INTRODUCTION

In the last two decades, we have developed a substantial, although incomplete, body of knowledge about what teachers need to know and be able to do, to build on and/or develop many languages and literacies present in twenty-first century classrooms and communities. Less understood, however, is how to educate teachers in ways that ensure not only the acquisition of those understandings, but also the teachers’ enactment of those understandings in their teaching, as well as the relationship that this kind of teaching holds for their children’s learning. This chapter starts out by describing different kinds of language awareness that are necessary in diverse schools, specifically focusing on what we call multilingual awareness (MLA) for today’s multilingual schools. The chapter focuses on the pedagogy of MLA that must be the core of ALL teachers education programs. Although the discussion that follows is relevant for the entire world, we focus here on North America and Europe.

EARLY DEVELOPMENTS: LANGUAGE AWARENESS AND AWARENESS OF LANGUAGE

Since the publication of Bolitho and Tomlinson’s Discover English: A Language Awareness Workbook in 1980, the term “language awareness” has been increasingly used in the language teaching field, especially as a result of the burgeoning of the TESOL profession. Generally, language awareness (LA) or knowledge about language (KAL) in teaching is used to encompass three understandings: about language, its teaching, and its learning (Andrews, 1999, 2001; Wright, 2002; Wright and Bolitho, 1993, 1997; building on the roles described by Edge, 1988):

1. Knowledge of language (proficiency). (The language user)
   Includes ability to use language appropriately in many situations; awareness of social and pragmatic norms.

2. Knowledge about language (subject–matter knowledge). (The language analyst)
   Includes forms and functions of systems—grammar, phonology, vocabulary.
3. **Pedagogical practice. (The language teacher)**

Includes creating language learning opportunities; classroom interaction.

The Association for Language Awareness (ALA) defines language awareness as “explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use” (ALA home page). Its journal *Language Awareness*, published since 1992, states its goal as the study of, the role of explicit KAL in the process of language learning; the role that such explicit KAL plays in language teaching and how such knowledge can best be mediated by teachers; the role of explicit KAL in language use: e.g., sensitivity to bias in language, manipulative aspects of language, literary use of language, etc.

Wright (2002) distinguishes two roles for language awareness:

1. As a goal of teacher education, it develops the teachers’ sensitivity to language, what Wright calls their “linguistic radar.”
2. As a method, a task or activity type, students work with authentic language data.

Language awareness has been mostly used for teachers of second languages (most especially ESL teachers), as well as teachers of foreign and modern languages. The focus has been on the target language, that is, the language the teacher was trying to teach in the classroom, with little understandings of the students’ language, except as it “interfered” with the language being taught. The understandings that these teachers must have in these classrooms can be rendered as in Table 1; that is, the

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*Note: Because I am writing from a multilingual perspective, I will not refer to an L1 or L2 because these are inaccurate concepts from the perspective of multilingual communities, or to target language because a multilingual education has multiple target languages as objects of attention. Instead I refer to Language #1 and Language #2/3, etc. pointing to the language which is the object of attention of the teacher.*
teacher must have knowledge of and knowledge about the language she is teaching, as well as knowledge of pedagogical practice. The teacher does not need to have any knowledge of or knowledge about the “other” language, or of bilingualism, or of understandings of social struggles. She is simply a language teacher.

In his classic book, *Awareness of Language*, Eric Hawkins (1984) describes “awareness of language” as a way of bridging all aspects of language education (native language/foreign language/second language/ethnic minority language/classical language) that presently takes place in isolation. Although language focused, Hawkins interest is not on teaching languages per se, but in promoting questioning about language to develop linguistic understandings and challenge linguistic prejudices (see also Cots, Knowledge about Language in the Mother Tongue and Foreign Language Curricula, Volume 6; Van Essen, Language Awareness and Knowledge about Language: A Historical Overview, Volume 6). Hawkins proposes a series of topics for such a curriculum, one for all teachers, and not just language teachers: (1) human language and signals, signs and symbols, (2) spoken and written language, (3) how language works, (4) using language, (5) languages of the UK, Europe, and the world, and (6) how do we learn languages. In 1988, the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of the English Language in England (the Kingman report, 1988) developed KAL as a possible component of the English National Curriculum. The purpose was to have teachers improve their competence in their mother tongue, improve their language learning through comparisons between other languages and their own, and increase their linguistic sensitivity to other languages (Tulasiewicz, 1997). The understandings and awareness of language that teachers must have to work in these educational contexts can be rendered as in Table 2; that is besides all the understandings of the target language, the teacher also needs to know about bilingualism and to teach bilingual children.

**MAJOR CONTRIBUTIONS/PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES: MULTILINGUAL AWARENESS**

This chapter builds on concepts of language awareness (LA), awareness of language, and KAL to examine the MLA needed by teachers for multilingual schools. Multilingual schools bring to the foreground, more than any other type of schooling, language practices that often differ significantly from the ways in which the standard variety of the nation-state is used in school. Additionally, these different language practices are often manifestations of social, political, and economic struggles. MLA then must always build a fourth understanding—“the understanding of the social, political and economic struggles surrounding the use
of the two languages—what has become known as critical language awareness” (see Fairclough, 1990, 1999). Although this fourth understanding is very important for all teachers, it is crucial for anyone working in multilingual schools.

In talking about language awareness in the context of multilingual schools, Shohamy (2006, p. 182) refers to understanding the ways in which languages are used “in undemocratic ways to exclude and discriminate.” She further posits that “language awareness needs to lead to language activism.”

But multilingual schools are of many kinds and have different goals and needs. Thus, they employ at least three different kinds of teachers who impart diverse instructions and need diverse degrees of MLA.

1. Teachers who actively draw on children’s multilingualism to educate.
2. Bilingual teachers using one of two languages in instruction, the result of team-teaching with a teacher using the other language, either in the same classroom or in a side-by-side model.
3. Bilingual teachers using two languages to educate.

As we will discuss, these three kinds of teachers need different MLA to effectively educate.

**Teachers Actively Drawing on Children’s Multilingualism**

Schools in countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, have had to contend with multilingual populations being schooled in languages

Table 2 Awareness of language for all teachers

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other than their mother tongues throughout the twentieth century. But schools in the USA and Europe have until recently most often ignored the multilingualism of their autochthonous and indigenous peoples. However, as a result of the movement of people both physically and ideologically occasioned by wars, poverty, globalization, and new technologies, schools in the developing world have had to face the multilingualism of their school-aged children. Twenty-first century classrooms throughout the world have students who speak many different languages, often languages different from those spoken by the classroom teacher. Thus, classrooms teachers most often teach content in languages other than those the children speak at home and in communities. These teachers are not language teachers, and yet, to be successful content teachers they need to have specialized knowledge of language, and especially of the bilingual and multilingual contexts in which the children live, and of the social practices that produce certain discourses.

When teaching second language learners, these content teachers need to have deep understandings about the language system in which they are teaching. They also need to be thoroughly familiar with pedagogical practices surrounding bilingualism and the development of bilingualism. They need to understand, for example, the important role that the first language has on the development of the second, and of the interdependence of both languages (Cummins, 1979). And beyond psycholinguistic understandings, these teachers need to know how to build on their students’ first language and literacy to develop literacy in the second. This has been shown, for example, by the work of Danling Fu (2003) in the New York Chinatown as teachers build on their recently arrived students’ Chinese literacy to write English language texts. Teachers also need to understand the importance of scaffolding (Gibbons, 2002) for these students.

But beyond teaching second language learners, most children in the world today speak languages at home that are different from that which the school system calls the “standard.” Thus, I would argue that all teachers need to have specialized knowledge about the social, political, and economic struggles that surround the languages, about pedagogical practices surrounding bilingualism, and about bilingualism itself. For example, Cummins (2006) has recently shown us how important the school’s use of “identity texts” are in the teaching of children who speak languages other than that of the school at home and in community. We can render the MLA these teachers need as in Table 3. Of course, it would be desirable that these teachers have knowledge of and knowledge about the students’ many languages, but given the linguistic heterogeneity present in today’s classroom, this might be a theoretical impossibility. However, it is not impossible to require that
all teachers be bilingual and thus knowledgeable of how two languages function in one’s life.

**Bilingual Teachers Using One of Two Languages in Instruction**

Where bilingual or multilingual schools have been organized, teachers may teach only in one language. In effect, these teachers are individuals with different degree of bilingual proficiency who serve as monolingual teachers often in a team-teaching situation within the same classroom or in neighboring classrooms. It is the combination of two of these bilingual individuals/monolingual teachers who make a child bilingual (Table 4). This is often the arrangement in elite enrichment bilingual education programs. This is also the preferred way of staffing multilingual schools teaching in more than two languages, including bilingual schools for autochthonous and indigenous groups who are also interested in teaching their children English (see, Cenoz and Genesee, 1998), as well as European multilingual schools (Baetens Beardsmore, 1993). Immersion bilingual schools often use this type of staffing.

Although full proficiency in and full knowledge about Language #2 is not required (although desired), having some degree or proficiency in Language #2, knowledge of bilingual development, contrastive features among languages, and especially full knowledge of how the other language is taught (a result of team-teaching), as well as the interdependence of the two languages in pedagogical practice is extremely important. For these teachers, I would outline the understandings they need as in Table 4.

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Table 3 Multilingual awareness for teachers in true multilingual classrooms
Table 4 Multilingual awareness for teachers in bilingual/multilingual schools

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**Bilingual Teachers Using Two Languages in Instruction**

Finally, we find bilingual schools that employ only one teacher for whom knowledge of two languages, that is, bilingualism and biliteracy is an absolute necessity. The teacher serves as both the content teacher and the language teacher. These schools use two languages in instruction, sometimes with the goal of developing the children’s bilingualism and biliteracy (developmental bilingual education programs or two-way dual language bilingual education programs), but other times with a transitional goal of encouraging language minority children’s shift to a majority language (transitional bilingual education programs) (Table 5). Most of the developmental bilingual schools are for indigenous or autochthonous peoples, or for language minority students when they are fortunate, and two-way dual language classrooms encompass both language minority and language majority children. But this pedagogical arrangement is very prevalent in transitional bilingual education classrooms.

For these teachers, the four understandings about language identified earlier: (1) Knowledge of language (proficiency) in both languages, (2) Knowledge about the two languages (subject–matter knowledge), (3) Pedagogical practice in the two languages, (4) Understandings of the social, political, and economic struggles surrounding the use of the two languages—are absolutely necessary. In addition, however, these teachers need to develop understandings of and about bilingualism itself, since the two languages spoken by the teacher and the students are often in contact and in code-switching interaction. Developing pedagogical practices building on the students’ bilingualism and biliteracy, for example, ways of translanguage in the Welsh sense (see Baker,
2003), or of code-switching with pedagogical intent (see Van der Walt, Mabule, and de Beer, 2004), would be extremely important. The understandings these true bilingual teachers need are then the same as identified in Table 5 including full knowledge about language #2 as in table 5.

From Language Awareness to Multilingual Awareness

Clearly, the language awareness programs of the past are not relevant for teacher education in the twenty-first century, for in most of the world, the multilingualism of children is evident in today’s classrooms. It is thus important to think of how to teach teachers in ways that develop their “MLA” and that empowers them to use this MLA in their teaching. From least to most complex MLA needed for different kinds of teachers, one can identify the following continuum:

1. Language awareness for language teachers
2. Awareness of language for all teachers
3. MLA for teachers with multilingual populations (all teachers)
4. MLA for bilingual teachers in bilingual/multilingual schools
5. MLA for sole bilingual teachers.

Because of the higher complexity of situations (3–5), and because there has been little attention given to how these understandings of MLA can be developed through teacher education, the rest of this chapter focuses on these three cases. I discuss teacher education for MLA first from the perspective of the nonspecialized situation, that is, situation #3. I deeply believe that this is needed by ALL teachers in today’s classrooms. I end with what else is needed in the specialized bilingual/multilingual schools of situations #4 and #5.

Table 5  Multilingual awareness for bilingual teachers

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The Why of the Centrality of Multilingual Awareness Pedagogy and Curriculum for ALL Teachers

Given the complex multilingualism of the school-aged population throughout the world, teacher education programs must do much more than just “adapt” what they have done in the past for second language learners and bilingual children. When public school systems throughout the world are increasingly populated with multilingual children, it behooves teacher educators to put language difference at the center of the educational enterprise. Most teacher education programs pay little attention to multilingual differences, educating their teachers as if all students were native speakers of the dominant language of the nation-state. Sometimes, they include a requirement of a course in the teaching of the majority language as a second language or in bilingual education. But a single course is not enough to acquire the sophisticated MLA that teachers need today, especially in developed societies with increased immigration. Instead, MLA must be a thread that runs throughout the entire teacher education curriculum.

The How of the Pedagogy of Multilingual Awareness for ALL Teachers

The question for teacher education, however, is how teacher education programs can go about instilling and developing these understandings of, and disposition towards, MLA, and abilities of how to use this MLA pedagogically. With Freire (1973), Cummins (2001) and other transformative educators, I believe in a critical pedagogy that is situated in practice. I base our transformative pedagogy on the four elements developed by the New London Group (1996) for their multiliteracies pedagogy:

1. **Authentic situated practice** and immersion of students in such practice
2. **Overt instruction** to develop awareness and understanding of practice
3. **Critique of practices** as socially particular through critical framing
4. **Transformed practice** through experimentation with innovative practices that are a result of reflection, overt instruction, and critical framing.

In the following section, I develop how our transformative pedagogy works with teachers to develop appropriate MLA.
The What of a Curriculum for Multilingual Awareness for ALL Teachers

It is clear from the earlier discussion that a course in MLA, or even a linguistics course, can do little to transform the MLA of teachers. Instead, the explicit instruction about the system of language that students get in a language-focused course—be it a linguistics course or language/literacy courses that focus on what Schulman (1987) has called pedagogical content knowledge (PCK)—must be combined with authentic situated practice, critique of practice, and the resulting transformed practice in order for learning to take place.

Throughout the years, I have developed ways to immerse teachers in language and literacy practice, critique of such practice, and transformed practice, as well as building in explicit instruction at times. I developed such ways especially as Dean of a School of Education in Brooklyn, New York that had a large bilingual and bidialectal student body who wanted to become teachers, extending them when I joined Teachers College, Columbia University, as faculty in bilingual education. The six strategies that I share later, however, were developed with my colleagues at the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University, most especially Cecelia Traugh.

Descriptive Review of a Bilingual Child’s Language Use. Elsewhere (García and Traugh, 2002) we have described how descriptive inquiry, a disciplined process of research in teaching and learning, can enable a group to cut through generalities and abstractions, make the complexity of the lived reality more visible, and enlarge understandings that can generate ideas for action. One way of enabling teachers to understand bilingualism in its complexity is to engage them in observing children closely and describing them fully, working to withhold judgment or interpretation and being respectful of the child as the maker of words and worlds. Basing ourselves and extending the Descriptive Review of the Child process proposed by Carini (2000), prospective teachers are taught to describe one child fully under six headings—physical presence and gesture, disposition and temperament, connections with others, strong interests and preferences, modes of thinking and learning, and use of languages with different interlocutors and in different contexts (for more on the Descriptive Review of the Child, see also, Himley and Carini, 2000).

The purpose of this close observation and careful description is two-fold. On the one hand, the child’s language use is seen and described within the context of other activities and student characteristics, and not in isolation. This is important in not reifying language, forcing ourselves to see language not as object in itself, but as an instrument used by the child and used by the teacher in describing the student. On the
other hand, the child’s language use is seen and described from the child’s own perspective, and not from a sociopolitical or sociohistorical context, contexts that may shape how the child uses language, but that are important to separate from the child’s language use.

Another purpose of the Descriptive Review of the Bilingual Child is to bring this detailed description back to the community of practice, sharing it with fellow prospective teachers. Fellow prospective teachers (and the teacher educator) listen attentively as the reviewer shares observations. Afterwards, they first ask information questions, opening up possibilities for further reflection. The process ends with participants, one at a time, giving recommendations to the reviewer to generate new ideas, new practices, new viewings and re-viewings of the child’s language and literacy use.

The advantage of the Descriptive Review of the Bilingual Child is that it enables the prospective teacher not only to become a better observer of language, but also a better user of language, as s/he works to be descriptive and withhold judgment of the child’s language use. Another advantage is that based on what Carini calls “human capacity widely distributed,” it builds a community of practice, a collaboration, in which the changing ways in which language is used is the spur for further action.

Ethnography of Speech Communities and Sociolinguistic Study of the Linguistic Landscape. Prospective teachers are also given the tools to look closely and describe richly the “linguistic landscape” (Shohamy, 2006) of the school community or of those from which the children come from (see also Gorter and Cenoz, Knowledge about Language and Linguistic Landscape, Volume 6). To do so, they are initially sent out to document—using photography and videos—the languages they see in the community public signs, in the newspaper and magazine stands. They listen to conversations and sounds in the street, and make recordings of that discourse. They interview leaders in the community, as well as common folk, about ways of using languages, and about the sociopolitical and socioeconomic struggles the community faces. They also gather information of the institutions/organizations that support the use of those languages, and of the struggles those organizations face. An important part of this language ethnography is the home of the child itself, and in particular, the funds of knowledge of the parents (Moll and Gonzalez, 1997). In the twenty-first century, it is also important that prospective teachers develop a broad understanding of language use, and that they include in their descriptions the multico codes within one language, that is, the images, music, art, graphs that make up today’s ways of using language, especially by youth—what others have called varied ways of languaging (Kress and Leeuwen, 1996).
Prospective teachers are then encouraged to compare the language data and the information they have gathered with the print and information they find in the internet, and with readings they have done for class. Based on this authentic data that prospective teachers have gathered, the teacher educator provides explicit instruction about aspects of language that are found naturally in what students have collected. It is this explicit instruction that gives prospective teachers the tools to analyze their material further. Prospective teachers become familiar with internet sites, and with translation capabilities of the Internet, tools that will enable them to become lifelong learners about the languages and literacies that they will continue to encounter in their changing communities.

Problem sets for different language use situations are collaboratively generated in class. For example, banks of examples of code-switching in media and print, as well as in oral discourse could be generated. Video clips of different language and literacy uses in the home could also be developed. These problem sets would then be subjected to further analysis and could be the focus of explicit language and literacy instruction. These problem sets also serve as ways of building social, political, and economic consciousness about language use in different contexts and for diverse purposes.

Descriptive Review of Language and Literacy Practices in Teaching. Using descriptive inquiry as the process which we described earlier, prospective teachers are also engaged in close observation and description of how language and literacy is used by the teacher and the students inside the classroom in different contexts and practices—class arrangements, lessons, assignments, and testing. In sharing the description with other prospective teachers in other classrooms, complex views and understandings are generated. Collaboratively, the group examines how the particular discourse is used by the teacher and students to include or exclude and how discourse works within particular social practices.

Occasionally, the prospective teacher tapes herself with the children, again describing closely the language used, and sharing it with the collaborative group as a way to build texts of practices that could be subjected to explicit analysis, and as a way to encourage transformation of practices. Again, as a collaborative group, the prospective teachers with the teacher educator review the practices to generate new and transformed practices. The teacher educator explicitly points to promising practices and strategies and provides microanalyses of some discourses.

In describing language and literacy practices within the classroom, the prospective teachers can draw from the data they have gathered outside the classroom and in the community. This comparison can serve
well to help teachers anchor language use in particular domains and for specific purposes. Critical framing of the different events can generate transformed practices.

**Makers of Multicultural and Multilingual Texts.** Both in the more theoretically oriented courses, as in the more practice-oriented courses, students are engaged in producing multicultural and multilingual texts. Specifically, this is done by encouraging the use of double-entry journals, where students react to the academic texts they are reading from their own personal perspective, contributing their experiences, their cultural and linguistic understandings to make sense of the text. Sometimes, these reactions/reflectons are written in the students’ many languages. At other times, they are written in the class language, with the hybrid use that a personal reflection enables.

Again, these double-entry journals are shared with their fellow classmates and the teacher educator, as a way to build multicultural and multilingual understandings of the same text and to generate different understandings from multiple perspectives.

**Curriculum Meaning-Makers.** As prospective teachers are made “wide awake” (see Greene, 1995) by the attention paid to detail and description of the language use of the child, the speech community, the classroom, and themselves, they start to develop ways of developing curriculum that build on these understandings. The curriculum courses use all this authentic material in creating true multilingual and multicultural curriculum for actual classes and for student teaching.

Prospective teachers try out curriculum in actual classrooms where the cooperating teacher and the college supervisor serve as sounding boards for further reflection and transformation of practices.

**Language and Social Activists.** All descriptions, collaborative sharing of understandings, materials, products, and explicit teaching practices developed through the strategies described earlier result in action that has the potential not only to transform practice, but also to transform the lives of children and communities. This action is sometimes at the individual level, i.e., helping a child’s family with translation services, but sometimes it is at the level of local and even national policy. For example, one semester a group of prospective teachers learned about the difficulty of immigrants learning English, since there were no free English language classes available. They gained understandings not only of the inequity that this presented, but also of how this affected their children’s learning and their own teaching. With the help of a local immigrant rights organization, they organized a letter campaign, went on radio programs, spoke to politicians. As a result,
funding for adult classes in English was increased the following funding year.

The What of a Curriculum for Multilingual Awareness for Bilingual Teachers

In addition to everything that has been said before, bilingual teachers need additional abilities and understandings—in particular, proficiency in Language #2, and sociocultural understandings of the groups who speak Language #2.

With regards to proficiency in Language #2, bilingual teachers (whether one of two or the sole teacher) need to already have some degree of bilingual proficiency before being accepted in a program to educate bilingual teachers. This is because it is almost impossible for a teacher education program to develop the specialized curricular and pedagogical knowledge needed, as well as linguistic ability in a second language. However, bilingual education programs must assess the candidates’ bilingual ability upon admissions. And they must provide contexts for students’ development of that initial proficiency so that they are capable of teaching academic subjects in Language #2. In every teacher education course for bilingual teachers, readings in two languages are included, and writing assignments in the two languages are required. Student teachers are also required to develop curricula in two languages and to become familiar with instructional material in two languages. This is especially important in the area of children’s literature where prospective bilingual teachers should be deeply familiar with children and young adults literature in the two languages. In addition because of the possibility that a bilingual teacher will be hired to teach in the two languages, the prospective teacher is given practice teaching in the two languages and is observed and evaluated doing so in two languages.

Beyond familiarity with the language and all its language varieties, bilingual teachers must gain deep understandings of the sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts of the group that speaks the second language. This is done by requiring that prospective teachers not only take courses that cover such issues, but also by ensuring that this is an integral part of the ethnography of the speech communities and the interviews with community participants.

CONCLUSION

In the twenty-first century, it is MLA that all teachers need. This article has placed MLA within the framework of language awareness, extending it to include other important abilities and dispositions for the twenty-first
century. In particular, however, this article describes ways in which teacher education programs can develop these understandings in all their students, building more specific ones for specialized bilingual teachers.

**See Also:** Arthur Van Essen: *Language Awareness and Knowledge about Language: A Historical Overview* (Volume 6); Josep M. Cots: *Knowledge about Language in the Mother Tongue and Foreign Language Curricula* (Volume 6); Durk Gorter and Jasone Cenoz: *Knowledge about Language and Linguistic Landscape* (Volume 6)

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