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## **“Writing like a Health Scientist”: A Translingual Approach to Teaching Text Structure in a Diverse Australian Classroom**



SUE OLLERHEAD <sup>a</sup>

ISOBEL CREALY <sup>b</sup>

REBECCA KIRK <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Macquarie University,  
Australia*  
[susan.ollerhead@mq.edu.au](mailto:susan.ollerhead@mq.edu.au)

<sup>b</sup> *Beverly Hills Intensive English  
Centre, Australia*  
[isobel.crealy3@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:isobel.crealy3@det.nsw.edu.au)

<sup>c</sup> *Beverly Hills Intensive English  
Centre, Australia*  
[rebecca.kirk7@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:rebecca.kirk7@det.nsw.edu.au)

### **Abstract**

In multilingual Australian classrooms, one of the biggest challenges for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) learners is mastering the academic language they need to succeed at school. Unlike everyday language, academic language refers to the abstract, complex and challenging language that students need to understand, evaluate, synthesise and report on ideas that they learn in the classroom. It may include, for example, discipline-specific vocabulary, or textual conventions typical for a content area. As Goldenberg (2008) says: “If we want students to think like mathematicians, read like historians, write like scientists, we need to teach them these ways of thinking reading and writing” (p. 9). For CALD students in Australian mainstream classrooms, who learn subject content through English, mastery of academic language can prove particularly challenging if they are restricted to “English only” approaches to show what they know and can do. In contrast, a translanguaging approach can enable students to utilize any of the features in their full linguistic repertoires to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to classroom content (Garcia, Johnson & Seltzer, 2017). This paper reports on an empirical research project that investigated the role of translanguaging (Garcia, 2009) in teaching academic language to CALD students, by setting up collaborative activities in which students worked together to draw upon all of their language and cultural knowledge. During this project, the first author, an academic researcher, collaborated with two classroom teachers (both of whom co-authored this paper) to explore various ways in which teachers could mobilise multilingual teaching pedagogies to support the students’ access to and engagement with language and literacy learning. In providing a finely grained account of how a translanguaging approach was applied to literacy and oracy work in a Health Sciences unit, this article demonstrates clearly how CALD students’ linguistic resources are fundamental to their cultural identities, and that enabling students to access all of these resources can lead to deeper and richer learning experiences.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, pedagogy, translanguaging, literacy, genre

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## Introduction

As in most countries in our globalised world, multilingual classrooms are a growing feature of the Australian education system, owing to rapid increases in mobility and migration in the Asia Pacific region. Within these classrooms, students have widely divergent linguistic and cultural backgrounds. More often than not, they are learning the language of instruction, English, as an additional language. In Australia, such students are referred to as “English as an additional language (EAL) students.” In New South Wales, Australia’s most populous state, EAL students account for 23 per cent of the school-going population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Despite a growing body of research pointing to the benefits of using multilingual approaches to teach CALD students, English continues to dominate in many classrooms globally. In Australia, mainstream schooling dictates that EAL students from multilingual backgrounds learn in and through English only, the sole medium of instruction in schools. All classroom texts and discussions are in English, and many classrooms are characterised by “English only” approaches, where students’ use of their home languages is firmly censured. This firm separation of languages is referred to as code-segregation (Guerra, 2012), parallel monolingualism (Heller, 2001) or two solitudes (Cummins, 2005) and frequently results in EAL students being silenced in the classroom or unable to demonstrate their full understanding of curriculum content. In such environments, multilingual students come to accept and believe that their home languages and cultural practices should be left outside the classroom door, and not used or referred to in any way for everyday school learning (Piller, 2016).

Some well-meaning educators resist making space for students’ home languages in the classroom for fear that it will hamper their acquisition of the “language of the classroom” the one in which they will be taught and assessed (Ollerhead & Taylor-Leech, 2019). In reality, however, this approach denies bilingual students’ very valuable opportunities to draw on what they already know and understand in their home language, in order to make sense of new content in the language of the classroom. Luis Moll (2000) emphasises how important it is to work with bilingual students in what he terms “the bilingual zone of proximal development”, an environment in which students are able to use their home language to enhance classroom learning and stretch their classroom performance. There are many ways in which teachers can facilitate this kind of environment, for example: students can work in home language groups to solve problems or analyse complex texts; talk to one another in their home languages to discuss and explain new concepts and ideas, take notes in their home language when the teacher is explaining new concepts, or annotate classroom texts in English in their home language to enhance their understanding. As well as providing academic support, classrooms which support the active use of home languages in a multilingual learning environment can serve to foster positive identities for multilingual learners that are embedded in their home cultures. Such an approach is undergirded by Richard Ruiz’s notion of language as a resource (1984) in which he promoted and advocated for the use of students’ home languages as resources for learning and teaching. Practically, a language as resource orientation sees teachers supporting the use of multilingual students’ home languages as a tool for thinking and communication while simultaneously learning and developing proficiency in the language of instruction.

Increasingly, educational researchers have started to advocate for the beneficial role that multilingual pedagogies can play in engaging diverse learners in meaningful classroom learning, documenting several effective multilingual practices (see, for example, Garcia, Seltzer & Johnson, 2016, Heugh *et al.*, 2019). Work such as this requires a strong researcher-teacher nexus, grounded in intensive classroom observation, where data is collected and analysed to elucidate those teaching and learning practices that contribute to educational success for multilingual students. In this study, the authors share select findings from an observational descriptive study of the intentional translanguaging

practices of one teacher in a multilingual Australian classroom to demonstrate how teachers might leverage students' multiple languages to support their learning and sustain their cultural and linguistic identities.

### **Theoretical framework**

In this article, translanguaging is conceptualised largely as a pedagogical strategy in which students are encouraged to use their multiple languages strategically and flexibly during a single learning opportunity, in classroom environments where it is understood that conceptual knowledge coded in students' home languages can strongly influence their academic engagement and achievement in English. This conceptualisation of translanguaging is based on the work of Cen Williams (1996), who defined translanguaging as a bilingual pedagogy that alternates between language modes. In other words, information is received in one language and used or applied in another. The idea of translanguaging pedagogy was initially applied to bilingual education and connoted "building bilingual students' language practices flexibly to develop new understandings and practices" (Garcia, Flores & Woodley, 2012, p. 8). When translanguaging is used in the context of literacy instruction, it is sometimes described as transliteracy (Baker, 2003) or transnational literacies (Hornberger & Link, 2012), an expansive term which incorporates not only intentional multilingual instruction, but also the integration of students' funds of knowledge and multicultural identities.

According to Canagarajah (2011), translanguaging occurs when students employ their full linguistic repertoires in a strategic manner to learn new concepts. Canagarajah's work has shed important light on how multilingual writers in particular use their entire linguistic range as an integrated whole. Instead of writing in one language only, and being constrained by language-specific barriers to their cognitive processing and means of expression, Canagarajah contends that successful multilingual writers use their linguistic resources flexibly and strategically, by, for example, planning and annotating their work bilingually, even if their aim is to write their final text in English. Furthermore, they may discuss their texts in their home languages with their peers, then collaborate to compare bilingual texts or texts in the medium of instruction. Such classroom practices have important consequences for students' sense of agency in their learning: Says Canagarajah: "Through such acts, multilingual writers create space to reappropriate and resist traditional, monolingual academic discourses, and through them construct spaces for rhetorical efficacy" (2011, p. 16).

Complementing the theoretical foundation of translanguaging pedagogy is Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis (1979), which proposes that what is known and understood in one language contributes to what is known and understood in another language. In other words, if a language learner already has academic language proficiency in their home language, this prior knowledge would help the learner succeed with the same concept in the new language. For instance, the concept of "adjective" does not change across languages, even though the word connoting the concept does. Cummins proposes that what a learner knows in their home language can positively transfer to the second language. This interaction is referred to as a common underlying proficiency. It therefore follows that making meaning from a text should not be restricted to one specific language, particularly because multilingual students' literacy skills may be distributed across the varied languages that make up their linguistic repertoire.

### **The Study**

The purpose of this study was to document and explore how a teacher and her multilingual students explicitly practised and valued translanguaging pedagogies in direct contrast to the English-only approach adopted in so many Australian schools. The findings are used to elucidate how empirical, classroom-based translanguaging research can provide a roadmap for the creation of pedagogies that

harness students' multilingual linguistic resources and enrich and strengthen their academic engagement and achievement.

Guiding the researchers' observations throughout the observational study was the overarching question: What particular pedagogies does the teacher plan and implement to encourage students to draw upon their home languages to facilitate the learning outcomes of the unit of work? As a case study, this research makes no claims to generalisability across contexts. Instead, it seeks to add to a body of international studies (see Chow & Cummins, 2003; Ntelioglou *et al.*, 2014), to demonstrate the implications, potential and feasibility of multilingual pedagogies to stimulate literacy and language engagement.

### Setting and participants

This observational case study was carried out as part of a larger collaborative inquiry involving a university-based researcher and four teachers at Metro Intensive English Centre (pseudonym), a specialised secondary school providing targeted English language tuition to newly arrived migrant students in Australia. Drawing upon the research of Ntelioglou *et al.* (2014) conducted with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students in inner urban schools in the U.S., the project was conceptualised as a collaborative pedagogical inquiry (Carini, 2000, García, Johnson, & Seltzer 2016) in which the participants worked to analyse and discuss the ways in which they were using specific pedagogies and practices in response to their students' language and literacy needs. Our collaboration had several projected aims, including sharing and discussing current research and theory on best practice for CALD students' language and literacy development, designing and trialling new pedagogies in response to students' identified needs and producing a series of professional learning materials to share our findings with wider teacher networks (Ollerhead, 2009). Through a series of collaborative discussions and workshops presented by the first author on multilingual and translanguaging practices, teachers became deeply interested and engaged with Cummins' interdependence hypothesis and its implications for implementing translanguaging pedagogies in their classrooms (García, 2009).

The focal teacher of this case study was Sarah, a teacher of Health Sciences and Physical Education. Sarah was in her mid-twenties and a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish, with a postgraduate certificate in teaching English to speakers of other language (TESOL). Metro Intensive English College, located in a multicultural, working class suburb of Sydney, is a specialised secondary school that provides up to six months of intensive English language support to prepare EAL students for learning Australian curriculum content. Many of the students attending Metro have refugee backgrounds and have experienced little, or severely disrupted, formal schooling. As with all Intensive English Centres in Australia, Metro offers traditional school subjects taught within a language outcomes framework that is based on genre literacy pedagogy (Christie & Martin, 2007). Thus, the language and literacy demands of academic texts are made explicit to students across all subject areas. All teachers at the school have a specialised qualification in TESOL.

Despite the cultural and linguistic diversity of both the teachers and students at Metro, the school initially appeared to be dominated by traditional monolingual language ideologies and practices, such as the English-only rule (Lin, 2012). A survey conducted at the commencement of the study to explore Metro teachers' attitudes towards their students' multilingualism, revealed what Ruíz (1984) describes as a language-as-problem mindset. A typical survey response was "The use of the L1 leads to exclusion of students speaking other languages, as well as the teacher. It is distracting from the goal of learning English" [Interview, 2018]. Significantly, these attitudes were held by a teaching cohort that was itself largely multilingual, with 14 of the 17 teachers reporting speaking one or two languages in addition to

English.

Sarah's class comprised nine students aged between 11 and 14 who came from widely divergent cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Their home languages included Arabic, Mandarin, French and Spanish. Sarah expressed a keen interest in exploring the potential of translanguaging pedagogies to support her students to produce extended stretches of text in both spoken and written form.

### **Data analysis**

The broader study was aimed at providing a finely grained, systematic description of the multilingual and translanguaging practices that participant teachers implemented in their classrooms, and at analysing the effects that they had upon EAL students' literacy engagement and learning. Over a full academic year, the academic researcher met bi-monthly with teachers to discuss and workshop proposed multilingual and multimodal teaching practices that were designed into plans for units of work. A unit of work plan would usually cover a term of eight to nine weeks. Teachers would then trial these practices and video record their lessons. The lesson recordings were transcribed and analysed with the help of a postgraduate research assistant. In alignment with the theoretical framing of this study in terms of translanguaging pedagogies, video segments highlighting activities or instructions in which Sarah facilitated students' use of multiple languages, were systematically selected for detailed transcription and analysis. Each segment was then characterised as an "intentionally planned translanguaging event." Once selected, segments were examined and re-examined to understand the ways in which multiple languages were being used. The following key questions, adapted from Mazak and Herbas-Donoso's (2015) study into university-based translanguaging practices, acted as themes which generated codes to guide our analysis of video footage, teacher notes and student artefacts:

- How are multilingual and multimodal resources functioning pedagogically in this lesson?
- What is the impact of the multilingual and multimodal affordances on students' engagement in their learning?

Through an iterative process, illustrative strategies were coded for themes using a constant comparative method of viewing, describing and analysing the video footage (Strauss, 1987). Each analysis session culminated in the editing and production of a video vignette of key pedagogical findings from that unit. In the following section, we will highlight a number of purposefully planned translanguaging strategies that Sarah developed and used over the course of a six-week Health Sciences unit of work on nutrition and wellbeing.

### **Findings**

One of the key literacy skills that students require to be able to develop academic language proficiency is the identification, understanding and reproduction of key patterns of language use in typical text types used across different learning areas (ACARA, 2016). The Australian Curriculum stipulates that the content knowledge of each learning area is commonly expressed in purposeful, patterned and predictable ways called genres, which are specific to different areas of learning, such as History, Maths or English and stem from disciplinary ways of "knowing and communicating" developed over time. As students engage with subject-based content, they must learn to access and use the language elements in particular and specific ways that are distinctive and valued modes of communication in each learning area (ACARA, 2016).

In the unit of work analysed for this study, Sarah worked to prepare her students to write an extended information report on about the benefits of healthy nutrition and its impact on physical and mental

wellbeing. Sarah was teaching a junior level 1 class of nine 11 to 14-year-old students who had only been learning English for between six and 12 months. The aim of this unit of work was to support students to write an extended information text that would culminate in a spoken presentation to the class. One of Sarah's chief concerns about her students' literacy skills was their difficulty in understanding, recognizing and producing accurate generic text structures in English. Says Sarah:

*One of the things that was really lacking in (my students') extended writing was structure. I wanted to encourage the students to introduce their main points in the introduction, elaborate on them in the body with examples and explanations, then to summarise them in their conclusion. This wasn't happening. I was finding new ideas being pulled in everywhere, introductions were lengthy and full of examples and explanations that should be saved for later on in the piece.*

[Interview, 2018]

Using many of the insights she had gained over the course of the collaborative inquiry, Sarah began to see the potential of using translanguaging strategies to scaffold her students' understanding of text structure, with the aim of supporting them to write a coherent, accurate and persuasive extended information text. What follows is a descriptive account of a number of translanguaging strategies that Sarah had planned intentionally to support her students to achieve their aim of becoming "successful writers" in the Health Sciences informative text genre.

### **A translingual approach to teaching classroom writing: helping students to "write like health scientists"**

The culminating task for this unit was for students to produce an informative text of 150 to 200 words that included essential facts about the importance of healthy eating and its impact on physical and mental wellbeing. As an informative text, the generic macro-structure that students needed to follow comprised an introduction, supporting information in the form of four to five paragraphs, and a persuasive conclusion. At a micro-level, Sarah focused on paragraph structure, focusing on topic sentences, supporting information and linking sentences. Sarah's unit planning also included a number of activities focused on vocabulary development, language awareness, such as transition words and combining clauses and nominalisations. To start the unit, Sarah presented students with a model of the type of spoken informative text she wanted them to be able to produce by the end of the unit of work. She presented it in the form of a video recording presented by a fellow teacher (see Figure 1 for the video transcript).

While students were watching this presentation, Sarah had them use a simple assessment rubric (see Figure 2) to gauge what they thought of the presentation. She had students reflect on the following elements of the spoken informative text:

**Stance:** Does the speaker hold themselves upright, face the class directly, use positive body language?

**Eye contact:** Does the speaker direct their gaze to all members of audience?

**Clarity of voice:** Does the speaker project their voice, use accurate pronunciation and word/sentence stress?

## Healthy Eating

There are many reasons for healthy eating. There are positive physical effects, negative physical effects and mental and emotional effects.

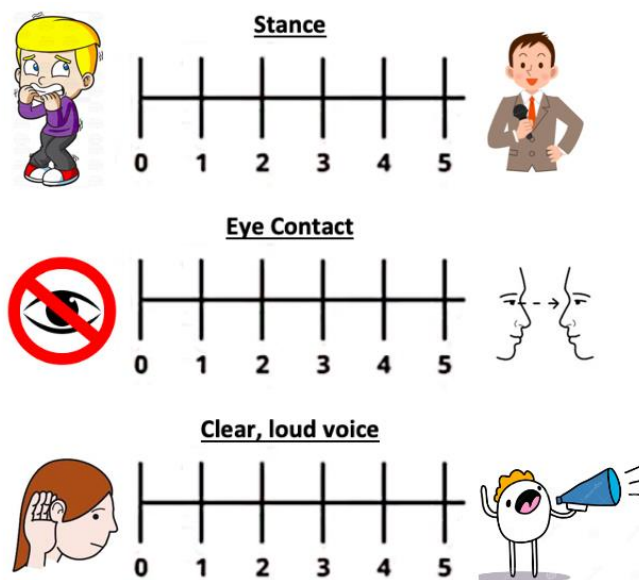
Firstly, healthy eating is good for your physical health. Healthy foods have vitamins that your body needs to work well. Healthy eating helps your immune system and stops you getting sick. It also helps your internal organs stay healthy, as well as your skin.

Secondly, there are many negative physical effects when you do not eat healthy foods. Fast foods and fatty foods do not have many vitamins and have too many fats and sugars. If you eat these foods you can become overweight or obese, you will get sick more and your internal organs will become unhealthy.

In addition, healthy eating also has positive mental and emotional effects. Good foods have vitamins that help your brain work. When you eat healthy foods you feel happier and less moody. You will also have energy for sports and exercise and you will be able to concentrate at school.

In conclusion, we can see that there are many positive effects of healthy eating. It is good for your physical health as well as your mental and emotional health. So eat lots of fruit and vegetables and stay healthy!

**Figure 1** A model informative text type



**Figure 2** A simple rubric to reflect on oracy proficiency

Next, Sarah conducted a multilingual word study with her students. For this activity, she gave students the following tools:

- a transcript of the modelled spoken informative text (see Figure 1) and
- a simple multilingual “dictionary” which she had prepared beforehand, using key words from the model text translated into the key languages of the classroom (see Figure 3)

ENGLISH	SPANISH	FRENCH	CHINESE	ARABIC
positive	positivo	positif	正	إيجابي
negative	negative	négatif	负	سلبى
physical	físico	physique	物理	جسدى - بدنى
mental	mental	mental	心理	عقلى
emotional	emocional	émotif	情绪化	عاطفى
effects	efectos	effets	效果	تأثيرات
vitamins	vitaminas	vitamines	维生素	الفيتامينات
immune system	sistema inmune	système immunitaire	免疫系统	جهاز المناعة
moody	temperamental	de mauvaise humeur	喜怒无常	متقلب المزاج
concentrate	concentrar	concentrer	半	تركيز

**Figure 3** A simple multilingual dictionary to help students identify key terms in the text prepared by Sarah

The key terms in the multilingual dictionary were used as meaningful “hooks” for students when they read the text for the first time. Sarah used her knowledge and understanding of the interdependence hypothesis to surmise that if students understood the key terms in their home languages first, and recognised their English equivalents within the text, that would help them to construct meaning from the other English words surrounding these terms in the text.

This stage of the lesson provided Sarah with a good opportunity to build up multilingual awareness in the classroom by doing some simple whole class “call and response” exercises. For example, she would call out one of the key terms, such as “concentrate” and have students respond with the equivalent word in their home language. She also used the activity to focus on the form and pronunciation of the key terms in English. For example, “How many syllables are there in the word emotional? Which syllable is stressed? How does that differ to the word in your language? (e.g. in Spanish the last syllable is often stressed, e.g. *emocional*). Sarah got students to notice the similarities and differences between the written scripts of the different languages in the class, including the many cognates in English, Spanish and French, e.g. *positive*, *positivo*, *positif*, and *physical*, *físico*, *physique*.






















Furthermore, Sarah also used this activity to build plurilingual awareness amongst class members by having students learn the key terms in a language *other than English or their home language* and had them recite them to the native speakers of each language to check for accuracy. In this way, a healthy multilingual ecology (Garcia, Seltzer & Johnson, 2016) was fostered in the classroom, one in which Sarah made space for her students’ multilingualism and in which their multilingual identities were validated.

In order to help her students to visualise coherence in an informative text, Sara used a picture essay to help them visualise a coherent text structure. This picture essay contained the same information as the model informative text, but this time it was represented through pictures (see Figure 4). Sarah had students study the picture essay and led them to notice that the pictures used in the introduction were repeated with examples underneath them in the body, then repeated again in the conclusion. She got students to link the pictures to key terms in the written text. This exercise helped students to visualise the pattern of a coherent text, without having to grapple with grammatical or lexical information. This



strategy aligned well with a multiliteracies approach drawing on multiple modes of meaning making and communication, including images, photos, drawings and colour (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). At this stage, Sarah asked probing questions to the students to ensure they noticed the pattern in the text, e.g. What does this picture represent? What examples are included in the body of the text? What points are repeated in the conclusion? Noticing these key terms helped students to consolidate the key points to include in their informative text and oral presentation.

**Scaffold for preparing your presentation:**

<b>Title/topic</b> 	
<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main idea</li> <li>Preview of points</li> </ul>	  1.  2.  3.
<b>Body</b>	
<b>Paragraph 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point</li> <li>Explanation</li> <li>Example</li> </ul>	 Eg.  ;  ; 
<b>Paragraph 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point</li> <li>Explanation</li> <li>Example</li> </ul>	 Eg.  ;  ; 
<b>Paragraph 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point</li> <li>Explanation</li> <li>Example</li> </ul>	 Eg.  ;  ; 
<b>Conclusion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restate points</li> </ul>	 +  +  = 

**Figure 4** A picture essay to help students to visualise patterns of coherence in an informative text

Next, Sarah organised students into their home language groups. Using the picture essays as visual cues, she got students to write their own informative texts in their home languages. By removing the barrier of having to think in English, a language in which they were still developing competence, students were able to focus instead on achieving structure in their texts, creating clear, coherent meaning in their plan.

In the following lesson, Sarah reorganised students into their multilingual groups. Having written their coherent information texts in their home languages, students then presented them orally in their home languages, in most cases, to student audiences with different home languages. In this way, each student presenter was considered the “expert,” not hampered by the lexical or grammatical challenges of English. The students who were listening used the same rubric used in Figure 2 to focus on the non-linguistic oracy elements of the presentation, that is. stance, eye contact, voice clarity. This feedback from their peers helped students to know which areas to work on before making their final presentation in English.

In the final stage of the unit of work, Sarah instructed her students to repeat the process, but this time with different but related content with a text on how students should look after their teeth. This time, students wrote their informative text first in their home language, and then worked with their peers to create a version in English. To avoid students' overreliance on Google translate, Sarah instructed students to select the five most important words that they wanted to have translated from their home language into English. She had students come to the front of the class and write them on the chalkboard. This then led to a classroom discussion where students were asked to note possible cognates between their respective home languages, and to identify similarities and differences between the words the different class members thought were most important to translate. Next, students translated each key term from their home language into English, using fellow class members or Sarah as "translators." Students wrote these key terms and their translations onto separate pieces of paper and displayed them on the classroom walls so that students could refer to their multilingual "word wall." Using these key terms, and the knowledge gained from previous lessons in this unit, students were able to translate their home language writing into English. Finally, students prepared palm cards for their English presentation, and delivered their final presentations in front of the class, which were assessed by their peers.

The stages of the unit of work outlined above reflect the detailed, systematic and intentional incorporation of translanguaging pedagogies into Sarah's planning and teaching. This approach undoubtedly involved a great deal more preparation and input at all stages of her lesson planning. For Sarah, however, this investment was rewarded through the profoundly increased levels of student engagement and interaction at all stages of the unit. Seeing her students as multilingual "experts" encouraged her to draw on their linguistic knowledge in lessons, which in turn positioned them as brokers of their unique cultural and linguistic knowledge. This in turn led to a vastly enriched multilingual ecology, where students were engaged not only with English as a medium of instruction but learning more about the other home languages present in the rooms. Finally, the depth, accuracy and confidence with which the final informative texts were written and presented were a clear indicator that the use of translanguaging pedagogies had engendered a corporate learning experience that had resulted in enriched academic achievement across the entire cohort. Through drawing on multiple modes of meaning-making at their disposal throughout the unit and accessing all the prior knowledge coded in their home languages, students ultimately had acquired the information text genre and had learned to "write like scientists" (Goldenberg, 2008).

In reflecting on the unit, while recognising the multiple learning and self-efficacy benefits for her students, Sarah candidly observed that adopting a translanguaging stance and practices forced her to move distinctly beyond her comfort zone as a teacher.

*Taking this approach was a bit of a risk for me. It involved a number of small group activities, where students were all using their home languages. As their teacher, I had to accept that I couldn't monitor everything they were doing as I would not be able to read or understand everything they produced in their home languages.*

*[Interview, 2018]*

Nevertheless, Sarah reflected that the notable benefit of the translanguaging strategies employed in this unit was the way in which they encouraged students to engage more closely with complex concepts, such as structuring their writing, in their first language, while ultimately supporting them to produce a proficient academic text in English. Sarah summarised: "I think the success of this approach lay in the way it allowed students to think of complex concepts like text structure in their first language, while ultimately successfully producing an artefact in English."

As Espinosa, Ascenzi-Moreno, and Vogel (2016) point out, the act of writing is inextricably linked to other language modes – reading, speaking, viewing and performing. The work that students participate in through using these modes, such as dialogic conversations, synthesising, evaluating and critiquing information, provides them with a schema about text structures as well as ability to develop ideas and be creative. For multilingual students, it follows that meaning making is far more effective if they can participate in all of these modes using their entire linguistic repertoire through translanguaging (Garcia & Li Wei, 2015). Put differently, teachers like Sarah who create opportunities for enabling translanguaging opportunities help to enrich the literacy skills of their multilingual students.

### **Conclusion**

To date, there are few studies on translanguaging that have explored the varied ways in which teachers intentionally design learning experiences that acknowledge and draw upon multilingual students' abilities to use their linguistic competence for classroom learning. This article contributes to the literature by providing a window on specific strategies teachers can use to harness the manifold cultural and linguistic resources students bring to the classroom.

As illustrated in this observational case study, teachers have the ability to enact powerful learning opportunities when opening up spaces for students to access knowledge coded in their home languages (Cummins, 2005). In the case of Australia particularly, a country in which English is significantly privileged in educational environments, translanguaging offers a promising alternative, a chance to foster pedagogies in which learners' cultural and linguistic experiences are valued as intrinsic to their development and wellbeing. As Creese and Blackledge (2010) assert, pedagogies of bilingualism that included intentional translanguaging recognise that language and identity are inextricably linked. Rather than offering a "one size fits all" approach that tends to measure linguistic competence according to native speaker like norms and view the use of home languages in a deficit way (see van Viegen, this issue), there is a potential for what Hopewell (2013) calls a "universal drive" towards creating the conditions and contexts for classroom practices that fit the diverse students we teach (p. 67).

Research into the multilingual stance advocated in education systems around the world inevitably places the researcher in an ideological (some may say political) position. To continue to support the status quo of English only agendas in programs that insist on rigid separation of languages is itself an ideological act that, from a translanguaging perspective, denies multilingual students' access to rich resources for learning (Ruiz, 2014). Furthermore, the growing body of research illustrating the persuasive benefits of multilingual approaches to teaching and learning, in their broadest sense, recognises that students' home languages are inextricably linked to their identity and humanity. As Heugh (2019) observes: "Forbidding a child to use their own language at school is a violation of their rights and deeply problematic for their engagement with education. Using students' home language, using their own language systems, should be the most important aspect of any school language policy (p. 79).

It has been suggested that one of the greatest barriers to teachers enacting translanguaging pedagogies in their classrooms is the lack of practical guidelines to explain how teachers can systematically integrate students' home languages into their classroom lessons. In offering this finely grained observational analysis of translanguaging approaches to classroom writing, this study adds to the cumulative vision of how teachers enacting the curriculum through more than one language are able to generate knowledge about how multilingualism can purposefully be harnessed to advance learning.

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**Author biodata**

**Dr Sue Ollerhead** is a lecturer in Languages Education at the School of Education at Macquarie University in Sydney. She has worked extensively in English language and literacy training and materials development in Africa, Europe and Australia. Her expertise lies in Language Teacher Education, in particular the development of classroom pedagogies that best support students for whom English is an additional language. Her other research interests include multilingual education, language-in-education policy, literacy across the curriculum and oracy development in schools.

**Isobel Crealy** is a Leadership Advisor at the School Leadership Institute, an initiative of the NSW Department of Education. She was formerly a high school teacher at Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre (a school for newly arrived migrants and refugees in Sydney), and has completed a Churchill Fellowship on refugee participation through education. Isobel is in the final year of PhD study at ANU and holds degrees from Oxford University and the University of Sydney.

**Rebecca Kirk** is a high school teacher at Beverly Hills Intensive English Centre, where she has led programs to build professional development resources that document quality teaching practices and strategies. She was selected as a participant in the 2019 NSW Leadership Development Initiative (LDI), building on her knowledge, skills and professional capabilities as a classroom teacher for wider application in the education sector. Rebecca holds a degree from the University of Wollongong.