

Fostering Bilingualism: A Language Teacher's Journey from Barcelona to Chicago

Francesc Borrull

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1475-8122>

Author's Note

This chapter was originally written for an edited volume on narratives of non-English L2 language teachers. I ultimately chose not to pursue publication in that venue and am sharing the work here to make it publicly available. Rather than presenting empirical findings, this piece offers a narrative, theory-informed account of language teaching across two sociolinguistic contexts—Catalonia and the United States—grounded in lived experience. I share it in the spirit of practitioner scholarship, with the hope that it may resonate with language educators, teacher educators, and scholars interested in bilingualism, language ideology, and teacher identity.

Abstract

This narrative essay traces my journey as a language educator from Barcelona to Chicago, examining how experiences teaching Catalan in a minoritized linguistic context shaped my approach to teaching Spanish in U.S. public schools. Drawing on sociolinguistic theory, bilingual education research, and over twenty years of classroom practice, I reflect on culturally responsive instruction, heritage language development, bilingual program advocacy, and writing-centered pedagogy. The chapter offers a reflective account of teaching across distinct yet parallel language ecologies, highlighting how language ideology, identity, and policy shape classroom practice. By situating personal experience within broader theoretical conversations, this work contributes to practitioner scholarship on bilingualism and aims to engage educators navigating multilingual classrooms in diverse sociopolitical contexts.

Introduction: Language, Identity, and Origins

I was born in Barcelona, Catalonia, when Spain was under a totalitarian regime. My household was bilingual: my father, hailing from Andalucía, spoke Spanish, while my mother, born in Tarragona, spoke Catalan. During Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975), Catalan

—along with other regional languages such as Basque and Galician—was repressed. The use of Catalan in public life, education, and media was banned, and it was discouraged even in private settings. This repression was part of a broader effort to construct a homogeneous Spanish identity centered on Spanish culture and language.

With the death of Franco in 1975, Spain began its transition to democracy, which brought about a gradual relaxation of restrictions on regional languages and cultures. A new Spanish Constitution approved in 1978 recognized Spain as a multilingual country and acknowledged the rights of autonomous communities to use and promote their own languages. In the Statute of Autonomy (1979), Catalan was officially recognized as a co-official language in Catalonia alongside Spanish. This legal recognition marked a significant step in the revitalization of the language. As a result, the 1980s saw the implementation of language policies aimed at restoring the use of Catalan in public life, particularly in the education system, media, and public administration. The reintroduction of Catalan as the primary language of instruction in schools had the most profound impact, serving as a crucial step in ensuring the language's future. As Catalan was revitalized in schools, media, and public administration, increased political autonomy also emerged, and the language became a symbol of Catalan identity and a focal point for regional pride and nationalism.

Despite these revitalization efforts, globalization, demographic shifts, youth language preferences, and ongoing legal and political tensions currently threaten the future of the Catalan language. Even the immersion model in education—which prioritizes Catalan as the language of instruction and was successful in promoting social cohesion—has come under increased scrutiny and legal challenge. Critics argue that it marginalizes Spanish, while supporters view it as essential for sustaining Catalan in a bilingual society.

Catalan has a rich history and deep cultural significance, yet it has faced marginalization and suppression throughout much of its existence. Today, the threats to its future are more pressing than ever. Language policy reform at the national level is urgently needed to ensure its protection and revitalization. International organizations such as PEN International (2011) and

the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000, Articles 21 and 22) recognize language as a fundamental human right, intrinsically linked to identity and cultural expression. For me, safeguarding and promoting the use of Catalan became a personal mission, and teaching the language was my chosen path.

I always wanted to be a teacher, but a pivotal moment arrived in ninth grade when a remarkable Catalan teacher—and later friend—Llorenç Soldevila, kindled my desire to pursue a career in education. His inspiring pedagogy, combined with my growing awareness of Catalan's sociolinguistic vulnerability as a minority language under constant pressure, solidified my commitment to becoming a champion for its preservation and revitalization. After three fulfilling years teaching Catalan to high school students in Barcelona, I yearned for a new adventure. A friend teaching in San Francisco told me about a Visitor's Teacher Program, and I decided to apply. Soon after, I was packing my bags for Chicago, a city that would become a pivotal chapter in my life.

This unexpected opportunity marked the beginning of a twenty-year career in Chicago Public Schools, the third-largest school district in the United States. There, I taught Spanish in three different neighborhood schools to a diverse student population across grades 9–12 and multiple programs, including general education, bilingual education, heritage learner courses, dual-credit offerings, AP, and IB. While student motivations varied widely, my core goal remained steadfast: to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment that fostered social, emotional, and academic growth.

Although my path to teaching Spanish in the United States was undeniably serendipitous, I soon realized that the core values forged during my years teaching Catalan remained central to my approach. The parallels between Catalan's marginalized status in Spain and the position of Spanish in the United States were striking. In many ways, I had moved from one linguistic minority context to another. At the same time, the broader cultural and educational landscape of the United States presented a distinct set of opportunities and challenges. This convergence of experiences has shaped my teaching philosophy and continues to inform my practice today.

Teaching Context: From Catalonia to Chicago

In Chicago, I learned a great deal about differentiated instruction and how to serve the individual needs of every student effectively. In addition to legal mandates associated with learning disabilities (IEPs and 504 plans), I made a sustained effort to know my students as individuals so I could tailor instruction that was both compelling and relevant. One guiding principle in my planning and delivery of instruction was the connection between academic content and the real world. Student motivation is difficult to sustain unless learners perceive value in what they are studying and can connect classroom learning to their lives beyond school.

This emphasis came naturally to me because communication has always been one of the most fundamental human skills. By learning to read, write, and speak another language, students were not simply acquiring grammatical structures; they were accessing the world through a language other than English. This perspective made learning Spanish both compelling and meaningful. Through content-based instruction, we were able to engage with an unlimited range of topics simply by shifting the language of access from English to Spanish.

In Chicago, I also continuously adapted instructional materials in response to curriculum demands and textbook availability. In 2010, our district adopted a standards-based approach, prompting close collaboration with colleagues to develop thematic units, instructional resources, and assessments for the courses I taught. This collaboration occurred at multiple levels: within individual schools, across the district, and throughout the metropolitan area with world language teachers from neighboring districts.

In the United States, where monolingualism largely prevails and foreign language learning remains limited, Spanish faces unique challenges rooted in sociolinguistic misconceptions. Unlike the multilingual landscape common in many parts of Europe, the American “melting pot” ideology often equates language acquisition with assimilation, marginalizing languages other than English. This mindset contributes to insufficient language programs and to the perception of immigrant languages as barriers to integration.

As a Spanish teacher in Chicago Public Schools, I actively worked to counter these views by advocating for and implementing bilingual programs. By recognizing the value of both Spanish and English, we empowered students to develop academic proficiency in both languages. One notable success was our school's participation in piloting the Seal of Biliteracy program at the city and state levels. This initiative led to several graduates accessing significant academic opportunities, including a full-ride scholarship to Harvard Law School. Such outcomes illustrate the tangible academic benefits of bilingualism.

Spanish also carries particular stigma in the United States due to its association with immigration and persistent negative stereotypes. These prejudices often surface in classroom contexts and can affect students' self-esteem and perceptions of the language. To counter this, I consistently promoted Spanish as a language embedded in rich, diverse cultures and global communities, fostering student pride and challenging deficit-based narratives.

Recognizing the linguistic diversity among my students, I emphasized that although my own Spanish dialect originated on the Iberian Peninsula, the language includes a wide range of equally legitimate regional varieties. I was often disheartened to hear students or families suggest that my Spanish was somehow "superior" to their own. In response, I consistently affirmed the validity of all Spanish dialects, underscoring that each variation is correct, valuable, and worthy of respect.

Pedagogical Foundations and Classroom Practice

My teaching is grounded in a sociocultural approach that fosters a dynamic classroom where meaningful interaction thrives. Learners engage in rich conversations through comprehensible input while drawing on social, linguistic, and cognitive tools to construct meaning. Collaboration plays a central role as students negotiate meaning, share perspectives, and engage in purposeful tasks that mirror real-life communicative contexts. This student-centered approach aligns closely with the national standards for world language instruction established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which

emphasize six core practices, including teaching grammar as a concept and using it in context (ACTFL, 2006).

Building on this foundation, the ACTFL-aligned High-Leverage Teaching Practices (HLTPs) (Glisan & Donato, 2017, 2021) further foreground instructional strategies directly related to writing proficiency, particularly guiding learners to interpret and discuss authentic texts (HLTP #3) and engaging learners in purposeful written communication (HLTP #9). Integrating these practices into my instruction proved especially effective in bridging the gap between social and academic language proficiency for heritage learners.

One of the most critical instructional challenges I encountered involved teaching grammar conceptually and demonstrating its application in meaningful contexts. My experience working with heritage learners revealed a pronounced gap between their social fluency and their academic command of Spanish (Cummins, 1980). While many students communicated confidently in informal settings, they often lacked the linguistic tools necessary to use Spanish effectively for academic purposes. Addressing this gap made the integration of academic writing an essential component of my instruction.

In one school, a school-wide initiative known as Writing to Learn provided a valuable instructional framework. This approach conceptualizes writing as a tool for learning rather than merely a product of learning (Brandl, 2008, p. 372). Writing supported deeper linguistic processing and reinforced the development of reading, listening, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary skills. Beyond linguistic growth, writing also contributed to students' cognitive development by fostering idea generation and promoting critical thinking through the organization of complex thought processes (Brandl, 2008).

To implement this framework, I adopted a genre-based pedagogical approach informed by Brandl's (2008) research. This approach recognizes that written communication is situated within specific social and cultural contexts. Instruction was anchored in the analysis and discussion of authentic texts representing six prototypical genres central to language development: recounts, instructions, narratives, information reports, explanations, and

arguments. Students engaged weekly with diverse written media from the Spanish-speaking world. Initially working in small groups and later independently, they completed writing tasks that mirrored authentic genres, including letters to the editor, emails, opinion columns, argumentative essays, news reports, and other real-world texts.

A key strength of this genre-based approach is its holistic view of language learning, in contrast to traditional methods that emphasize isolated sentences and decontextualized grammar drills. The focus shifts toward meaning-making and achieving communicative purposes through whole texts. Teaching grammar through authentic texts exposes students to language as it is used by real speakers for real audiences, prioritizing authentic communication over rote exercises and the memorization of discrete grammar points. Grammar instruction thus provides students with the building blocks necessary to consolidate knowledge and express ideas, opinions, and emotions with increasing precision. In this way, grammar is experienced “in action” within meaningful communicative contexts.

This instructional orientation also aligns with Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), which emphasizes the importance of a low affective filter for successful language acquisition. By fostering a supportive, student-centered learning environment centered on real-world communication, the genre-based approach helps reduce anxiety, encourages risk-taking, and ultimately enhances language development.

Lessons following this approach typically progressed through four stages, as outlined by Glisan and Donato (2021): (1) setting the context and building knowledge of the topic, (2) deconstructing texts to identify genre-specific features, (3) jointly constructing a text with the class, and (4) supporting students’ independent writing. This instructional sequence aligns closely with the concept of focus on form (Brandl, 2008), which emphasizes the integration of grammatical form and communicative meaning. Unlike traditional approaches that emphasize isolated grammar drills (“focus on formS”), this method embeds grammatical instruction within meaningful contexts and communicative tasks.

During the final five years of my tenure with Chicago Public Schools, I taught Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish courses, where writing played a central role. The College Board curriculum for Spanish Language and Culture and Spanish Literature and Culture emphasizes writing tasks such as responding to emails, crafting argumentative essays based on multiple sources (articles, infographics, and audio texts), and conducting literary analysis. In AP Literature, students engaged in increasingly sophisticated reading and writing practices, including textual analysis, interpretation, and comparison across literary and non-literary texts, as well as analysis of relationships between texts and artistic representations.

Student mastery of these skills culminated in the year-end AP examination, which included writing tasks such as single-text analysis, comparative essays, and short-answer responses requiring textual explanation and text–art analysis. Exams are scored on a scale from 1 to 5, with scores of 3 or higher indicating passing performance. While outcomes varied, one particularly notable success involved a student who earned a perfect score of 5 on the AP Spanish Literature and Culture exam and later received a full scholarship to Harvard Law School. This achievement reflects not only the effectiveness of sustained, writing-centered Spanish instruction but also the academic potential cultivated within a Chicago neighborhood school.

Navigating Linguistic Diversity in Urban Classrooms

As a Spanish teacher in Chicago, I encountered challenges common to many educators, as well as obstacles unique to language instruction within a predominantly English-speaking environment. My classroom reflected the city’s remarkable diversity, bringing together students from a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Among them were native Spanish speakers, English Language Learners (ELLs) from multiple linguistic backgrounds, and students with little to no prior exposure to Spanish.

One persistent challenge was the pressure to prioritize English language development, particularly for students who were still acquiring English proficiency. These students often found themselves navigating the dual demands of learning academic content while developing

proficiency in a new language. For native Spanish speakers, this tension was especially acute, as efforts to strengthen English skills sometimes came at the expense of maintaining and developing Spanish literacy. I frequently navigated the delicate balance between reinforcing Spanish academic language while ensuring students continued to make meaningful progress in English—an essential requirement within an English-dominant school system.

For non-native Spanish speakers, the challenge took a different form. These students were learning Spanish in an environment where English dominated not only outside the classroom, but often within it as well. Creating an immersive Spanish-language experience while acknowledging students' limited exposure beyond school required intentional, engaging instructional strategies. At the same time, I needed to address wide variations in proficiency levels, ensuring that advanced learners were challenged while providing appropriate scaffolding for beginners.

Taken together, this complex linguistic landscape demanded a nuanced approach—one that fostered Spanish fluency while honoring the diverse linguistic needs of all students. Meeting this challenge required both careful instructional design and a deep awareness of the sociolinguistic dynamics shaping language learning in a multicultural urban context like Chicago.

Another significant challenge involved limited access to native-speaking teachers, which affected students' exposure to authentic pronunciation, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuance. Without consistent interaction with native speakers, students risked missing opportunities to develop natural intonation patterns and deeper cultural understanding—both essential for effective communication. To address this gap, I adopted a multifaceted approach that emphasized collaboration, technology, and community engagement.

I worked closely with colleagues who possessed strong Spanish proficiency or cultural ties to Spanish-speaking countries to share instructional strategies and resources. Together, we organized activities such as cultural fairs and language workshops that created opportunities for students to engage with Spanish in more dynamic and authentic ways. Technology also became

an invaluable tool. I incorporated video and audio materials featuring native speakers, as well as interactive platforms that allowed students to practice listening and speaking with Spanish speakers from around the world. Virtual exchange programs—including pen-pal initiatives and live video conversations—enabled students to use Spanish in real time while building relationships across cultures.

Student diversity presented further complexity, particularly among heritage learners. Many brought personal and familial connections to Spanish, yet their proficiency levels and literacy skills varied widely. Some were fluent conversationally but lacked formal academic language, while others had limited exposure to Spanish despite cultural ties. Non-heritage learners, by contrast, often approached Spanish with different motivations, such as academic advancement or personal curiosity.

To meet these varied needs, I relied on differentiated instruction tailored to students' proficiency levels, backgrounds, and interests. For heritage learners, I incorporated culturally relevant materials—literature, music, and historical texts—that resonated with their lived experiences. For non-heritage learners, I selected materials designed to spark curiosity and foster appreciation for the language and its cultures. By supporting individualized learning pathways, I aimed to create an inclusive classroom environment where all students could develop a sense of ownership over their learning.

Resource limitations posed an additional challenge. Budget constraints often restricted access to high-quality instructional materials, making it difficult to create immersive learning environments through traditional textbooks alone. In response, I leveraged technology, community partnerships, and creative lesson design to extend learning beyond the textbook. Multimedia resources, virtual tours, and Spanish-language media such as news broadcasts, podcasts, and music videos enriched classroom instruction and provided students with authentic linguistic input.

Community partnerships further strengthened these efforts. Collaborations with local cultural centers, consulates, and businesses enabled students to experience Spanish in real-world

contexts through field trips, guest speakers, and cultural events. Whether attending a Spanish-language play, participating in a cooking class, or engaging in a Q&A session with a native speaker, students gained firsthand exposure that bridged classroom learning and authentic language use.

Creative lesson planning also played a central role. I designed lessons that engaged multiple learning modalities—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—to support diverse learners. Role-playing activities allowed students to simulate real-life scenarios such as ordering food in a restaurant or navigating a market abroad, reinforcing language structures while building confidence. Project-based learning further encouraged students to explore areas of personal interest, from researching Spanish-speaking countries to creating multimedia cultural presentations or bilingual storybooks.

While navigating these challenges was demanding, witnessing student growth made the effort deeply rewarding. One of the most fulfilling experiences involved helping students overcome initial hesitation and develop confidence as Spanish speakers. Many began the year reluctant to speak, concerned about making mistakes or speaking in front of peers.

Collaborative projects and culturally immersive activities helped students move beyond these barriers. Group work fostered mutual support and normalized risk-taking, allowing students to recognize that their peers shared similar challenges. Over time, confidence grew organically.

A particularly powerful example emerged during preparations for Día de los Muertos presentations. Students researched the cultural significance of the tradition and connected it to personal or family experiences. What began as tentative participation evolved into passionate expression. Students who once avoided speaking became confident presenters, sharing family stories, explaining cultural practices, and incorporating creative elements such as artwork, music, and handmade altars. Their presentations reflected genuine pride and connection to language and culture.

These moments reaffirmed the transformative power of culturally responsive teaching and the importance of classrooms that encourage personal expression. Watching students find their voices reminded me why I became a teacher: to empower young people to communicate with confidence, both inside and beyond the classroom.

Another significant success was the development and implementation of our school's bilingual program, an initiative in which I was deeply involved from its inception. Designed to promote balanced bilingualism and biculturalism, the program created an environment where Spanish and English were valued equally. Students developed high levels of proficiency in both languages while gaining deep cultural understanding.

Program outcomes were evident. Graduates consistently exceeded district averages in Spanish proficiency, excelling in both written and oral communication. Beyond language skills, students demonstrated strong critical thinking abilities, particularly in navigating multicultural contexts. Daily engagement with two languages fostered perspective-taking and analytical skills essential in an interconnected world.

Cross-cultural communication emerged as another strength. Through integrated cultural, historical, and literary study, students developed empathy and global awareness. Multidisciplinary instruction helped students connect language learning with broader social and historical contexts, reinforcing linguistic development while deepening cultural understanding.

The program's success extended beyond academic outcomes. Increased enrollment in Spanish courses—particularly Advanced Placement Culture and Literature—reflected growing student interest and the positive learning environment we cultivated. This growth affirmed the value students placed on bilingualism and sustained language study.

Looking back, I recognize areas where I initially lacked preparation, particularly in teaching heritage learners and managing wide proficiency ranges. Through coursework and ongoing professional development, I addressed these gaps and refined my instructional approach. I also became acutely aware of the importance of accurate student placement. Too often, heritage learners are misplaced in courses designed for non-native speakers, limiting their academic

growth. Comprehensive placement assessments, conducted prior to the school year, are essential. Understanding students' linguistic profiles allowed me to implement differentiated strategies that provided appropriate scaffolding and individualized support.

Professional Learning and Teacher Growth

Throughout my career, I actively sought diverse professional development opportunities to strengthen my practice as an educator. Early on, participation in the Chicago Public Schools induction program provided a solid foundation. Over time, I gained valuable insights from professional development workshops such as Using Technology to Foster Authentic Communication in Spanish and Engaging Heritage Learners in the Spanish Classroom. These experiences equipped me with practical strategies, including the integration of virtual exchange programs and culturally relevant multimedia, which enhanced student engagement and language acquisition.

The most impactful professional development experience of my twenty years teaching in Chicago, however, was achieving National Board Certification. This rigorous process sharpened my instructional practices, deepened my understanding of curriculum design and assessment, and significantly expanded my instructional repertoire. Most importantly, it fostered a sustained commitment to continuous improvement as a reflective practitioner. This work also extended beyond my own classroom. I served on the national committee responsible for revising the first edition and co-authoring the second edition of the World Languages Standards, collaborating with educators from across the country through sustained work sessions convened by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Participating in this process deepened my understanding of standards-based instruction at a national level and reinforced the importance of aligning classroom practice, assessment, and policy in meaningful and equitable ways.

My professional growth also unfolded through sustained engagement with academic scholarship. After relocating to the United States at a moment when I was preparing to complete my doctoral dissertation, I initially set aside that goal in order to focus on full-time teaching in Chicago Public Schools. Years later, I returned to doctoral study, conducting research over a

three-year period and completing a PhD in applied linguistics and translation in 2015 while continuing to teach full time at the high school level. This experience deepened my engagement with research, sociolinguistics, and bilingual education, strengthening the theoretical foundations that informed my classroom practice.

Alongside my work in K–12 education, I taught at the university level, serving as an adjunct faculty member at North Park University, where I taught courses in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and the foundations of ESL and bilingual education. During this time, I helped establish a cohort model for Chicago Public Schools teachers seeking ESL and bilingual endorsements, teaching three of the five coursework classes required by the Illinois State Board of Education. I also taught a course on the history of bilingual education in the United States at DePaul University, an experience that significantly expanded my understanding of the historical, political, and sociolinguistic forces shaping bilingual education policy, immigration discourse, and language ideology in the U.S. context.

This work at the intersection of K–12 teaching and higher education directly informed my leadership within schools. As my expertise in bilingual education deepened, I was asked to coordinate the bilingual and dual language programs at my school, including oversight of curriculum, assessment, and the implementation of the Seal of Biliteracy. Importantly, I carried out this work while continuing to teach full time in the classroom. Remaining embedded in daily instructional practice allowed me to apply research-based principles in real time at a programmatic level, supporting both student achievement and teacher development while staying closely connected to students' lived classroom experiences.

In 2021, my professional trajectory culminated in my appointment as Interim Director of the World Languages Teacher Education Program at Illinois State University. In this role, I worked with preservice teachers, faculty, and institutional partners to support the preparation of future world language educators. This position represented a convergence of my experiences as a classroom teacher, scholar, mentor, and program leader, and it reaffirmed my long-standing commitment to excellence in language education across educational contexts.

A strong professional support network has been essential throughout this journey. I have been an active member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the Illinois Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and I served for several years on the Chicago chapter board of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. In addition, the National Board Certification process connected me with a broad national network of world language educators. As part of the Chicago Public Schools National Board support initiative—developed in collaboration with the Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Public Schools—I served as a coach and mentor for world language teachers pursuing National Board Certification. In this role, I worked closely with candidates through sustained, weekly mentoring over the course of one to two years, supporting their instructional growth, reflective practice, and successful completion of the certification process. Professional growth, I have come to understand, is inherently collaborative, and sustained participation in professional learning communities remains vital for educators committed to reflective, equitable, and evolving practice.

Conclusion: Reflections on Language, Advocacy, and Belonging

My journey as a language educator has been transformative, shaped by both personal and professional growth. From my roots in Barcelona to my years teaching in Chicago, I have witnessed the profound influence language exerts on individuals and societies. Teaching Spanish in a diverse urban context allowed me to engage deeply with the complexities of language learning, pedagogy, and policy.

Grounding my practice in sociolinguistics, I sought to challenge persistent misconceptions about Spanish and to empower students to embrace their linguistic identities. Research by García (2009) and Rosa (2019) underscores the importance of addressing sociolinguistic dimensions in language education, and my experiences in the classroom closely align with these perspectives. Through culturally responsive instruction, bilingual program development, and sustained advocacy for equitable language policies, I worked to create learning environments that were both inclusive and empowering.

The rewards of witnessing students' linguistic and personal growth have been deeply meaningful. One particularly memorable moment involved a student who earned a perfect score on the AP Spanish Literature and Culture exam and later received a full scholarship to Harvard Law School. Such achievements illustrate not only individual academic success, but also the broader transformative potential of language education when students' identities and linguistic resources are valued.

As I reflect on my career, I feel profound gratitude for the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute positively to the lives of my students. By sharing these experiences and reflections, I hope to encourage future language educators to engage thoughtfully with the challenges and rewards of the profession. Language education, at its best, affirms identity, fosters belonging, and opens pathways to opportunity.

Ultimately, it is through collective effort that we can ensure language functions as a bridge rather than a barrier. By grounding teaching in sociolinguistic research, embracing innovative pedagogical approaches, and advocating for equitable language policies, educators can empower students to become not only proficient language users, but also critical thinkers and globally engaged citizens. As we look to the future, sustained commitment to multilingualism and intercultural understanding remains essential.

Reference List

Brandl, K. (2008). *Communicative language teaching in action: Putting principles to work* (2nd ed.). Cognella.

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. (2000). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/texten.pdf>

Cummins, J. (1980). The cross-lingual dimensions of language proficiency: Implications for bilingual education and the optimal age issue. *TESOL Quarterly*, 14(2), 175–187. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586312>

Cummins, J. (1981). Empirical and theoretical underpinnings of bilingual education. *Journal of Education*, 163(1), 16–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002205748116300104>

García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century: A global perspective*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2017). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices* (Vol. 1). American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Glisan, E. W., & Donato, R. (2020). *Enacting the work of language instruction: High-leverage teaching practices* (Vol. 2). American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2010). *World languages standards* (2nd ed.). National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

PEN International. (2001). *Girona manifesto on linguistic rights*. <https://pen-international.org/girona-manifesto>

Rosa, J. (2019). *Looking like a language, sounding like a race: Raciolinguistic ideologies and the learning of Latinidad*. Oxford University Press.

Revised: January 2026