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### Language, Literacy, and Love: A Critical Framework for Teaching Adolescent Emergent Bilinguals

Phylicia Anderson, Mary Amanda Stewart, & Victor Antonio Lozada

**Abstract:** A high school English teacher/doctoral student and two university researchers share a three-part framework for educating emergent bilinguals across disciplines with these constructs: language, literacy, and love. Through long-term professional development, teachers at two high schools began to view language as translanguaging, literacy as multiliteracies, and love as the critical notion of armed love. Specifically, as educators recognized the value of students' home languages, they understood how all languaging was useful to acquire English, access content, and develop confidence in disciplinary literacy. Building off an understanding of students' languaging, educators then focused on multiliteracies in their disciplines, incorporating multilingual and multimodal literature in their curriculum that represented student diversity. Finally, teaching through a critical lens of armed love, educators began to examine societal, political, and economical constructs relevant to their emergent bilinguals' lives. This framework is useful to effect sustainable changes for teaching and learning equity with students in the dynamic process of English language acquisition.

**Keywords:** content area literacy, disciplinary literacy, professional development



**Phyllicia Anderson** has taught high school English language arts, photojournalism, and creative writing for ten years. She is a Ph.D. student in Reading Education at Texas Woman's University where she researches culturally responsive pedagogy, critical literacy, multilingual education, multimodality, and discourse. She has published a book chapter and peer-reviewed articles, presented at conferences locally, nationally and internationally, and produced manuscripts currently out for review.



**Mary Amanda (Mandy) Stewart** is Associate Professor of Multilingual Literacies at Texas Woman's University and the director of Master of Arts in Multilingual and Multicultural Studies. Her work focuses on adolescents' language, biliteracy, and identity development. She is the co-author of *But Does This Work with English Learners, a Guide for the ELA Classroom Grades 6-12* as well as *Radicalizing Literacies and Languaging: A Framework toward Dismantling the Mono-Mainstream Assumption*.



**Victor Antonio Lozada** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Literacy and Learning at Texas Woman's University. See his work in the co-edited book *Engage and Empower! Expanding the Curriculum for Justice and Activism* as well as his publications in the *Bilingual Research Journal*, the *Journal of General Music Education*, and the *Journal of Literacy Research and Instruction*.

### Introduction

**B**i/multilingual students who are acquiring English as a second or additional language in school have a wealth of language practices and translingual learning experiences both in and out of school on which educators can build (Martínez, 2018). However, secondary schools tend to be monolingual English-spaces where teachers might not be aware of bi/multilingual students' strengths or trained in ways to effectively teach them (Menken & Sánchez, 2019). Specifically, adolescent bi/multilinguals are a highly diverse population due to the years they have had to cultivate various academic, sociocultural, and language experiences in potentially more than one country (Stewart & Genova, 2020). That is, students may be either U.S. (or of the country where instruction takes place) or foreign-born, and if the latter, newcomers or students with many years in the country's schooling system. Further, they might be simultaneous or sequential bilinguals with varying experiences using their languages for familial, social, and academic purposes. In secondary schools, these myriads of factors merge, representing a complex phenomenon of geographical, linguistic, and cultural border crossing that affects the classroom where language and content learning take place (Yazan et al., 2019). Consequently, there is a pressing need for secondary teachers to understand bi/multilinguals' linguistic and cultural strengths as they create curriculum and instructional practices for students to thrive.

In this article, we share a framework for teaching secondary emergent bilinguals (EBs), highlighting students' process of acquiring English. As an

illustrative example, we invite you to meet Karmen and her English teacher, Phyliciá, the first author of this manuscript. We choose to share Karmen and as an example because she is representative of the EBs the teachers in this program teach (a Latina Spanish-speaker who is foreign-born), although we acknowledge EBs are a highly linguistically, racially, and culturally diverse group of students.

### Karmen and Phyliciá

Karmen (all names are pseudonyms) walks into her 10th grade English classroom on the first day of school. She finds her seat, silently awaiting further instructions. Phyliciá notes Karmen's eagerness to learn. She has been in the United States for four years and this is her first time in a mainstream, non-ESL classroom. Her school labels her an "English learner" due to her ongoing English acquisition and need to receive higher scores on English language assessments.

Reading high school level texts in English is a struggle in all of Karmen's English-medium classes. The learning demands in history, math, science, and English as well as their corresponding high-stakes assessment present multiple challenges for both Karmen and her teachers. Further, the content in her classes does not always connect to her life as young adult from another country, coming of age in a real world full of discrimination and inequalities.

In 2017, that is where the story might have ended. But Phyliciá now applies a framework of Language, Literacy, and Love in her classroom as a result of her professional learning as a doctoral student. She

knows that Karmen loves to read and excels at the 10th grade level when reading in Spanish, her home language. Further, taking a justice orientation toward loving her minoritized students, Phylicia works to support Karmen’s home language literacy and English language acquisition and students like her when engaging in relevant academic content. Therefore, while all examples we share in this manuscript might not include Karmen directly, we invite the reader to imagine how Phylicia interacts with her EBs and consider how this applies to teachers of all linguistically diverse students.

### The Collaboration and Methodology

The framework we call Language, Literacy, and Love is a result of a five-year collaboration of university researchers and two high schools in an urban-fringe area in the Southwestern part of the U.S. that receives many people from Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Notably, this grant<sup>1</sup> project began in 2016 and continued through 2020, a time in the U.S. with an increasing amount of anti-immigrant rhetoric (López & Pérez, 2018). To support interdisciplinary teachers in their instruction of EBs, this grant-funded initiative entailed whole-school professional development. The research team collected various data for five years to determine effective ways to empower secondary teachers to better educate EBs in

**Table 1**  
*High School Teachers*

Teaching Disciplines	Teachers from Two High Schools in the Same School District
English Language Arts (American Literature, World Literature, Composition, Reading Improvement, Creative Writing)	5
Social Studies (U.S. History, World History)	1
Science (Biology, Chemistry, Aquatics)	5
Math (Algebra, Geometry)	4
Technology	1
World Languages (Spanish, French, Latin)	5
Special Education	1
Leadership/Support Staff (Principal, Program Coordinators, Library Media Specialists)	5
<b>Total teachers</b>	<b>27</b>
Number Identifying as Monolingual	19
Number Identifying as Bi/multilingual	8
Number Identifying as a Person of Color	8
Number Identifying as White	19

their classes (See Hansen-Thomas et al., 2021 and Stewart et al., 2021b for more details of the empirical research from this initiative). Specifically, these data include the teachers’ coursework (reader responses/online discussions, lesson plans/reflections, text set creations, reflective essays), ongoing informal conversations with the teachers and school administrators, teachers’ surveys, classroom observations, and EB students’ classroom artifacts and test scores.

Through reiterative data analysis, trial and error, and feedback from all stakeholders including the teachers

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themselves, we developed and refined the Language, Literacy, and Love framework to represent the essential components teachers should adopt in teaching adolescent EBs. In other words, we determined that the ideas of language (the need for students to acquire discipline-specific English), literacy (teachers cover reading, writing, listening, and speaking in their content areas), and love (most teachers say they love their students) meet teachers where they are. Through the professional learning described in this article, teachers' understandings of these concepts can expand in profound ways.

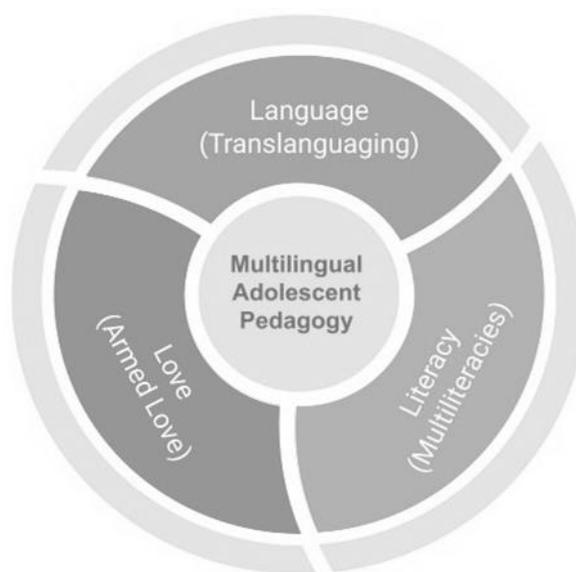
The teachers in Table 1 are the lead teachers in this initiative. They took three graduate courses and served as exemplar EB teachers for other educators in their schools. As illustrated in Table 1, they represent various disciplines as well as linguistic and racial identifications. Eight of the teachers identify as bi/multilingual (with proficiency in Spanish, French, and/or Latin in addition to English) and eight identify as people of color (Black or Latina/o), with six of them in both categories as Spanish-speaking Latina/os. We share their work to explain the framework, first highlighting Phylicia's journey as an English teacher and a scholar as she contributed to the research that resulted in this framework.

I (Phylicia, Author 1) identify as a Black woman who speaks American and Black English and is an emergent bilingual in several languages other than English, including Spanish, Swahili, and Chinese. As a doctoral student, I share my story in collaboration with my professor, Mandy, who is the grant project director who taught me and my colleagues in some of our coursework. Mandy (Author 2) is a White woman who acquired Spanish as a second language as a young adult. Victor (Author 3) is a research assistant for this project who identifies as a cisgender White-presenting Latino who speaks Spanish as a heritage language. Thus, we all bring diverse racial, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds into this work.

Like many of my high school teacher colleagues, through continual work with this framework, my understanding of language changed to translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014) as I began to see my students as bi/multilinguals. My conception of literacy shifted to focus on multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996) as I purposefully sought curriculum that connected to my students' lives while encouraging them to more fully express themselves through various modes, including different languages. Finally, my notion of love radically changed to an unrelenting armed love (Freire, 1998) that is now the foundation of my teaching, particularly when considering marginalized students who face inequity in and out of school.

Understanding these theoretical constructs influenced my perception of Karmen and how I taught her and other EBs. Figure 1 illustrates the three components of the framework we developed and how we presented it to other secondary teachers to foster similar experiences in their classrooms.

Figure 1



- Language→Translanguaging: Acknowledging students' multiple languages and understanding more about their bilingualism.
- Literacy→Multiliteracies: Recognizing the culturally-embedded ways students send and receive meaning across different modes and languages.
- Love→Armed Love: Teaching with a critical stance to address the inequities that students encounter.

As language changed to translanguaging, I began to view Karmen as a multilingual who creates meaning using both English and Spanish alongside many language varieties. I sought to understand her sophisticated translanguaging in all aspects of her life. Then, as literacy changed to multiliteracies, I focused on Karmen using all modes of language in all her languages, encouraging her to read, write, listen, speak, view, and create using different methods of communication in English in addition to Spanish, a language in which I am not fluent. Finally, as my love for Karmen strengthened to armed love, a construct applied to education by literacy activist Freire (1998), I learned about her struggle and took a critical stance on the systems that perpetuate oppressive forces in her life. I developed an understanding of Karmen as a young woman from Mexico, a first-generation immigrant in our society of hierarchies and inequalities. I started to name the struggles she faces as a member of particular people groups who receive unequal opportunities both historically and present day in our society—a racial minority group, immigrants, women, and someone whose English language is marked as nonstandard (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Acknowledging these difficult truths and acting on them in the classroom is now the foundation of my teaching—armed love.

**“It is incumbent on all teachers to gain awareness and develop practices to provide EBs with an equitable education.”**

In dialogue with one another, my colleagues and the university researchers learned about relevant theory, used it to name and form our beliefs, and then explored how to put it into practice (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009). Below, we share each component of the framework and exemplars of how the 27 teacher leaders put each element into practice within their discipline. We continue to focus on Karmen as an ungeneralizable, yet humanizing representative of the diverse EB population in high schools.

### **Language, Literacy, and Love: An Integrated Framework across the Disciplines**

Karmen is an EB whose experiences of language acquisition are similar to many students in our schools, an estimated 9.6% of the student population which continues to grow (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2020). It is incumbent on all teachers to gain awareness and develop practices to provide EBs with an equitable education. Even a school with only one EB requires every teacher to possess essential knowledge about language instruction and bilingualism (García, 2017). Taking this to heart, throughout our explanation of this framework, we share the experiences of teachers across various disciplines (e.g., ELA, world languages, math, science, history, technology) who applied a language, literacy, and love framework to various degrees in their classes with their own EBs, creating an effective whole-school approach.

This framework consists of three interrelated theoretical constructs essential for teachers to understand in order to affect their beliefs about EBs that will in turn, impact their disciplinary teaching. Below, we explain our conceptualization of each part

of the framework, how these theories affected teachers' beliefs, and then, the specific actions they took to connect theory to practice to deliver disciplinary-specific literacy instruction. In order to illustrate how this framework may be applied in teacher-education, we explain the specific learning activities and outcomes from the 27 lead teachers who participated in three graduate courses focusing on this framework. Our purpose is two-fold, speaking to both secondary teachers (like Phylícíá) and teacher educators (like Mandy and Victor). We aim to illustrate the powerful nature of this framework that teachers can adopt and suggest approaches for adolescent teacher education through graduate programs and professional development.

### **Language to Translanguaging**

The language component of this framework addresses theories surrounding second language acquisition (SLA) from a multilingual lens, highlighting the multilingual turn in language education (May, 2014). Most teachers recognize the need for EBs to acquire language, but translanguaging moves beyond teaching English through a monolingual perspective. Yet many teachers are not bilingual themselves and do not experience language as a verb the same way that EBs do. Therefore, in this first graduate course, teachers both learned about and experienced second language acquisition and multilingualism to walk in their EBs' shoes.

### **Translanguaging Theory**

Translanguaging is simultaneously a pedagogical strategy, a natural way bi/multilinguals use language, and a political project. First, there are many implications for the language learning classroom as once adopts a translanguaging perspective. SLA seeks to understand the human capacity to learn languages other than the first during the later stages of human

growth and development, and after the first language or languages have been acquired (Ortega, 2009). Therefore, through a multilingual perspective of SLA, the first language plays a crucial role in the acquisition of the second language (Ortega, 2014). Because they are bi/multilinguals, EBs are engaged in translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014) as they use their first language to assist in the development of the additional language and when they make meaning of academic content from their full linguistic repertoire.

Further, translanguaging is a sociocultural reality for bi/multilingual people. EB students naturally engage in communication that draws from their named languages, using their linguistic flexibility in purposeful ways to make meaning (García & Otheguy, 2021). Thus, translanguaging takes a view of language as an activity, putting the focus on the individual, such as Karmen, rather than her named languages, Spanish and English. It is incumbent on teachers to see how Karmen engages in translanguaging by drawing from English, Spanish, and the language varieties there within. Understanding translanguaging practices are first about people, not just language as an object, as bi/multilingual people make meaning in various contexts including the classroom (Babino & Stewart, 2020).

Finally, an understanding of translanguaging allows teachers to consider the multiple power dynamics at play within the classroom where bi/multilingual students are present (Bauman & Briggs, 2003; García & Otheguy, 2020). That is, teachers have the power to sanction what is considered appropriate language for learning and expressing one's learning. In this vein, translanguaging is a much larger political project that aims to pursue learning equity for students like Karmen by giving teachers the tools to critically examine explicit and understood language policies that govern how learning occurs in and out of the classroom.

Table 2

*Walking in EBs' Shoes: Personal Second Language Acquisition*

Teacher	Discipline	Language of Study	Positive Experiences	Negative Experiences	Application to EBs
Caroline	Science	American Sign Language	[The teacher] was very patient and particular with us as she moved through her lesson.	Watching the more experienced signers speaking [at a silent dinner] to each other left me feeling invisible.	Some EBs are completely immersed in a new language, perhaps looking for any word that sounds familiar.
Drake	Spanish	Italian	The further I went in, the more I was relying on my Spanish to make sense of the new language.	I found myself not remembering much from week to week, having to review previous lessons each time I opened the book.	My job is to improve their linguistic and literary skills in their first language so that they can make those meaningful connections while they are learning English.
Ethan	Math	Spanish	Hearing someone speak the language in the videos forces me to interpret what is being said in real time.	In many cases, the visual aids did not match what was being taught.	This helped me see some of the struggle my students face in our schools and how practices in my own classroom need to change.
Phoebe	Journalism	Xhosa	The best solution was continued practice in learning how the different letters were pronounced.	I struggled to find resources to start acquiring the language.	When teachers have an understanding of how language is acquired, they can ... lower the student's affective filter.
Raven	Latin	French	Being able to contribute to an impromptu conversation cemented the grammar in my mind.	There were times that translating slang really confused me.	Encouraging translanguaging will now be a higher priority than it already was for me.

Studies continually show the benefits of EBs utilizing translanguaging in sanctioned ways within bilingual and even English-medium classrooms (CUNY-New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals, 2021; Seltzer, 2019). For example, Ascenzi-Moreno (2018) examined the ways teachers adapted formative reading assessments for their EBs by allowing their students to use their multilingual language practices, or translanguaging skills, when demonstrating comprehension of texts. As a result, teachers were able to approach the reading assessment of their EBs through an asset-based lens which highlighted the

areas of strength and room for growth in the students' language and literacy skills. Another study illustrates how translanguaging assists students in recognizing the clues needed for interpretation during close reading (Canagarajah, 2011). As teachers took on a multilingual view of their students, they began to see beyond the language form and make meaning from new words and phrases.

### Theory to Practice

The first focus of this framework meets teachers from where they usually start and the idea that EBs need to acquire discipline-specific English. However, the teachers became language learners to fully understand language theory first-hand and engaged in their own informal SLA of a language of their choice, trying out different learning methods and

materials for a minimum of 10 hours during the first course. They used apps, computer programs, videos, and books to learn, and practiced their learning with speakers of the target language such as students in their schools. They made connections from their SLA experience to their students' experiences acquiring English. Throughout the first course, the teachers kept track of the ways they found helped them the most to acquire the language and later used this information to report their findings in a second language acquisition autoethnography. The results of their positive and negative experiences, and how they

applied those experiences to educate their EBs, are reflected in Table 2.

Through this second language acquisition experience, the teachers noticed they relied heavily on their first language (i.e., English) or full linguistic repertoire when seeking ways to understand the new language. They became aware of their own translanguaging through this personal experience and then, were better adept at recognizing and valuing the multiple languages their own students brought with them into the classroom for learning. This led to their next step of documenting their students' languages and exposure to each language using informal interviews or surveys when they had many students such as 100 or more (See Stewart & Genova, 2020 for sample language surveys in English and Spanish). The teachers used this knowledge to provide their students with multiple opportunities to learn and express their discipline-specific learning in their home language as well as in English.

Thus, teachers experienced the act of translanguaging as a language learner while acquiring an understanding of relevant theory. This knowledge affected what emerged as a core belief amongst the teachers—that EBs' languages are valuable in their classrooms. This idea of translanguaging as an act focused on the person who possesses knowledge of various languages, pushed into the next component, a focus on literacy in the disciplines.

### Literacy to Multiliteracies

The literacy component of this framework builds on the language component by addressing theories of

multiliteracies (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, composing, critical thinking) across all disciplines in EBs' home languages and English. Teachers adopted foundational understandings of this construct as they moved from literacy to multiliteracies and applied it to their instructional practices and content-specific curriculum.

### Multiliteracies Theory

Literacy can be interpreted as the discreet skills needed to accomplish specific reading and writing

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tasks necessary to perform on standardized assessments—what Street (1998) refers to an autonomous view of Literacy written in the singular with a capital L to denotes the narrow view that is often privileged. Notably, when a narrow form of Literacy is privileged, other forms and inevitably marginalized. However, conceptualizing literacy in the plural, literacies, involves adopting an ideological stance to acknowledge the multiple, culturally-embedded ways one sends and receives meaning

which are always situated in society's power structures (Street, 1998). Certainly, there are multiple ways Karmen makes meaning using various features within her languages as well as signs, symbols, gestures, and numerous forms of media. An ideological view of reading acknowledges her multiple literacies while also understanding that not all literacies carry the same power in a given context such as the school.

The term multiliteracies, coined by the New London Group (1996), adopts an ideological view of literacies

and addresses societal disparities that are often exacerbated in the school setting. Multiliteracies accounts for the burgeoning ways of making meaning through various languages and cultural expressions as well as new technologies and modes of communication (Mira et al., 2018; New London Group, 1996). Further, Smith et al. (2018) and Stornaiuolo et al. (2017) highlight the mobile nature of literacies in our modern day, technology-driven world where one makes meaning across various digital platforms simultaneously. In teaching adolescent emergent bilinguals, teachers must consider the juxtaposition of their languages and translanguaging with the digital devices, applications, print text, visuals, images, sounds, and gestures available to them to comprehend and express themselves.

The various ways to communicate meaning are referred to as modes, creating the study of multimodality (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Multimodal discourse, or a communication with a variety of modes including speech, sounds, gestures, and images (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2010), is particularly important for emergent bilinguals to gain content knowledge and language acquisition, while also expressing their learning in ways that are not constrained by proficiency in any particular language, nor merely print text or speech. Thus, EBs have a wealth of modes available to them through their growing language repertoire in addition to affordances through technology, images, video, and movement.

One way to implement multiliteracies instruction across the curriculum is through the incorporation of disciplinary text-sets with an emphasis on culturally relevant texts that elicit students' connections through their culture, ethnic group, peers, family, and community (Brooks & Browne, 2012). Personal connections to the text from one's own lived experiences generate comprehension and further

second language acquisition (Ebe, 2012; Ebe & Chapman-Santiago, 2016). These text sets should also include multilingual and multimodal reading/viewing in the disciplines because drawing on multiple languages and modes also promotes language acquisition and content accessibility (Zapata & Lacorte, 2017). Then, through multimodal composing, emergent bilinguals can more effectively demonstrate their learning with numerous resources to express themselves most effectively (Smith et al., 2021).

### **Theory to Practice**

While learning about multiliteracies theory, the teachers were immersed in an exemplar multicultural, multimodal, and multilingual text set created by Mandy about immigrant youth (See Stewart et al., 2021a). The text set included reading/viewing from different perspectives about immigration, purposefully highlighting narratives of youth from Mexico and Central America, the primary population of the teachers' students, in order to facilitate connections. It also included poetry, artwork, videos, graphs, statistics, and informational text. Through experiencing learning through this approach, the teachers gained knowledge about how they might incorporate different texts in their disciplines while understanding the importance that their students were represented in their classroom reading/viewing.

Then, applying multiliteracies theory, the teachers developed text-sets for emergent bilinguals in their specific disciplines, ensuring that the texts included representation of student populations, three or more languages (building off of the language component of the framework), multiple modes, and genres. Table 3 illustrates exemplars of texts they included in their text sets.

Table 3

*Sample Books from Multimodal, Multilingual, Multicultural Text Sets*

Title/Author	Style or Genre	Information Summary	Language/s	Instructional Purpose
“如果世界是一個村莊 (If the World Were a Village)” by David J. Smith	Picture Book	This book explores the lives of 100 villagers in relation to the world population.	English/ Chinese	Introduce a unit on world geography
“All American Boys” by Jason Reynolds	Chapter Book	Rashad and Quinn come to terms with unspeakable truths about prejudice and must risk everything to change the world.	English/ Spanish	Use in student book clubs for reader response
“A poeta X (The Poet X)” by Elizabeth Acevedo	Novel in Verse	Xiomara Batista discovers her love for slam poetry and uses it as a way to understand the world.	English/ Portuguese	Teach mini-lessons on literary elements
“Where is the love?” by Black Eyed Peas	Song/ Lyrics	The song questions if love can be found in the midst of a world full of injustices.	English/ Spanish Remix	Discuss relevant issues of social injustice
“Why stereotypes should be avoided” - NewsELA	Informational Text	The article discusses the problems with stereotyping others and how it can be harmful to our communities.	English/ Spanish	Provide example of article that show social injustice for student project

Furthering their understanding of multiliteracies, teachers also infused more writing and speaking across languages and modes into their regular teaching. They encouraged students to express their learning through technology, first language writing, and artistic compositions as illustrated in a Karmen’s book snap (Figure 2). Phylicia infused Spanish reading, English writing, and technology in order to allow students to equitably demonstrate their understanding of literary elements. This illustrates how a multilingual/multiliteracies approach allowed the teachers to focus on the literacy demands of their disciplines as separate instructional goals from language. Thus, they realized they could teach math to newcomers by using much of the students’ language, even if they did not speak it by using videos

and online documents in multiple languages. Teachers also encouraged their students to write bilingual poetry, record weather forecasts in all of their languages, and use images to accompany their writing. Notably, the adoption of a multiliteracies approach also increased student talk in the classroom around content objectives—speaking that occurred in all languages.

### Love to Armed Love

In addition to translanguaging and multiliteracies approaches, the final component of this framework addresses

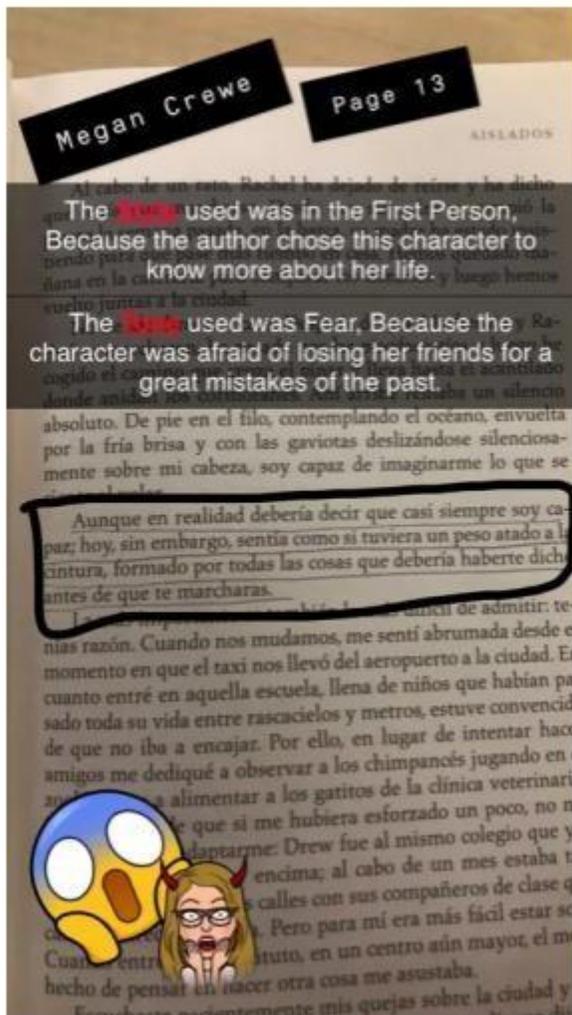
teaching as an act of love through confronting injustices (Freire, 1998). In the last graduate course, teachers were asked to adopt critical perspectives on society, the educational system, their schools, and even their own classrooms, knowing that the EBs they serve encounter often-intersecting forms of oppression.

### Armed Love Theory

Beyond more than a feeling, this is “an ‘armed love,’ the fighting love of those convinced of the right and duty to fight, to denounce, and to announce” (Freire, 1998, p. 84). Friere (1998) applies this idea to teachers, borrowing the term armed love from Thiago de Melo’s poem “Song of Armed Love”, denoting the power of solidarity amidst injustices, translated from

Portuguese to English (Tucker-Raymond, 2010). This requires teachers to be more than literacy, language, and discipline-specific teachers. It calls us to action for and with our marginalized students. Armed love does not run away from the injustices and inequalities EBs face due to the way they are perceived in our society (as well as the often disparaging perceptions of their language, cultural transitions, family members, and people from their immigrant communities). They are minoritized, or viewed as substandard, due to various factors that could include their race, translanguaging practices, markedness or accent of their English, country of origin (or their parents'), traditions, and religious practices (Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Figure 2



Armed love moves beyond a simple act of caring to being able to identify with the struggles of students and the injustices they face. In this critical pedagogy, teachers must engage their students in critical consciousness (Freire, 1968, 2018) by naming oppressive structures and then acting on them collectively. Specifically, through the graduate courses, Phylíciá deeply learned about the marginalized position of her EBs and critically evaluated the oppressive language structures in the educational system. Once teachers name such tensions, they can explore innovative and courageous ways to address the tensions in their curriculum, instruction, classroom management, and engagement with students. Then, as teachers and students engage in constructive dialogue, the teachers are able to learn from the students in a dialogic model. Thus, it is not the fight against the injustices that warrant armed love, but the empowering of students to agentively fight for their rights to receive humanizing treatment in all parts of society.

Professional teachers have worked to implement armed love and critical consciousness within their pedagogical practices in the disciplines. For example, de los Ríos and Molina (2020) engaged their Latinx immigrant students in critical literacies to explore social justice issues in their communities. Through a multimodal approach, their students participated in grassroots protests, uniting day laborers, teachers, and others through a cultural and religious celebration. In addition, Newfield (2011) demonstrates how South African preservice teachers used multimodal means such as drama and visual art “to critique colonialism” (p. 34) through the re-dramatization of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and *The Enchanted Island*. This allowed students and teachers to co-create knowledge using both critical consciousness and armed love. Further, Harvey-Torres and Valdez (2021) share how a bilingual teacher combats negative rhetoric regarding

immigration, racism, and specifically anti-Blackness with first grade students through purposeful text selection and writer’s workshop. These examples illustrate how teachers in any discipline at any grade-level can apply armed love in their teaching.

Teaching EBs through armed love aligns with Nieto’s (2018) assertion that language, culture, and teaching

are linked. Thus, teachers can engage students in critical inquiry, building on students’ socio-political contexts as well as their linguistic and cultural diversity. Nieto (2018) similarly implores educators to work toward justice through their curriculum and pedagogy, which is a key feature of armed love.

**Theory to Practice**

**Table 4**

*Lessons of Love*

Teacher	Discipline	Teacher-Created Lesson Title	Instructional Goals
Chloe	Math	Scatter Plots: A Lesson in Algebra and Social Justice	Students become aware of racial income inequality by questioning the causation through discussions about scatter plot data.
Kiara	History	Words Matter	Teachers understand implicit and explicit language to help students improve communication skills.
Mable	English/ESL	Enlighten, Educate, and Empower	Students read informational texts on controversial issues, discuss the various issues, and form opinions about each topic.
Phoebe	Journalism	What Makes a Photo Powerful?	Students participate in discussions as they consider why and how emotions are communicated through photography.

**Table 5**

*Critical Analysis of a Text*

Teacher	Discipline	Text Title	Critical Analysis
Chloe	Math	<i>Stand and Deliver</i> [Film]	Escalante’s ... teaching methods consisted of memorization and drill more than critical thinking.
Kiara	History	<i>Me and My House: James Baldwin’s Last Decade in France</i> by Magdalena J. Zaborowska and [Film] <i>I am Not Your Negro</i> [book]	When society can acknowledge the things that have come to pass, the result of those decisions, and their repercussions, then we can start a conversation grounded in love.
Mabel	English/ESL	<i>Refugee</i> by Alan Gratz [book]	[Students] are more engaged when a text is relevant to their life experiences.
Phoebe	Journalism	<i>Family Matters, The Cosby Show, A Different World, Black-ish</i> [African American Sitcoms]	Students need to be empowered to believe intelligence is appealing.

Certainly, applying this theoretical idea to actual practice is less concrete than the two prior ideas. Therefore, we believe it is important to build critical perspectives piece by piece through the more accessible notions of translanguaging and multiliteracies before arriving at armed love. Consequently, the third graduate course focused on armed love by developing teachers, and subsequently, their students, to become agents of change. Teachers began by completing an autobiography presentation in which they shared events that were instrumental in shaping who they are as individuals, focusing on areas of privilege as well as marginalization. Next, they identified a documented instance in a peer-reviewed journal that related to disciplinary teaching for social justice through a multiliteracies lens. The teachers then developed similar lessons for their students as shown in Table 4.

In order to more fully realize the potential of technology for critical pedagogies, the teachers then used virtual reality (VR) apps and VR

Table 6

Teachers' Theories, Beliefs, Practices while Adopting the Framework

	Language	Literacy	Love
<b>Theory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multilingual View of Second Language Acquisition</li> <li>• Translanguaging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiliteracies</li> <li>• Multimodality</li> <li>• Culturally Relevant Texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed Love</li> <li>• Critical Literacy</li> <li>• Critical Pedagogies</li> </ul>
<b>Beliefs</b>	Students are emergent bilinguals. All of their languages are important in their learning.	Students need to engage in multiple forms of communication beyond the written word in all their languages. They need to read texts that they can connect to.	Teachers need to see and name students' struggles due to the inequities they face. Then, teachers should act based on that knowledge, helping their students do the same.
<b>Practices</b>	Teachers learned which languages their students spoke and found disciplinary resources in those languages. They encouraged students to engage in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in all languages.	Teachers used technology and relevant literature in multiple languages to engage students in expressing their learning multilingually and multimodally.	Teachers engaged students in critical analysis of content, asking whose perspective was honored and whose was marginalized. Teachers framed their teaching through social justice issues past and present.

agreement that EBs need to acquire English, literacy should be incorporated in all subjects, and we all signed up for the job, because we really do love our students. However, understanding theories that move these understandings forward can impact how we teach EBs. The powerful constructs of translanguaging, multiliteracies, and armed love work in tandem, as one impacts another in teacher beliefs and classroom practices. We claim that each one is essential to providing an equitable and transformative education for adolescent EBs. This collaboration suggests that

cardboard headsets to see the world through someone else's eyes. This helped them notice how systems of oppression influence their EBs. Similarly, they read/viewed various multimodal texts (movies, television shows, articles, and books) through critical lenses. Then, they created a critical analysis of a relevant issue based on this text (Table 5).

This critical lens recognizes teaching language and literacy is not enough and will only perpetuate the status quo of inequity for EBs and their communities. Through a stance of armed love, teachers can work with youths to name tensions and inequalities while also acting on them that will serve them far beyond the classroom walls. Indeed, disciplinary literacy and language instruction really begins to gain traction in affecting students' outcomes, when combined with a critical lens of armed love.

### From Theory to Belief to Practice

The language, literacy, and love framework meets teachers where they are and builds off of their

an understanding of these theories can affect teachers' beliefs and ultimately, affect their practices as seen in Table 6.

First, an understanding of language through a multilingual lens is crucial. If we teach bi- and multilingual students as if they were monolingual English-speakers, we completely misunderstand them and consequently, implement misguided instruction. From their personal experiences, theoretical knowledge, and classroom applications, these high school teachers discovered that learning increases when students are able to access their home language to gain content knowledge, English acquisition, and confidence in using disciplinary literacies (García & Li Wei, 2014; Wright et al., 2017).

Using all students' languages opens instruction up to a myriad of previously unimagined possibilities, then, is multiplied exponentially through a multiliteracies approach to disciplinary literacy instruction. Further, the benefits of creating multimodal learning environments that allow students to read and

research using their cultural frames of references provides them greater access to knowledge as they develop an understanding of the various concepts and ideas presented across disciplines. Therefore, it is important for teachers to seek multilingual and multimodal resources that align with their curriculum standards and reflect the cultural diversity represented in their classrooms.

Finally and most important is that teachers teach more than their discipline's standards, the English language, or even literacy. Helping teachers understand and embrace critical pedagogies to acknowledge and confront the systematic forms of oppression that affect their EBs is transformative. Teachers can then provide their students with the tools to examine the power structures impacting their daily lives. This equates teaching with armed love, providing students opportunities to think critically about their worlds (Freire, 1968, 2018). However, this collaboration must take place through dialogue as teachers listen to understand their students' life experiences and seek to represent those in the curriculum.

**“Translanguaging, multiliteracies, and armed love gave Phylicia the tools to teach Karmen and other students more effectively.”**

### **Transformations Using Language, Literacy, and Love**

Phylicia continues to learn and apply this framework in her teaching throughout the year, noting differences in Karmen's engagement and participation in the ELA classroom. We attribute some of this to Phylicia's focus on Karmen's translanguaging, multiliteracies, and awareness of her agency to affect change that began with her speaking her native language and utilizing translanguaging skills in the ELA classroom. Her abilities to read high school level texts in English have increased, and she has continually developed her

Spanish language literacy skills. Translanguaging, multiliteracies, and armed love gave Phylicia the tools to teach Karmen and other students more effectively. This powerful framework can engage emergent bilingual students across multiple disciplines in a whole-school approach. We invite other teachers to join Phylicia in applying this framework in the classroom. Further, teacher educators can use the framework to meet teachers where they are and then expand their learning in meaningful ways.

As you consider how to put Language, Literacy, and Love into practice in your classroom, school, or teacher-education program, we encourage you to begin by doing, just like the teachers in this program did. That is, as you engage with the theory, begin

applying it to actual teaching practices while in dialogue with others who are doing the same. You may replicate, with appropriate modifications, the activities we described in each of the graduate courses. Below, we also provide more concrete ways for you to journey from theory to

belief to practice while engaging in our three constructs.

### **Translanguaging**

Use the teaching ideas in these articles for students to express their full linguistic repertoires:

- D'warte, J. (2019). Mapping languages and literacies with multilingual students in Australian classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 72(5), 663–669. <http://doi:10.1002/trtr.1785>
- Fishman, E. (2021). What can translation do?: Language, power, and identity in an elementary classroom. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 17(1).

[http://jolle.coe.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fishman\\_JoLLE2021.pdf](http://jolle.coe.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Fishman_JoLLE2021.pdf)

These articles will help you develop classroom practices that consider your students' flexible use of language as a strength. If you are concerned about how you might accomplish this due to language barriers in working with newcomers, read the article below where two self-identified monolingual teachers describe how they taught adolescent newcomers while implementing what they were learning about translanguaging:

- Flint, P., Dollar, T. & Stewart, M. A. (2019). Hurdling over language barriers: Building relationships with adolescent newcomers through literacy advancement. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 62(5), 509–519. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.927>

### Multiliteracies

Bring together multiple technologies and languages in your literacy instruction as guided by the innovative practices outlined in the following resources:

- Pacheco, M. B., Smith, B. E., & Carr, S. (2017). Connecting classrooms and communities with language and technology: A multimodal code-meshing project. *Voices from the Middle*, 24(3), 63–67. Retrieved from <https://zi/library.ncte.org/journals/vm/issues/v24-3/28998>
- Anderson, P., & Borda, J. (2020). Visuals, sounds, text, and symbols: Multimodal instruction to support second language acquisition. *TexELT: Texas English Language Teaching*, 9(1), 14–28. <http://textesolv.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/texelt-v9n1.pdf>

These articles illustrate practical ways that teachers can use technology with emergent bilinguals to draw from many modes of communications, increasing English acquisition, creativity, and academic engagement. By combining multiliteracies with a translanguaging framework, you will open up many more possibilities for your students to have equitable access to learn content and express their learning.

### Armed Love

Finally, remember that we cannot ignore the struggles regarding various forms of discrimination and oppression that our students face. Apply critical lenses to your teaching by addressing inequity by engaging with the information on these websites:

- Southern Poverty Law Center. (2020). Dismantling racial caste: Teaching tolerance. Retrieved from <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/dismantling-racial-caste>
- Learning for Justice (n.d.). The language of the immigration debate. Retrieved from <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/the-language-of-the-immigration-debate>

These resources contain specific teaching ideas that address standards as well as topics such as systemic racism and anti-immigration rhetoric. Many emergent bilinguals will already be familiar with these issues through their out-of-school lives. When you bring in concerns relevant to them in the classroom, you honor them and their experiences, showing you stand in solidarity with them. Further, you are able to learn from and with them as you think critically to interrogate the way things are so you might reimagine a more just world.

Like many teachers or teacher educators, you might feel overwhelmed to implement all of these

innovative practices at once. However, we encourage you to make changes in your teaching, step by step (language, literacy, love), as you view emergent bilinguals as students with sophisticated translingual

and transnational skills. These small changes can eventually lead to radical change as you continually apply the framework. Language, literacy, love . . . repeat!

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