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INTRODUCTION

CHANGING ASSESSMENT MINDSETS

It takes both sides to build a bridge.

—Fredrik Nael

Almost three decades ago, I was invited to present at the Language Testing Research Colloquium on portfolio assessment in Tampere, Finland. It was my first international conference with colleagues who were focused on elevating the status of research-informed assessment for multilingual learners—an exciting new bridge for me to cross. Thirty years later I remain a steadfast warrior for nurturing multilingual learners’ linguistic and cultural identities and am committed to equitable assessment practices to empower students and teachers.

That is, in essence, what this 3rd edition of *Assessing Multilingual Learners: Bridges to Empowerment (Assessing Multilingual Learners)* is about. It is built on “*ganas*”—the will—and determination of educators, students, and families to have strength in their convictions to persevere and enlighten the education community which, in many cases, still clings to disheartened deficit views of “blaming the victim” for our educational ills. We are not asking you to abandon the goal of assessment equity, but to enhance and enrich it through student and teacher empowerment. To set the context for classroom assessment for multilingual learners, Figure 1 illuminates the subtle differences between equity and empowerment.

FIGURE 1 ENHANCING ASSESSMENT PRACTICES: FROM EQUITY TO EMPOWERMENT

ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR EQUITY	ASSESSMENT PRACTICES FOR EMPOWERMENT
Highlights the strengths of multilingual learners	Centers strengths-based student and teacher agency
Honors stakeholder relationships	Forges and builds partnerships from classroom, school, home, and community relationships
Accentuates learning as an assessment goal	Accentuates learning as part of student identity formation and a goal for assessment
Experiments with assessment <i>as, for, and of</i> learning	Systematically enacts assessment <i>as, for, and of</i> learning
Uses assessment data to improve teaching and learning	Uses assessment data as a call for taking action beyond the classroom
Accepts bilingualism and multiculturalism as an underlying premise for educational attainment of multilingual learners	Infuses bilingualism and multiculturalism as a way of being that is integrated into assessment

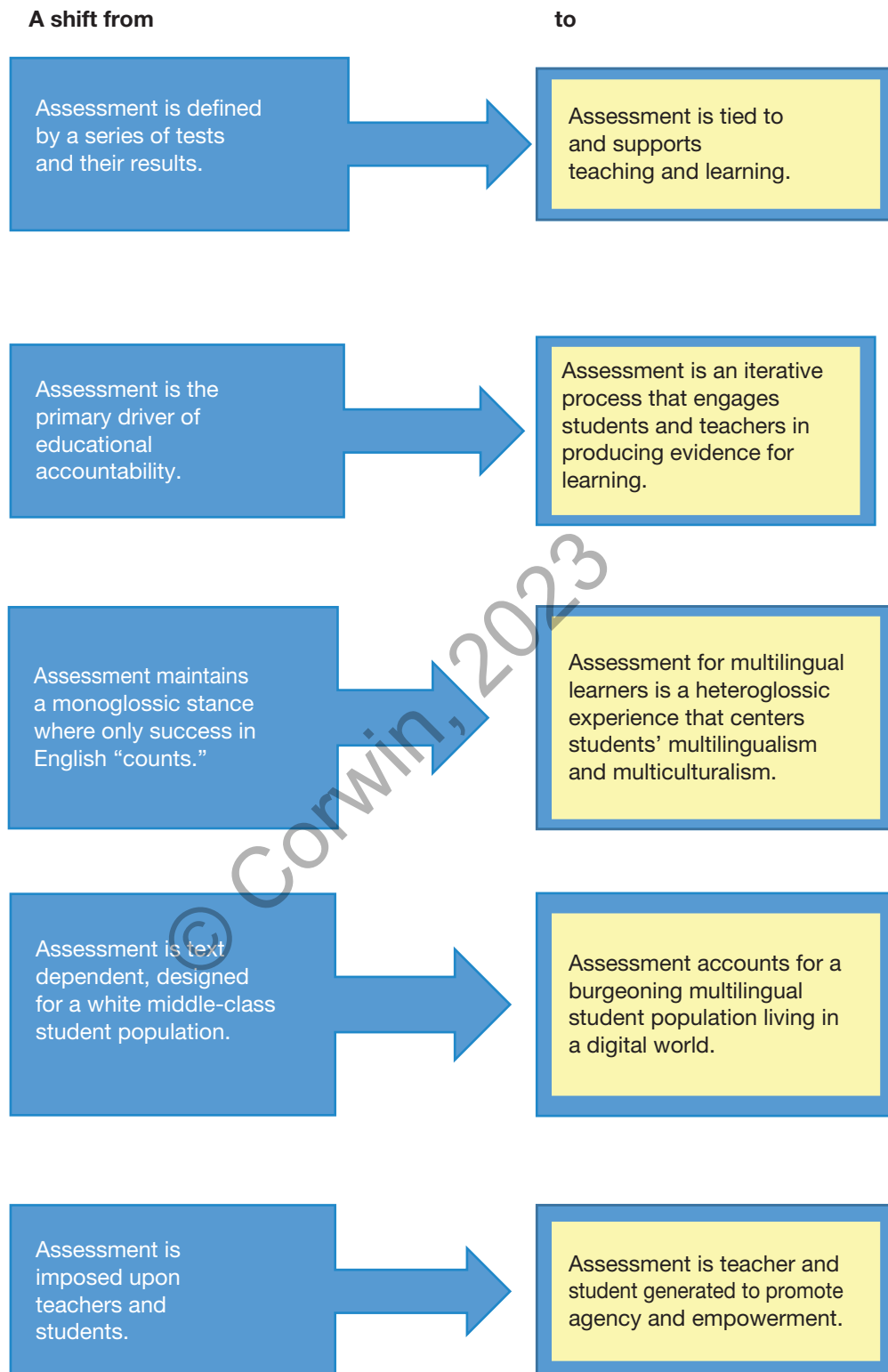
This assessment book contributes to my compendium of Corwin books which illustrates the evolution of my thinking on classroom assessment for multilingual learners over an 18-year span. It reveals a growing awareness of the increasing relevance of information from classroom assessment for multilingual learners in every content area for every teacher, not just in specialized language and language arts classes. It highlights the value of instilling multilingual learners' languages, cultures, experiences, and perspectives within curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessment. It relies on multiliteracies, multimodalities, and multilingualism as viable pathways for students to optimize their access to learning and choice of evidence for learning.

Educators often examine assessment in terms of productivity, as shown, for example, in interim or annual test scores. While this orientation gives us a macro-level account of the extent that multilingual learners meet external language and content expectations (as in accountability), it does not produce a classroom micro-level account of the interaction among students and between students and teachers in everyday activities. Such close-up internally generated information is vital for understanding language and content learning for multilingual learners in local settings (Leung, 2005). Understanding the parameters and constraints of federal and state levels, this book attends, in large part, to assessment *as, for, and of* learning at the school and classroom levels.

SHIFTS IN ASSESSMENT THINKING

Assessing Multilingual Learners explores the possibilities and realities of classroom assessment as a road to empower multilingual learners, their families, and teachers. We suggest activities for multilingual learners to access and use their full linguistic and cultural resources as potential leverage points. In essence, we propose five shifts in how we think about assessment, illustrated in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2 CHANGING ASSESSMENT MINDSETS FOR MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS



In *Assessing Multilingual Learners*, *multiculturalism* refers to “a dynamic system of social values, cognitive codes, worldviews, and beliefs that give meaning to our lives and those of others” (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 2001). *Multilingualism* encompasses the recognition and use of named languages and dialects, and their natural interaction in a variety of contexts. With multilingual learners, we must remember that linguistic and cultural influences mediate or shape the political nature of teaching and learning. It is precisely the talent potential of multilingual learners and their contribution to educational betterment that places them at promise rather than “at risk” (Boykin & Allen, 2002). Embodied in multilingual learners, this 3rd edition unfolds through the ecology of multilingualism and multiculturalism as applied to assessment in K-12 settings.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

The eight chapters draw on concepts and issues important to instruction and assessment in today’s classrooms. Together they send a message that is threaded throughout the book—empowerment leads to recognition and validation of multilingual learners, families, and teachers. Although many of the ideas are generalizable across users, we center multilingual learners, their families, and teachers as the lenses through which we contextualize assessment. Premises, principles, practices, and a host of strategies and tools guide how to conceptualize and enact classroom assessment. The chapters unfold as follows.

Chapter 1

Empowering Multilingual Learners and Their Teachers Through Assessment introduces the process of planning, collecting, interpreting, and using information, the backbone of assessment, to honor student and teacher agency and voice. In summarizing legislation and litigation, we set the stage for defining terms (labels) prevalent in the field of language education and their subsequent policies that have impacted multilingual learners and educators. Focusing on relationship building to foster ownership in teaching and learning, we view assessment—its purposes and its different types—through the eyes of multilingual learners and the persons with whom they interact. Principles for assessing multilingual learners in a classroom setting set up assessment as a linguistic and culturally sustainable process for empowering multilingual learners and their teachers.

Chapter 2

Issues in Assessment for Multilingual Learners addresses eight controversial areas that surround assessment. We first delve into competing theories of language and language learning which are the cornerstone for the other issues. Other topics we touch on include the role of multiple languages during assessment, differing definitions and uses of academic language, use of information for formative/summative purposes, and competing/constraining policies and practices around evidence for learning. These issues are juxtaposed with the influences of content, language, and technology standards on assessment. The chapter also touches on social and emotional learning in instruction and assessment and concludes with ideas for building student and teacher self-efficacy.

Chapter 3

Assessment as, for, and of Learning revolves around a viable model where multilingual learners are the most critical contributors to creating and sustaining a

balanced and equitable information system for schools and districts (Gottlieb, 2016). It acknowledges the interaction of languages and their intersection with students, families, and educators. In doing so, these assessment approaches tap families’ “funds of knowledge” and students’ personal “funds of identity” as foundational for teaching and learning. By nurturing collaboration and relationship building across assessment approaches, this chapter guides educators in formulating a robust, inclusive, and balanced system that promotes student and teacher efficacy and produces sound evidence for learning.

Chapter 4

Multiliteracies, Multimodalities, and Multilingualism in Assessment expands accessibility options for multilingual learners as they engage in instruction and assessment activities, tasks, and projects. In combining oral and written modes with technology—visual, graphic, and kinesthetic ones—multiliteracies allows multilingual learners to comprehend and interpret the world through a variety of perspectives and experiences that are present in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. By building on literacy to encompass multiliteracies, we emphasize how linguistic and cultural sustainability coupled with technological advancement becomes inclusive of multilingual learners and their language practices. In addition, we highlight how multilingual learners’ translanguaging practices help deepen their understanding and creation of meaning while multimodalities, representing principles of Universal Design for Learning, assist in scaffolding learning for multilingual learners and multilingual learners with identified disabilities.

Chapter 5

Connecting Assessment to Curriculum and Instruction recognizes the constraints of prevailing monoglossic language policies that value monolingualism—English—and attempts to shift that thinking by illustrating linguistic and culturally sustainable assessment features and strategies for heteroglossic multilingual student populations. To do so, this chapter presents practical ways of embedding equitable assessment into the (co)planning and delivery of lessons within units of learning. With the overall aim to empower students and teachers, we attempt to show the educational community how to be open to and accepting of linguistic and cultural variability in assessment. In noting the subtle differences among linguistic and cultural sensitivity, relevance, responsiveness, and sustainability, we exemplify multilingualism and multiculturalism. We end the chapter by presenting two curricular models that underscore these concepts and illustrate how integrated learning targets combine content, language, and modes of communication within a sociocultural context to offer a unified vision for learning.

Chapter 6

Dynamic Student Assessment Systems consist of three companion systems that operate at the classroom (micro), school and district (meso), and state (macro) levels to form an overall assessment system. Measures across the system are fortified by robust research, sound principles, and proven practices where students, families, and educators have voice and agency. In student assessment systems, each user group has a distinct and important role and responsibility. For example, while administrators must understand the technical qualities of high-stakes tests, teachers must be agile in giving qualitative feedback to individual

students. We explore different assessment tools and information to ensure linguistic and cultural sustainability for multilingual learners. Sample analytic and holistic rubrics illustrate how to interpret student samples from common, project-based, or performance assessment. At the close of the chapter, we revisit assessment *as, for, and of* learning as an organizing principle and a means for multilingual learners, families, and educators to work together to co-create comprehensive and equitable systems.

Chapter 7

Student Evidence for Learning speaks to ways we capture multilingual learners' growth in conceptual and language development in a variety of contexts. Evidence for learning comes from information from different types of rubrics (e.g., standards-referenced, multimodal, and linguistic and culturally sustainable ones) that serve as tools for interpreting students' original work. In examining these rubrics, we become cognizant of multilingual learners' metacognitive, metalinguistic, and metacultural awareness. In drawing evidence for learning from all types of assessment (i.e., annual, interim, common, and classroom assessment), we gather a full complement of data to form comprehensive portraits of multilingual learners.

Chapter 8

Assessment and Grading Practices takes a critical look at issues surrounding grading traditions and what we might do to evoke more equitable treatment of this mainstay practice for multilingual learners. We propose not to ground grading in numbers and letters but rather sound research-informed language and assessment principles with input from multilingual learners and their teachers. As a means of reforming grading, we suggest student-led conferences and assessment portfolios as viable options. By defending a body of work that meets agreed-upon learning goals, students become owners of their own learning, while teachers and students build trust.

UNIQUE FEATURES IN THIS EDITION

We have listened to you and converted your feedback from prior editions into new features. First and foremost, assets-based language permeates the pages. Each chapter begins with four *premises* that identify the most salient points for discussion and guide its organization. *Classroom assessment tools* illustrate teachers' and multilingual learners' voices. *Portraits of Practice* from educators in the field illustrate authentic assessment practices for multilingual learners that complement vignettes of typical assessment scenarios in schools. *Text boxes* scattered throughout the chapters highlight important concepts.

An opening *photo* to each chapter creates a metaphor for or provokes thinking about some facet of assessment for multilingual learners. At the close of each chapter are topical *References* specific to the content followed by *Resources* for discussion among groups of educators and multilingual learners. LET'S CONNECT, marked by boxes interjected throughout the chapters, personalizes and extends the text's ideas through deep questioning to help educators think through a process, a dilemma, or to challenge the status quo. It is a feature that invites grade-level/department teams, schoolwide professional learning

communities, or district task forces to probe deeply into assessment-related problems of practice.

As a point of clarification, there are expressions used throughout the book that may not have universal applicability. Whenever we mention types of assessment, it applies to standardized forms at state and district levels (annual and interim) and standard/non-standard forms (common and classroom) at school and individual classroom levels. Replacing assessment for formative and summative purposes are three approaches—the model of assessment *as*, *for*, and *of* learning.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

In this edition we have prioritized policies, principles, and practices for educators and multilingual learners over subsets of students or different program types. Although not treated in depth, we acknowledge the following areas of language/bilingual/multilingual education.

- Specialized groups of multilingual learners (e.g., special education students, Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), newcomers, Long-Term English Learners (LTELs), gifted and talented students)
- Low incidence and indigenous languages
- Individual language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- Levels of language proficiency (e.g., as designated by annual standardized language proficiency tests) as a delineation for scaffolding instruction and assessment
- Strategies for specific educational models (dual language, development bilingual, transitional bilingual, English language development, “sheltered” content).

Assessing Multilingual Learners is a guide, not a recipe, to promote educator and student empowerment. It is illustrative, not exhaustive, as it places responsibility for teaching and learning in the hands of multilingual students and their teachers. It fosters, not negates, the agency of educational stakeholders including students and families within local school and community contexts. We hope that this book builds bridges for multilingual learners, their families, and educators to help them navigate the linguistic and cultural waters of assessment. Through equitable linguistic and culturally sustainable assessment practices, we can uphold the values and identities of our multilingual learners in their pursuit of pathways to success.

Personally, I have constructed and crossed many bridges in my long career as a passionate educator and unwavering advocate for multilingual learners. It is my firm conviction that assessment should and can be a positive experience for students and their teachers to make those crossings, too.