

Moving Forward

Ten Guiding Principles for Teachers

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The diverse cases in this book place educators at the epicenter of the dynamic process of language policymaking, highlighting how they time and again act upon their agency to change the various language education policies they must translate into practice. We have seen how educators “stir the onion” by creating ideological and implementational spaces for multilingualism within their own practices, even in highly centralized contexts and educational systems that assert great control over educators and their languaging. We have also seen how educators can close off those spaces. At times educators’ sense-making is directed by their prior experiences or personal identity, as individual cognitive forces shape their interpretations and enactment of language policies. At other times, it is instead external or situational forces that motivate educators’ decisions and the policies they ultimately enact. As we have stated, variations in policy implementation are not a problem that should be avoided, particularly when policies hold the potential to marginalize language minorities. Instead, we simply need to gain deeper understandings of this variation to help educators negotiate this complex terrain when faced with their own policy decisions and to help policymakers who are working from outside of classrooms create policies that assume and allow for such variances.

In this final chapter, which reflects just the actual beginning, we speak to you who are educators—particularly teachers—and are faced with language policy negotiation, recreation, and implementation as policymakers in your own right. We draw upon the lessons learned in this book to offer you a set of principles to help you make sense of this complex terrain, to see yourselves as policymakers, and to act upon the agency and power that you have. As these principles reflect, we feel it is first necessary for you to turn inward before you can act outwardly. Thus, these principles focus on you as they spiral their way through the layers of the onion.

Ten Guiding Principles for Teachers

- 1 Understand your own sociolinguistic profile and language practices. Conduct a self-reflection by answering the following questions:
 - How many languages do you understand? Speak? Read? Write? Sign? How well? How did you develop these ways of languaging?

- How would you describe your languaging at home? With different people?
 - How would you describe your languaging in social situations?
 - How would you describe your languaging in professional situations?
 - How would you describe your languaging in your classroom as a teacher?
- 2 Know the sociolinguistic profile and practices of the students in your classroom, school community, students’ families, and the community surrounding the school. By closely observing the activity of the classroom, school, families, and community, as well as conducting a sociolinguistic survey of the classroom, school and community actors, answer the following questions:
 - What are the sociolinguistic practices of your students in classrooms?
 - How do students language in classrooms? In what varieties? For what purposes? In what media? When and where?
 - How do students language in the playground and cafeteria? In what varieties? For what purposes? In what media? When and where?
 - What are the differences in languaging among students of different ethnicities? Genders? Socioeconomic class?
 - What are the differences in languaging among individual students?
 - How well do students language in different varieties and domains or contexts?
 - In what ways are students encouraged or discouraged to language in your classroom in the ways that they language outside of school?
 - What are the sociolinguistic practices of the school community?
 - How do members of the school community, other than students, language? For example, how do principals and administrators, clerical staff, maintenance and cafeteria staff, support personnel, and others language? In what varieties? For what purposes? In what media? When and where? What, if any, are the differences between actors in their languaging, and what might be their motivations?
 - To what extent do actors in the school community language in different varieties and do they do it well?
 - What are the sociolinguistic practices of the families of the students?
 - What are the languaging activities and varieties of the parents of students? Of their younger and older siblings? Of their grandparents and extended families?
 - How do students language at home? In what varieties? When? Where? For what? With whom?
 - What are the differences between the students’ languaging with parents and with their older and/or younger siblings? With their grandparents and extended families?
 - How well do family members language in different varieties?
 - How well do students language within the family in different varieties?
 - What are the sociolinguistic practices of the community?
 - What languaging is heard or read around the block of the school? In other words, what is the linguistic landscape around the block? How

- are people languaging in the street? In nearby stores and institutions? What are the languages and language varieties used in signs and billboards? What are the messages communicated in the different languages? Are different languages relegated to more official use in signs? Reflect on the reasons for the community's languaging.
- What languaging takes place in the larger community from which most students come? What languages are used in the larger stores and in important institutions? What languages are commonly heard in the street? What are the languages and language varieties used in signs and billboards? What are the messages communicated in the different languages? Are different languages relegated to more official use in signs? Reflect on the reasons for the languaging used in the community.

3 **Know the societal language management policy.** Obtain information from the internet or other sources that would enable you to answer, with detail, the following:

- Do you live in a society that has an overt policy for language education? If so, what is it? Who determined the policy? Were all key stakeholders involved? Is it a national policy? If not, at what level has it been mandated? How do you feel about it?
- If there is an overt language education policy, how is it being implemented? When? By whom? Are there sufficient resources and support for it? What kind of teacher education or professional development plan has been instituted? Is it being supported by authoritative bodies? If so, what is their role? Are these bodies functioning at a national, supranational or sub-national level?
- Are there other mechanisms, other than overt policies, through which language policies are being encouraged? What are they? What are the *de facto* policies they create in schools? How do you feel about these?
- Is there ideological and implementation space for multilingualism in the policies?
- How well do these policies match the sociolinguistic profile and practices of your students, school staff, families, and community, as well as your own?

4 **Know the school's language education policy.** Reflect on your school language policy and then answer the following questions (if you're a new teacher, go through the school archives and/or speak with veteran teachers to learn about the policy):

- Does your school have an explicit language education policy? If so, what is it? How was it developed? Who participated? Was it a rigorously democratic venture in which all participated? Were there meetings with students, staff, parents, and community? Do all school stakeholders believe in, support, and act upon the policy?

- Does your school have an implicit language education policy? If so, what is it? How was it developed? What mechanisms are in place to support it? Do all school stakeholders believe in, support, and act upon the policy?
- Do all educators in your school interpret and implement the policy in the same way?
- What was the motivation for the policy? Was the motivation educational or otherwise?
- Has the policy been tested and adjusted over time? If so, what adjustments have been made? Why? How have these adjustments been made?
- What other educational policies must your school negotiate that impact language education? Do these support or undermine your school's language education policies?
- What other daily practices occur in school that can be considered mechanisms of language education policies? Are they hidden or overt? Do they support positive social change?

5 **Understand your beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations.** Conduct a self-reflection by answering the following questions:

- What are your beliefs about a standard language and/or other varieties?
- How would you describe your language identity? Are you and your students linguistically similar or different?
- What are your attitudes toward bilingualism? Do you believe there are cognitive consequences, and what might those be? Are there social consequences, and what might those be? If you had children, would you want your children to be bilingual or monolingual? Why?
- Do you hold any stereotypes of children who are linguistically different? Can you describe instances of linguicism you have witnessed?
- What are your beliefs about translanguaging in bilingual communities?
- What are your beliefs about translanguaging as a pedagogical tool?

6 **Understand the beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations of others.** Reflect on all of the information that you have gathered and answer the following questions:

- What are the attitudes of the school administration, the teaching and nonteaching staff, parents and families, and the community toward the present language education policy (or policies) that are being followed in the school? How does each of these stakeholders differ regarding the importance of the policy and its implementation?
- Is there a difference between those who favor the policy and those who oppose it? What might be the motivation for those differences?

7 **Know the staffing, organization, and leadership structure in your school.** Interview principals and teachers if necessary to make sure you can answer the following questions:

- How are classrooms in your school staffed? Is this adequate to meet the goals of the school's language policy and otherwise support effective language instruction?
- Is the leadership style in the school collaborative? For example, do teachers work together toward certain language goals?
- Are there shared values among the staff and is there an ethos of caring?
- Is the discourse used among the staff one of respect, collaboration, and inclusion of language differences? Are all staff members given a voice in school decisions that affect them?
- How is the relationship between school staff, parents, and community members?

8 **Understand how the curriculum and pedagogy are interrelated with language education policies, and the ways that you act as a policymaker in your school or classroom.** Read the sources in the bibliography and then reflect on what you know about the effect of your own curriculum and your pedagogy on social life.

- In what ways do you interpret the different language policies you negotiate in your classroom, and how do you implement them? In the process, how do you act as a policymaker?
- In what ways is the curriculum inclusive or exclusive of linguistic and cultural diversity? Does it convey the worldview of your students, their families, and their community?
- How do you plan for different ways of languaging to be allocated in the curriculum?
- Do you allow translanguaging in your classroom? Why or why not? When? And with what effects?
- What are the languaging arrangements that you make in your classroom to include different language practices? What are its effects?
- What are the strategies you use in teaching and how does this relate to students whose language practices are different?
- Do you scaffold instruction linguistically? Do you contextualize? Model? Bridge? Plan for multiple entry points? Use different grouping strategies that ensure each student has a voice?
- Do you plan curriculum and language objectives concurrently? Why or why not?
- Is biliteracy an important goal of your curriculum? If so, how do you develop it and sequence instruction? What pedagogies do you use to address this development? What other societal concerns do you have to keep in mind in order to implement literacy education policies?

9 **Understand how ways of assessing students are interrelated with language education policies.** Read the sources in the bibliography then reflect on what you know about the effect of your own assessment policies and practices on social life.

- What assessments are used in your school? What are the purposes of each assessment? Does the assessment match the purposes for which it was intended?
- Which assessments being used are high-stake tests imposed by educational authorities? What decisions are being made on the results? Does the test serve a gatekeeping function?
- Which assessments being used are formative assessments conducted by you? In what ways do they support your teaching and your students' growth?
- What language and cultural matters need to be kept in mind when developing assessments?
- What effects do different kinds of assessments have on you and your students, and what relationship do they have to language policy? Do the assessments have a positive or negative overall impact on your instruction and on your students' educational experiences? How do the assessments improve schooling for your students, if at all?

10 **Remain critical and aware of language education policies.** Understand the effects of language education policies on social justice and issues of inequality among linguistic groups and your own power as a policymaker.

- What are the effects of the present language education policy, as you enact it in your classroom, on equality among students? How is their languaging represented and included in your language education policy? In what ways have you as a policymaker carved our implementational spaces for multilingualism and multiculturalism in your classroom?
- Is your role in constructing language education policy acknowledged?
- What would you have to do to equitably build on, and use, the languaging resources of your students? Your school? Families and the community?
- How can you advocate for language education policies that are sound for your own students, and your school community?

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