

**SECOND
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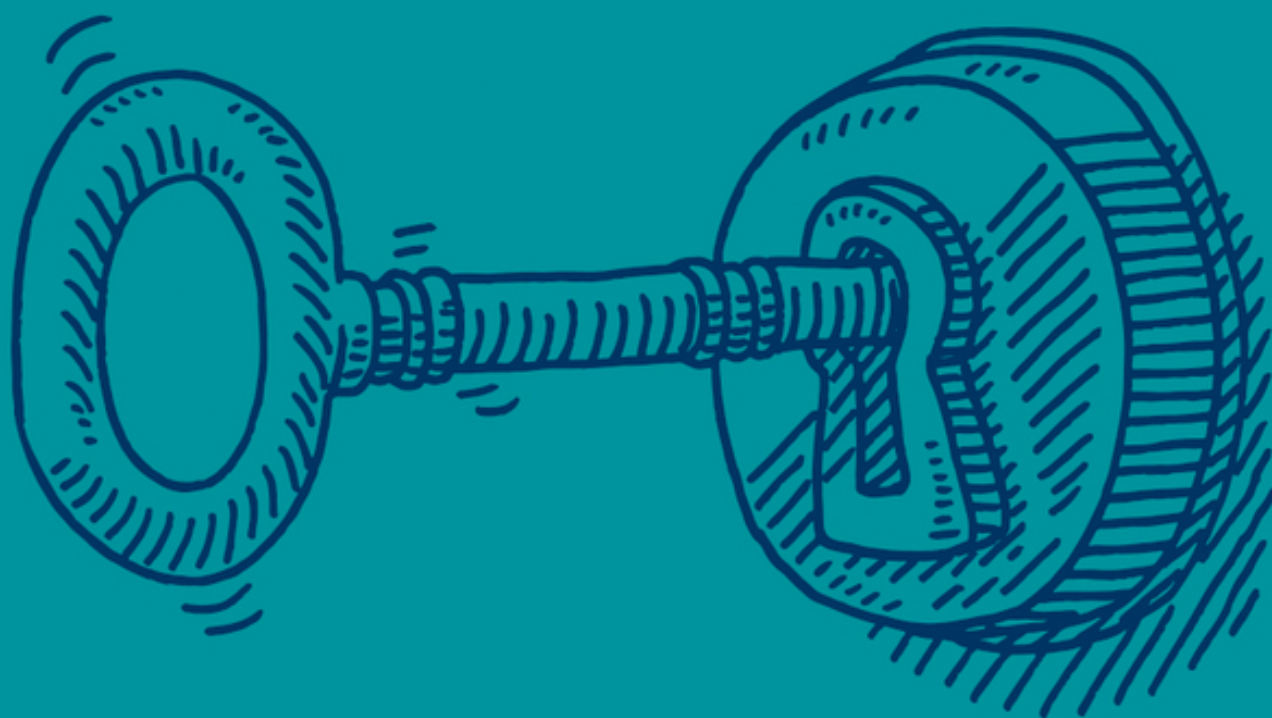
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FOREWORD BY EMILY FRANCIS

Unlocking MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' POTENTIAL

STRATEGIES FOR MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE



CORWIN

UNLOCKING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' POTENTIAL

Second Edition

This book is dedicated to all teachers of multilingual learners.

May you find the joy and passion that working with these students brings.

We also dedicate this book to our families,

David, Zoe, Maya, and Carson Fenner,

Gus, Sylvia, and Iris Fahey, and

Jason, Wiley, Liana, and Easton Smith,

for the boundless love and support they offer.

UNLOCKING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' POTENTIAL

Strategies for Making Content Accessible

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Foreword by

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Second Edition

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Note From the Publisher: The authors have provided video and web content throughout the book that is available to you through QR (quick response) codes. To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

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FOREWORD

By

Emily Francis

If the *Unlocking Multilingual Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* book is not on your teacher's bookshelf, you are missing out. This book is a gem and a must-have resource for all general education and English language development (ELD) teachers.

Whenever I come across a professional development book for educators that specifically focuses on multilingual learners (MLs), particularly on unlocking their full potential, my heart fills with joy. Additionally, it makes me reflect upon the missed opportunities I had while attending school in the United States as an ML. It is difficult for me to imagine myself as a 15-year-old ML sitting in a classroom trying to make sense of what my teachers were teaching. Looking around high school halls for something or someone to validate my humanity, strengths, and culture. For me, this only happened in bathroom mirrors.

Instead of developing the identity I had already constructed for 15 years, I found myself at a place where I was forced to build a new personal and academic identity—an experience that made a negative imprint in my future years. You see, when I began my ML experience here in the United States, I had lived 15 years of my life surrounded by Guatemalan cultural experiences that shaped who I am. At a very early age, I learned to survive very difficult experiences

that perhaps others have only read about or watched in movies. I had taken on a motherhood role while my mother worked countless hours and even left our home country to come to the United States to make a way for us. I had learned how to run our family business, which consisted of selling oranges at the local market or selling door-to-door in our local neighborhoods; all this just to afford shelter over our heads and have beans, rice, and tortillas on our table. I had traveled as an unaccompanied and undocumented immigrant across countries to come to a place that offered the opportunity of education and new life.

My hope in 1994 as I entered high school as a Student with Limited/Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) was not to start over as a blank slate or to rebuild my identity; on the contrary, I hoped to continue developing my identity upon the assets I had within me.

But it did not take me long to process the message the school environment was sending about my cultural identity and my home language. Because I found my identity threatened, I felt the need to protect it by hiding it away. I began the process of assimilation where all that mattered was learning English and meeting the academic expectation all teachers had of me ... regardless of my language proficiency and at the cost of racial trauma. While questioning my humanity and whether my experiences were even worth caring about, I met my ELD and academic goal by obtaining 42 high school credits by 1997. ¹ Unfortunately, I did not graduate. A New York State Regents exam put a hold on my academic success as a high school student.

¹ Emily had the required number of credits to graduate, but she did not receive the score that she needed on the New York State United States History and Government Regents examination to allow her to graduate.

So, as a high school dropout and while absorbing our society's message about my existence, I operated dysfunctionally within our

society for several years. However, in 2004 I began putting my broken pieces back together while putting myself through school at a community college and reconstructing my academic identity. I was determined to not only become the educator I desperately needed while I was in school but also to impact students' educational experiences positively. My experience as an ML inspired me to become an ELD teacher knowing that this role affords me a deep understanding of the challenges my students must overcome to find success.

In 2012, during my first year as an ELD teacher, I received a call from the front office about José, a newcomer from Mexico enrolling in a U.S. school for the first time. My heart leaped with joy and on the way to the office I began brainstorming from all my personal experiences and from all the learning I had acquired while becoming an educator. I was thinking about all the ways, not just me, but as our school community, we could build a place where our new student could thrive not only academically but also linguistically and emotionally.

That school year, José began his academic experience with us. However, we intentionally focused on his assets, passion, cultural experiences, and home literacy development. He was encouraged to use his home language to access content, present research projects in his language, and freely interact with peers in a comfortable environment. General education teachers worked closely with me to ensure we were employing up-to-date strategies to support his academic and linguistic needs. He participated in our school's Spanish Spelling Bee competition where the entire school witnessed his potential and literacy skills. This identity-affirming environment had a very positive impact on José's life. We had created a place with a strong sense of belonging that activated his voice and developed his academic identity. During his last year at our elementary school, José exited the ELD program and obtained passing scores on his math, English language arts (ELA), and

science end-of-grade testing. This school year, José is crossing the stage and graduating high school.

During my fifth year as an ELD teacher, Drs. Staehr Fenner and Snyder's book *Unlocking English Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* was released. I purchased the book and joined a Twitter book study/chat. Little did I know the impact this book was about to have on my life and career. At a personal level, I felt like this book was healing the wounds I received during my educational experience by acknowledging that the poor instruction and the low expectations I experienced while attending high school in the United States translated to inequity and injustice that impacted me greatly in a negative way. I honestly felt like [Chapters 1](#) and [2](#) were like cool water to my soul. Here is a book with a framework for equitable ML education with core beliefs focused on students' assets, culture, home languages, and identities.

Professionally, I felt reaffirmation of so many practices I had put in place for five years as an ELD teacher. I found myself marking on the book all the areas that would share something I had already put into practice. I smiled every time I highlighted an affirmation in the book.

I was also enlightened on so many topics that strengthened my instruction with guidelines that became part of my everyday instruction. From that day forward, this book became part of my lesson planning as I crafted lessons that were equitable and excellent for my students. Moreso, this book made me a more culturally competent educator. Just because I had some shared experiences with my students, that was not enough to have the cultural competence I needed to serve my MLs with equity and justice. This book allowed me to reflect carefully and intentionally on my cultural values and beliefs that today shape my expectations for my students, then make it intentional to learn more about my students by recognizing their values and beliefs that may be different than mine. These are key components to becoming a culturally

competent educator with a mindset of respecting and building on my students' assets, backgrounds, and experiences.

In 2018, an opportunity came for me to begin working with newcomer students at Concord High School in Concord, North Carolina. The plan was to implement a full inclusion model where our students were spending more time in core instructional courses and receiving support from me, their ELD teacher, throughout the day. I did not doubt that the framework and strategies I acquired from the *Unlocking English Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* book were exactly what I needed to implement this program with passion, integrity, and equity.

Today, five years later, we continue to implement this framework and employ many of the strategies for academic success found within these chapters.

So, it is 2023, and I get a first look at the second edition of this amazing book. It is a joy, an honor, and a humbling opportunity to see the new additions and revisions. I am thrilled to see that Dr. Staehr Fenner, Dr. Snyder, and new coauthor Ms. Gregoire-Smith are still hard at work in our field and saw the urgent need to revisit this essential resource for educators and added much-needed components such as a focus on SLIFE students, shifting the language from EL to ML, and removing strategies no longer effective in our practice. The addition of peer learning to foster MLs' oral language and content understanding is one of my favorites. I do believe that the pandemic stole from our students the skills to engage in conversation whether in social or academic settings. The strategies provided are not only helpful for MLs but are great for all students to develop oral language with success. I consider [Chapters 3 – 9](#) to be heavy in content but loaded with doable strategies that wrap up with a focus on the role of collaboration in teaching MLs and the role of equity, advocacy, and leadership in teaching, which I see both as fundamental to support our MLs. This is critical now that many districts are implementing more and more inclusive

instructional models where the ELD teacher provides support to both the mainstream classroom teacher and the MLs within the classroom. This book has a clear focus on MLs' success relying on all adults surrounding the students, not only the ELD teacher.

Throughout the chapters, you will read scenarios that will provide an accurate picture of the strategy in practice.

As a full-time ELD teacher and fearless advocate for the instructional support our MLs deserve, let me share with you how I implement this book:

I follow the five core beliefs, which are research-based with practical tools to apply them.

I apply Culturally Responsive Pedagogy after recognizing the culture and experiences that shape our students' learning.

I elevate vs. value students' home language and experience by amplifying translanguaging practices and displaying students' work.

I provide content teachers a clear understanding of instructional scaffolds for MLs.

I encourage participation through strategies that promote engagement for all students including our MLs and SLIFE students.

I share a clear understanding of how social and academic language is constructed and developed.

I integrate practice with academic vocabulary and vocabulary practices.

I incorporate reading and writing activities that are equitable ⇒ challenging and on grade level, including engineering text for MLs and SLIFE students.

I implement identity text projects where students demonstrate their cultural background through a multimodal text created by students.

I implement equitable assessments and differentiated assessment and grading.

Do not be intimidated by this long list of practices my school is implementing based on *Unlocking Multilingual Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible*. This implementation does not happen from one day to another—it is a process. The key is starting somewhere and working your way through all the amazing practices shared in the book. My first tip is to do an equity audit and an inventory. An equity audit that advocates for MLs' rights and the education they deserve. Conduct an inventory of your cultural views and experiences. Create a climate of shared responsibility where all adults on campus feel the urgency to begin building a safe place for all MLs and SLIFE. This is hard work and requires vulnerability. However, it is at this crossroads that students will meet you and see that there are teachers who care and believe they matter. Students will feel comfortable enough to share about themselves and this will give you the windows of knowledge about their life experiences you need to make [Chapters 3](#) to [9](#) (content and language strategies) doable for their success.

From teacher to teacher, know that you are not alone. We are all trying to do what is best for our students. Just the fact that you picked up this book and are reading these words says that you care for your MLs and want what is best for them. We are in this together. Let's connect and together UNLOCK our students' FULL potential.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A central theme of *Unlocking Multilingual Learners' Potential* is collaboration. We could not have written this book without our collaboration with students, educators, colleagues, and friends. We feel incredibly fortunate to be part of such an amazing network of individuals working in support of multilingual learners (MLs) and their families. The process of writing goes far beyond the work of the three of us, and as a result, there are quite a few people we'd like to acknowledge and thank.

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children, Wiley, Liana, and Easton, and her parents, Jane and Michael. We are especially encouraged to see our own children learning about the book-publishing process through witnessing it firsthand, and we are hopeful our kids appreciate that their moms wear multiple hats.

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INTRODUCTION

WHY WE WROTE A SECOND EDITION

Since *Unlocking English Learners' Potential: Strategies for Making Content Accessible* was published in 2017, we have continued to work extensively with educators of multilingual learners (MLs) to implement the strategies shared in the book. We have also framed ongoing coaching projects in several school districts around the content of *Unlocking* and have seen trends in terms of teachers' strengths and needs in implementing these strategies to support MLs. As a result, we decided we needed to add to the activities and tools from the first edition that align with each chapter based on our collaborative work with K–12 educators. In addition, since the first edition of *Unlocking* was published, there has been new research on effective strategies to support MLs' acquisition of language and engagement with grade-level content, and we wished to give the research we draw from a refresh. This second edition of *Unlocking* has allowed us the opportunity to update the research that we include so as to provide the most relevant theory that undergirds the instructional practices that we share.

We have also seen the impact that interrupted schooling and virtual learning had on MLs' language development opportunities and learning and recognize the urgent need to revisit what we know about the best way to build on MLs' assets and further their growth. For example, through our work, we have noticed a need to be more explicit about strategies to support MLs in reading and writing across content areas, including the elevated importance of peer interactions to foster growth in literacy and content understanding. Additionally, we are frequently asked about unique strategies to support the specific learning needs of ML newcomer students (students who

have been in the country for less than a year) and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). The second edition of our book gives us the opportunity to highlight our collaboration with educators and districts and to incorporate new strategies for supporting MLs' language and literacy development, including much-needed strategies for newcomers and SLIFE.

WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

In addition to updating the classroom examples, instructional strategies, and research in each chapter, we have also made several other changes in the second edition. Some highlights of the new or modified content follow.

In order to take a more assets-based approach in the second edition, we use the terms *multilingual learner* and *emergent multilingual learner* instead of *English learner*. Please see [Chapter 1](#) for our rationale for this shift and the definition of these terms. In addition, we are using the term English language development (ELD) teacher instead of ESOL teacher to refer to teachers who specialize in MLs' language development.

We have revised our five core beliefs (formerly called guiding principles) to include a belief framed around the importance of peer learning opportunities for MLs. While we have always understood peer learning to be a valuable support for MLs, the urgency for incorporating these practices into daily instruction has become even more pronounced. For more on our rationale for this shift, see [Chapter 1](#).

To respond to the many questions that we have received about strategies for supporting ML newcomer students and SLIFE, we have added a section in [Chapters 2 – 9](#) to focus on practices specific to leveraging the strengths and meeting the needs of

these populations of MLs. In these chapters, we provide specific considerations in the instruction of ML newcomer students and SLIFE related to that chapter's topic. Then we provide a scenario to illustrate how these unique considerations might be applied in a school or classroom.

We revised [Chapter 8](#) to focus more broadly on supporting MLs in reading and writing in the content areas rather than focusing only on text-dependent questions. [Chapter 8](#) now includes a variety of recommendations for incorporating scaffolded instruction and peer learning opportunities into reading and writing activities for MLs.

We developed a unit planning template that is aligned to the research-based instructional practices presented in the book. [Chapters 3 – 9](#) include the relevant section of the unit planning template so that, if you would like, you can develop a complete unit plan as you progress through the book. The complete unit planning template and a model unit plan are provided in the appendices on the online companion website. To access the companion website, please visit resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E.

UNLOCKING RESOURCES



To read a QR code, you must have a smartphone or tablet with a camera. We recommend that you download a QR code reader app that is made specifically for your phone or tablet brand.

resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E

How This Book Is Structured

As we wrote the second edition of book, we imagined all of the different types of current and future educators who might use it and took steps to adapt the content, as well as the structure, of the book to reach a wide audience. We have heard from countless educators in varied roles, including preservice teachers, teacher educators, content teachers, ELD teachers, support staff, and administrators about how practical and relevant the first edition of the book has been for them, and we wanted to ensure it continues to be relevant for everyone who reads it. First, we were sure to frame the book around solid research that grounds the ML strategies you will encounter and apply. Next, we structured the book in a way that provides the background that teachers with less training in working with MLs will need in order to understand the research, the rationale, and the use of particular strategies. At the same time, we also included ample modeling and examples, application activities, and reflection questions that can support even an experienced teacher of MLs in deepening their understanding and use of the selected research-based strategies, weaving in scenarios that span grade levels and content areas. We are confident that anyone from kindergarten dual-language teachers to high school mathematics teachers can find useful strategies that they can apply in their context. Further, we have included ample opportunities in the book for reflection so that educators can focus on their intentionality in selecting certain strategies, voicing their rationale for why and how they would use such strategies to support MLs. The online companion website that accompanies this book includes a compilation of all the reflection questions in the book with space to write your responses. You can print out this document and jot down your responses as you read. To access the companion website, please visit resources.corwin.com/FennerUnlocking2E

UNLOCKING RESOURCES



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In addition to ensuring the book is relevant for all educators, we have structured the book so that you can use it independently, as part of a course, or within a professional learning community (PLC), where ideally, ELD teachers and content teachers can discuss and interact with the material together. The book is organized so that the first two chapters introduce our organizational framework and provide overarching instructional practices for MLs that are meant to be implemented in combination with other strategies shared in [Chapters 3 – 9](#) of the book. [Chapters 3 – 9](#) then each introduce a very specific instructional practice in a multilayered fashion that you can incorporate into your instruction. Each chapter includes scenarios that allow you to reflect on how the practice might be applied to a particular classroom setting and tools to help you implement the practice in your own setting. If you are reading this book as part of a PLC or in a coteaching partnership, you could select any of [Chapters 3 – 9](#) to read, discuss, and implement in your classroom. In addition, for ready-to-use, practical tools to support these instructional practices, please visit SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox.

SUPPORTED TOOLBOX



For ready-to-use, practical tools to support culturally responsive teaching, please visit SupportEd.com/unlocking-toolbox.

Even though integrating research-based strategies is crucial to MLs' success, educators must also constantly monitor and strengthen

their professional skills with other educators to most effectively serve MLs. Our approach to working with MLs is unique, and so is this book. Because we believe the principles of collaboration, equity, advocacy, and leadership are fundamental to supporting MLs, we have woven these ideas into each chapter. As a result, we have included two sections at the end of each chapter that identify the role collaboration can have in relation to each specific instructional practice and also how equity, advocacy, and leadership can play out in the facilitation of each practice. This book offers you a space in which you can hit the pause button, reflect on your own practice and your relationship with your colleagues, and recharge your batteries to better support MLs. We encourage you, as you implement the different practices recommended in this book, to examine how you can build on your collaboration with your colleagues in the service of equitable and excellent education for MLs. We also hope you will reflect on how you can bolster your advocacy and leadership skills to share the new considerations, approaches, and strategies that you are implementing with other educators as a result of your learning in this book. This book will provide you with the opportunities to begin conversations not only around instructional practices that all teachers can use to support their MLs but also around ways in which teachers can continue to enhance their own professional development and grow as leaders and advocates for MLs. Now that we have provided you this overview, a summary of each chapter follows.

CHAPTER 1: WHY YOU NEED THIS BOOK TO SUPPORT MLS

[Chapter 1](#) identifies the urgent need to provide MLs with the type of instructional support that they require to succeed academically and recognizes that they are equal members of any classroom. The chapter provides an overview of the current educational context, demographics, research, and climate within which MLs are being educated. We also introduce the five core beliefs that define our work with MLs and their educators. These beliefs provide an easily accessible theoretical framework that forms the foundation for the remaining chapters in the book.

CHAPTER 2: USING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE FRAMEWORK TO LEVERAGE THE STRENGTHS AND MEET THE NEEDS OF MLS

[Chapter 2](#) provides an understanding of the crucial role culture plays in the education of MLs. The chapter includes working definitions of culture and culturally responsive teaching, a description of the characteristics of culture, and strategies to support culturally responsive teaching. It also provides opportunities for you to reflect on your own culture and how it shapes your instruction, classroom expectations, and interactions with MLs.

CHAPTER 3: SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION FOR MLS

[Chapter 3](#) shares an overview of what scaffolds are and why they are essential to incorporate into instruction and assessment for MLs. The chapter's deeper focus is on research-based strategies for selecting and developing scaffolds based on such factors as the academic task at hand and MLs' English proficiency levels, as well as other student background factors. The chapter includes examples of a variety of different types of scaffolds, checklists, and practical tools for you to plan and implement scaffolded lessons and units for MLs in your context.