Book Review of *Teaching Multilingual Students Through Culture and Language*

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How can teachers prepare students to navigate the workplace, their communities, and beyond, when school-based skills offer only a portion of the knowledge needed in today's globalized digital world? For teachers of emergent bilinguals, how can culture and language enhance classroom learning? In *Teaching Multilingual Students Through Culture and Language: An Elementary Teacher's Guide to Self-Discovery Using Semiotics,* Karkar-Esperat (2026) helps teachers learn the foundations of multiliteracies and funds of knowledge while reviewing applications of multimodalities. The recommendations in this text are useful for educators seeking to adopt a multimodal approach to teaching.

The *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* framework (New London Group, 1996) and the funds of knowledge concept (Moll et al., 1992) provide rationale for the recommendations in Karkar-Esperat's (2026) book. According to the *Pedagogy of Multiliteracies* (New London Group, 1996), literacy is broader than reading and writing skills taught in schools; instead, multiliteracies overcome "the limitation of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of working, civic, and private lives of students" (p. 60). The New York State Education Department's *Science of Reading for English Language Learners* Brief 1 (Escamilla, 2025) similarly recommends that educators view their students as whole learners, with multiliteracies including literacies besides just reading and writing. Furthermore, according to Moll et al. (1992), teachers who value students' funds of knowledge recognize their individual skills and interests, reflecting the asset-based perspective of the New York State Department of Education's Science of Reading for English Language Learners Brief 2 (Herrera, 2025). Karkar-Esperat's (2026) book is especially relevant for elementary teachers looking for ways to implement recommendations from the Science of Reading movement and multiliteracies in the classrooms with ELLs, as her book has foundations in these theoretical frameworks.

Based on these theoretical foundations, *Teaching Multilingual Students Through Culture and Language* reviews six modes of learning: linguistic, visual, audio, spatial, gestural, and synesthesia. Each chapter begins with a description of the mode and includes a table detailing relevant national standards, including standards from the Common Core, National Council of Teachers of English, and International Literacy Association; the Next Generation Learning Standards are not described. The chapters then provide at least one complete lesson plan that integrates the mode with scaffolds for emergent bilinguals. For example, the audio mode includes lesson plan examples on mariachi, hip-hop, and folk music. Through the lesson plans, readers can draw connections between the theoretical framework and a practical application. The text emphasizes strong language objectives,

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which are critical for effectively teaching multilingual students. The lesson plans are most applicable to upper elementary and even secondary teachers, although the content could be simplified for the primary grades, too. Methods for differentiation are described, but the lesson plans do not include explicit details on modifying for primary grade learners.

Despite the positive aspects of this text, there are a few limitations. For example, the Next Generation Learning Standards are not included, which would have been a valuable reference for New York State teachers. Additionally, the theoretical framework at the beginning of the book is lengthy and detailed, containing information beyond the immediate needs of elementary educators. Finally, the chapters would be stronger if Karkar-Esperat (2026) had included primary-friendly lessons; although the book's title specifies that this guide is designed for elementary teachers, the content seems better suited for upper elementary and secondary classrooms.

Teaching Multilingual Students Through Culture and Language is an informative text for educators working with emergent bilinguals who want to know more about multiliteracies, multimodalities, and how culture and language can enhance classroom learning. This book is available for purchase through Routledge for $32.79.

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