cultural diversity in education policy, practice, and research. This foundational text is grounded in theoretical understandings about bi/multilingual individuals and their linguistic and cultural development. An important premise is that decisions about languages and language use shape the educational experiences afforded students in significant ways, especially for children who negotiate multilingual and multicultural realities. *Foundations* equips educators with the knowledge and skills they need to make principled decisions about language education in their schools. The book also explores multiple pathways for advocacy through classroom and school practices and policy-making and sets an agenda for research from a multilingual perspective.

*Foundations for Multilingualism in Education* is written for practicing teachers and administrators working in bilingual or multilingual school settings, for those preparing to work in these settings, and for those interested in conducting research on multilingual issues. The book takes a comprehensive, pluralistic approach to research, theory, policy, and practice, and introduces four core principles that are applicable across a wide range of educational contexts including bilingual, multilingual, and English-medium types of programs. *Foundations* is international in scope and includes examples of multilingual educational practices in the United States as well as in other countries around the world.

## Pluralist Perspectives on Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice

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*Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: from Principles to Practice* takes a holistic, context-sensitive approach to bi/multilingualism. It presents bi/multilingualism as a phenomenon to be understood and valued on its own terms, rather than in opposition to or derived from our understandings of monolingual realities. Research, policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment, as well as other educational practices, are considered explicitly through this lens. The book examines what pluralistic discourses look and sound like and compares this pluralist perspective with assimilationist discourses that have dominated the education field. Students identify critical questions that teachers, administrators, researchers, and policy makers can ask from this perspective and learn to align practice (policy, program choices, instruction,

assessment) with what we know about multilingual development and the role of students' linguistic and cultural experiences in their success at school.

## A Principled Approach

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In linking theory to policy, practice, and research, *Foundations for Multilingualism in Education* moves way from traditional dichotomies found in the field of bilingual education. The dichotomous choice between bilingual or English-only instruction, for instance, has led to a preoccupation with finding the one “best model” to work with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Sensitivity to specific local contexts and student populations is often not reflected in this debate.

Instead, this book focuses on four core principles that educators can use to make informed decisions about the schooling of multilingual children.

Principle 1: Striving for Educational Equity

Principle 2: Affirming Identities

Principle 3: Promoting Additive Bi/Multilingualism

Principle 4: Structuring for Integration

These four principles transcend traditional English-medium, bilingual, and multilingual models, and are applicable across a wide range of multilingual contexts.

### PRINCIPLE 1: STRIVING FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The first principle is an overarching principle. Educators who apply the *Principle of Striving for Educational Equity* create school environments where each individual feels valued and respected. They work together to ensure that formal and informal language policies and practices at the school, program, and classroom level fairly represent the diversity in the school and do not discriminate systematically against certain groups of students.

### PRINCIPLE 2: AFFIRMING IDENTITIES

The second principle, *Affirming Identities*, draws attention to how languages and cultural experiences are represented in schools. Educators who value this principle demonstrate respect for students' linguistic and cultural identities in school policies and classroom practices. These educators validate students' linguistic and cultural experiences and purposefully create spaces for diverse student voices.

### PRINCIPLE 3: PROMOTING ADDITIVE BI/MULTILINGUALISM

The third principle, *Promoting Additive Bi/Multilingualism*, highlights languages as resources to draw on and nurture. Educators who promote additive bi/multilingualism understand the role that students' existing linguistic repertoires play in language and literacy development and in content learning. They create opportunities for using, developing, displaying, and engaging in multiple languages by building on and extending students' existing linguistic repertoires. They make knowing multiple languages an integral part of their curriculum and instructional decisions.

### PRINCIPLE 4: STRUCTURING FOR INTEGRATION

The fourth principle, *Structuring for Integration*, recognizes schools as systems where diverse parts are interconnected and can work together to create an environment of mutual respect and equity. Educators who structure for integration promote representative involvement of constituents with diverse perspectives and expertise in decision making, including language policy, program structure, curriculum and materials, classroom structures, assessment practices, and extracurricular activities. These educators reject the notion that language minority groups (students, parents, teachers) must unilaterally assimilate to fit into the existing system. Instead, educators who structure for integration work to build a linguistically and culturally responsive system for all of their constituents.

### SPECIAL FEATURES

*Foundations for Multilingualism in Education: from Principles to Practice* includes special features within the text to structure learning, teaching, and research.

**Guiding Questions.** Each chapter opens with a series of questions that preview the main ideas and concepts of the chapter. Guiding Questions encourage students to set a purpose for reading and to summarize and synthesize major concepts. Guiding Questions also prepare students to apply what they learn in the chapter to practice.

**Key Terms.** Key Terms are listed at the beginning of each chapter. Key Terms are highlighted and clearly defined in the text when first used. Key Terms can also be found in the Glossary for quick reference.

**Critical Issues.** Critical Issues questions at the end of each chapter invite students to review and critically analyze the main ideas discussed in the chapter. Critical Issues questions can be used to guide group discussion or responded to individually.

***Application & Reflection Activities.*** Application and Reflection Activities help readers link what they have read to their own context. These activities also challenge readers to consider the implications of pluralist and assimilationist perspectives for research and scholarship. Students and professors can take these activities and develop them into more comprehensive research or application projects.

***Recommended Readings.*** Each chapter concludes with a list of books and articles recommended by the author. The annotated list encourages readers to further explore key issues.

***Glossary.*** The Glossary provides a quick reference to the vocabulary used in the field and to the Key Terms highlighted in the book.

## Acknowledgements

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This book is the result of ongoing interactions and conversations with many people, and I am grateful for all of the mentors and teachers that I have had the honor of meeting and who have helped with the writing of this book. María Estela Brisk and Susan McGilvray-Rivet deserve special mention as they planted the seeds for the book as I began working in the United States.

During my doctoral work at Boston University, María Estela Brisk introduced me to the notion that we must look at bilinguals ‘as bilinguals’ and not as deficient monolinguals. She pushed me to think about what a bilingual perspective entails. One important theme in this book is exactly this question—what research questions, what policies, and what instructional practices characterize a multilingual perspective? This book would not have been the same without her continued mentorship and on-going willingness to engage in many conversations about teaching, teachers, and multilingual children.

Working for the Framingham Public Schools with Susan McGilvray-Rivet (then Director for Bilingual Education) was an equally valuable learning experience. Sue helped me see the importance of guiding administrators and teachers to understand how theory translates into practice and how to approach implementation with integrity. She and the many bilingual and English as a Second Language teachers in the district that I had the honor of working with gave me the opportunity to engage in this translation process. Based on these experiences, this book considers specifically how the question of quality education plays out in different classroom and school contexts.

Finally, a special thanks is due to my editor, Rebecca Freeman Field. Her faith in the book, her expertise in this field, her enthusiasm, feedback, and

constant support were contagious and of tremendous help. Her encouragement and patience allowed me to find my voice and this book to find its own path. Publisher Charles Field's guidance and organization have also been a great source of support. The final draft benefited greatly from copy editor Debby Smith's eye for detail and consistency.