

A book review of

Peercy, M. M., Tigert, J. M., & Fredricks, D. E. (2023). *Core practices for teaching multilingual students: Humanizing pedagogies for equity*. Teachers College Press.

A must-have resource to disrupt inequities for multilingual learners

MARJETA BEJDO

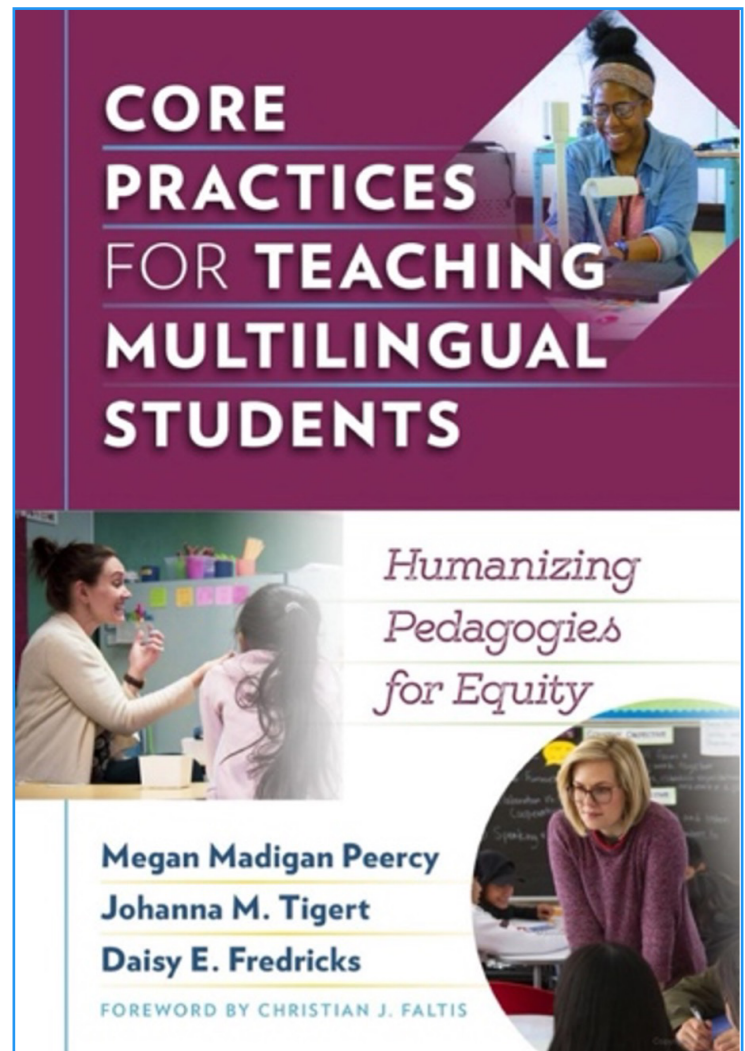
Summary: This resource provides teachers with six core practices for teaching multilingual students. It provides real classroom examples of how each core practice looks like and it also provides tools for teachers to analyze their lessons for the six core practices. This book intends to humanize pedagogy, disrupt inequity for multilingual students and emphasizes the importance of collaboration and reflection in teaching to promote equity.

Keywords: multilingual students, core practices, humanizing pedagogy, equity, collaboration, reflection

The number of multilingual students is increasing in U.S. classrooms (Nieto & Bode, 2012; Ottow, 2019), yet classroom teachers often feel unprepared and unsupported to serve these students (Peercy et al., 2023). Teachers have questions about how to humanize their practice and best support multilingual students in their classrooms. From my experience, humanizing pedagogy manifests when multilingual students are empowered by and carry their linguistic and cultural wealth into their learning spaces. Teachers can work to achieve more humanistic pedagogy by creating classroom environments in which multilingual learners feel safe, seen, understood, supported, and valued for who they are. A review of *Core practices for teaching multilingual students: Humanizing pedagogies for equity* provides in-service and pre-service teachers with core practices for teaching multilingual students.

This book focuses on how classroom teachers can humanize pedagogy for multilingual students. The principles that the authors use to define humanizing pedagogy include:

- knowing students as whole human beings,
- valuing the assets and resources they bring into the classroom,
- building mutually caring, trusting relationships between teachers and students,
- seeing students as active participants in their learning,
- drawing on students' experiences and knowledge,
- providing instruction that is rigorous and meaningful and recognizes their experiences, and
- disrupting traditional power dynamics in schools and classrooms.



The six core practices outlined in the text correspond to classroom practices which can help teachers achieve a more humanized pedagogy. They are:

- 1. Knowing students:** Learn about their home language, English language background and literacy, prior schooling, their interests, their experiences in their homes and their communities;
- 2. Building a positive learning environment:** Set high expectations, clear and consistent routines, use culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining pedagogy, build trusting relationships and supporting students' social-emotional skills;
- 3. Content and language instruction:** Use comprehensive input, scaffolding, differentiation and integrated content and language objectives;
- 4. Language and literacy development:** Promote vocabulary development, use students' home language as a resource, engage students in receptive and expressive language use, adapt instruction to students' language development needs;
- 5. Assessment:** Design and use formal and informal assessments for language and content, interpret the results of standardized tests, include English language proficiency tests, differentiate formal and informal assessments in response to students' language development and content knowledge;
- 6. Relationship and advocacy:** Collaborate with colleagues, make meaningful connections with families, engage in advocacy with a variety of stakeholders, practice teacher self-care.

The six core practices for teaching multilingual students are identified from work and collaboration that the authors have done over several years with several ESOL teachers. Those teachers have contributed to this work by sharing their experiences as they were working through their questions, challenges, and successes about instructing multilingual students. Throughout the book, stories from the classrooms of those ESOL teachers bring to life what the six core practices for teaching multilinguals look like in real-world classrooms.

REFERENCES

- Nieto & Bode. (2012). *Affirming diversity: the sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Ottow, S. B. (2019). *The language lens for content classrooms: A guide for K-12 teachers of English and academic language learners*. Learning Sciences International.
- Peercy, M. M., Tigert, J. M., & Fredricks, D. E. (2023). *Core practices for teaching multilingual students: Humanizing pedagogies for equity*. Teachers College Press.

CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Bejdo, M. (2024). A must-have resource to disrupt inequities for multilingual learners. *WAESOL Educator*, 49(1), 32-33.

I found this book to be a great resource and highly recommend it for educators at every level. As a classroom teacher, I found the examples from the field shared in this book to be windows into other classrooms. I also found them reassuring of my own teaching practices. For example, in the second chapter of this book, the authors endorse the practice of building classrooms that are linguistically and culturally responsive, which is an important part of my pedagogy. One of the examples the authors provide is “allowing students to use all of their languages” (p. 30). I learn key words in the languages of my multilingual students and teach greetings in those languages to my class with the intention of helping my multilingual students feel that our classroom is a safe place for them to use their language(s). My multilingual students are encouraged to use their home language(s) in our class. It is heartwarming to see my monolingual English-speaking students try and say “hello” to their multilingual peers in their home languages. The authors also discuss the importance of collaborating with colleagues as another way to advocate for multilingual learners. As a classroom teacher, I value collaboration with my school’s English language development teacher. We coordinate small group instruction during literacy and math rotations, and, despite common planning time constraints, we make time to meet and collaborate even if that often means using personal time to do so.

Teaching can be isolating, and most teachers do not have the opportunity to observe other competent teachers in action, but the stories from the classrooms in this book provide teachers with concrete examples of what effective teaching practices for multilinguals look like in practice. My understanding of humanizing pedagogy for multilingual students from reading this book suggests that it directly addresses inequity and injustice past and present for multilingual students; this book supports teachers by building their understanding of how to do just that. In my opinion, in-service and pre-service teachers alike would benefit from being familiar with the six core practices identified in this text. I believe that all teachers need to try to incorporate these practices into their classrooms to ensure equity for multilingual students. This book would be a valuable addition to the libraries of educators from early childhood to higher education.