

# VS 3.1: Water as a...



## Think About

- How can I learn and grow as a professional?
- How can exploring my moral beliefs and assumptions help me teach diverse students?

### Conceptual Outline

**Richard Ruiz** (University of Arizona)

Three orientations toward language diversity:

- Language as problem
- Language as right
- Language as resource

### Language as Problem

1. We identify social problems, like poverty and high drop out rates, with language minority status. (Ramona Cutri)
2. A focus on language abilities students don't have is an orientation that eclipses all that students do bring into the classroom. (Ramona Cutri)
3. One example is a chemistry teacher. All students who went on to college had to take his class. He said, "The path to higher education comes through my door." At the same time, he did not accept language minority students in his classroom unless they were fluent English speakers even though he couldn't explain why. (Tom Destino)
4. If teachers refuse to accept language minority students in their classroom, I see it as a matter of education. (Sherrie Sellers)

### Language as Right

### Meaning Making

My orientation?

Language a problem?

Paths under my control?

Spanish as a threat to English?

## Conceptual Outline

## Meaning Making

1. When language use and choice are viewed as human rights that are guaranteed by the constitution, it places emphasis on the right of all people to participate in social institutions like schools. (Ramona Cutri)

2. The movement of "English as the official language of the United States" is based in the concerns about the place and future of English in this country; specifically, Spanish has been perceived as a threat to English in this country. (Margie Berns)

3. Because language forms the basis from which we understand ourselves and our world, because children have the right to use their language in learning environments. "Children for whom Spanish is their home language are most comfortable speaking Spanish for social interaction . . . expressing their innermost emotional needs, wants, desires. . . . So their use of Spanish, let's say in a classroom in certain situations, is understandable and certainly can be acceptable." (Margie Berns)

Language and identity?

Bilingual education and English?

4. Ruiz reminds us that the language as a right orientation has limitations. "If we're only focusing on 'This is my right and I demand to have my right,' we might have some negative repercussions." (Ramona Cutri)

5. "How do we get across a positive impression of bilingual education? . . . We should tout that . . . bilingual education really helps a child learn English better, . . . that children are learning English in this wonderful program." (Rita Esquivel)

### Language as Resource

1. Resources are things we want to conserve because they are valuable and can serve us as a society. (Ramona Cutri)

2. "It's a resource to have two cultures, mainly because it keeps you more open minded . . . because you care and you're interested in what's happening in another culture." (Muriel Tuairau)

Language diversity as a service?

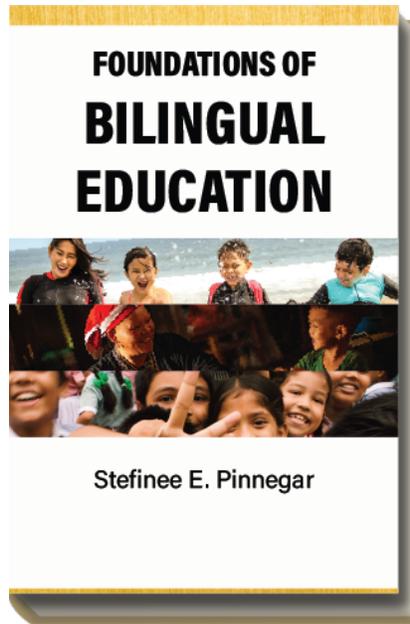
3. "When I enter new situations, . . . I can adapt quickly and I can take a new perspective quickly and see the story of people." (Claudia Ramirez Wiedeman)

Orientations toward language as a problem, a right, or a resource is manifested in every aspect of education.

**Millie Fletcher** (Middle School Principal)

"The assimilation process goes both ways. It isn't just the students who have to learn to accept and adjust to cultural difference."

Assimilation both ways?



Pinnegar, S. E. (2019). *Foundations of Bilingual Education*. EdTech Books.  
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