Imagining Multimodal and Translanguaging Possibilities for Authentic Cultural Writing Experiences

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Cover Page Footnote
End Notes

[1] We have chosen to employ Kissel's (2017) term, "Writers' Workshop" in place of "Writing Workshop" in order to center on the *writers* rather than their writing products.

[2] Term coined by García, O., Kleifgen, J. A., & Falchi, L. (2008). *From English language learners to emergent bilinguals.* A research Initiative of the Campaign for Educational Equity. Equity Matters 1. Teachers College, Columbia University.

About the Authors:

Lucía Cárdenas Curiel, PhD, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. Her research examines the conditions that allow emergent multilingual language learners to succeed academically in elementary schools. Her work contributes by looking at the intersection between pedagogical knowledge, disciplinary literacies, and linguistic repertoires simultaneously.

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This article proposes ways to authentically amplify writer's workshop for emergent bilinguals. Through the study of one bilingual teacher's mediation in teaching, we examined the affordances that translanguaging and transmodal practices have for emergent bilingual students' writing processes. In this case study, we focused on a writing sequence associated with the well-known Latin American holiday of the Day of the Dead, in which 3rd grade emergent bilinguals wrote "calaveras," or literary poems, as part of an interdisciplinary language arts and social studies lesson. Our work is framed by sociocultural theories of mediation, literacy, and language. Under a multiliteracies pedagogy, we observed how a bilingual teacher and emergent bilinguals negotiate meaning through a variety of linguistic and multimodal resources. In our interactional analysis of talk, we found how the teacher mediated background knowledge and vocabulary as a part of the writing process; we also identified ways in which her mediation included extensive scaffolding as she provided linguistic and disciplinary knowledge needed to write calaveras. Through integrating the tenets of mediation with biliteracy, multiliteracies, and translanguaging pedagogies, this study offers a promising example of how teachers can build a culturally-sustaining writers' workshop to support emergent bilingual learners' language development and writing practices.

Writers' Workshop[1] has become a mainstay in literacy education, developing over three decades ago as an instructional framework to apprentice young learners into the craft of writing. The framework is based on four principles: students will (1) write

about their own lives, (2) use a consistent writing process, (3) write in authentic ways, and (4) develop independence as writers (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983). Within this framework, teachers model writing practices and strategies with short mini-lessons and provide additional guidance during one-on-one conferencing throughout the writing process (Calkins, 1994; Ray & Laminack, 2001). While Writers' Workshop has long been touted as an effective pedagogical approach for supporting young writers (Calkins et al., 2005; Graves, 1983; Kissel, 2017), scholars have questioned the efficacy of the model to support emergent bilingual[2] (EB) writers, particularly when their teachers are unprepared to mediate language development alongside writing (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2013; Peyton et al., 1994).

Translanguaging and Writer's Workshop

In response, an emerging line of inquiry considers how teachers can support EB writers by integrating translanguaging within writing (Canagarajah, 2011; Gort, 2006, 2012; Pacheco & Smith, 2015; Velasco & García, 2014). Translanguaging emphasizes the creative and critical agency enacted by language users who fluidly integrate linguistic resources (e.g., language systems, dialects), registers (e.g., everyday speech, formal writing) and modes (e.g., images, sound, text, animation) according to their purposes for communication (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2017). When translanguaging is adopted as pedagogy, the "locus of control" is situated in "the students' active use of language," thus centering the learners' voices and choices (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 391). The teacher not only leverages the learners' language and cultural practices to promote the development of their disciplinary language and content knowledge but recognizes learners' full meaning-making repertoires as "both informing *and* informed by classroom instruction" (García et al., 2017, p. 28).

Like translanguaging, the Writers' Workshop centers the learners' agency, specifically with regard to how their intended purposes and audiences inform their rhetorical decisions (Calkins, 1994). In her study of six Spanish-English bilingual children in a first-grade class in Texas, Durán (2017) found that EBs' engagement with an audience-focused curriculum informed the linguistic and rhetorical decisions they made in drafting and revision. Also, it was found that the teacher's questioning during conferences promoted EBs' awareness of audience throughout the writing process. In another study, Rowe (2018) incorporated translanguaging pedagogy to support multimodal composition among her multilingual second grade writers; she emphasized the importance of providing authentic opportunities for students to engage in writing to communicate with bi- and multilingual audiences. At the middle school level, Pacheco and Smith (2015) investigated how eighth grade students integrated languages and multiple modes in digital compositions when afforded the opportunity to choose their purpose and audience for writing within the workshop model. The authors analyzed students' "multimodal codemeshing", which refers to "how students translanguage when composing multimodal texts" (p. 293). Their study revealed that students chose to integrate multiple languages and modes (i.e., audio recordings, text, images) in their writing to "convey multidimensional and nuanced meanings" and engage multiple audiences (p. 308). Together these studies suggest young EB learners demonstrate awareness of audience and rhetorical astuteness within the context of Writers'

Workshop when afforded opportunities to choose their purposes, audiences, and means for composition. (See also Buell et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2017.)

Writers' Workshop also integrates apprenticeship and collaboration as an authentic component of the writing process, which extant research suggests can mediate EB writers' development. Gort (2012) found that collaborative structures embedded within parallel English/Spanish Writers' Workshops promoted talk among EB first grade writers, who employed oral code-switching for self-reflection, evaluation, and regulation of their writing processes. In other cases, students developed awareness of audience through opportunities to collaborate throughout the writing workshop, such as in Axelrod and Cole's (2018) study of a before-school program for EB elementary students. The authors found that the flexible and collaborative nature of this multilingual setting required students to engage in "negotiation of language, language choice, and awareness of audience and multiple perspectives" with their mentors and peers (p. 148). They found that young EB writers' interaction supported the development of sophisticated consideration of audience, consciously integrating orthographic and syntactic resources across their full linguistic repertoires based on their purposes for writing. Likewise, Bauer et al. (2017) found that peer interactions among Latina/o and African American students played an important role in shaping their writing in a dual-language classroom, where buddy pairs "became a vehicle for supporting translanguaging," and mediated movement from orally sharing ideas to capturing them in writing (p. 22). As these studies reveal, opportunities to translanguage through peer interaction within the Writers' Workshop facilitate the development of EBs' writing practices.

Like peer interaction, teacher mediation is central to the Writers' Workshop, where the teacher models effective practices, engages learners in collaborative writing, and provides individualized support during writing conferences. However, the extent to which peer and teacher mediation support EBs' chosen purposes, audiences, and compositional practices for writing depends on whether their linguistic and cultural resources are invited into the classroom as illustrated in Brown (2009) and Ranker (2009). Brown (2009) observed a second-grade teacher's writing instruction, focusing on Juan, one of the two EB students, to examine what linguistic literacy practices he used. Though his writing was scaffolded by teacher modeling, conferencing, and peer interactions, Brown found that Juan's home linguistic/cultural resources were excluded by his teacher and peers. As a result, he avoided using Spanish in class and revised his writing to move away from his family's cultural mode of storytelling to mimic his teacher's linear approach more closely. We compare this study with Ranker's (2009), which considered the writing development of six first grade EBs in Ms. Stevens's sheltered English as a second language classroom. Ranker investigated what elements of their teacher's collaborative writing practice the students adopted and how they hybridized these elements with their own cultural and linguistic resources. Unlike the teacher in Brown's study, Ms. Stevens is bilingual and explicitly encouraged her students to use Spanish, despite the restrictive language policy at her school.

While these two studies highlight the important role of teacher mediation within the Writers' Workshop, less is known about the role of teacher mediation to support translanguaging and transmodal composition to support EBs' writing, which is the

purpose of our study. Specifically, we investigate how one third grade bilingual teacher mediates EB students' writing in a dual-language classroom. We also consider whether or not these translanguaging and transmodal practices enhance or hinder students' writing processes.

In what follows, we first provide an overview of our theoretical framework, namely sociocultural theories of literacy learning as mediated action, the affordances of biliteracy and multiliteracies pedagogies, and translanguaging and transmodal mediation. We then outline our methods for this ethnographic case study before turning to our three overarching findings: developing background knowledge and key vocabulary, translanguaging and scaffolding, and critical cultural consciousness and authentic engagement. We conclude with a discussion of what this study suggests about how the traditional Writers' Workshop might be amplified for young EB writers.

Sociocultural Theories of Literacy Learning as Mediated Action

We contextualize this study in sociocultural perspectives of learning (Vygotsky, 1987) to consider the integral role social interaction plays in facilitating new language and literacy practices. We draw upon New Literacy Studies (NLS), which emphasize the situated and ideological nature of language and literacy (Gee, 2010; Street, 1984). NLS advocates conceptualize literacy as socially constructed; we employ our literacies to do something, often within social and cultural groups who "apprentice" us into different literacy identities and practices (Gee, 2010; Street, 1984). The ideological perspective of literacy acknowledges the social, cultural, and political environment of the individual and locates literacy practices within the differential power structures of society (Gee, 2010; Perry, 2012; Street, 2006).

Sociocultural perspectives also emphasize the dialogic nature of learning to write, where growing writers leverage a variety of linguistic and cultural resources to make meaning according to their intended purposes and audiences (Vygotsky, 1987; Wertsch, 1993, 1998;). Drawing from Vygotsky's (1987) notion of mediation, Wertsch (1998) suggests that learning is mediated through the use of cultural tools and signs, such as spoken language, writing, and drawings, which not only mediate human action, but "[alter] the entire flow and structure of mental functions...determining the structure of a new instrumental act" (Vygotsky & Cole, 1981, p. 137). In other words, when adopted by learners, cultural tools mediate their emerging success with a new practice and the development of their mental schemas associated with that practice. Throughout this process, learners adapt cultural tools to their purposes, making them their own.

Wertsch's (1998) theorization of mediated action builds from Burke's "pentadic terms," referring not only to the dialectic between (1) learners as agents and (2) their cultural tools as mediators of action, but also (3) the scene, or sociocultural context, (4) purpose, and (5) mediated act. Analysis of mediated action can involve isolating one or more of these elements but should also consider how these elements work together. Examining these elements separately allows us to identify what affordances are associated with particular cultural tools as well as how the elements interact dialectically. As Wertsch (1998) contends, "studies of the agent or the mediational means are useful and relevant insofar as they inform us about how these elements combine to produce the mediated action" and that mediational means "can have their

impact only when an agent uses them" (p. 30). In other words, the resulting mediated action depends on whether an agent chooses certain cultural tools as mediational means and how the agent and chosen tools interact within a particular context, or scene.

In the classroom, learners and teachers bring particular cultural tools–tools that may or may not be leveraged in the classroom. According to Wertsch (1998), "[any] attempt to understand or act on reality is inherently limited by the mediational means we necessarily employ," such as languages or modes (p. 40). In other words, the learners' enactment of the teacher's intended mediated action will be enhanced or hindered by the tools made available. Often the teacher determines which cultural tools, such as classroom texts or students' linguistic and cultural resources, are invited into the classroom and how they might be adapted to enhance learning. Likewise, teachers may explicitly or implicitly communicate to learners that certain tools are excluded. That said, fundamental to Wertsch's theory is the emphasis on the agency of the learner. Whether the learner chooses to use one set of tools versus the other–or to hybridize the two–depends on many factors, such as the affordances or constraints of certain tools. Ultimately, learners-as-agents decide whether they will adopt certain cultural tools and undertake the teacher's intended mediated action.

This perspective connects to intertextuality theory, which refers to how students juxtapose, or relate texts during literacy events. As cultural tools, intertextual connections have to be proposed, responded to, and acknowledged by the participants before they have social significance for the classroom community (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993). This practice is called "texturing" through mediation, where meaning-making processes move "from one social practice to another, from one event to another, from one text to another" (Fairclough, 2014, p. 89). From this perspective, intertextual connections between linguistic or cultural resources happen in different spaces and points of time through literacy events. Thus, cultural tools can move across time and space through teachers' mediation.

The Affordances of Biliteracy and Multiliteracies Pedagogies in the K–12 Classroom

We integrate Wertsch's theory of mediated action with the sociocultural biliteracy framework, which emerges from bilingual education. A sociocultural perspective of biliteracy honors EBs' identities, home languages, cultures, and family literacy practices, which they leverage to co-construct meaning with others, such as parents, teachers, or peers (Bauer & Gort, 2012). As Moll et al. (2001) explain: "Literacy is not only related to children's histories, but to the dynamics of the social, cultural, and institutional contexts that help define its context" (p. 447). Therefore, the biliteracy framework also considers the "sociolinguistic, sociohistorical, and sociocultural factors" of their bilingual and bicultural development. When connected with Wertsch, the biliteracy framework emphasizes what possibilities exist for young EB writers' development when their teachers invite them to integrate their home language/cultural resources as cultural tools to mediate literacy learning.

The current study also builds on a multiliteracies approach, which derives from New Literacy Studies (Perry, 2012). A multiliteracies approach includes not only

language but also ever-changing "modes of meaning," which are "constantly being remade by users as they work to achieve their cultural purposes" (New London Group, 1996). According to the New London Group (1996), individuals integrate six design elements in their meaning-making processes: linguistic, visual (e.g., images, page layout), audio (e.g., music, sound effects), gestural (body language), spatial (e.g., environmental and architectural spaces), and multimodal (i.e., the interrelationship of aforementioned modes; p. 80). From a multiliteracies perspective, Jewitt (2008) encourages educators to include the experiential knowledge, skills, discourses, and multimodal texts that students use in everyday life and in their communities. Consistent with our earlier discussion of ideological literacy (Street, 1984), multiliteracies pedagogy views literacy as a functional practice that is socially, culturally, and politically situated. A multiliteracies pedagogical approach (Rowsell et al., 2008) integrates a variety of texts and modes as channels of representation (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; New London Group, 1996), where students collaborate as a community of learners to engage with texts. This includes replacing traditional literacies (i.e., linguistic, written or oral) with alternative forms (i.e., visual, audio, gestural, spatial). Importantly, minoritized and marginalized communities and their literacy practices are recognized; therefore, multiliteracies pedagogy promotes the sustenance of home language and cultural practices.

An important body of work has been conducted in educational systems outside the United States where there exists official recognition of multiliteracies theory as a pedagogical approach in their curricula (Jewitt, 2008). Recent empirical studies in Canada and Australia implement multiliteracies pedagogy following Cope and Kalantzis's (2000) components for teaching and learning with multiliteracies (Angay-Crowder et al., 2013; Giampapa, 2010; Hepple et al., 2014; Mills, 2006; Ntelioglou, 2011; Taylor, 2008). These studies reveal what opportunities can be realized within diverse cultural and linguistic contexts through multiliteracies pedagogy, including the development of critical thinking, vocabulary, reading, and speaking skills and the expression of ideas in different modes. A multiliteracies pedagogy also promoted learner agency, collaboration, and the use of multiple modes of literacies, giving access to and empowering culturally- and linguistically-diverse students. However, fewer studies have been conducted in the U.S. to consider the implementation of multiliteracies pedagogy with a focus on culturally- and linguistically-diverse students' learning (Macy, 2016; Skerrett, 2015; Vinogradova, 2011). The body of research above appears, as of yet, not to have explored multiliteracies pedagogy as a culturally-sustaining approach in bilingual elementary settings.

Translanguaging and Transmodal Mediation

Finally, we draw from the concepts of translanguaging and transmodality to move beyond the limitations of additive multilingual and multimodal ideologies, which still distinguish between named languages or modes as separate entities (García & Li, 2014). Instead, we observe the fluid negotiation of linguistic and modal resources in literacy classroom practices within the focal teacher and EBs' interactions, where they employ all their meaning-making resources as "innovative ways of knowing, being, and communicating" (García et al., 2017, p. xi). We define translanguaging as language

users' fluid integration of meaning-making resources to communicate, where language is seen as a situated practice rather than a static system (Canagarajah, 2011; García & Li, 2014; Li, 2017). As a theory of language, translanguaging emphasizes "the human capacity to make meaning and the deployment of those practices…made up of linguistic signs…[and] developed in social interaction" (Blommaert et al., 2018, p. 17).

In connection with multiliteracies, translanguaging includes incorporation of "semiotic assemblages," referring not just to language, but also other multimodal cultural modes for communication, such as movement, music, and images (Pennycook, 2017, p. 278). Therefore, we recognize the importance of multimodal features for communication in the classroom and recognize language "as being multimodal itself," seeking to disrupt traditional notions of languages that often marginalize semiotic meaning-making resources (Blommaert et al., 2018, p. 30). In centering the diverse meaning-making resources leveraged by bilingual learners in the classroom we studied, we adopt a multimodal approach to translanguaging and the "interrelationship of modal resources" for meaning making (Blommaert et al., 2018, p. 115). Consequently, we understand transmodal as referring to how individuals fluidly produce and negotiate meaning by integrating different modes and recognize that all language practice is transmodal in unique and particular ways (Horner et al., 2015). In considering the interrelationship of modes and language, we analyze how individuals in this setting make meaning and expand their literacy practices. More specifically, this paper considers the affordances of multiliteracies pedagogy for emergent bilinguals by analyzing how the focal teacher mediates EB writers' bilingual and biliteracy development through integration of translanguaging and transmodal practices.

Methods

This article draws from a larger qualitative study conducted by Dr. Lucía Cárdenas Curiel during the 2015-2016 school year with the objective of understanding (bi)literacy and linguistic practices in Ms. Braun's 3rd grade dual-language classroom at Sunny Hillcrest Elementary in a central city in Texas. (Pseudonyms have been used for the names of all participants and locations in this study.) Our interest in this study began as both authors taught a literacy methods for diverse learners' course and examined the importance of incorporating language practices to support EB's writing development. We discussed the ways that data from Lucía's overall study had shown the importance of engaging with multimodal texts for authentic engagement in the classroom (Cárdenas Curiel, 2017) When Ms. Braun incorporated multimodal texts in different disciplines, EBs were able to use their linguistic repertoires flexibly and dynamically to collaborate and develop academic knowledge and biliteracy skills. Here we focus on the way that elementary EBs engage with multimodal texts during the writing process (Axelrod & Cole, 2018; Buell et al., 2011; Rowe, 2018). Therefore, we set out to answer the following research questions: How does a third-grade bilingual teacher mediate selected EB students' writing in a dual-language classroom? To what extent do multimodal literacy practices enhance or hinder the EBs' writing processes?

Context

At the time the study was conducted, Ms. Braun had taught for 15 years and had just started her third-year teaching in Sunny Hillcrest's two-way dual-language

program. This program provides instruction in Spanish and English to EB students classified as native Spanish or English speakers so that all students can develop bilingual and biliteracy skills. The classrooms are departmentalized; Ms. Braun taught language arts, science, and social studies in Spanish while her team partner, Ms. Robinson, taught language arts and mathematics in English. Ms. Braun considers Spanish to be her first language. Throughout the data used for this paper, her interactions with students were in Spanish unless otherwise indicated.

The first author observed 20 students (8 Spanish-dominant speakers and 12 English-dominant speakers). All are second-generation immigrant students except for one, who is a third-generation immigrant; his mother was also born in the US. Seven of the Spanish-dominant speakers were identified as English learners by the school.

Data Collection and Analysis

Within the larger case study, Lucía used ethnographic methods to collect data in the form of observations, interviews, and review of artifacts (Heath & Street, 2008). Observations were conducted during language arts, science, and social studies classes from October to December 2015. Lucía video and audiotaped lessons for three hours a day, three to five times a week; she also collected photographs of students' classwork (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

Lucía first employed an inductive approach to data analysis grounded in classroom observations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Dyson & Genishi, 2005). During initial coding, Lucía carefully read and reread the field notes, developed connections, and organized the data by emerging patterns (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Erlandson, 1993; Stake, 1995). This phase of analysis was interpretive in that Lucía developed categories based on disciplinary expertise and conceptual frameworks (i.e., *multimodal texts, Spanish language, English language, experiential background, peer interaction*). Lucía then organized all literacy events and practices in Ms. Braun's classroom descriptively by text, disciplines, and teaching and learning strategies and wrote analytic memos (Marshall & Rossman, 2010) of emerging literacy practices patterns.

Based on emerging themes related to writing processes identified in previous analyses, we narrowed our focus for purposes of this microethnographic case study to a two-day literacy event to illuminate the moment-by-moment mediational moves made by the teacher. Coined by Erickson (2004), we employ microethnography, or "ethnographic microanalysis of social interaction" in order to consider the "conduct of talk in local social interaction in real time," namely this two-day instructional sequence in Ms. Braun's classroom. We additionally consider how this talk is shaped by cultural tools from beyond the temporal and spatial boundaries of this sequence (p. viii). More specifically, we analyzed interchanges between two or more speakers as the "basic concrete unit of social activity," (Goffman, 1967, p. 19) within the context of this two-day writing sequence. By bounding our analysis of Ms. Braun's instructions to this timeframe, we were able to closely observe what micro moves she made using both linguistic and non-linguistic means to enact culturally-sustaining literacy instruction practices. Closely examining these interactions also allowed us to trace whether Ms. Braun's instruction mediated her EB students' writing processes as they composed writing products in form of "literary calaveras," which Ms. Braun's class studied to

celebrate the Day of the Dead in November. A calavera is a form of poetry written as an imaginary obituary in which someone or something still living is satirized and typically incorporate meter and rhyme; they became popular during the Mexican Revolution as a way to criticize the government. (For more information and examples, see *Día de los muertos* [2009].)

As a part of our collaborative open coding process, we followed Erickson's (2004) interactional analysis of talk in the form of "kairos," which refers to patterned forms of interaction using both verbal and nonverbal means. First, Lucía interpreted the data from Spanish to English to support Christina's comprehension of the data. Next, Christina watched again the video recordings to code the semiotic forms of mediation (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) as cultural tools within the classroom. We also employed Fairclough's (2014) definition of discourse as language in social interaction and Erickson's (2004) approach to linking the outside social world within local discourse. For that reason, we consider the named languages, or systems established by society and norms, of Spanish and English in local interactions. Finally, Lucía watched once more all video recordings to note when Ms. Braun moved from Spanish to English and vice versa.

During our second cycle of coding (Saldaña, 2016), we looked for themes according to how the teacher mediated learning throughout the writing process and the extent to which EBs adopted the teacher's cultural tools. We created a table to look at the teacher's mediation, students' actions, cultural tools, and writing processes. Using Burke's five pentadic terms (Wertsch, 1998), we isolated and integrated the elements involved in EBs' learning to write calaveras as mediated action (Table 1).

Table 1

Burke's pentadic terms (Wertsch, 1998)

Agents: 20 emergent bilingual students (8 Spanish-dominant and 12 English-dominant speakers)

Scene: Ms. Braun's 3rd grade dual-language class at Sunny Hillcrest Elementary

Purpose: Compose a multimodal literary calaveras in Spanish about a deceased person

Mediated acts:

Traditional writing workshop:
- Mini-lessons (e.g., prewriting, drafting, editing/revision)
- Guided and independent writing
- Conferencing

Ms. Braun's adaptations:
- Build background knowledge
- Frontload key vocabulary
- Systematically scaffold writing process

Cultural tools:
- Videos
- Notebooks
- Teacher modeling
- Realia
- Translanguaging
- Students' cultural tools

Limitation

We acknowledge that the short time frame limits our study. Further, we do not seek to generalize the experiences of Ms. Braun and her students, but instead to show what this microethnographic snapshot reveals about how Ms. Braun's integrated multimodal literacy practices to mediate her EB students' writing.

Findings and Discussion

In what follows, we present our microethnographic analysis of a two-day writing sequence where Ms. Braun's 3rd grade EBs learned to compose calaveras. Although Ms. Braun did not follow the traditional patterns of writing calaveras with her EBs, the decisions she made to structure this mediated action provided students with an authentic purpose and audience for writing in Spanish.

Below we describe the multimodal literacy practices Ms. Braun incorporated as mediated acts to apprentice her EBs into writing calaveras, both incorporating traditional elements of the Writers' Workshop and adapting the model to mediate EBs' language development. Emphasis was given to the translanguaging and transmodal cultural tools emerged, which further mediated EBs' language development and writing. We also consider the extent to which particular cultural tools may have enhanced or hindered EBs writing processes, emphasizing students' agency to adopt–or not–Ms. Braun's intended cultural tools and mediated action.

Cempazutchil, Papel Picado, and Pan De Muertos: Developing Background Knowledge and Key Vocabulary

Ms. Braun mediated students' background knowledge and vocabulary development using multimodal cultural tools, a practice she employed often in instruction, to introduce them to the purpose and traditions of the Day of the Dead. She began by showing two videos, explaining how they would be learning more about this holiday, pointing and orally directing students to focus. In this social interaction (Erickson, 2004), Ms. Braun used linguistic and gestural means to direct students' attention to interact with these videos as cultural tools.

The first video (CG Bros, 2013), an award-winning animated 3D short film produced by the Ringling College of Art and Design, was wordless and accompanied by traditional instrumental music. The animated video opens with a sad little girl who is visiting her mother's tomb. The girl is magically drawn to the land of the dead, where she learns about the Day of the Dead. The audio and visual elements reduced the linguistic demands of the task. As students watched the story unfold, they learned the significance of the holiday, which is to honor those dear to our hearts who have passed away. The video introduced cultural elements and vocabulary (see Figure 1) associated with the holiday, such as traditional music, "cempazuchitl" (marigold) flowers, fruit, sweet Mexican bread, calaveras, piñatas, traditional dress, and dancing. The second video was an informational text that built upon the first video. It included real images of Day of the Dead celebrations in Latin American countries and provides descriptive narrative of the visual elements using Spanish voice over.

Figure 1

Day of the Dead Keywords (CG Bros, 2013)

pan de muertos (sweet bread)	cempazuchitl (marigolds)	calaveras de azúcar (sugar skulls)
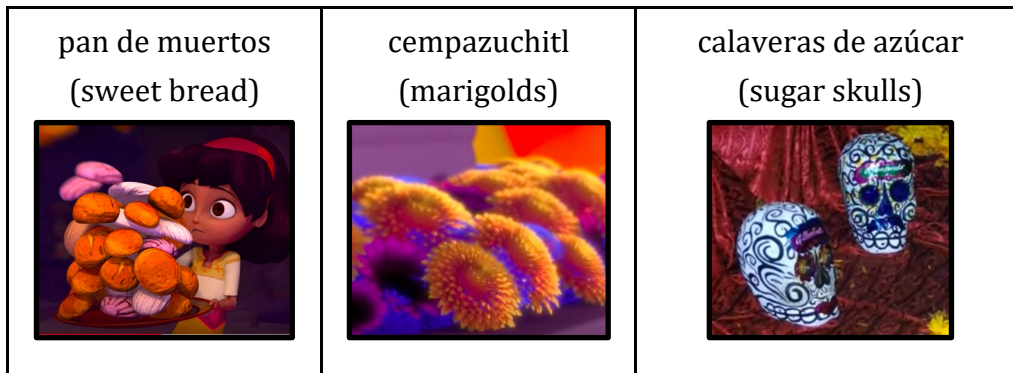
Ms. Braun's decision to open the writing sequence with these two videos successfully engaged students in the lesson. While students required explicit prompting to direct their attention to the projection screen, they were quickly engaged by the music, visuals and narration within the videos. Consistently, students' eyes were fixed on the screen and in some cases, they were observed laughing at the illustrations of dancing skeletons in the first video or the comedic narrator in the second. The images, narration and music made it possible for students to grasp key details from the video regardless of their language backgrounds.

While the videos did not explicitly discuss calaveras, they provided important background knowledge for the Day of the Dead. Consistent with her instruction throughout the year, Ms. Braun further mediated the development of students' background knowledge by integrating multiple cultural tools to explore what they learned from the videos: their writing notebooks, the document camera, a concept map, and whole class and small group discussion. Following the videos, she used her own writer's notebook and the document camera to model for students that they should also take out their own notebooks and open them to a new blank page. Ms. Braun purposefully restated the directions, holding and gesturing at her notebook to model the process again as she rotated to face the back of the room. When she noticed that one student did not yet have his notebook open, she provided explicit direction for him.

Figure 2

Student's Concept Map
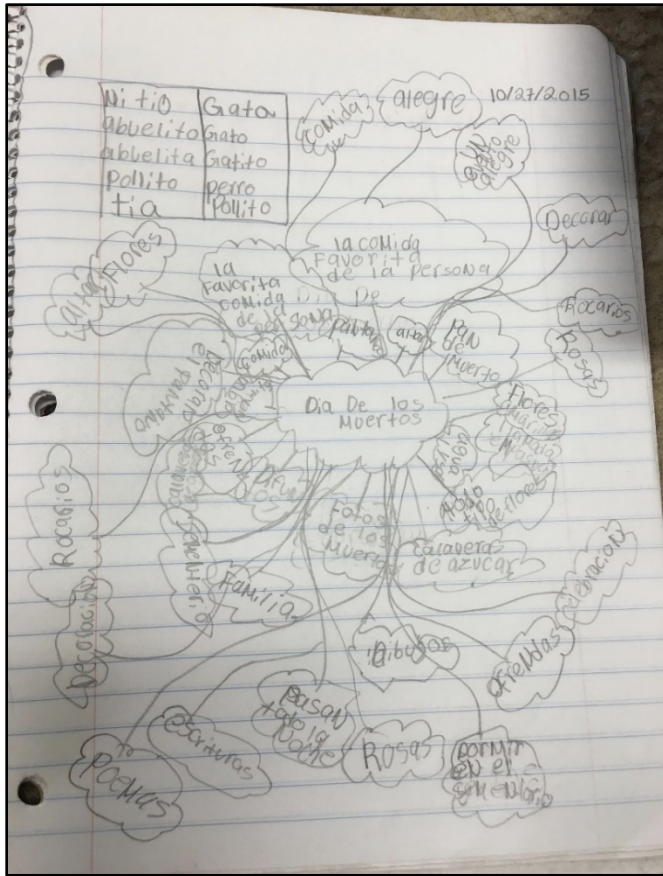
Once students were ready, Ms. Braun modeled the next step: drawing a concept map to recall details about the Day of the Dead (Figure 2). She asked students to write two or three details they learned from the videos, prompting them with a series of questions: "What are the components of Day of the Dead that you heard in the video? What did you observe? What does it consist of? What did you talk about? What did you see? Write it in your notebook." She then elicited students' contributions to add to her concept map as shown on the transcript below:

Ms. Braun: Ford, ¿Qué podemos poner alrededor de ésto? (Referring to the projection of a Day of the Dead concept map from her notebook.)	[Ford, what can we write around this?]
Ford: Flores	[Flowers]
Ms. Braun: ¡Muy bien! Flores. Y tienen una flor en particular. O.K. Ahorita lo voy a escribir porque es muy difícil.	[Very good! Flowers. And they have a particular flower. O.K. Now I'm going to write it because it is very difficult.]
Ford: I forgot it, but it starts with a "c."	
Ms Braun: Cempazutchitl, cempazuchitl. (She repeats, as she writes on the concept map in her notebook.) Otro por favor, Andrea	[Marigold, marigold. Another please, Andrea.]
Andrea: Pan de muertos	[Day of the Dead bread]

Ms. Braun: Absolutamente, hay pan de muertos ¿Verdad? Es un pan de azúcar está muy rico. A mí me gusta mucho el pan de muertos. Dime Esmeralda…

[Absolutely, there is Day of the Dead bread. Right? It is a sugar bread that is delicious. I like Day of the Dead bread. Very much. Tell me Esmeralda.]

Esmeralda: Calaveras de azúcar

[Sugar skulls.]

Ms. Braun: Calaveras de azúcar. Absolutamente. ¿Qué más podemos agregar a nuestra lista? A ver, Violet.

[Sugar skulls. Absolutely. What else can we add to our list? Let's see, Violet.]

Violet: Fotografias.

[Photographs.]

Ms. Braun: (Directs question to all students) ¿De quién son las fotografías? Habla con tu grupo…¿De quién son las…?

[Whose are the photographs? Talk with your group, whose are the..?]

Greg: Fotografías de muertos.

[Photographs of the dead.]

Ms. Braun: Sí, de las personas que han muerto. O.K. So, Siempre son las personas que ya no están aquí con nosotros. O.K. Fotografías y voy a poner….de difuntos. (while writing on the concept map) Sería una buena palabra, ¿no? De los difuntos. Repite difuntos

[Yes, of the people that have died. O.K. So, they are always of the people that are no longer here with us. O.K. Photographs and I'm going to write.. of the deceased. It would be a good word, right? Of the deceased. Repeat, deceased.]

All students: Difuntos

[Deceased]

Ms. Braun: Difuntos

[Deceased]

All students: Difuntos

[Deceased]

Ms. Braun: Son los difuntos. Son las personas que ya han muerto y no están con nosotros. So, ésas son las fotografías que ponemos ahí.

[They are the deceased persons. They are the people that have died and are not with us. So, those are the photographs that we add there.]

As Ms. Braun collected students' responses on her concept map, she emphasized keywords (e.g. Figure 1) to mediate their background knowledge and vocabulary development. Ms. Braun used students' contributions to mediate the development of more advanced vocabulary. For instance, she prompted students to share what objects they noticed on the Day of the Dead altar in the video, explicitly teaching the terms "ofrendas" (offerings) and "la comida favorita" (favorite food); she asked students to repeat each term aloud several times before they wrote them in their notebooks. Likewise, students mediated vocabulary development for each other in their small groups, such as when Cheryl taught Jeffrey the term "esqueleto" for "skeleton." Through

integration of their writer's notebooks, the document camera, dialogue, and the concept map, students had the opportunity to hear, read, say, and write key vocabulary as they co-constructed background knowledge.

Another practice that Ms. Braun incorporated here and throughout the school year was the use of realia, a term used to refer to objects from everyday life, to mediate students' background and vocabulary knowledge. During their initial discussion of the Day of the Dead, Ms. Braun introduced the term "papel picado" (pecked paper), orally repeating and writing it on her concept map before asking students to repeat it. When she asked if anyone was familiar with the term, one student said yes and gestured to the colorful tissue paper hanging from the ceiling around the room (see Figure 3). Ms.

Braun then explained that papel picado has intricate patterns cut, or "pecked," into it and is often used to decorate altars for the deceased during Day of the Dead. Similarly, when the class returned to the writing task the next day, she reminded students of vocabulary words from the previous lesson, such as cempazuchitl and calaveras de azúcar. As Ms. Braun walked around, showing students the marigolds and sugar skulls, she brought, she asked them to repeat

Figure 3

Papel Picado

the words in Spanish (Figure 4). These realia provided students with cultural tools associated with the Day of the Dead to connect to their new background and vocabulary knowledge.

Figure 4

Calaveras de Azúcar

After introducing the topic of the Day of the Dead, one of the Spanish-dominant students, Elio, shared that he would be celebrating the holiday to honor his recently deceased grandfather. Later, in their discussion of papel picado, Elio was reminded of the colored paper-like wafers that his aunt brought to his house. Ms. Braun then mentioned that it is also tradition to place "agua y sal" (water and salt) on the altar for los muertos. This

prompted Eric, another Spanish-dominant student, to mention that sometimes they use "agua bendita" (holy water), making another home-school connection to his personal experience. Ms. Braun then repeated agua bendita, adding it to the concept map and asking students to repeat after her. In both instances, Ms. Braun created space for Elio and Eric to share their home-school connections during whole class instruction, affirming the value of their experiential knowledge and culture.

Through integration of translanguaging and transmodal cultural tools, Ms. Braun established the context for students' learning, building background and vocabulary knowledge associated with Day of the Dead. Establishing this context for writing provided an opportunity for students to express themselves with an authentic purpose and audience for composing calaveras and doing so in Spanish (Duran, 2017).

En Honor a los Difuntos: Translanguaging as Scaffolding

When Ms. Braun moved into more explicit writing instruction, she continued to integrate multiple cultural tools to provide systematic scaffolding throughout the writing workshop. She used her notebook and the document camera to model her writing process, directed students to follow along in their own notebooks, and facilitated whole class and small group discussion to provide support along the way. Unlike a traditional Writers' Workshop model, where the teacher provides a short mini-lesson about a writing strategy for students to try during independent writing time, Ms. Braun strategically guided students through brainstorming and drafting of their calaveras *en honor a los difuntos* [honoring the dead]. As with other writing units, she modeled each step in her own notebook, prompting students to follow her model in their notebooks and rotating around the room to provide individualized support before moving onto the next phase.

Once the class had concluded their discussion of the cultural elements of Day of the Dead, Ms. Braun drew a square below her concept map and wrote a list of people who had passed away in her life. She then directed students to do the same. When she noticed that not all students were following her model, she momentarily stopped the whole class, and then clarified that they were to make a list of important people in their lives who were now deceased. She also clarified that they were no longer copying exactly what she had, as they had done with their concept maps, but instead that they would make their own lists.

All students developed their lists by the conclusion of the lesson on the first day, though not without a degree of resistance. The home-school connection Elio made with the lesson contributed to both his engagement and his resistance with writing calaveras as a mediated act. On the first day, he demonstrated great vulnerability when he shared that he would be celebrating the Day of the Dead in honor of his deceased grandfather. When the class brainstormed their lists, he began crying. When Ms. Braun noticed, she rotated to his table to hug and talk one-on-one with him. Building off this interaction, she addressed the whole class, again directing students to stop writing and listen carefully. She explained to the whole class that they would have the opportunity to write about the people on their list. Moments later, when she saw that Elio still had his hands over his face, Ms. Braun returned to his side to reassure him and asked if he would like to take a break. She said:

Ms. Braun: I'm sorry. A veces es difícil, verdad. ¿En quién estás pensando? (She moves closer to him to hear what he is saying. After, she addresses the whole class.) Pero mira. Yo creo que una cosa...una cosa muy pero muy importante del Día de los Muertos es que no es un día para estar triste. Es un día, es una celebración alegre. O.K. de la vida de esas personas. O.K. So, tenemos que tener esto, no como triste, pero como una cosa que podemos celebrar esa persona y estar felices de haberlos conocido, Elio. O.K. No te pongas triste. I'm sorry.

[I'm sorry. Sometimes it is difficult, right? Who are you thinking of? But look. I think a thing… a very, very important thing about the Day of the Dead is that it is not a day to be sad. It is a day, it is a happy celebration, O.K, of the life of that person, O.K. So, we have to have this, not sad, but as a thing that we can celebrate that person and be happy to have known them, Elio, ok. Don't be sad. I'm sorry.]

By the time Elio returned to the classroom, the class had transitioned to science. Ms. Braun allowed Elio to embrace his emotions and gave him the space to recover and continue with his academic work. This exemplifies socioemotional learning goals in the classroom. In recent years, the school districts in Texas have incorporated socioemotional learning goals to support student social and emotional safety. An unintended consequence of this lesson on how to manage emotions and resiliency was key as students remembered their relatives that have passed away.

At the start of the lesson on the second day, several students cheered when Ms. Braun explained that they would be returning to their exploration of the Day of the Dead and writing calaveras. She used her writer's notebook as a semiotic resource to communicate to students that they would be resuming their calaveras. She opened her notebook and displayed the concept map and list from the previous day under the document camera before directing students to open their notebooks, too. Reflective of her typical practice, Ms. Braun then rotated around the room, using proximity, gestures, and one-on-one interactions to ensure all students had their notebooks out and were ready to follow along. She returned to the projector to resume modeling, using oral language and gesturing with her finger to show that she was revisiting the list she had brainstormed the previous day.

Moving on from brainstorming to drafting, Ms. Braun used the left page of her notebook to show students how to write their calaveras. This allowed her and her students to see their concept maps and lists from the previous day while they wrote their poems. Ms. Braun began crafting her poem, composing a sentence frame ("Yo quiero celebrar a...I want to celebrate…") for students to copy into their notebooks before filling it out for her own poem about her "tia" (aunt) Dina.

After writing the first line, she repeated the sentence and walked around the room to monitor students' individual progress as they composed the first sentence in their own notebooks. She returned to the document camera, pointed to "tia Dina" to emphasize her use of capitalization, and rotated around the room once more to correct individual students' sentences as needed. Ms. Braun repeated this process for several

consecutive lines, constructing new sentence frames in the moment and using them to model for students how to continue writing their calaveras. Only after modeling the first few lines of the sentence did she move into independent writing time. Ms. Braun explained to students that once they had "seis oraciones buenas" (six good sentences), they could then write their calaveras on colored paper with the outline of a calaveras de azúcar that she had printed for students to compose their final drafts.

Throughout all stages of the writing process, Ms. Braun created space for her and her studies to leverage the rich linguistic and cultural resources they brought into the classroom. For instance, Ms. Braun employed translanguaging to explicitly develop students' metalinguistic awareness. Likewise, during the second day of instruction, Ms. Braun provided an impromptu mini-lesson on the use of possessives after monitoring students' writing. During this instance, she provided explicit instruction on how to use the possessive form, comparing the grammatical structure in English and Spanish registers.

"It's creepy": Día de Muertos and Literary Calaveras to Promote Critical Cultural Consciousness and Authentic Engagement

Translanguaging and transmodal practices in Ms. Braun's classroom not only served as scaffolding tools, but also mediated and disrupted deficit cultural understandings (Cervantes-Soon, et al., 2017). Incorporating calaveras as a poetic genre allowed her to highlight an important cultural celebration in Latin American countries and foster cross-cultural understanding and the empowerment of students with diverse backgrounds. For example, as Ms. Braun drew her concept map and wrote "día de los muertos" in the middle of the page, Ms. Braun overheard Joshua say, "It's creepy." She responded to him, asking to explain why he felt that way. Joshua couldn't answer and she encouraged him to stay on task. As she continued the lesson, she highlighted the importance of día de los muertos as a holiday during whole class instruction. Here Ms. Braun preparation as a critical bilingual teacher empowered a narrative where diverse cultural celebrations in Texas and beyond are centered and valued in the curriculum for student engagement.

Ms. Braun also drew upon different linguistics registers for different functions to support students' authentic engagement, allowing EBs to flexibly leverage their linguistic and cultural practices to participate in literacy events and practices (Christenson et al., 2012). For instance, Ms. Braun provided redirection in English as needed. When she noticed that students could not see the projection screen on the first day to watch the introductory videos, she provided directions in English for them to move their chairs. Likewise, when Ms. Braun noticed that both Abby and Jeffrey, English-dominant speakers, were disengaged during guided and independent writing, she used English to clarify directions, review her model, and offer encouragement, like "Let's go!" and "That's great!"

During independent writing time, Mrs. Braun's students also accessed resources for themselves and each other, often through translanguaging. They independently used multiple cultural tools introduced by Ms. Braun to support their learning, from their notebooks and concept maps to her sentence frames and modeling. They also relied on the bilingual dictionaries stacked at their tables or their peers to mediate their own

learning. In some cases, students shared personal connections they had made with the curriculum to help each other make sense of what they were learning. For instance, after one of the Spanish-dominant students, Eric, had finished his calaveras on the second day, Ms. Braun directed him to help his small group with their own writing; he offered to help one of his group members, Alaina, who asked him how to say "missed" in Spanish. Though Eric was unsure, the two students discussed the term together. Making a home-school connection, Eric shared that he had not seen his father in a while, and with some teacher mediation, he used the word "extraño" to help Ashley express the feeling of missing someone who has been gone for a long time.

Figure 5

Eric's final draft
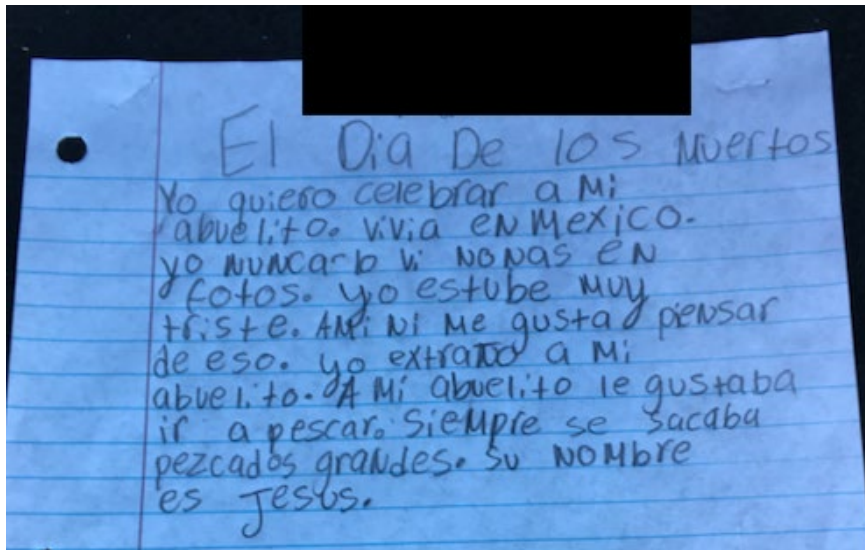
By the end of the two-day writing sequence all students had produced a literary calavera in an appropriate Spanish poetic register. (See Figure 5 for an example.) These calaveras showed all the different writing elements for this particular genre. As students learned how the difunto's favorite food was placed in their altars during the Day of the Dead, students transferred this knowledge and included some of the favorite foods in the calaveras. Some students wrote about family members and others about their favorite pets. They wrote about the deceased individuals' favorite activities and why they enjoyed spending time together. In sum, Ms. Braun spent a significant amount of time establishing the context for writing calaveras through integration of cultural tools at the start of the writing sequence. Likewise, Ms. Braun leveraged students' cultural and linguistic resources to co-construct background and vocabulary knowledge and scaffold writing development. Next, we will discuss how translanguaging and transmodal practices can amplify the Writers' Workshop to mediate EBs' language development and writing processes.

Amplifying the Writers' Workshop Model for Emergent Bilinguals: A Discussion

Employing Burke's five pentadic terms within Wertsch's (1998) framework of mediated action in our analysis of literacy practices in a bilingual classroom allowed us to distinguish what instructional strategies, practices, and structures supported EBs' writing development as well as to see how they worked in tandem. Identifying Ms. Braun's mediated acts helped us to see how she expanded the traditional Writers' Workshop to apprentice EBs into writing calaveras. Given that she taught in a dual-

language classroom, Ms. Braun needed to invite students' linguistic and cultural resources across different registers and modes (Blommaert et al., 2018; García & Li, 2014); she also sought to expand what tools they had, so they could write calaveras.

First, in Ms. Braun's class, mediating background knowledge and vocabulary development went hand-in-hand to establish an authentic cultural context for composing calaveras. At the start of the writing sequence, she was purposeful about introducing students to the traditions associated with the Day of the Dead, such as decorating with papel picado and cempazuchitl and placing la comida favorita on the altar as ofrendas to the deceased. While these words were not necessarily going to become a part of the students' calaveras, discussing these practices expanded the EBs Spanish language repertoire and knowledge of the Day of the Dead as cultural, semiotic, and linguistic resources; they also created space for Spanish-dominant students, like Eric and Elio, to integrate their own experiences as cultural tools for learning. Furthermore, Ms. Braun situated this writing sequence as an opportunity for all EBs to remember and celebrate the life of someone important to them, from showing the wordless film of the young girl who visits her deceased mother in the land of the dead to adapting calaveras to honor the deceased rather than being political satire. Therefore, each student was able to draw upon their own experiences as cultural tools to develop their calaveras. Even when students, like Joshua, expressed resistance to learning about día de los muertos, Ms. Braun was purposeful about creating space for him to express his reaction to the holiday and later emphasizing why the holiday is an important cultural celebration.

Additionally, to support students' learning, Ms. Braun drew upon different cultural and linguistic tools, using translanguaging and transmodality to scaffold the learners' negotiation throughout the process of writing their calaveras. For example, Ms. Braun purposefully restated directions, holding and gesturing at her notebook to model the writing process. She incorporated various transmodal texts to support students' writing, from the two videos and realia to the concept map and brainstorming list. She also ensured that students' language comprehension and production were scaffolded through whole group instruction. She clarified that they were no longer copying exactly what she had, as they had done with their concept maps, but instead that they would make their own lists. Finally, intertextuality played a role in scaffolding translanguaging and transmodal literacy texts. While EBs produced their own work, Ms. Braun's modeling traveled through space and time, as her concept map and list supported individual students' unique production of concept maps and lists in their own notebooks. Likewise, EBs' own personal experiences traveled from home to school as they thoughtfully wrote about their deceased relatives.

Conclusion

Through integrating the tenets of mediation with biliteracy, multiliteracies, and translanguaging pedagogy, Ms. Braun offers a promising example of a culturally-sustaining (Paris, 2012) Writers' Workshop. As a case study the implications of our investigation illustrate how teachers might amplify the Writers' Workshop model to include opportunities for learners to develop background knowledge and key vocabulary for the *context* for writing as well as the actual writing process in addition to

more strategic language scaffolding throughout the writing workshop. As Ms. Braun's class illustrated, students can benefit from more bounded expectations for writing within a particular genre, extensive modeling by the teacher, and a structured approach to developing and organizing ideas for writing. In contrast with the Writers' Workshop model put forth by Calkins (1994) and Graves (1983), this suggests that it may be necessary to narrow students' opportunities for choice with respect to the genres, topics, and other decisions for writing *at first*. Accordingly, they could need extensive linguistic and cultural scaffolding in order to develop biliterate writing practices.

By including translanguaging and transmodal practices, Ms. Braun departs from an English-Only monolingual ideology (García & Li, 2014) and redistributes minoritized linguistic registers as cultural tools for learning. Furthermore, her writing instruction goes beyond traditional views of translanguaging as linguistic resources and includes multimodality (Blommaert et al., 2018) as a way for mediating students' writing processes. Together, these instructional practices promoted the voice and the identity of EBs as writers, where they added their own cultural, experiential, and emotional experiences to their calaveras.

Future lines of inquiry might consider how teachers draw upon biliteracy, multiliteracies and translanguaging frameworks to invite their students' existing knowledge and practices into the classroom as cultural tools for learning as well as to expand them through the introduction of new language and literacy practices. Likewise, we wonder how teachers might conceptualize the intertextuality of these cultural tools, considering alongside their students how their translanguaging and transmodal practices travel across time and space, thus disrupting the perceived boundaries between named languages (i.e., Spanish and English), linguistic and semiotic practices, and home and school contexts. Through incorporating the principles underlying both multiliteracies and translanguaging pedagogies, teachers can expand EB students' language and literacy practices while centering their resources and agency as growing bilingual and biliterate writers.

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End Notes

[1] We have chosen to employ Kissel's (2017) term, "Writers' Workshop" in place of "Writing Workshop" in order to center on the *writers* rather than their writing products.

[2] Term coined by García, O., Kleifgen, J. A., & Falchi, L. (2008). *From English language learners to emergent bilinguals.* A research initiative of the Campaign for Educational Equity. Equity Matters Research Review No. 1. Teachers College, Columbia University.