

# **EXPLORING HUMANIZING PEDAGOGIES FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS AND THEIR TEACHERS**

**KARA MITCHELL VIESCA**

**NANCY COMMINS**





**WITH THIS LAND  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, WE AFFIRM  
NATIVE AMERICAN SOVEREIGNTY  
AND WE COMMIT TO WORKING IN  
RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR  
NATIVE AMERICAN RELATIVES AND  
NEIGHBORS AS WELL AS WITH THE  
LAND THEY WERE HISTORICALLY  
AND CONTINUE TO BE PROTECTORS  
AND STEWARDS OF.**

# **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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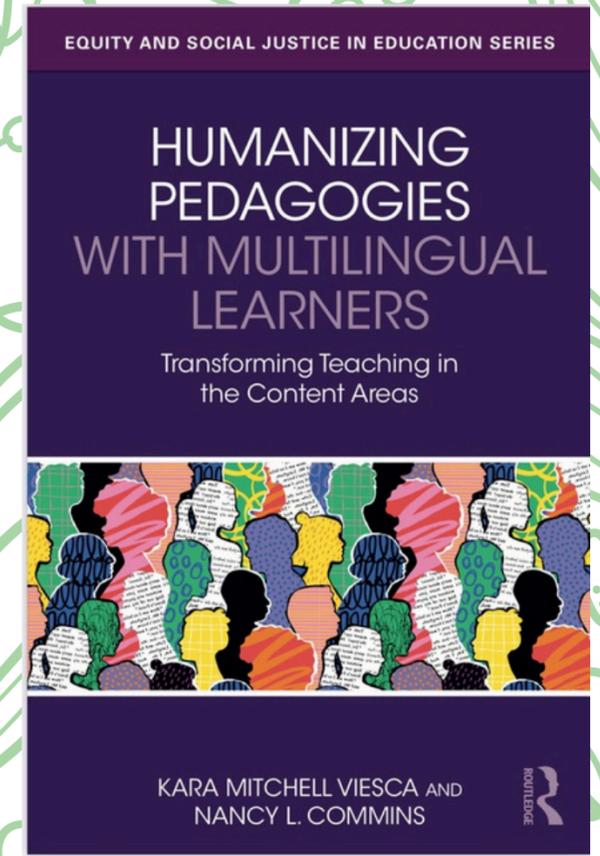
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**GREAT RESOURCE - NATIVE KNOWLEDGE 360**  
**[HTTPS://AMERICANINDIAN.SI.EDU/NK360](https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360)**

# THIS IS US



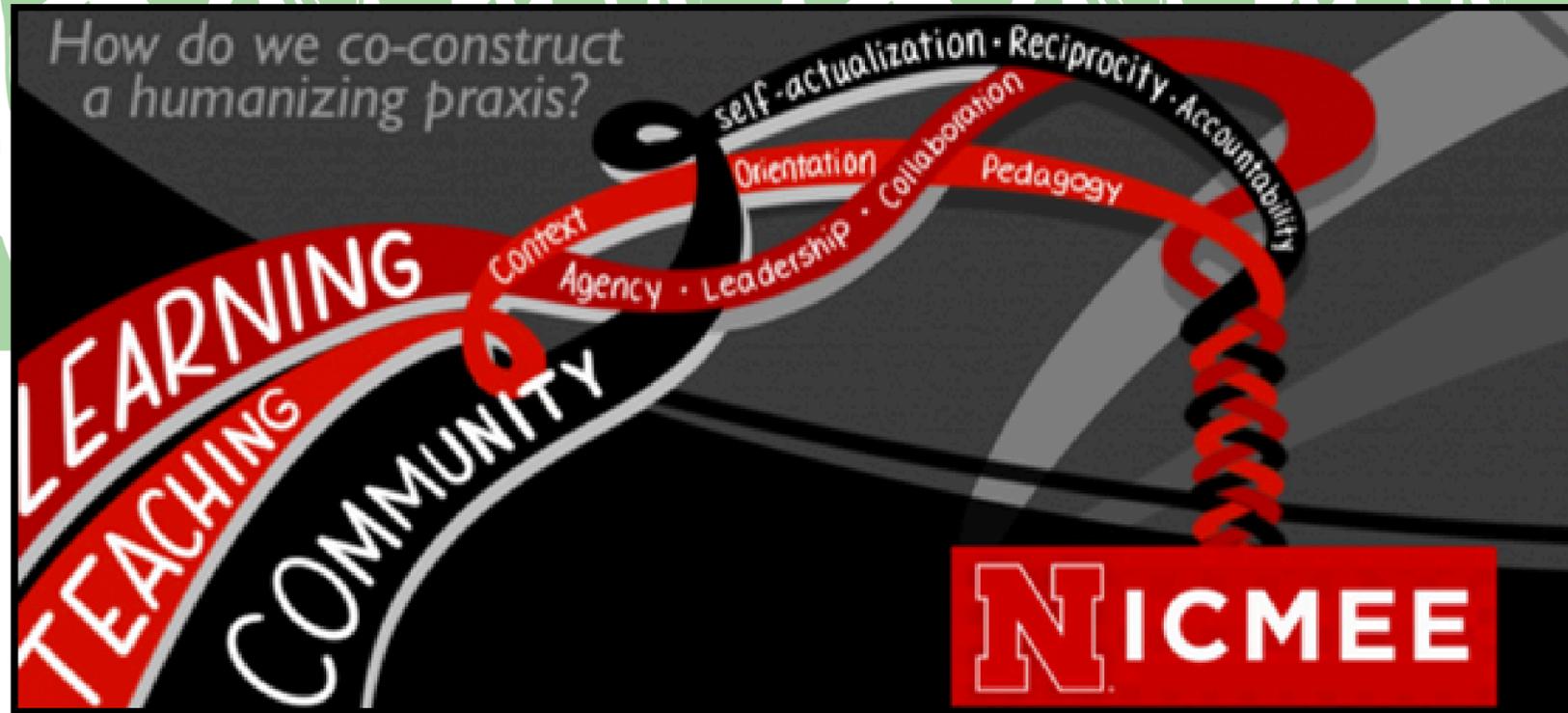
**THIS IS ALL OF US**

**THINK FOR A MINUTE: WHAT IS  
SOMETHING THAT IS MAKING YOU  
HAPPY TODAY?**

**SHARE IN THE CHAT!**

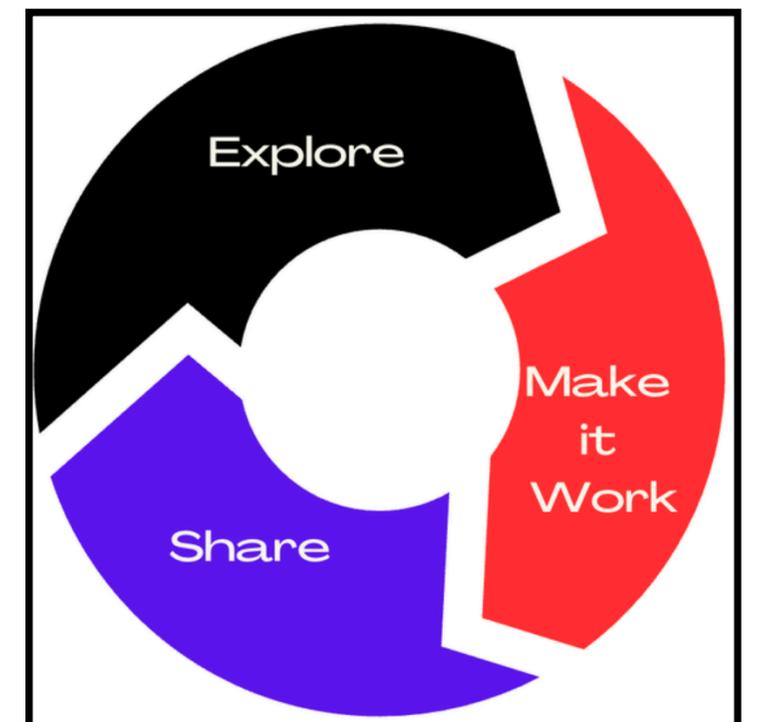


# HUMANIZING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



eCALLMS

**eLearning Communities for Academic Language Learning in Mathematics and Science (2011-2016)**



**International Consortium for Multilingual Excellence in Education (2016-2021)**

~2400 Workshop completers responded to end of eWorkshop survey:

- 92% reported eWorkshop was effective at increasing knowledge about working with multilingual learners.
- 91% reported eWorkshop improved their ability to work with multilingual learners.

<https://icmee.unl.edu/eworkshops/>

# Developing a Complex Portrait of Content Teaching for Multilingual Learners via Nonlinear Theoretical Understandings

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*Utilizing a complex theory of teacher learning and practice, this chapter analyzes ~120 empirical studies of content teacher development (both preservice and in-service) for working with multilingual learners as well as research on content teaching for multilingual students. Our analysis identified three dimensions of quality content teaching for multilingual learners that are complex and intricately connected: context, orientations, and pedagogy. This chapter explores the results of our literature analysis and argues for improving content teaching for multilingual students through improved theoretically grounded research that embraces, explores, and accounts for the expansive complexities inherent in teacher learning and practice.*

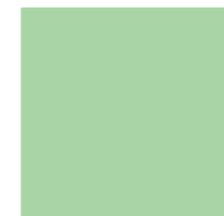
The underpreparation of content teachers to work with multilingual students<sup>1</sup> is a well-documented issue (Faltis & Valdés, 2016; Freeman & Freeman, 2014). However, as Faltis and Valdés (2016) argue, there is little consensus

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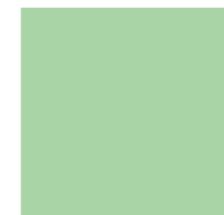
## LITERATURE REVIEW FINDINGS



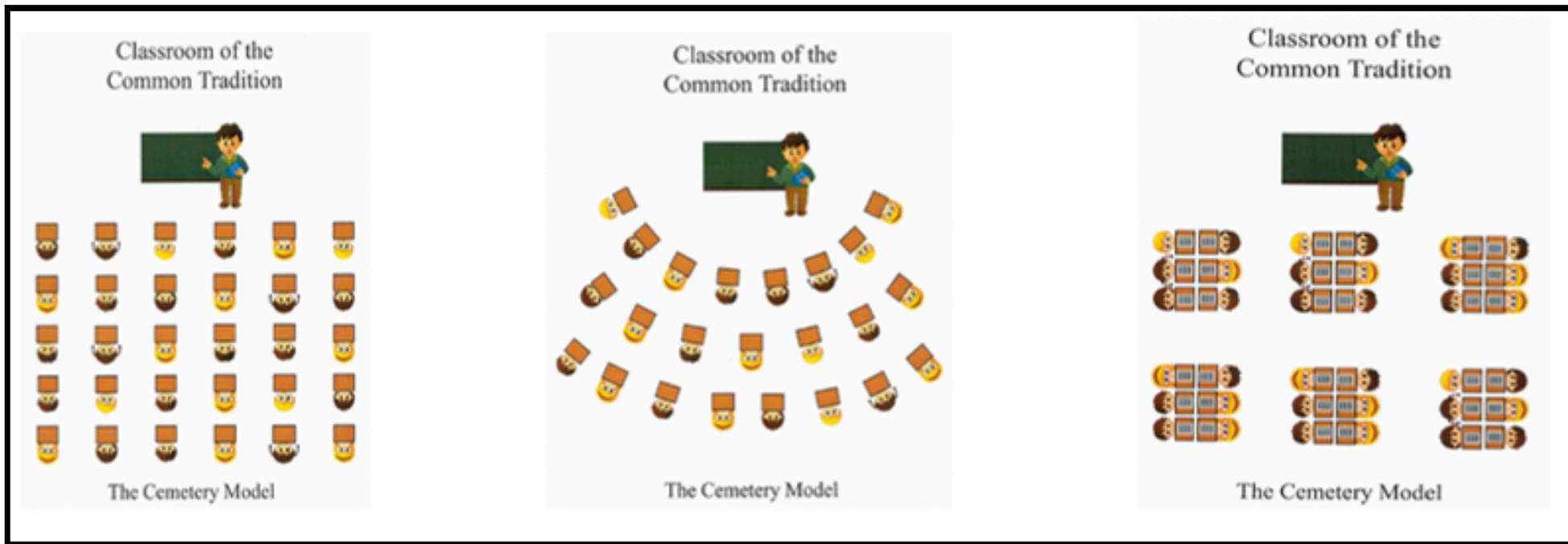
**CONTEXT**



**ORIENTATIONS**

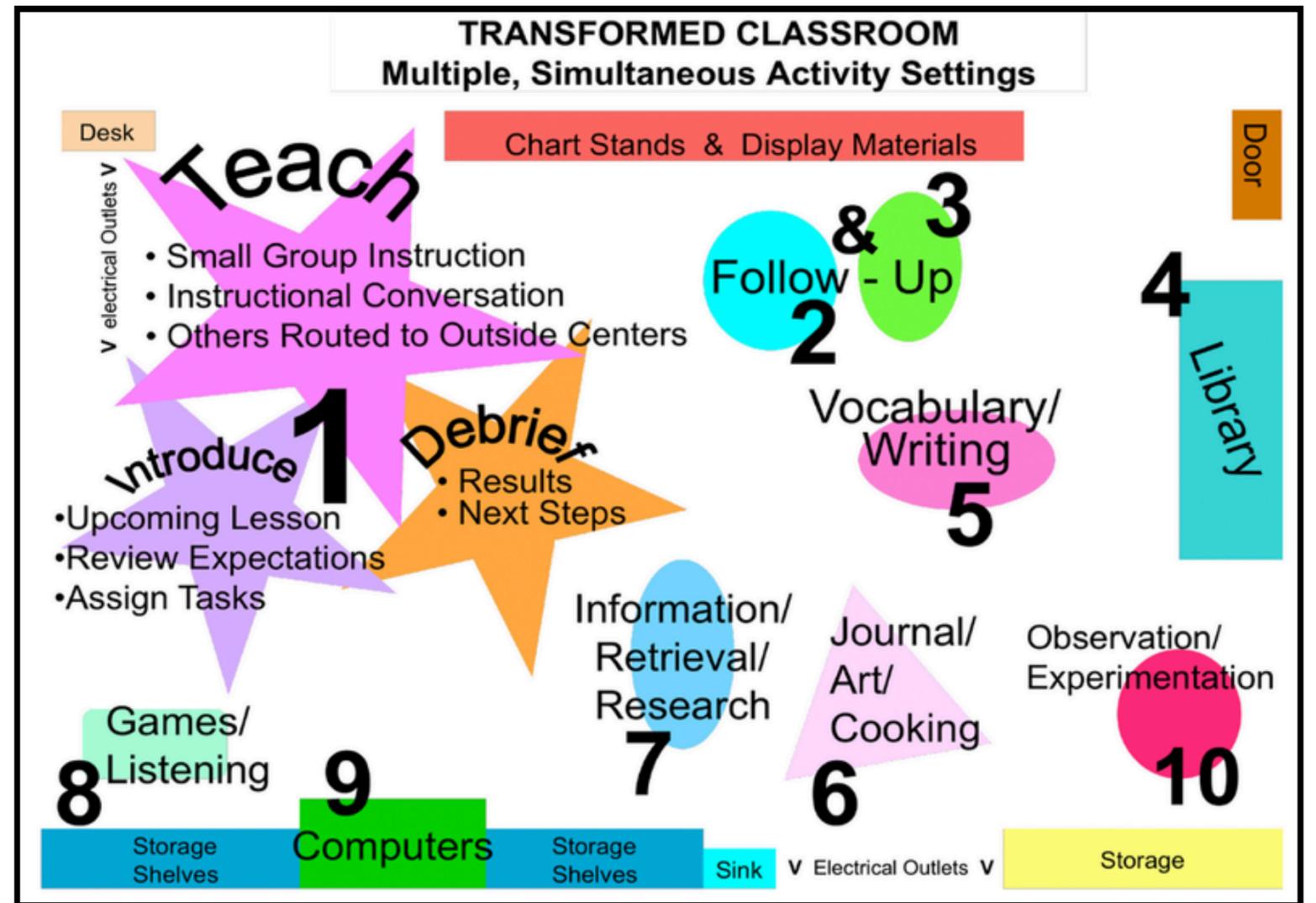


**PEDAGOGY**



**FROM THIS**

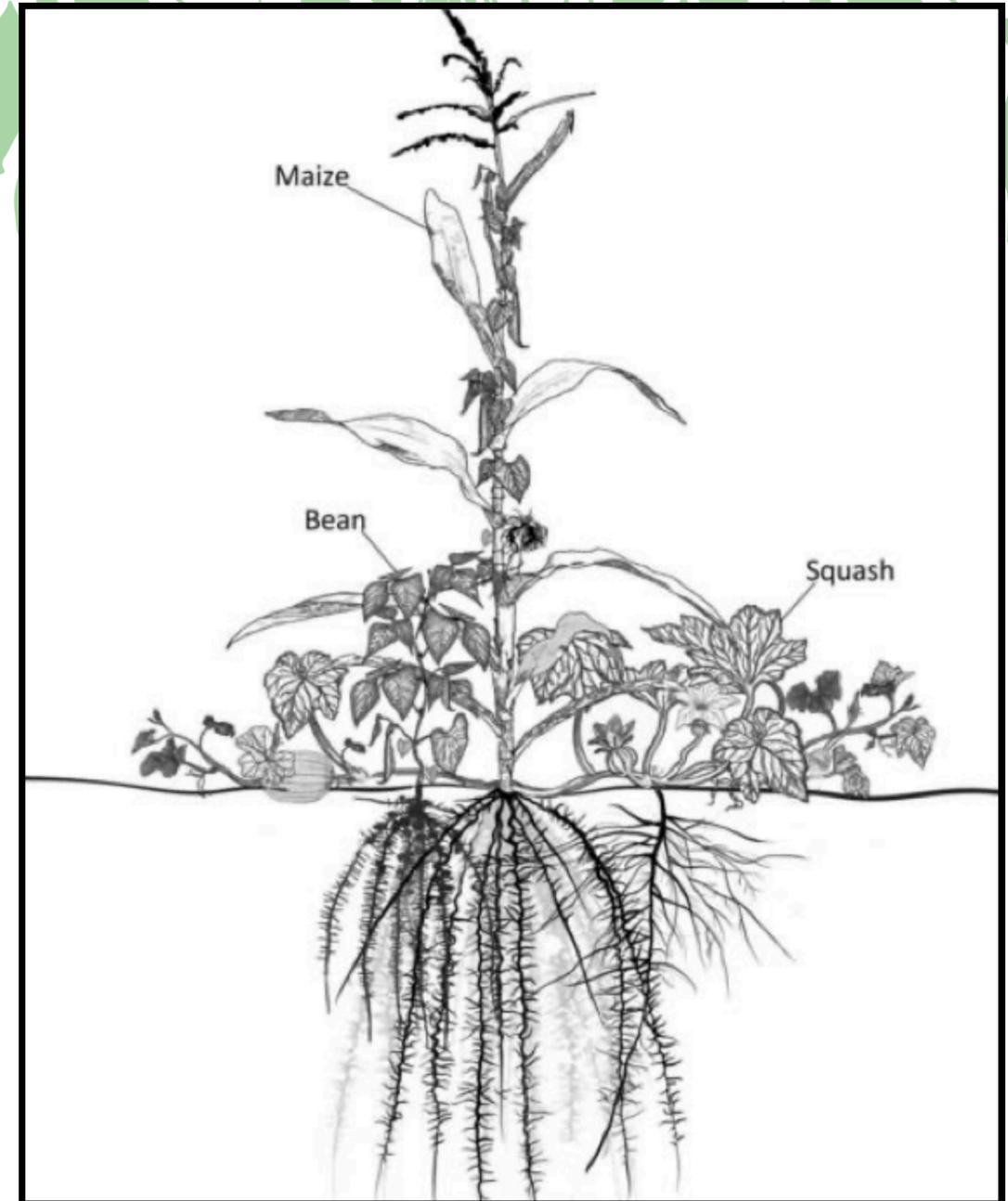
**TO THIS**



Images and Inspiration from  
**Dr. Annala Teemant's** Work  
 (University of Indiana Indianapolis)

# CONTEXT: NOT JUST PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

**POLICY**  
**HISTORY**  
**ECONOMICS**  
**PUBLIC SENTIMENTS**  
**CULTURAL NARRATIVES**  
**EXPECTATIONS**  
**RESOURCES**  
**VIBES**  
**EXPERIENCES**  
**RELATIONSHIPS**



**The Three Sisters Indigenous Planting Technique**

# CONTEXT

## DIFFERENCE AS DEFICIT AND ASSIMILATIONISM

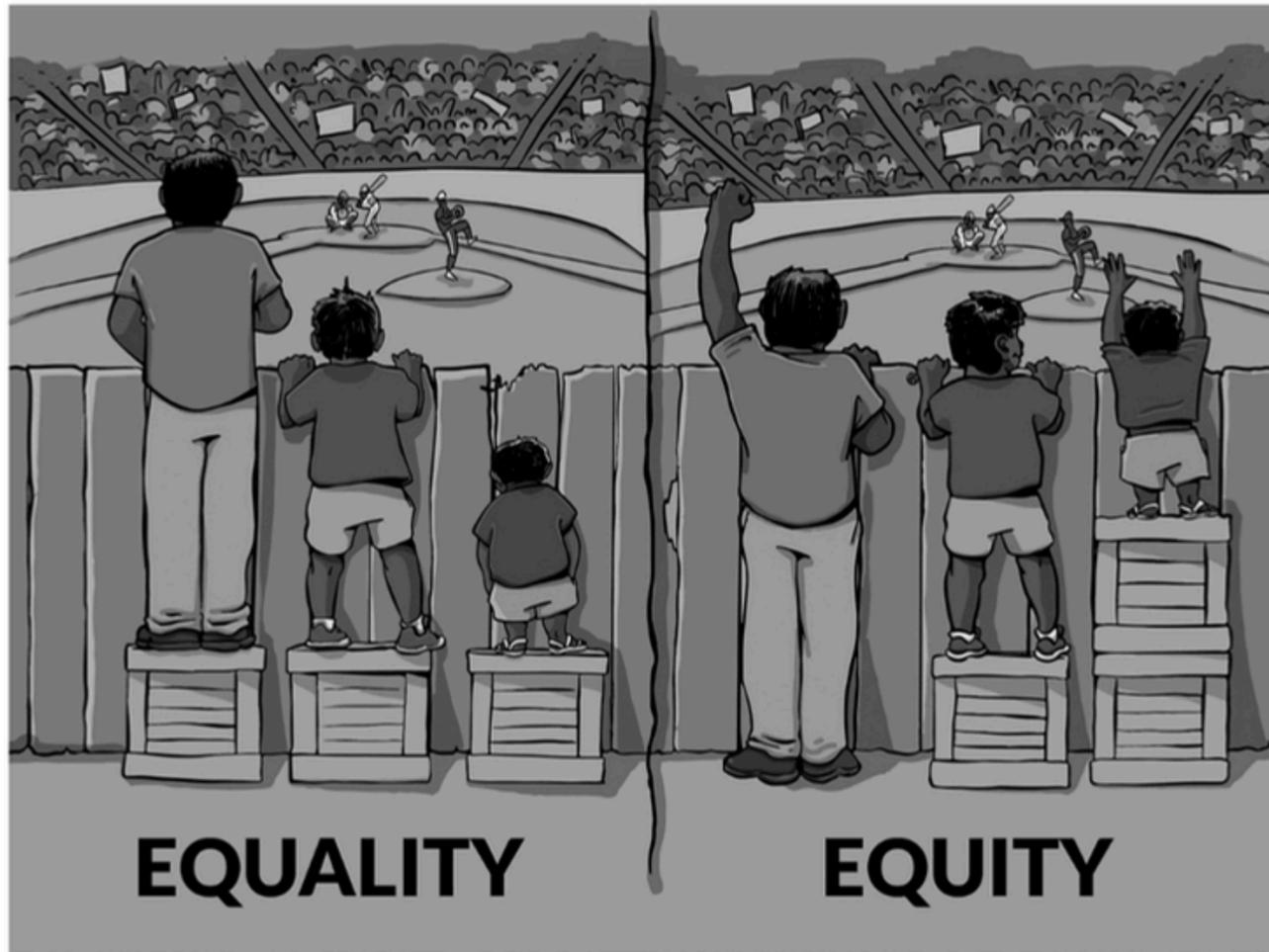
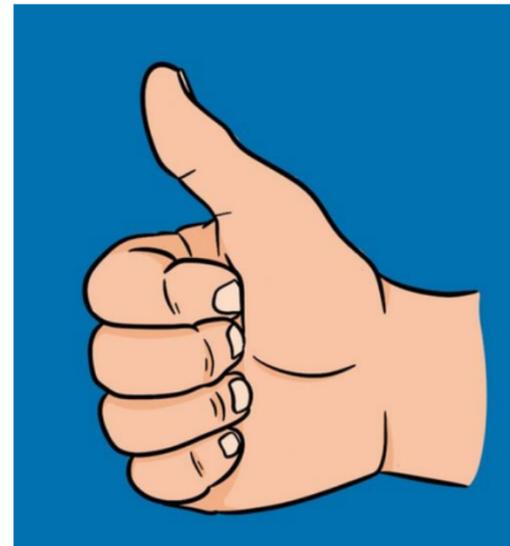


FIGURE 2.1 Equality vs Equity.



- Who matters?
- Whose Ideas are centered?
- How can Human dignity be preserved in the context of cultural conflict?

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<b>Section I Context</b> .....	23
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Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection Questions: <i>How do the racial and linguistic identities and migration histories of my multilingual learners from different backgrounds affect how I interact with and teach them? What impacts do systemic racism and linguistic have on my classroom, my students, their families, and communities?</i>	
<b>2 Dominant Cultural Narratives</b> .....	45
Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection Questions: <i>What impacts do perceptions of difference held by me, my students, their families, and communities have on our classroom community? What do I need to do for differences to be positive and productive rather than a source of harm and marginalization for multilingual students and their families?</i>	
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Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection Questions: <i>How do policies and current practices impact our (me, my students, their families, their communities) perceptions of varied language practices and our willingness to engage in communication across differences? How can I open my classroom as a space where varied language practices (languages, dialects, and registers) are utilized for the purposes of teaching, learning, and effective communication?</i>	

## **Intrapersonal: Dominant Narratives Autobiography**

Purpose: Dig into how dominant narratives have operated/operate in your own life in relation to one or more aspects of your identity (race, gender, class, language, nationality, religion, ability, sexuality, or family roles).

Reflect on the following questions:

- ◆ What various identities do I have? (Consider race, gender, class, language, nationality, religion, ability, sexuality, family roles, etc.)
- ◆ How have those identities been associated with expectations by my family, community, or society in general?
- ◆ Where did those expectations come from? Whom do they benefit? Whom do they harm?
- ◆ How were they communicated to me?
- ◆ How did those expectations fit me? Or not fit me?
- ◆ Did the dominant narratives that were told to me about who I should be and how I mattered in the world match my own sense of myself and who I wanted to be in the world? If they did, how? If they didn't, how?
- ◆ How have I responded to one or more dominant narratives told to me in my life?
- ◆ How have the dominant narratives surrounding me affected how I engage with the world?

Then draft a narrative regarding your own personal relationship with dominant narratives in your life. Be sure to include the ways you may have disrupted dominant narratives imposed on you. Also consider how dominant narratives impact you now in your work as an educator.

# **MAKE IT WORK**



## **INTRAPERSONAL**

Dominant Narratives Autobiography



## **INTERPERSONAL**

Dominant Narratives in the Classroom



## **SYSTEMIC**

Welcoming Families

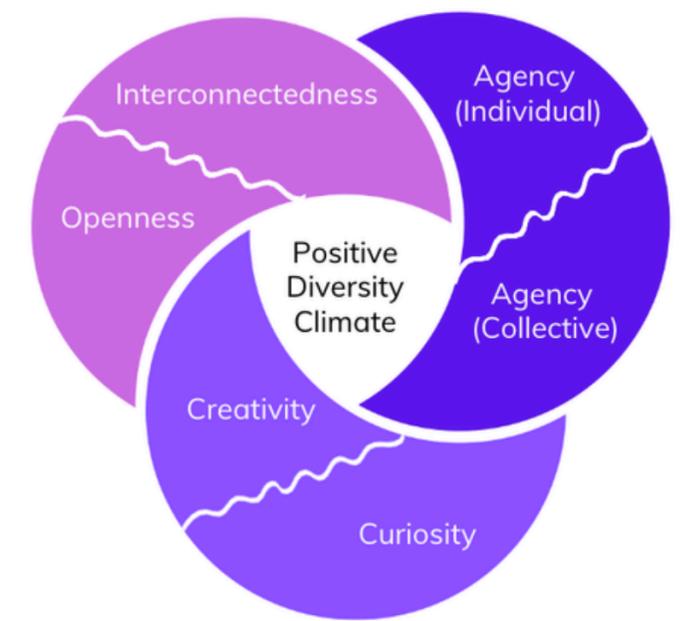
# **ORIENTATIONS THAT ARE FREQUENTLY PRESENT**



**CONTROL/DOMINATION**  
**ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL**  
**PRODUCTIVITY OVER PEOPLE**  
**POLICY OVER PEOPLE**  
**ENGLISH IS ALL THAT MATTERS**  
**DIFFERENCE IS DEFICIT**  
**THERE IS NO STORY ABOUT RACE**

**MERITOCRACY IS IMPORTANT/APPROPRIATE**

# IMAGINE INSTEAD



## OPENNESS

Teaching/learning that embraces multiple knowledges with grace.



## INTERCONNECTEDNESS

Humanizing teaching/learning that produces belonging.



## AGENCY

Teaching/learning grounded in self-determination.



## CURIOSITY

Teaching/learning for growth through exploration and inquiry.

## CREATIVITY

Teaching/learning that generates possibility and transformation.

Viesca, K. M., Alisaari, J., Flynn, N., Hammer, S., Lemmrich, S., Routarinne, S., & Teemant, A. (2024). Orientations for co-constructing a positive climate for diversity in teaching and learning. In *Teacher Education in (Post-) Pandemic Times: International Perspectives on Intercultural Learning, Diversity and Equity*. Peter Lang.

# ORIENTING TOWARDS INTERCONNECTEDNESS

## MULTICULTURAL NIGHT

- Whole school invited, mostly just multilingual students and families participated
- Fun
- Celebrated diversity
- Didn't change the issues it sought to address--students were still treated poorly at lunch, around their English use, etc.

## VERSUS

## GLOBAL GALA

- Whole school participated (during school day)
- Student led
- Repositioned students as knowers and havers of important knowledge
- Built relationships across grade levels, classrooms, etc.
- Improved whole school environment
- Teachers saw multilingual learners as more capable

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4 Co-Constructing Learning Communities.....89

Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection

Questions: *How can I orient myself and my students toward interconnectedness and openness to build a strong community where we can collaboratively solve problems, disrupt inequitable issues, and create a sense of belonging? What systems, policies, and practices impact my ability to establish these kinds of relationships with students and families?*



5 Humanizing Assessments.....111

Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection

Questions: *How can I use assessment to create a complete and complex picture of my students? How is assessment data used to sort, label, and promote deficit narratives of multilingual students? What roles do or should families play in the assessment of my students? How do curiosity and creativity contribute to humanizing my assessment practices?*

6 Pluralism in Practice.....133

Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection

Questions: *What role does pluralism play in your practice? In terms of control in the classroom, what is important to you? Where might you be able to give up some of it? Where might you struggle to offer students agency and shared responsibility in the classroom? Why?*

## **Interpersonal: Co-Construct Shared Agreements**

Purpose: Co-construct shared agreements with students to guide classroom engagements and accountability plans based on orientations toward interconnectedness and openness.

Create (and, if possible, implement) a plan for co-constructing shared agreements with your learning community. If there are already schoolwide expectations for conduct or behavior, focus on making them authentic to your classroom. In the process, consider how you can move away from a one-size-fits-all approach. You might begin by thinking back on conflicts that have arisen in the past. Consider what you did and come up with some alternative transformational consequences you could have used to address them. More importantly, co-construct a plan with students regarding how to engage in accountability grounded in transformational consequences (e.g., the people involved co-construct the consequences that will repair harm as well as prevent future harm). Include in your plan how you will ensure accountability to the shared agreements and maintain everyone's human dignity and value. If you can implement the plan, reflect on what you might do differently going forward.

# **MAKE IT WORK**



## **INTRAPERSONAL**

Self-study/Self-analysis of interconnectedness and openness



## **INTERPERSONAL**

Co-construct shared agreements



## **SYSTEMIC**

Explore and Improve Systems, Policies, and Practices Impacting your Classroom Community

# **PEDAGOGIES THAT ARE FREQUENTLY PRACTICED**

**TEACHER MAKES ASSIGNMENTS (USUALLY FROM TEXT OR LECTURE)**

**STUDENTS ATTEMPT TO MASTER ASSIGNMENTS INDIVIDUALLY**

**STUDENTS EXPECTED TO RECITE FACTS EITHER IN WRITING OR ORALLY**

**CLASS IS DOMINATED BY WHOLE CLASS INSTRUCTION**

**LECTURE-DOMINATED (“BANKING MODEL OF EDUCATION”)**

**TEACHER VIEWED AS THE ONLY “TEACHER” AND HOLDS ALL THE POWER IN THE  
CLASSROOM**

**Dr. Annela Teemant's Work**  
(University of Indiana Indianapolis)

# **PEDAGOGY: IMAGINE INSTEAD**

**TEACHER AND STUDENTS WORKING TOGETHER ON REAL PRODUCTS AND REAL PROBLEMS**

**ACTIVITIES ARE RICH IN LANGUAGE AND DESIGNED TO DEVELOP HIGHER ORDER THINKING AND EXPANSIVE  
MULTILINGUAL REPRETOIRES**

**ACTIVITIES ARE MEANINGFUL AND RELATE TO STUDENTS LIVES', EXPERIENCES, AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES**

**TEACHERS CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO APPLY THEIR LEARNING IN COMPLEX WAYS TO SOLVE MEANINGFUL PROBLEMS**

**DIALOGIC TEACHING--NOT LECTURE**

**MULTITASKING IS THE NORM**

**ALL STUDENTS WORK WITH ALL OTHER STUDENTS**

**STUDENTS TAKE LEADERSHIP OVER THEIR OWN LEARNING AND OTHERS**

**STUDENTS HAVE AGENCY**

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**7 Meaningful Collaboration .....157**

**Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection**

*Questions: What tensions and complexities need to be addressed in my classroom for collaboration to be meaningful, equitable, and just? What opportunities exist and what barriers do I have to overcome for me to work as a collaborator in student learning?*

**8 Grouping in a Multilingual Multitasking Classroom...180**

**Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection**

*Questions: Whom do students typically get to work with in my classroom? Across their whole school day? What markers of identity get attended to in determining such grouping? How can I group and regroup with multilingualism in mind? What other factors need attention to ensure that inequities are not perpetuated as my students work together in different groups?*

**9 Authentic Language Practices .....201**

**Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection**

*Questions: What do I currently do to promote student agency, meaning-making, and a commitment to equity in the use of different language practices? How can I address the complexities of using a variety of language practices to humanize the languaging in my classroom?*

**10 Deepening Conceptual Understandings .....223**

**Complexity Thinking and Critical Reflection**

*Questions: Do I treat students as complex multiplicities with a variety of important life experiences that can inform their growth and development? Do I do so even if those perspectives and experiences are different from my own or the knowledge that is valued at school? Is there space in my curriculum and instruction for ideas, perspectives, and life experiences that students bring from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds? Do I sufficiently decenter whiteness and monolingualism to make space for different ways of knowing and being in my classroom?*

**References .....248**

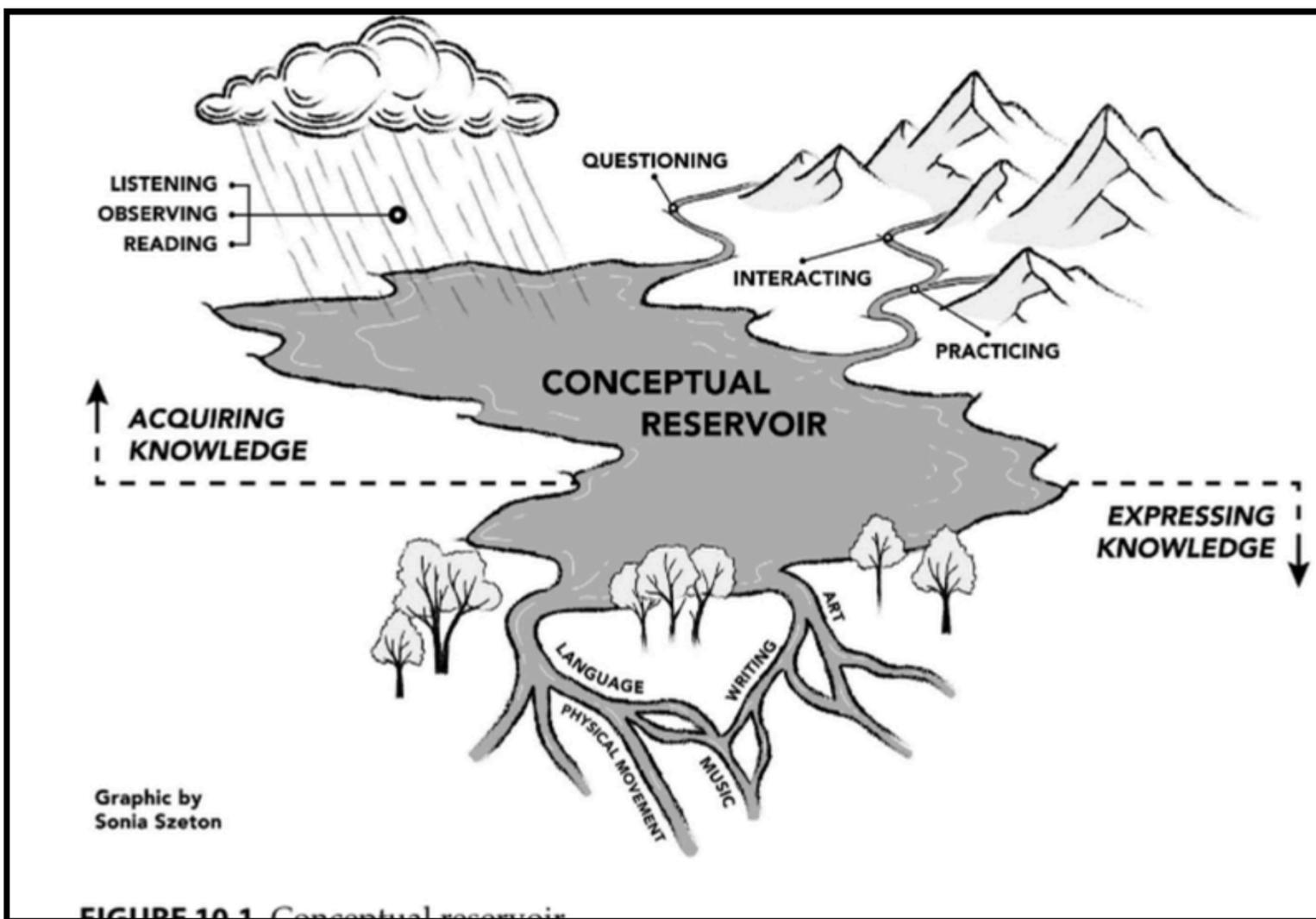


FIGURE 10.1 Conceptual reservoir



**A New Open-Access Journal on  
Race, Language, and Education**

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Be sure to:



**Read and  
Share**

**Submit Your  
Work**

**Ask Me  
Your  
Questions**

**Another Great Resource for  
Humanizing Ideas, Resources, and  
Practices!**

**THANK YOU!**

**Our Book Is available for purchase!  
We are also happy to support professional  
learning efforts around the use of it.**

**Reach out!**

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