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## Listening to Latinx Students through Translanguaging

Patricia Velasco

Queens College, [patricia.m.velasco@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.m.velasco@gmail.com)

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### Cover Page Footnote

#### About the Author:

**Patricia Velasco, EdD**, is an associate professor in the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education (EECE) at Queens College, CUNY, where she coordinates the Bilingual Education Program. Her research interests include the development of metalinguistic awareness and its role in biliteracy, teacher education, and understanding the language and educational ideologies of Indigenous Mexicans living in NYC. In 2012, she coordinated the work for NYSED Home and New Language Arts Progressions that were part of the Bilingual Common Core Initiative. Patricia co-directed a project for NYSED creating practices for multilingual learners facing the demands embedded in the New Generation Learning Standards.

## Book Review Introduction

# Listening to Latinx Students through Translanguaging

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**Patricia Velasco**

Queens College, City University of New York

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“Are you listening to me?” We often hear this question in classrooms where teachers are aiming to garner students’ attention. Listening is also emphasized in the Speaking and Listening Common Core State Standards as well as in the Next Generation Learning Standards. It seems that the students are the ones expected to do all the listening while teachers do most of the talking.

A different approach is discussed in Suriel’s book review of *En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students* by España and Herrera (2020). This book describes practices that center and leverage the experiences of Latinx students. The lessons that España and Herrera describe are based on translanguaging, which is essentially using a student’s complete language repertoire for communicating. In order for translanguaging to be a successful practice, it requires a teacher who knows how to listen. By doing so, students will know that they have a voice and in turn this will encourage them to be active participants in the learning process. Implementing translanguaging practices in a classroom requires teaching without judging. It means moving away from externally imposed standards or expectations in order to be considered worthy or right.

The lessons described by España and Herrera were created to reflect the culture of Latinx students. Their implementation requires for teachers to listen; to recognize the students’ communication habits and skills; to build intrinsic motivation and curiosity about the world as seen through the eyes of literature. Bilingual Latinx students need teachers who can listen; teachers who will advocate for their bilingual language practices, and to give them voice for their present and future.