Exploring Translanguaging in Adult ESL Classrooms: Fostering Multilingual Competence

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Abstract

ESL students encounter social and academic barriers when learning English. These obstacles frequently stem from a lack of confidence that hinders participation. To address these challenges, the integration of students' native languages/translanguaging is a fundamental strategy. This approach fosters a sense of confidence and enhances their engagement in class. Translanguaging is key in reinforcing students' cultural connections and individual identities. The implementation of translanguaging practices fosters positive and inclusive environments while using prior linguistic repertoires. In this workshop, I will present a few of the strategies and activities I use in my classrooms. At the beginning of the semester, an icebreaker activity is employed to facilitate introductions among students. In this activity, students are encouraged to use their preferred language to introduce themselves. This initial interaction aims to create a welcoming atmosphere allowing students to express themselves comfortably in their native language and fostering a sense of inclusivity in the classroom. In the context of writing assignments, students are encouraged to employ their native language during the planning and drafting stages, while transitioning to English for the final draft. This approach takes advantage of students' linguistic strengths, allowing them to organize their thoughts and ideas more effectively in their native language before refining their final essays in English. By embracing a multilingual approach, students enhance their language skills and also gain confidence in expressing themselves proficiently in multiple languages. These instructional strategies prioritize linguistic diversity, cultural inclusivity, and academic excellence, fostering a dynamic learning environment favorable to student success.

Keywords: Culture, Language, English, Spanish, Arabic, French, Higher-Ed, Teaching Strategies, Inclusivity, Diversity