

# PENNSYLVANIA LANGUAGE FORUM



Pennsylvania State Modern  
Language Association

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Pennsylvania State Modern  
Language Association

*INSPIRING MULTILINGUAL  
COMMUNICATION AND  
INTERCULTURAL  
UNDERSTANDING*

**The mission of the Pennsylvania  
State Modern Language Association  
(PSMLA) is to enhance world  
language education throughout  
Pennsylvania by:**



Promoting the teaching  
and learning of world  
languages and culture at  
all levels (Pre-K through  
university)

Providing  
opportunities for  
professional growth  
and networking



Recognizing excellence  
in the field

Collaborating  
with local, state,  
and national  
organizations



## ABOUT

*Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF)* is the semi-annual online publication of the Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association. It features articles on teaching strategies, lesson plans, project ideas, and research by and for world language teachers in Pennsylvania.

PSMLA Members will receive an invitation to view the journal online through the publications section of our website. A digital archive of previous issues is also available online. Visit <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum> to access *PLF* online.

## SUBMISSIONS

Article submissions are accepted on a rolling basis but must be received by February 15 to be considered for publication in the Spring issue of *PLF* or by August 15 for the Fall issue.

The Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF) supports responsible, ethical, and transparent use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in academic writing. Authors who use AI tools to help with writing, editing, or creating visuals must briefly explain how and why they used these tools in their manuscript. AI tools cannot be listed as authors, since they cannot take responsibility for the work or respond to peer review. However, any reference to AI in your text should be cited in the references. Authors are fully accountable for the accuracy and originality of all content; ***AI is fallible***. This policy follows current standards from APA, Elsevier, and ACTFL, and will be updated as technology evolves.

### General Submission Guidelines

- PSMLA members may submit titled articles related to teaching and language education.
- All submissions must be written in English, though examples of lessons or student work may be in the target language.
- All articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or a Google Doc, formatted using Times New Roman 12-point font and be double-spaced. PDF article submissions will not be considered for publication.
- Scanned documents and photographs that accompany the article submission must be clearly identified and labeled. They must be submitted as a JPG or PNG.
- All documents of the submission must include the following information:
  - Name(s) of author(s)
  - Affiliation(s)
  - Language(s) taught
  - Intended levels, when relevant
  - Release Form(s) for any ***photographs*** (available [online](#) )

Submissions must be submitted online using the submission link on the [PSMLA website](#).

All authors and any co-authors must be current PSMLA members or members of a NECTFL reciprocal state organization at the time of publication. PSMLA members whose work is chosen for publication will be notified via email. All formatting and final edits are at the discretion of the editors.

## CONTACT PLF

PSMLA and the *Pennsylvania Language Forum* invite vendors and organizations to submit advertisements that share our mission. Vendors wishing to advertise should consult the Ads & Exhibits page on the PSMLA website ([www.psmla.org](http://www.psmla.org)). All other questions may be directed to Christina Huhn or Nathan Campbell, Co-Editors of *PLF*, at [PALanguageForum@psmla.org](mailto:PALanguageForum@psmla.org).



## Call for Submissions – Peer Reviewed Articles

### Pennsylvania Language Forum: Peer Review Process

**Aim and Scope:** *Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF)* is PSMLA's annual publication. The journal features a selection of original scholarly articles that are chosen by a peer review process.

The Editorial Board of *PLF* welcomes original scholarly, research-based articles that address issues directly related to world language teachers in Pennsylvania. Peer Reviewed articles should maintain a classroom relevance for world language educators at all levels in Pennsylvania. Dissertations should be refined and re-focused, as dissertations are too long and detailed for a published article. Research conducted in the K-12 classroom is highly encouraged.

#### Potential Topics may include:

- **Empirical research studies** and application of high-leverage practices in the World Language Classroom in the state of PA. Submissions of ***empirical research*** for the peer-reviewed section of the journal should generally include the following sections
  - ✓ Introduction
  - ✓ Literature Review
  - ✓ Methodology
  - ✓ Discussion or Results
  - ✓ Implications for the Classroom
  - ✓ Conclusion
  - ✓ Acknowledgements (optional)
  - ✓ Works Cited
- Literature reviews of published scholarship on ***Technology in World Language Education, including AI, classroom applications, etc.*** The reviews of literature should include research with a classroom focus, and focus on research completed within the last 10 years”
- Scholarly research focusing on ***language proficiency development.***
- Scholarly articles on ***literary topics, cultural topics, or interdisciplinary topics*** are welcome, provided the article is focused on classroom applications.
- Literature reviews or scholarship on ***World Language Advocacy.***
- Scholarship on ***unique learning contexts, such as content-based instruction, heritage language learners, special needs, or social-emotional learning, among others with a classroom connection to the PA World Language Classroom.***



All submissions should follow the general constructs of academic research and be applicable to the World Language Classroom in Pennsylvania.

**Peer-Review Process:** All manuscripts follow a blind review process and are first reviewed by the editor(s) of the journal and then sent for blind review by members of the Editorial Board. Manuscripts must follow the submission guidelines below.

#### Manuscript Preparation Guidelines

1. Submissions must be original work that has not been previously published or be presently under review by another journal.

2. Submissions must be written in standard academic English. Authors should follow APA guidelines consistently. Use [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html) as a reference as needed.
3. All submissions are initially read by the Editor(s) (first review) and then if deemed appropriate and *all* guidelines were followed, sent out to a group of appropriate experts for blind review. Submissions should include a title page as a separate document that includes:
  - a. Article Title
  - b. Article abstract
  - c. Name(s) of author(s)
  - d. Affiliation(s)
  - e. Language(s) taught
  - f. Intended level(s), when relevant
  - g. Release Form(s) for any images or materials (available at <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum>)
4. The anonymity of the author(s) *must be ensured* by removing all identifiers from the manuscript. This can be done by referring to any identifying information as “Author X, University X, etc.)
5. All manuscripts must be submitted as .doc, docx, or rtf files. Use Times New Roman 12 point, double space.
6. All in-text quotes require page numbers or paragraph sources for nonpaginated sources. Use *italics* for emphasis; not quote marks.
7. Word limitations are as follows: Title [15 words]; Abstract [150 words]; Key Words [5]; full article, [approximately 5,000 words (roughly 15 pages)].
8. Submissions must be submitted online using the submission link on the [PSMLA website](https://psmla.org).
9. All submissions will be acknowledged by the Editor(s) within 2 weeks of receipt.
10. Authors are responsible for completing Human Subjects and IRB requirements and securing publication rights when using images.

#### Rubric for peer-reviewed submissions:

|                  | Exceeds  | Meets Expectations   | Further Development Required  |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| <b>Relevance</b> | Article is very relevant and timely both to the Aim and Scope of the PLF and World Languages.      | Article is relevant to Aim and Scope of PLF but some improvements should be considered by the editor(s).                           | Article topic not relevant to Aim and Scope of PLF.   |
| <b>Citations</b> | Article is well cited, following APA citation guidelines as identified in the Author instructions. | Article is well cited, following APA citation guidelines, but there are a few errors that will require attention from the editors, | Article is missing citations or citations are largely inaccurate.   |
| <b>Mechanics</b> | Article is very well-written, free of typographical or structural errors.                          | Article is well-written and free of typographical errors but may have a few sections that will require the editor(s) attention.    | Article contains significant typographical errors or structural errors beyond what the editorial process can support. |

# Editors' Message

## Fall 2025



### Nathan Campbell & Christina Huhn *Editors* *Pennsylvania Language Forum*

Devoted world language educators:

Welcome to the Fall issue of the PA Language Forum! As we kick off the new school year, we are gearing up to host our Fall Conference in Bethlehem, PA, where our teachers are the stars! We hope to connect, learn, and grow together as we share strategies, ideas, and research to improve our profession. We are grateful to all our sponsors. As you browse this issue, be sure to click on the interactive ads of the language companies that support our programs!

At our conference, we will honor our 2025 award winners. Learn more about the **PSMLA Teacher of the Year**, Charlene Bigelow on page 10. Also, learn more about **Outstanding World Language Educator**, Sarah Dutton, on page 11. Both Charlene and Sarah have demonstrated themselves to be amazing educators whose passion continues to inspire.

By now, we are all back to work at our respective institutions of learning, and it can be a challenge to remember to put ourselves first. In this issue's survey, we asked our members how they stay grounded. Check out some of their responses on pages 13 and 14.

As a way to help balance our work and personal life, Cherie Garrett offers multiple Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications that can help you organize, plan, and create engaging lessons for your students. Check out her detailed list on page 16.

This past spring PSMLA hosted the first-ever World Language Education Summit at Penn State Harrisburg. Educators, administrators, legislators, and industry leaders all came together to learn about the importance of World Language education and create a Pennsylvania roadmap for World Language education. On page 22, please read about the summit and how the work continues.

Finally, we feature a Peer-Reviewed article on the contemporary topic of *Translanguaging and Universal Design for Learning (TrUDL) Practices* by Kramer-Gordon, Czora, and Normile, of SUNY Empire State University in New York. This peer-reviewed article is the first piece published under our affiliate agreement with states that share our NECTFL region and can be found on page 26.

We hope you find this a thought-provoking and practical issue of our journal!

# President's Message

## Fall 2025



**Megan Flinchbaugh**  
*President*  
**PSMLA**

Greetings, PSMLA members and world language educators!

It's back-to-school season, and we hope the year is off to a great start. As you settle back into the school year, we hope you will look to PSMLA for support. Whether for networking, professional development, resources for advocacy, student and educator awards, or news and research related to world language, turn to PSMLA. Check out our [website](#) to know or learn the many facets of PSMLA's important ongoing work.

### **Professional Development**

PSMLA is excited to welcome you to Bethlehem, PA, this October for our annual fall conference. Come "Be the Star!" with sessions that will help you continue to guide your students on the path toward proficiency. The conference is a great opportunity to connect with colleagues, learn from each other, celebrate our award winners, and hear from keynote speaker Dr. Victoria Gilbert. Of course, be sure to visit our exhibitor's hall to discover organizations that can support and enhance the work you do in the classroom.

In addition to the fall conference, PSMLA is proud to offer opportunities for professional growth. PSMLA's professional development committee has organized a fall webinar series-free to members! --featuring presentations from current members of the PSMLA Executive Council. [Register today!](#)

Our professional development is always working and planning, so stay tuned in the spring for additional opportunities. Contact our chair Jennifer Campbell at [jen@psmla.org](mailto:jen@psmla.org), and visit our [calendar](#) for more information and upcoming events.

In addition to free or discounted registration rates, PSMLA members can receive Act 48 hours for our events. If you have let your membership lapse or still are not a PSMLA member, now is the time to join! Visit our website to renew or [join now](#).

### **Getting involved**

Are you interested in getting involved but aren't sure where to start? Consider one of the many programs offered by PSMLA

You can work with PSMLA's [peer mentoring program](#) as a new teacher or mentor.



Mentoring (or being mentored!) is a great way to connect with colleagues, share experiences and expertise, and strengthen the profession.

PSMLA'S [Global Scholars](#) program supports and recognizes students in grades 9-12 in their global studies, including world language courses.

The PSMLA [PEP awards](#) is a great way to recognize outstanding world language teachers, students, and schools, and it is a great way to demonstrate the value and

impact of world language programs in schools.

This is my last message as PSMLA president; thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It has been a true honor, and I look forward to continuing my work with PSMLA as past president. I am eager to continue working with world language educators like you: invested, passionate, committed, and enthusiastic. Thank you for all you do to support and promote world language education! I am grateful to be your colleague.

# 2025 PSMLA Award Recipients



## PSMLA Teacher of the Year (2025)



### Charlene Bigelow

Charlene Bigelow has dedicated more than 25 years to inspiring students and advancing world language education in the Downingtown Area School District. A master French teacher, she is recognized for creating a classroom where students gain not only linguistic proficiency but also intercultural competence and global awareness.

Charlene's teaching blends rigor with creativity. She designs immersive learning experiences that allow students to explore francophone cultures, practice meaningful communication, and develop critical thinking skills. Her ability to differentiate instruction ensures that every learner can succeed. Her students graduate with strengthened literacy in both French and English, and with the confidence to connect with diverse perspectives in today's interconnected world.

As World Language Department Leader at Downingtown High School West, Charlene has made a lasting impact on curriculum design, assessment practices, and mentoring. She recently hosted a student teacher, modeling best practices in instructional design and classroom culture. Her leadership extends to professional development, where she collaborates with colleagues, presents at workshops, and shares innovative strategies.

Charlene's influence reaches beyond her school. She is an active member of PSMLA and ACTFL, engaging in professional learning and advocating for world languages as a core content area in K–16 education. Her contributions to curriculum development and her willingness to share expertise exemplify her commitment to strengthening the profession.

Her accomplishments are grounded in a clear vision of the value of language learning. Drawing from research in neuroscience, Charlene highlights how studying another language strengthens cognitive function, enhances literacy, and even contributes to lifelong brain health. She is a passionate advocate for multilingualism as a tool for fostering empathy, building cultural bridges, and preparing students to meet global challenges.

Charlene embodies the qualities celebrated by the PSMLA Teacher of the Year Award: exemplary teaching, leadership in the profession, and unwavering dedication to the growth of students and colleagues. She stands as both a model of excellence and an inspiring representative for world language teachers across Pennsylvania and beyond.





## PSMLA Outstanding World Language Educator of the Year (2025)

### Sarah B. Dutton

Sarah B. Dutton, M.Ed., recipient of the PSMLA Outstanding World Language Educator Award: Post-Secondary, has made a lasting impact as an innovative educator, program builder, and mentor in world language education.

At Elizabethtown College, Sarah served as Assistant Teaching Professor of Spanish and Director of the Graduate Certificate in Medical Spanish, a program she helped design to prepare health professionals with the language skills and cultural competence needed to serve Spanish-speaking patients. She taught courses such as *Medical Spanish I & II*, *Latinx Health Issues in the United States*, and *Cultural Competence: Working Effectively with Diverse Populations*. For more than two decades, she also taught medical Spanish at Johns Hopkins University, where she developed curriculum for schools of medicine and nursing.

Sarah distinguished herself through her professional leadership and innovation. She presented at PSMLA, NECTFL, and ACTFL on medical Spanish pedagogy, transparency in teaching and learning (TILT), and the integration of generative AI into equitable instruction. Her publications in *The Language Educator* and *Pennsylvania Language Forum* reflect her commitment to bridging research, technology, and classroom practice. She served as a Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Faculty Fellow, received Elizabethtown's Merit Award for Service to the College, and was honored twice by undergraduates as an Emergent Mentor Scholar.

Her colleagues described her as "one of the most talented leaders in our educational field," while her students consistently praised her mentorship, expertise, and engagement. Nationally, Sarah contributed as a member of the NECTFL Advisory Board, an ACTFL proposal reviewer, and through multiple curriculum development task forces.

PSMLA is proud to honor Sarah Dutton as the Outstanding World Language Educator for her excellence in teaching, innovation in curriculum design, and dedication to student success.



**Learn more about all the PSMLA awards on our website.**

**Look for our call for nominations each spring and nominate educators who deserve recognition for all their amazing work in World Languages.**





McAnulty College and  
Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Center for Hispanic Studies



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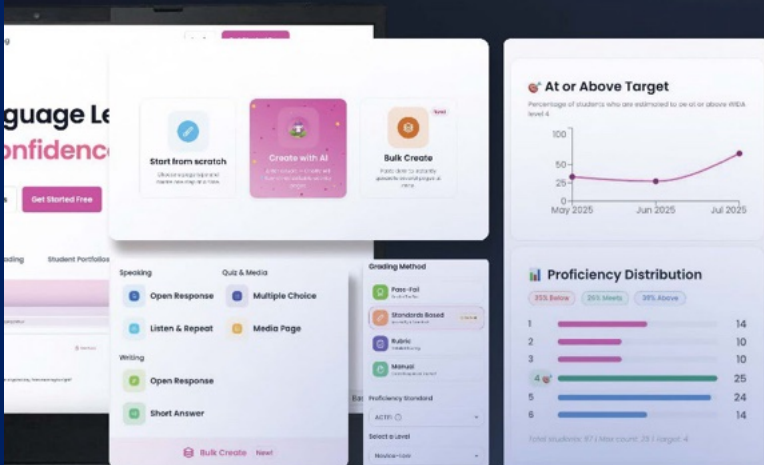


Every EF tour expands students' perspectives, prepares them for success in an ever-changing world, and is thoughtfully designed to align with our Responsible Travel initiatives. Our compelling itineraries stretch across the globe. Packed with experiential learning opportunities to practice language skills and culture that spark curiosity and unlock potential. Explore our tours at [eftours.com](https://www.eftours.com)

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FALL 2025

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p. 12



What is one personal or professional goal you have for yourself this school year?

"Publish two research studies."

-----

"Maintain a balance between school and life."

-----

"I want to find a way to spend less time working."

-----

"Maintain frequent communication with families through good news emails and a monthly newsletter."

-----

"My hallmates and I made a pact this year to not talk shop between classes. So far so good! Fingers crossed we can sustain!"

-----

"To ensure my lesson plans accommodate student kinesthetic needs."

## Member Survey

### FINDING JOY IN AND GROWING AS EDUCATORS

Teacher growth and professional joy are important to keep us fresh and help us be the best version of ourselves for our students. As we headed back to the classroom this fall, we wondered, what are ways that you hope to grow or stay fresh for your students?

Here are some of the responses we received from our members.

– Nathan Campbell, co-editor, *PLF*

How do you keep your own language skills sharp while teaching others?

"Connect with colleagues."

-----

"I follow native speakers on social media, listen to/view media in the target language, and practice with others who also speak it."

"I read the news in the language I teach every day and correspond with my friends regularly, who are native speakers."

-----

"Following specific social media accounts for new slang and idioms to incorporate into the classroom."

-----

"Teach graduate level courses in the summer in the target language."

## What is one small practice that helps you sustain joy and avoid burnout during the school year?

"Getting together with colleagues; attending conferences; reading about effective approaches."

-----

"Reading for pleasure for 15 minutes before I go to bed."

-----

"Leaving the confines of the classroom and enjoying lunch with colleagues in the faculty room."

-----

"The only access I have to work email is on my work computer. I don't attach any accounts to my phone."

-----

"Walking in nature."



The advertisement features a collage of images: a group of students, a street scene in Salamanca, and the city's historic architecture. A large plus sign is positioned over the collage. Below the images, the text reads: "Spanish Language and Culture Dual Master's Degree for Educators" and "JMU • VSAL". The main title is "Dual Master's Degree in Education". Below the title, it states: "Deadline for Registration: March 15" and "New cohort begins every summer". At the bottom, there are four bullet points: "Two degrees", "Hybrid program", "18-month program", and "1 summer in Salamanca". A "Learn more!" button and the website URL "https://www.jmu.edu/slcmasters" are also included.

Spanish Language and Culture  
Dual Master's Degree for Educators  
JMU • VSAL

### Dual Master's Degree in Education

Deadline for Registration: March 15  
New cohort begins every summer

- ✓ Two degrees
- ✓ Hybrid program
- ✓ 18-month program
- ✓ 1 summer in Salamanca

Learn more! <https://www.jmu.edu/slcmasters>

## How do you connect with colleagues (in or outside your school) to stay inspired as a world language teacher?

"Attending conferences and get togethers in my city."

-----

"I attend conferences and in group chats with school and outside colleagues."

"There is only one other language colleague in my school. We carpool, so we talk a lot. I am also a member of APPLES, the Appalachian Professional Language Educators' Society, and I connect with colleagues there."

-----

"By serving and connecting professionally, NE Regional Rep for NNELL, TD SIG in ACTFL, NADSFL webinars, etc."



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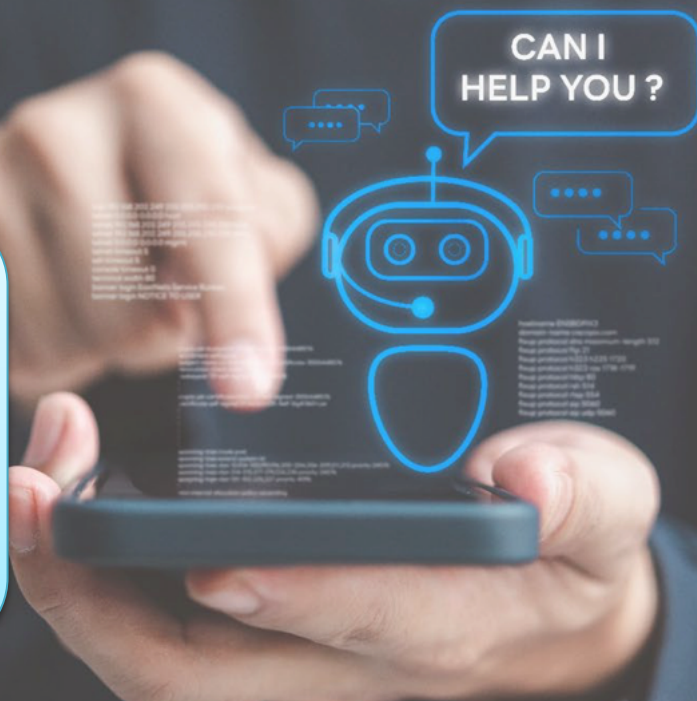
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# Top AI Tools for Teachers

Cherie Garrett, First Vice President, PSMLA

Do you ever feel like you are drowning in schoolwork? How would you like to save hours by having a personal AI assistant to plan lessons, create activities and worksheets, assess student progress, and more? Here are six amazing tech tools to lighten your load so you can finally have a moment to relax.



## AI Tools

## Description

### Brisk teaching



<https://www.briskteaching.com/ai-tools-for-teachers>

This incredible free tool can help create instructional and student intervention materials, manage administrative tasks, provide feedback, translate documents, inspect writing, change reading levels of text and more!

### Notebook LM

<https://notebooklm.google>



This AI tool creates summaries, FAQs, timelines and briefing docs from uploaded PDFs, Google Docs, Google Slides or YouTube videos. It also generates audio overviews so you can listen on the go. Lastly, you can ask questions for deeper insights and get answers with citations.

### Diffit

<https://web.diffit.me/>



Diffit creates differentiated resources for all your learners' needs. It is a personal assistant for reading & summaries, vocabulary, multiple choice questions, short answer questions, etc.

### Canva AI

<https://www.canva.com/ai>



Canva AI allows users to effortlessly create colorful projects from worksheets to slideshows to videos. You will never need to start from a blank canvas again!

### MagicSchool AI

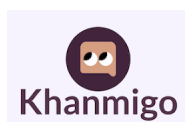
<https://www.magicschool.ai/>



This amazing tool generates standards-aligned lesson plans, academic content, assessments, IEPs, rubrics, worksheets, feedback and more.

### Khanmigo

<https://www.khanmigo.ai/>



Use Khanmigo for differentiation, lesson plans, quiz questions, student groupings, hooks, exit tickets, rubrics, and more.





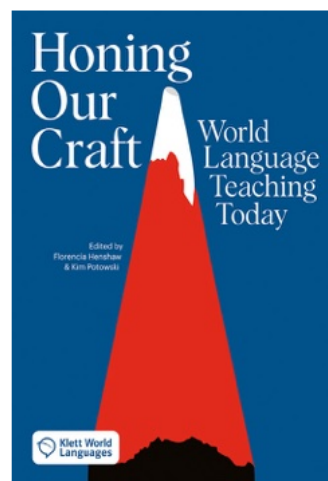
# INNOVATION MEETS PROFICIENCY

## Shaping the Future of Language Education at PSMLA 2025

We're proud to sponsor the **PSMLA Peer Mentor & Mentee Attendance Program** and are excited to be working with PSMLA on the **first KWL/PSMLA Book Club** for 2026, featuring *Honing Our Craft*.



PSMLA Peer Mentor & Mentee Program  
– 2025 Cohort



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# A Full-Circle Profession: Why I Still Choose Teaching

Traci DeGarmo

Mohawk Area School District

After 16 years in the classroom, in many different districts, and a few maternity leaves, I still come back and want to come back just like I did in year two. Teaching, for me, has evolved from becoming a teacher because of a specific teacher and culture when I was a student to remaining a teacher because of the students, my own children, and wanting to share culture and language with as many people as possible. It is absolutely a full-circle profession.

It's interesting that over my tenure, the lessons I've learned in the profession have transferred to my personal life, or maybe it's vice versa, but particularly during my leaves of absence. The building, the lessons, and the students will all still be there upon your return. Things will run as normal, and the anticipation in the students will remain, and they won't forget about you. I've learned that every lesson will not be amazing and unforgettable with confetti and horns blown. You will, in fact, have unsuccessful lessons, but you'll use those lessons to improve future ones; so, they aren't

totally unsuccessful after all. I've learned that a comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing grows there. It's okay to prune the vine so it can be fruitful. It's okay to up the rigor or say no. Just as we tell our students— it's okay to make mistakes! Make them, embrace them, and own them. Then, use them to refine your teaching or improve weaknesses. Again, a full-circle profession.

The unintended connections or accidental learning are some of the best moments for me. I'll never forget when my then 3-year-old son was naming a new stuffie. I suggested the name "Tina"

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**"[...] it's okay to make mistakes! Make them, embrace them, and own them!"**

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and he quickly agreed that "bathtub" was a good name too. Those moments and the continuation of learning, even when students are challenged, are the fruit of teaching. The moments when

something “clicks” or when the “es” from “me llamo” disappears are things that keep me in the classroom. Lastly, the rapport with students both within the classroom and outside makes my return each year easy. All these things, including the calendar year when you’re a parent, outweigh the meetings, IEPs, malfunctioning copy machines, disgruntled colleagues and parents, and the less-than-interested students.

Hindsight is 20/20 and the top bit of advice I would give myself in the early years is that you cannot (and will not) be the best at every aspect of the profession. Find what your gift is and use it where you can. Apply it to the lessons, relationships, extra duties, and activities, and let

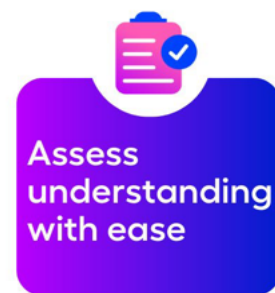
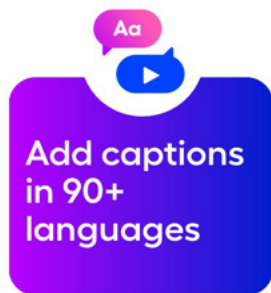


*Traci teaches a Spanish lesson to her students.*

your colleagues do the same. Use the ebbs and flows to strengthen and reflect on your craft. Doing so will create a powerful team of teachers and a climate where learning is fostered, and proficiency grows. Finally, don’t let that one bad <<insert thing here>> destroy your “why” because the students and our profession need you.



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# Dauphin County Technical School students earn the Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy

**Theresa Hoover**

**Dauphin County Technical School**

Bringing the PA Seal of Biliteracy to the Dauphin County Technical School is something that I thought would be a challenge to realize. It turns out that it was not that hard; just some work and perseverance. With some teamwork from colleagues, the support of administrators, guidance from Cherie Garrett (keeper of all things related to the PA Seal of Biliteracy), and students who desired this accomplishment – the goal was achieved.

On March 14, 2025, 22 students from the Dauphin County Technical School voluntarily took the AAPPL exam to assess their Spanish language skills and 11 earned the PA Seal of Biliteracy. The PA Seal of Biliteracy is awarded to students who have

demonstrated proficiency in English and one other language. Proficiency must be demonstrated in at least two languages. English proficiency is assessed by having achieved a proficient or advanced rating on the Pennsylvania Keystone English exam (or WIDA equivalent). As an assessment for the second language, our school selected to use the AAPPL exam. The AAPPL exam tests Interpretive Reading, Interpretive Listening, Writing, and Speaking. Students must earn a rating of 15 or higher on the four sections of the AAPPL exam to demonstrate adequate proficiency to qualify for the Seal. The PA Seal of Biliteracy provides evidence and proper



documentation to future employers and colleges of the students' biliteracy.

As a Career and Technical School, I felt it was important to offer this certificate. EL teacher, Ms. Kristi McConnell, worked with me to identify EL students who qualified. I rounded up students who had been enrolled in Spanish and others whom I knew to be heritage language speakers. We had our current Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Ms. Jen Spanger, locate the data on which students had earned Proficient or Advanced on their Keystone. We worked

with one of our guidance counselors, Ms. Sandie Pensiero, to assist with the testing. We had to learn the ins and outs of the AAPPL exam, which we had never used. We found the company to be very helpful and the exam was easy to work with. In addition, I held some practice sessions, offering exam tips and language practice to students who were interested.

This is the first year our students at Dauphin County Tech have participated. I believe we may be the first CTE in PA to offer the Seal of Biliteracy (Woohoo!). We are trying to follow the lead of Upper Bucks CTE in PA, to assess students for credentialing purposes. We are truly grateful for the PSMLA Xperitas Language Matters Award. We used the funds to purchase the exams.

All 50 states participate in the PA Seal of Biliteracy. In Pennsylvania, 39 school districts participated last year. The list of participants is growing. The project at DCTS was spearheaded by Ms. Teresa Hoover, Spanish teacher, and Ms. Kristi McConnell, ELA teacher. We hope that this program will continue to grow at DCTS, encouraging students to continue to learn languages and engage globally with their skills.



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# From Classroom to Career: PA Language Summit Links Language Skills to Workplace Demands with New Roadmap

**Cherie Garrett, PSMLA Advocacy Committee Chair**  
**Raquel Lodeiro, Penn State Harrisburg**

On April 28, 2025, a diverse and influential group of stakeholders gathered at Penn State Harrisburg for a landmark event: the Pennsylvania Language Summit. The eclectic group, comprising educators, state legislators, business leaders, healthcare professionals, intermediate unit administrators, representatives from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and community advocates, convened with a shared, urgent purpose: to assess the current landscape of language education in the Commonwealth and

to collaboratively forge an action plan for its future. This summit marked a pivotal moment, signaling a united effort to elevate the status and strategic importance of multilingualism across Pennsylvania.

## **Setting a National and State Context**

The day commenced with a compelling keynote address from Amanda Seewald, the Executive Director of the Joint National Committee for Languages – National Council for Languages and International Studies (JNCL-NCLIS). Seewald expertly framed the day's discussions by



connecting local efforts to the broader national context. She outlined key federal initiatives aimed at promoting language education, illustrating how proficiency in multiple languages intersects nearly every facet of modern life — from economic development and national security to cognitive benefits and cultural understanding. Her address underscored the critical importance of robust language policies and programs at the federal and state level, arguing that Pennsylvania has a unique opportunity at this time to strengthen language education by forging connections between language education and career readiness and gaining leadership at the state level. Seewald's message was clear: language is not a peripheral subject but a core component of a 21st-century education and a vital asset for the state's future.

### **Voices from the Field: The Workplace Demand for Multilinguals**

Following the keynote, the conversation shifted from policy to practice with a dynamic panel discussion featuring seven professionals from Pennsylvania's business and healthcare sectors. This session provided powerful, real-world testimony on the immediate and growing need for a multilingual workforce. Business leaders shared anecdotes and data highlighting the distinct advantage of having employees who can communicate directly with a diverse, non-English-speaking clientele. They emphasized

that multilingual staff could build stronger customer relationships, open new markets, and foster a more inclusive and effective business environment.

The perspective of the four healthcare panelists was particularly striking. They detailed the serious consequences that arise from language barriers in clinical settings, including dangerous miscommunications, critical time lost in diagnosing illnesses, and significant cultural misunderstandings that can erode patient trust and compromise care.

The panelists unanimously agreed that the demand for multilingual professionals is not a temporary trend but a permanent feature of our increasingly interconnected world. Their collective forecast was a sharp rise in the need for workers who can navigate different languages and cultures, making language education an issue of economic and social urgency.

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**"[...] the demand for multilingual professionals is not a temporary trend but a permanent feature..."**

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### **Charting the Course: The PA Language Roadmap**

The culminating activity of the summit was a collaborative workshop where attendees pooled their expertise and passion to develop action steps to accomplish the goals of the PA

Language Roadmap. This document is envisioned as a comprehensive, multi-year strategic plan designed to enhance, expand, and sustain language education programs for all students across the Commonwealth. The framework for the Roadmap is built upon three foundational pillars:

1. **Leadership and Advocacy:** Strengthening statewide and local leadership to champion the cause of language education and advocating for supportive policies and funding.
2. **Effective Programs for All:** Developing and implementing continuous, high-quality language learning pathways from early childhood through postsecondary education (K–16) that are accessible to every student.
3. **Teacher Talent:** Creating robust systems for recruiting, preparing, and retaining a diverse and highly qualified corps of language educators.

The ultimate goal of the PA Language Roadmap is twofold: to significantly boost Pennsylvania's economic competitiveness on a global stage and to better meet the linguistic and cultural needs of the state's growing non-English speaking communities. It is a grassroots initiative born from a shared conviction that strengthening world language education is an investment in Pennsylvania's future. The hope is that this collaborative advocacy will catalyze

meaningful change in educational institutions statewide, positively impacting not only students currently enrolled in world language and English Learner (EL) programs but also inspiring future generations to embrace the profound benefits of learning another language.

### **Next steps: Finalizing the Roadmap**

On October 15, 2025, select members of the PSMLA Task Force and other key stakeholders who attended the PA Language Summit in April will reunite at the Lehigh Carbon IU to finalize the PA Language Roadmap and to devise a plan to advocate for a designated World Language Content Advisor in the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). This role will be essential to advancing the roadmap's goals and strengthening world language education to meet the needs of the community and to enhance the state's economic competitiveness.



# PEER REVIEW CONTRIBUTIONS

**The following section contains contributed articles that have undergone our blind peer-review process.**

**A special thanks to our authors and peer reviewers for their contributions to this issue!**

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## **Integrating Translanguaging and Universal Design for Learning (TrUDL) Practices to Support English Language Learners**

### **Gloria J. Kramer-Gordon, Ed. D., SUNY Empire State University**

Gloria “Joanne” Kramer-Gordon is the TESOL Coordinator and Assistant Professor at SUNY Empire University. She brings extensive experience as a K–12 ESL and Spanish teacher, department chair, and dual language school principal. Her work in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) focuses on multicultural education, literacy development for multilingual learners, immigrant student mental health, and best practices in language instruction. Committed to supporting both young students and adult learners, Joanne continues to advance in the field of TESOL.

### **Lisa Czora, M.A., SUNY Empire State University**

Lisa Czora is a veteran teacher with 32 years of experience teaching French and Spanish inclusion classes. Lisa holds an M.A in Spanish from the University of California at Santa Barbara and a B.S. in Spanish Education from Buffalo State University. She is NYS certified in French 7-12, Spanish 7-12, and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

### **Molly Normile, M.S., SUNY Empire State University**

Molly Normile, a veteran teacher with 19 years of experience in special education, is currently a regional associate for the New York State Education Department, advancing compliance, equity, and excellence in special education programs. She holds a Master’s in Literacy and a Bachelor’s in Elementary and Special Education, with additional certifications in General Education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

## Abstract

Considering global mobility and the growing number of multilingual learners in American classrooms, educational institutions must provide equitable opportunities for all. This complicates matters for educators who already face challenges in supporting English language learners (ELLs), including ELLs with exceptionalities due to limited awareness of effective practices. As the multilingualism of the United States continues to evolve, it is imperative to continue to shift from monolingual viewpoints to multilingual and multicultural *translanguaging* practices that recognize and respect all students. Incorporating translanguaging strategies enables ELLs to harness all linguistic resources for effective learning both in the classroom and in their daily life. Furthermore, translanguaging creates socially just classrooms that empower students by encouraging them to use their home languages in the learning process. This paper presents a review of the literature to support ELLs and ELLs with exceptionalities by promoting translanguaging within a *Translanguaging Universal Design for Learning* (TrUDL) framework. Translanguaging and translanguaging practices are used interchangeably throughout this paper. This project shares practices and online resources to support both novice and experienced teachers. Thus, we present classroom strategies, identify deficiencies in processes for ELLs with exceptionalities, and offer recommendations for institutions and educators.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging, English Language Learners, Special Education, Universal Design for Learning

## Introduction

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2024), there were roughly “5.3 million English language learners nationwide in public schools during the fall of 2021, with 4.9 million receiving services in English language instruction education programs” (p.1). Considering such diversity, there has been increased attention to integrated “*translanguaging or translanguaging practices*, whereby multilingual speakers utilize their languages as an integrated communication system” in classrooms, aligning with cultural and linguistically relevant pedagogy (CLRP) (García & Wei, 2014, p.22). CLRP provides opportunities in students’ native languages, draws upon their prior experiences, and engages in pedagogical practices that promote an understanding of social justice (Blitz et al., 2016; Diallo & Maizonniaux, 2016; García & Chun, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nicolarakis & Mitchell, 2023). España and Herrera (2020) state that “learning about varied experiences and getting to

know and validate students' backgrounds and journeys are essential to affirming students' language practices" (p. 11). Tsokolidou and Skourtou (2020) state that valuing teaching practices encourages students' diverse experiences in the classroom, focusing on students' capabilities, and dismantling ideas of oppression. However, the failure of institutions to provide training to those working with diverse communities, along with teachers' continual lack of cultural and linguistic competency, results in systems favoring monolingual ideologies above translanguaging practices (España & Herrera, 2020; García et al., 2023; Jin & Liu, 2023; Kramer-Gordon, 2020; Makalela, 2018; Norlund-Shaswar, 2022; Stewart et al., 2021). Bacon (2020) notes that loyalty to monolingual ideology perpetuates systemic injustice against those who do not conform to monolingual standards. For this reason, it is important to focus on valuing and integrating the entire linguistic stock of bi/multilingual learners while giving them the tools to resist Racio linguistic principles, which highlight how racial ideologies shape perceptions of language and views racialized speakers as deficient regardless of their actual competence (Flores & Rosa, 2015, Rosa & Flores, 2017). Thus, translanguaging enables minority students to challenge conventional systems while promoting the growth of individual identity and novel interpretations, in which they reject deep-seated thinking and racial language views that disregard the presence of alternative knowledge and ways of life (Jin & Liu, 2023).

We explain the benefits of merging translanguaging and Universal Design for Learning (TrUDL) (Padía et al., 2024), as a dynamic approach "beyond bilingualism" (Tsokolidou & Skourtou, 2020, p. 2). Students in the initial phases of language acquisition are designated emergent bilinguals for those at the early stages of language learning, and others as bi/multilingual learners, or English language learners (ELLs). When discussing the language educator or classroom, we use the term English as a New Language (ENL) in place of English as



a Second Language (ESL). We will also use the terms bilingual and multilingual together, exceptionalities and disability, either simultaneously or individually, depending on the context.

## **Background**

Translanguaging was first introduced by Cen Williams (1994) to highlight a teaching approach in the bilingual classroom where instructions would switch between Welsh and English for input and output (Tai & Zuo, 2024; Thomas et al., 2022). Williams' approach was simple. He used the Welsh language to support students learning English. This approach came to be known as translanguaging. Although Ofelia García did not coin the term translanguaging, she is credited with revitalizing it internationally to confront the schoolwide monolingual practices that marginalize emergent bilinguals and oppose the idea that bilinguals have two separate language systems (Thomas et al., 2022). Additionally, García's viewpoint values students' diverse and rich language backgrounds, encouraging them to draw on all their language resources to comprehend their lives, literacy, and content area subjects (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Li & Luo, 2017; Stewart & Genova, 2020; Stewart et al., 2021; Vogel & García, 2017). Stewart et al. (2021) notes that the playing field is leveled for English Language Learners (ELLs) in a translanguaging classroom because students can think and communicate ideas in any language they can access, fostering deeper understanding. Embracing and celebrating students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds validates students' identities, profoundly impacting their learning (Braden & Dexter, 2023; Celic & Seltzer, 2013; García & Otheguy, 2019; Rosenow, 2023). Furthermore, Wei (2024) highlights translanguaging as a process that integrates several components of a multilingual speaker's linguistic and cultural abilities. It goes beyond simply combining two languages and instead incorporates the utilization of creative strategies by the language user. As García et al. (2023) states, translanguaging promotes the utilization of all

linguistic features in a person's language repertoire, encompassing vocabulary, grammar, dialect, lexicon, phonology, and larger cohesive units of text while integrating cultural and linguistic identities.

### **Social Learning and Development Theory**

According to García et al. (2021), translanguaging creates an environment for racially marginalized bi/multilingual individuals to achieve equality and justice (Jin & Liu, 2023). Teachers in every classroom should reconsider their pedagogies by adopting a translanguaging perspective. Translanguaging pedagogy diverges from the English-only model and the strict separation of languages in a bilingual program; instead, it allows the ability to see each student's linguistic background as one unified resource (García & Chun, 2016; García et al., 2023; Menken & Sánchez, 2019). We draw on Bandura's social learning theory and Vygotsky's social development theory where children learn by social interactions, observing, collaborating and communicating with others (Barnett, 2019; Yarberry & Sims, 2021). Together both theories promote group work, and peer interactions and highlight the significance of language roles to illuminate the impact of educational outcomes. Such theories are foundational to unlocking the process of higher-level thinking where teaching and learning are effortless, and students feel comfortable sharing their ideas through guided support (Barnett, 2019), while also establishing a home and school connection. Educators can then set higher standards by exposing students to complex content which is typically unconventional practice considering an ELLs developing language proficiency (Song et al., 2022; Vogel & García, 2017). Barnett (2019) states that "students learn best when learning from others" allowing them to reach their full potential (p.2). Furthermore, integrating a translanguaging approach acknowledges the languages spoken by

students, including the various literacy practices (reading and interpreting for family members, translating, reading, and writing) they apply in their everyday lives (España & Herrera, 2020).

Upon reviewing several studies on the topic, the case can be made that content area teachers who teach English Language Learners (ELLs) would benefit from linguistic diversity training and a comprehensive understanding of teaching and supporting the language foundations pertinent to their subject area while seamlessly allowing emerging language learners to switch between languages, akin to how a bi/multilingual mind works (Bacon, 2020; Becker & Deris, 2019; Celic & Seltzer, 2013; García et al., 2023; Stewart et al., 2021). This considers the potential impact of language fairness, which involves recognizing and valuing all languages in the classroom for engagement in literacy. In addition, Flores and Rosa (2015) argue that educators acknowledge the language practices of marginalized groups while also promoting an understanding of the interrelationships among “language, racism, and power” (Stewart et. al., 2021, p. 183). Since the concept of translanguageing is situated alongside cultural and linguistically relevant pedagogy (CLRP), Kramer-Gordon (2020) proposes that teachers should not doubt their abilities in implementing CLRP; instead, they should strive to achieve a thorough understanding of societal injustice to foster harmony and prioritize cultural and linguistic respect in every school. With the intent of developing global citizens, educators who embrace a raciolinguistic perspective and remove racial biases about bi/multilingual learners, promote a translanguageing ideology (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Translanguageing advocates encourage educational settings with diverse learners to allow the use of multiple languages to fully understand and convey messages because the goal is to develop both the home language and English while integrating academic content (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022;



Cummins, 2019; Dougherty, 2021; Füstenu et al., 2020; Li & Luo, 2017; Leung & Valdés, 2019; Stewart & Genova, 2020; Stewart et al., 2021; Vogel & García, 2017).

Cummins (2019) argues that schools systematically undermine multilingualism by prohibiting students from using and developing their home language in numerous contexts. According to Wei (2024), translanguaging creates a social environment for language learners by incorporating various components of their life experiences, histories, beliefs, and thinking processes into one cohesive dimension. For example, when reading a text, students can participate in bilingual reading by displaying information in both languages concurrently. Furthermore, students can articulate their thoughts and ideas in their first language and then utilize translators or bilingual dictionaries to support this process, while educators enhance vocabulary comprehension by employing visual aids with labels in all relevant languages in the classroom. Translanguaging helps in mastering language use to understand, evaluate, and communicate knowledge through textual evidence to support ideas and writing (García et al., 2023; Li & Luo, 2017; Stewart et al., 2021; Vogel & García, 2017).

### **A Translanguaging Space in Action**

The landmark case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) determined that educational institutions are expected to remove barriers that hinder learning, therefore guaranteeing equitable opportunities for every student (Kramer-Gordon, 2020; Wright, 2019). Many mainstream teachers erroneously hold the belief that ELLs are solely the duty of the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, without acknowledging that it is, in fact, a collective responsibility shared by school administrators and every teacher (Cheuk, 2020; Stairs-Davenport, 2021; Stewart & Genova, 2020; Yoon, 2023).

Collaboration between the ENL teacher and the classroom teacher is essential in a standard classroom, as students cannot fully engage in the learning process on their own (García & Otheguy, 2019; Menken & Sánchez, 2019; Stewart et al., 2021). Uninformed teachers hinder student engagement by employing a sink-or-swim approach. Expecting students to transcribe notes they do not comprehend is an ineffective pedagogical practice. Therefore, inclusion policies are needed to meet legal requirements to consider accommodating all students' needs (Stairs-Davenport, 2021). Additionally, it is commonly believed that ELLs should only speak English, therefore, diminishing students' identities and their right to communicate in their native language. Such practices risk silencing students' cultural and linguistic resources, which are essential to both identity development and academic success. Many schools, however, remain unaware of how to effectively serve their bi/multilingual population, often lacking the knowledge, training, or resources to implement inclusive language practices that honor and build upon students' full linguistic repertoires (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Cummins, 2019; Chapa, 2019; Li & Luo, 2017; Stewart & Genova, 2020; Stewart et al., 2021; Przymus & Alvarado, 2019).

Ofelia García (2009) recognizes that the expectation for students to communicate solely in English is limiting, as it prevents them from fully expressing themselves. That initiated the New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB) project led by García and Menken. This project researched the effects of translanguaging in the classroom, challenged educational practices of bilingual classrooms, and revealed that translanguaging is a valuable tool to help ELLs unlock their potential and uncover the depths of their thinking and process material they could not otherwise begin to grasp in a collaborative environment (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Menken & Sánchez, 2019; Rosenow, 2023; Stewart & Genova, 2020; Vogel & García, 2017; Wei, 2024).

With little adjustments to their classrooms, teachers can establish translanguaging spaces. The website of the CUNY-NYSIEB (2021) project, located at <https://www.cuny-nysieb.org>, offers a wide range of resources for educators, including practical strategies found in the Translanguaging Guide, webinars, a video series called "Teaching Bilinguals Even If You're Not One," and various other videos featuring translanguaging in practice (Celic & Seltzer, 2013). In these videos, by adopting a translanguaging perspective, these CUNY ambassadors highlight a globalized environment in which learners can collectively exchange their knowledge of other languages, forming a cohesive community; leveraging students' native language proficiency supports their comprehension and serves as a bridge to developing English language skills

One of the ambassadors exemplified the implementation of strategies that included all students and their entire arsenal of linguistic and cultural assets by promoting socialization, higher-order thinking by actively solving word problems, and incorporating problem-solving strategies with peers utilizing all languages in the classroom. When students realized their capacity to comprehend and internalize the information they were learning, they then reinforced their proficiency in their native language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Cummins, 2019; Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2020; Li & Luo, 2017; Menken & Sánchez, 2019; Przymus & Alvarado, 2019; Stewart et al., 2021). Emerging technologies like Artificial intelligence (AI), can translate text into other languages, enabling students to express their opinions in their native language, hence alleviating fear towards participation (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Rosenow, 2023). Students who recognize the significance of their language will see it as a valuable for understanding academic language and increasing cognitive skills (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Dougherty, 2021; Song et al., 2022).



Applying strategies with a particular emphasis using visuals in multiple languages improves students' comprehension of content that may not have been accessible if presented in English only. This dynamic learning space promotes the development of academic language skills, while also recognizing and appreciating cultural backgrounds. By transforming educators' mindsets and teaching methodologies, educators empower students to grasp ideas that were previously inaccessible in a monolingual classroom (Araujo et al., 2023; Johnson & Park, 2022; Przymus & Alvarado, 2019; Stewart et al., 2021). Educators might consider discussing and establishing a translanguaging policy that embraces linguistic diversity to acknowledge that all languages should be incorporated into a classroom, rather than only the dominant one (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2017; Braden & Dexter, 2023; Cummins, 2019; Daignault, 2020; Dougherty, 2021; Duarte & Günther-van der Meij, 2020; García & Otheguy, 2019; Menken & Sánchez, 2019; Vogel & García, 2017; Wei, 2024).

### **Foster Deeper Learning**

Each student possesses the right to acquire knowledge, and every educator assumes the duty of establishing an inclusive learning environment. In a translanguaging space, teacher-student collaborations occur; the roles of expert and learner shift due to the nature of an engaging, multilingual space, where the teacher no longer serves as the language authority in the classroom. Teachers in this environment willingly relinquish complete authority and frequently gain knowledge from their students, therefore challenging traditional dynamics of power.

Educators must consider how to scaffold reading, writing, speaking, and listening tasks when presenting important terms and concepts. As teachers become more cognizant of their bi/multilingual students' needs, they will naturally focus on vocabulary study (Calderón & Slakk, 2019; Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Cole, 2019; Dougherty, 2021; Wright, 2019). Teaching students

about cognates, words that have the same roots in different languages, improves understanding (Cole, 2019; Snyder & Fenner, 2021). Educators can train students to look for and highlight word connections and other new terms by creating multilingual word walls (Figure 1) and other visual graphic organizers (Figure 2) (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010). By giving students an anchor in more than one language, students will be able to process content that would have otherwise been beyond their grasp through mere auditory exposure during class presentations (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022; Dougherty, 2021; Füssenau et al., 2020; Menken & Sánchez, 2019; Stewart et al., 2021).



Figure 1. Multilingual word wall. From “Integrating translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) practices to support English language learners,” by Kramer-Gordon, G. J., & Czora, L., Normile, M. (2024). “Original Work.”

Effective lessons integrate images and gestures and purposefully incorporate all students’ languages to engage every student in the class. Moreover, selecting culturally relevant and multilingual literature increases motivation, allowing students to see themselves reflected in the literature, therefore, connecting the text to their lives (Daignault, 2020; Li & Luo, 2017; Rosenow, 2023; Song et al., 2022). After capturing students’ attention with interesting reading material, educators can promote higher-order thinking and improve reading comprehension with collaborative reading circles so students can support each other as they unravel the meaning (Gonzalez et al., 2022; Li & Luo, 2017; Song et al., 2022).

Translanguaging in an ELA class might allow students to write poems or identity text projects in a combination of students’ preferred languages as a means for sharing their multilingual, multicultural perspectives (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Cummins et al., 2015; Daignault,

2020; Stewart et al., 2021). Rajendram et al. (2022) advocate using George Ella Lyon's poem *Where I'm From* (1999) as a catalyst for creative self-expression and offer examples of multilingual poems. Their article illustrates how educators may provide culturally relevant instruction through the utilization of templates and sentence starters. Scaffolds, as such, provide students with a foundation to develop their language skills so they can flourish in the classroom.

Translanguaging has become an integral part of the math classroom, where students engage with mathematics as a unique language rich in symbols and formulas that carry meaning (Wong & Bukalov, 2020). In a special issue about multilingual learners, the Translanguaging Study Group, made up of math experts, states that being good at math doesn't require being good at English. However, research shows that English Language Learners (ELLs) who speak more than one language do tend to do better in math (De Arujo et al., 2020). Students connect symbols with language to create meaning. For example, when students are working on a measurement assignment using  $\text{area} = \text{length} \times \text{width}$  ( $A = L \times W$ ), students can utilize both their home language and English to reinforce understanding. Furthermore, teachers can encourage students to list mathematical terms in both languages (fracción/fraction) and use them interchangeably while solving problems. Additionally, learners can annotate math diagrams or graphs using a mix of English and their home language to capture nuanced understanding.

Subjects like science and social studies also create significant challenges for emergent bi/multilinguals, yet translanguaging practices can support the missing pieces. Educators should prioritize activating schemas with multilingual audio passages and videos to comprehend unfamiliar subject-specific vocabulary difficult for students to process (Celic & Seltzer, 2013; Rosenow, 2023). In addition, strategic grouping encourages collaboration and allows students to deeply process new material because they are communicating with others who can help them fill



in the blanks (Araujo et al., 2023; Braden & Dexter, 2023; Li & Luo, 2017; Stewart et al., 2021). Exploring topics through Digital Age Teaching (DAT), Task Based Learning (TBL), or Project Based Learning (PBL) will deepen understanding with reduced stress, at a student's own pace while developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (De Oliveira, 2019).

When literacy is the focus, educators can make simple language adjustments by using the same learning tools of any other classroom (Li & Luo, 2017; Stewart et al., 2021). For example, translating graphic organizers (figure 2), summaries, T-charts, KWL charts, multimedia projects, portfolios, journal entries, sentence starters, and presentations to enhance student engagement. These tools are available to any educator (Celic & Seltzer, 2013).

Figure 2. Multilingual book summary graphic organizer (English, Spanish, Arabic, Pashto). From “Integrating translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) practices to support English language learners,” by Kramer-Gordon, G. J., & Czora, L., Normile, M. (2024). “OriginalWork.”

An inclusive classroom values student languages and opens the door to learning through a variety of methods, including incorporating technology. Artificial intelligence (AI) opens new pathways for learning by personalizing instructional materials to meet the needs of individual students, independent of their native language or proficiency in English. Teachers can leverage AI as a valuable resource to provide this immediate, customized support. Diffit (<https://web.diffit.me/>) and Magic School AI (<https://www.app.magicschool.ai>) are sites geared toward helping educators plan and create customized materials for each student. Furthermore,

Khanmigo (<https://khanmigo.ai>) and SchoolAI (<https://schoolai.com>) act as teachers' assistants but they also have capabilities to provide accommodations, problem-solving support, and directly involve students in the learning process.

Educators working with ELLs can meet bilingual or multilingual students where they are by using well-known Artificial Intelligence (AI) sites such as Chat GPT (<https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/>) and Google Gemini (<https://gemini.google.com/app>) which provide basic services for teacher planning and differentiation. For example, a teacher inquiry requesting AI assistance could start a prompt such as:

"I am a 7th grade middle school science teacher teaching a unit on the Periodic Table of Elements. I have ELL newcomers who speak Pashto in my class. Create an introduction to the Periodic Table in Pashto, a vocabulary list in Pashto and English, and create a worksheet on basic elements. Align with grade 7 Next Generation Science Standards. Also find materials about the Periodic Table in Pashto."

The teacher can adjust and refine the output until the desired results are achieved.

Google Chrome offers a range of readily accessible AI options in the Chrome settings such as Live Caption and Live Translate. In addition, Live Caption can be set to several languages and can even provide translations for YouTube videos. Chrome has also developed Brisk (<https://www.briskteaching.com/>), an extension that allows teachers to instantly customize the reading level of a website or document and generate differentiated materials (Brisk Labs, 2025). In addition, the Brisk extension tool will generate materials in dozens of languages, create instant presentations, quizzes and allow teachers to give instant feedback and view students' writing process from start to finish. Advanced technologies, including AI, can validate ELL's multilingual identities by enabling multimodal, language-inclusive communication (Donely,

2024). It is important to note, however, that AI does tend to have some drawbacks where information can be hallucinated, may not be culturally appropriate, or translations can be misconstrued (Charles-Kenechi, 2024) and teachers should consider carefully what they choose to use.

### **Translanguaging and UDL**

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) was initially developed to increase accessibility for individuals with physical disabilities, but David Rose and Ann Meyer later expanded it to benefit all students in education. UDL removes barriers by offering flexible, challenging, and accessible pathways for student engagement (Kramer-Gordon & Bradley, 2023; The UDL Guidelines, 2024). Since translanguaging naturally aligns with UDL by making instruction and assessment comprehensible for emergent bilinguals, examining UDL through a translanguaging and culturally responsive lens is critical (Lopez et al., 2017). Cioé-Peña (2021) combined the two concepts of translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) to create an inclusive classroom environment for emergent bilinguals with exceptionalities. Her work emphasizes the importance of TrUDL to ensure that every student can access and engage within the content. Initial implementation begins with classroom adjustments such as side-by-side translations of texts, offering literature in students' home languages, using repetitive language, incorporating realia, and employing gestures.

In the primary grades, students may receive a demonstration before an assignment. For example, in an expository writing sequence exercise (Figure 3), the instructor could model how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich using actual peanut butter, jelly, bread, and a knife. The teacher articulates the names of each item in both English and in the student's native language. The vocabulary word is then placed on the multilingual board, accompanied by

images, and presented in all students' native languages. After introducing the steps and vocabulary, students are provided with a multilingual graphic organizer to arrange ideas and thoughts in all languages found in the classroom. Students will be encouraged to describe events in English, then develop their ideas in their native language, record themselves in English, and present the finished piece in English or the native language. Additional instructional strategies include multilingual matching games, as well as scripted organizers with sentence starters or fill-in-the-blanks utilizing all languages present in the classroom (Brown & Dolittle, 2008).

**Using TrUDL in the classroom**

| <b>First</b><br><b>Primero(a)</b><br><b>Ola</b> اوله<br>د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوب | <b>Then</b><br><b>Siguiente</b><br><b>moqbil</b> مقابل<br>بيا | <b>Next</b><br><b>Entonces</b><br><b>tham</b> تم<br>رانلونکي | <b>Finally</b><br><b>Finalmente</b><br><b>achira</b> اخيرا<br>په پای کې |
|--|---|--|---|
|  |   |  |   |

**Directions**

- ☐ Work with a partner to tell your story in Spanish
- ☐ Sketch your story in the template
- ☐ Practice telling your story with a partner in English
- ☐ Begin drafting your story in Spanish (written words)
- ☐ Record your story in English
- ☐ Publish your final draft in either Spanish or English

**Indicaciones**

- ☐ Trabaja con un compañero para contar tu historia en español
- ☐ Dibuja tu historia en la plantilla
- ☐ Practica contar tu historia con un compañero en inglés
- ☐ Comienza a redactar tu historia en español
- ☐ Graba tu historia en inglés
- ☐ Publique su trabajo final en español o inglés

**اتجاهات (Arabic)**

- ☐ اعمل مع شريك لسرد قصتك باللغة العربية
- ☐ ارسم قصتك في القالب
- ☐ تدرب على سرد قصتك مع شريك باللغة الإنجليزية
- ☐ ابدأ في صياغة قصتك باللغة العربية
- ☐ سجل قصتك باللغة الإنجليزية
- ☐ انشر مسودتك النهائية باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية

**لارښوونې (Pashto)**

- ☐ د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډله د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډلې ته د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډلې نه ولاړ شې
- ☐ خپله کيسه په قالب کې رسم کړئ
- ☐ په انګليسي ژبه د خپل ملګري سره خپله کيسه وويئ
- ☐ په پښتو ژبه د خپلي کيسې ليکنه پيل کړئ
- ☐ د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډله د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډلې نه په لاره اچ
- ☐ د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډله د افغانستان د کړکت ملي لوبډلې نه په لاره اچولې دی

Figure 3. Expository writing: Multilingual sequence graphic organizer. From “Integrating translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) practices to support English language learners,” by Kramer-Gordon, G. J., & Czora, L., Normile, M. (2024). “Original Work.”

TrUDL offers a framework for teachers to build on teaching methods to support students, across all planning stages (Padia et al., 2024). TrUDL requires assignments to be offered in both



the students' L1 and L2 language, including the choice of language in their method of response. Students may decide to do their prewriting strategies in their home language and their final pieces in English. In a case study of a Japanese student, Daignault (2020) found that while bilingualism was initially challenging, the student's efficiency and efficacy improved as translanguaging practices become normalized. He reported that strategies such as using bilingual texts with repetitive language and images, demonstrations, realia, and literature in his home language supported the development of his English proficiency.

### **Utilizing Translanguaging in the Exceptionalities Classroom**

Schools need to prioritize ELLs with exceptionalities, an educational term used to describe the diverse range of learning needs and abilities among students, including those with disabilities, giftedness or other characteristics that require specialized instructional strategies and support (Hallahan et al., 2019). Despite research supporting multilingual development, many districts prioritize English-only instruction, underscoring the need for translanguaging approaches for bi/multilingual students with exceptionalities (Becker & Deris, 2019; Kangas, 2014; Padía et al., 2024, Cioè-Peña, 2020). Cioè-Peña (2020) notes that emergent bilingual learners who have been classified as disabled and who remain in multilingual programs tend to do better linguistically and academically than those who are removed and placed in a monolingual classroom. According to Zetlin et al. (2011), "ELL students with learning disabilities showed improved growth when receiving content area instruction in Spanish, intensive English instruction in grammar, phonics, writing, and vocabulary, and Spanish instruction during reading comprehension" (Zetlin et al., 2011, p. 60). Research shows that children with impairments can acquire many languages with no adverse effects of multilingualism (Cioè-Peña, 2020). Moreover, Przymus and Alvarado (2019), state that

translanguaging unfolds when students are encouraged to utilize their complete linguistic repertoire with differentiated support to facilitate comprehensible output, enabling educators to evaluate students effectively. There is strong evidence that students' academic performance improves when they receive some instruction in their native tongue (Gonzalez et al., 2022).

Addressing inequities in the identification of multilingual learners with exceptionalities requires both improved assessment practices and more responsive systems of support. The strength-and -weakness approach to evaluating students with exceptionalities poses challenges for multilingual learners, as assessments in both the home language and English may not reflect true proficiency. Such incomplete measures contribute to disproportionality, resulting in the over- or underrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education and unequal access to services (Barrio, 2017; Marrs et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2018). These misidentifications risk labeling language-related challenges as disabilities or conversely, overlooking genuine learning needs, both of which hinder academic success (Kangas, 2017; Lbreiseth, 2021). To reduce these inequities, schools are encouraged to integrate TrUDL, which provides more accurate and supportive structures for multilingual learners (Lbreiseth, 2021). Yet, the proportion of English learners with disabilities remains unclear, as many districts still struggle to distinguish second-language acquisition difficulties from language-based disabilities (Hoover & Soltero-Gonzalez, 2018; Klingner & Harry, 2006).

Scaffolded instruction is essential for addressing the disparities in literacy and mathematics achievement that ELLs, especially those with exceptionalities, often face compared to their native English-speaking peers. One evidence-based strategy is the PLUS Model, a framework for instructional planning and lesson delivery (NJPSA, 2023; Sanford & Brown, 2018; Sanford et al., 2012). Its five components include: (1) pre-teaching critical terminology,

(2) modeling and providing opportunities to practice academic language, (3) incorporating visuals and graphic organizers, (4) delivering systematic and explicit instruction, and (5) strategically using students' native languages to support transfer. Originally designed for use across all tiers of Response to Intervention (RTI), the PLUSS Model complements RTI's tiered structure and progress monitoring system. RTI is an educational framework to identify and support students with learning and behavioral needs.

Moreover, the integration of assistive technology, such as Otismo (<https://otsimo.com/en/>) and Voice Dream Reader and Writer (<https://www.voicedream.com/>), provide multilingual opportunities that extend learning beyond the classroom. Collectively, these strategies foster equitable access to instruction and ensure that the diverse needs of multilingual learners with exceptionalities are effectively addressed.

## **Recommendations**

This literature review uncovered the importance of prioritizing translanguaging practice for bi/multilingual learners in all classrooms as a suitable teaching strategy within a TrUDL framework. Recommendations are based on the analysis of the literature.

The first recommendation is to dismantle monolingual ideologies and allow for a relaxed environment where students can be themselves and use the language of their preference as the primary support for the four modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing until they feel comfortable enough to use English. Language mixing in educational settings allows students to demonstrate understanding of the content while enabling them to express themselves freely (Tichelovan et al., 2021). Mixing languages in conversation is a natural phenomenon for bi/multilingual learners as they improve on the dominant language.

The second recommendation is for administrators to support translanguaging professional development so all educators can support classroom strategies within a TrUDL framework. TrUDL will allow ELLs not to fall behind their peers by supporting processing, retaining, and comprehending of information amid reinforcing their language proficiencies. This is beneficial for the development of cognitive function tasks and includes support for the home language (Tichelovan et al., 2021).

The third recommendation is to change the mindset of educators and perceive translanguaging as an asset to create an inclusive classroom community where diverse students can feel valued and respected. This is an opportunity for all participants to learn about diverse backgrounds and shift teacher perceptions of language learners.

The fourth recommendation is to utilize already familiar classroom strategies and support them with scaffolding and language support so all students can be co-learners as well as agents of their learning.

The fifth recommendation is to allow adequate multilingual support as an intervention tool before special education referrals. Unbiased research-based evaluations will allow for a comprehensive holistic review that can determine if a student is struggling with language acquisition or from a disability. This can lead to the dismantling of educational inequalities among exceptionally diverse students. The disproportionality among whites in special education compared to students of color impacts the trajectory of culturally and linguistically exceptional students (Tefera et al., 2017).

Finally, we recommend that future research focus on integrating TrUDL practices into the World Language classroom as a bridge to foster deeper cultural competence, enhance student



engagement through authentic tasks, and promote equitable language learning outcomes across diverse learner populations.

This review brings to light many ways to resist raciolinguistic ideologies but also provides areas for improvement and ideas to shed light on the benefits of implementing translanguaging and UDL in the classroom.

## **Conclusion**

This article underscores the importance of valuing multilingual identities of English language learners (ELLs) and advancing translanguaging classrooms as inclusive spaces for all students. Building on research in CLRP, UDL, and translanguaging, the integration of a TrUDL framework equips learners with the academic support needed for success while fostering appreciation for diverse perspectives through a global lens. Central to this approach is dismantling monolingual ideologies and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. Informed by Bandura's social learning theory and Vygotsky's social development theory, translanguaging enables children to learn from one another by drawing on their full linguistic and cultural repertoires, thereby cultivating new practices and preparing them for participation in a global society. This vision also requires culturally sensitive, unbiased, and collaborative assessment practices that distinguish language acquisition from disability. For ELLs with exceptionalities, translanguaging classrooms foster both language development and cognitive growth across subject areas. Implementing TrUDL pedagogy is not without challenges; however, with stakeholder engagement and district-level commitment, administrators can provide sustained professional development and integrate translanguaging practices across classrooms, advancing equity and social justice for all learners.

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Figure 2. Multilingual book summary graphic organizer

The graphic organizer is a rectangular form with a thick black border. At the top, there is a horizontal box containing a person icon on the left and the text "Book Title" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, a horizontal box contains the text "Author:" in a large, bold, sans-serif font, flanked by two black starburst icons. The form is divided into three main sections. On the left, a box contains the text "Why do you recommend the book?" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a large, empty rectangular box below it. On the right, there are two stacked boxes. The top box contains the text "MAIN CHARACTER (A DRAWING)" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a large, empty rectangular box below it that has a yellow border. The bottom box contains the text "PROBLEM IN THE BOOK" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a large, empty rectangular box below it.

Figure 2. Multilingual book summary graphic organizer (English). From Integrating translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) practices to support English language learners by Kramer-Gordon, G. J., & Czora, L., Normile, M. (2024).” Original Work.”



Figure 2. Multilingual book summary graphic organizer (Spanish, Arabic, Phasto).

|                          |                        |   |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <b>Título</b><br>Spanish | <b>عنوان</b><br>Arabic | <b>د افغانستان د کرکټ</b><br><b>ملی لوب</b><br>Pashto |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|

|                                 |                         |   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| <br><b>El Autor:</b><br>Spanish | <b>المؤلف</b><br>Arabic | <b>د افغانستان د کرکټ ملی لوب</b><br>Pashto |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|

|   |
|---|
| <b>¿Por qué lo recomendarías?</b><br>Spanish        |
| <b>لماذا تنصح بالكتاب؟</b><br>Arabic                |
| <b>چرا شما این کتاب را توصیه می کنید؟</b><br>Pashto |

|   |
|---|
| <b>PERSONAJE PRINCIPAL</b><br><b>(UN DIBUJA)</b><br>Spanish |
| <b>الشخصية الرئيسية</b><br>Arabic                           |
| <b>رسم</b><br><b>د اصلی کرکټر انځورگری</b><br>Pashto        |

|  |
|--|
| <b>PROBLEMA EN EL LIBRO</b><br>Spanish |
| <b>مشكلة في الكتاب</b><br>Arabic       |
| <b>په کتاب کې ستونزه</b><br>Pashto     |

Figure 2. Multilingual book summary graphic organizer (Spanish, Arabic, Phasto). From Integrating translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) practices to support English language learners by Kramer-Gordon, G. J., & Czora, L., Normile, M. (2024). "Original Work."

Figure 3. Expository writing: Multilingual sequence graphic organizer.

**Using TrUDL in the classroom**

| <b>First</b><br><b>Primero(a)</b><br><b>Ola</b> أولاً<br>د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوب | <b>Then</b><br><b>Siguiente</b><br><b>moqbil</b> مقابل<br>بيا | <b>Next</b><br><b>Entonces</b><br><b>tham</b> ثم<br>رانلونکې | <b>Finally</b><br><b>Finalmente</b><br><b>achira</b> أخيراً<br>په پای کې |
|---|---|--|--|
|   |   |  |  |

**Directions**

- ☐ Work with a partner to tell your story in Spanish
- ☐ Sketch your story in the template
- ☐ Practice telling your story with a partner in English
- ☐ Begin drafting your story in Spanish (written words)
- ☐ Record your story in English
- ☐ Publish your final draft in either Spanish or English

**Indicaciones**

- ☐ Trabaja con un compañero para contar tu historia en español
- ☐ Dibuja tu historia en la plantilla
- ☐ Practica contar tu historia con un compañero en inglés
- ☐ Comienza a redactar tu historia en español
- ☐ Graba tu historia en inglés
- ☐ Publique su trabajo final en español o inglés

**اتجاهات (Arabic)**

- ☐ اعمل مع شريك لسرد قصتك باللغة العربية
- ☐ ارسم قصتك في القالب
- ☐ تدرب على سرد قصتك مع شريك باللغة الإنجليزية
- ☐ ابدأ في صياغة قصتك باللغة العربية
- ☐ سجل قصتك باللغة الإنجليزية
- ☐ انشر مسودتك النهائية باللغة العربية أو الإنجليزية

**لارښوونې (Pashto)**

- ☐ د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډله د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډلې ته د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډلې نه ولاړ شي .
- ☐ خپله کیسه په قالب کې رسم کړئ
- ☐ په انګلیسي ژبه د خپل ملګري سره خپله کیسه وویلئ
- ☐ په پښتو ژبه د خپلې کیسې لیکنه پیل کړئ
- ☐ د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډله د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډلې نه په لاره اچ
- ☐ د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډله د افغانستان د کرکټ ملي لوبډلې نه په لاره اچولی دي .

Figure 3. Expository writing: Multilingual sequence graphic organizer. From Integrating translanguaging and universal design for learning (TrUDL) practices to support English language learners by Kramer-Gordon, G. J., & Czora, L., Normile, M. (2024). “Original Work.”

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