

## **A Discussion of Black Language Within the Context of Bilingual Pedagogy: Implications for Administrators**

Steven K. Sharp

*Governors State University, USA*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The author examines some of the critical issues raised by Baker-Bell (2020a) about language education in the United States. The challenges associated with linguistic justice are related to a history of linguistic discrimination in the United States, which many sources have documented and affected many different linguistic backgrounds and peoples. This research inspired her to develop an antiracist Black language pedagogy that assists students in understanding their position in white linguistic hegemony. The author evaluates some of the ideas of Black language pedagogy, explicitly focusing on the requirements of administrators in K-12 education. Additionally, the author contrasts Baker-Bell's ideas to translanguaging and how heteroglossic pedagogies are used to develop bilingual and bicultural students similar to the concepts of García (2009). The author then discusses how the ideas of heteroglossic language pedagogies, Black language pedagogy, and translanguaging could inform each other.

**Keywords:** bilingual education, translanguaging, Black language, culturally responsive pedagogy

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### **A REVIEW OF BLACK LANGUAGE PEDAGOGIES**

One of the challenges of administering a school is navigating the different linguistic backgrounds of the students who inhabit it. Many diverse backgrounds need to be considered in our multicultural society, and each presents its challenges and solutions. A compelling book, *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy* by April Baker-Bell (2020a), convinced the author that, while there is a need to differentiate many cultures when you are considering the linguistic aspect, there are solutions that will help with the development of more appropriate responses to the linguistic needs of all students. The author chose to examine Baker-Bell (2020a) in part because of the relationship with translanguaging pedagogies that the author is familiar with and the similarity to ideas espoused by García (2009). In this paper, the author examines a book by Baker-Bell (2020a) in the context of bilingual education that García (2009) espoused, and this paper hopes to explain why it is important to make considerations for Black language speakers as it is essential to consider all multilingual children. García (2009) is an important voice in bilingual education, especially regarding translanguaging, and the similarities of the works made the elements of language pedagogy highlighted by each more relevant.

García (2009) wrote about bilingual education and used a social justice lens to discuss the benefits of supporting a child's first language development as they learn a second language and school curriculum. Her discussion focused on the history of bilingual education and the education of multilingual students, and it also discussed other groups who were never allowed to learn their home language, including Native Americans and enslaved people. Baker-Bell (2020a) has built upon the ideas García (2009) and others developed to examine how Black language was repressed and how we should educate our children to understand the significance. Baker-Bell described other repressed languages (and there is a lengthy history of repression of minority and native languages in this country) as she developed the conceptual framework of antiracist Black language pedagogy. While the practices of bilingual instruction and the policies that support or challenge them advanced (Crawford, 1999; García, 2009; Lessow-Hurley, 2013), these marginalized groups were denied access to learning their first language, unlike speakers of White Mainstream English throughout the history of the United States (Baker-Bell, 2020a).

## History of Languages in the United States and Politics

The United States has been a country of many languages, though there have been elements of linguistic discrimination throughout our history. While White Mainstream English was never designated the country's official language, it has become the de facto language of the country. The United States emphasizes specific non-English European languages over non-European languages (Crawford, 1999; García, 2009; Lessow-Hurley, 2013), many of which developed in North America, unlike English. When enslaved Africans came to the United States, they were not allowed to use their native languages nor communicate with others sharing that language due to a policy of separating or mixing enslaved people from different backgrounds (Baker-Bell, 2020a; García, 2009). The situation for Native Americans was only initially less disconcerting. According to García (2009), most indigenous peoples were provided with a linguistic and cultural education. Until 1898, some peoples, including the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole, were allowed to provide education for their own cultural group. One successful program included the Cherokee bilingual program, which was more successful than many programs for English native speakers at the time (Lessow-Hurley, 2013). However, the history of language and education of Native Americans proved to be another example of American linguisticism, with terrible injustices served on Native Americans over many decades and even to this day (Baker-Bell, 2020a; García, 2009).

Throughout the history of the United States, European languages—German, Spanish, French, and others—were tolerated the most, though levels of toleration varied. Bilingual programs featuring these languages and others were marginalized during the World Wars and up until the 1960s (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act required equal access to education regardless of language) and the 1970s (*Lau v. Nichols* and the Office of Civil Rights *remedies* promoted the requirement of language support and instruction for multilingual children) (Crawford, 1999; García, 2009; Lessow-Hurley, 2013). While bilingual education and support for multilingual children have been strengthened during the last 40 years (Lessow-Hurley, 2013), the politics of language in America is a reminder of the discrimination that English-only programs perpetuate today. Meanwhile, Black language (and other related Englishes) has never been as accepted or valued as have European languages for use in academic and professional settings (Baker-Bell, 2020a). At the same time, there has been much discussion of the Anglo world's perpetuation of the myth that English language speakers from English-speaking countries are better or more *legitimate* than many world Englishes (Englishes being a term used to refer to the different versions of the English language) that developed and are used in other countries today (Kubota, 2019).

To understand Black language, one must understand its origins because its uniqueness as a language developed in rebellion against white enslavers who prevented Black people from communicating with each other (Baker-Bell, 2020a). Many of the unique features of Black language were cultivated from its use as a tool of resistance. hooks (1994) discussed how the language of enslaved people started as a language of resistance, hiding meaning in the “incorrect usage [or placement] of words ... so that white folks could often not understand black speech, made English into more than the oppressor's language” (p. 96). As an example of such resistance, hooks spells her last name without the traditional capitalization of proper nouns, causing spelling and grammar applications to annoy writers who cite her name.

Black language today contains language forms, vocabulary, and structures that foster confusion and misconceptions (intentional or not) among speakers of White Mainstream English. The challenge is that a majority of White Mainstream English speakers disdain those who speak Black language, or for that matter any language other than White Mainstream English, for being uneducated. Ironically, those same speakers are missing one of the benefits of bilingual education: increased linguistic ability and subject matter understanding (Baker & Wright, 2017).

While there have been attempts to teach Black language, they have been few. The failure of Black language pedagogy has not been attempted in many situations or for very long, so any lack of success has been attributed to a low sample size rather than a challenge to the conceptual framework itself. Pullum (1999) claims the controversy in Oakland, often cited as an unsuccessful attempt at teaching with Black language pedagogy, was not the attempt to teach using the students' first language but rather that Black language was even designated as a language at all. Baker-Bell (2020b) claims such reactions are a form of “anti-Blackness.” A policy determining that Black language is not a language is a form of discrimination against Black people, which evolved from the times of slavery when Black people were forcibly brought from their country and only allowed minimal communication, regardless of the language. Sadly, this kind of language discrimination continues today in states like California, Arizona, and Massachusetts, where bilingual education is restricted by laws requiring English-only classrooms (Lillie & Moore, 2014).

**Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy**

To say that Black language is distinct from other forms of English is not new. When Ladson-Billings (1992) discussed culturally relevant teaching, she focused on using student culture as a basis for student cultural understanding. Language is a part of culture and is inherent in the diversity of African American culture in their use of Black language (hooks, 1994). Furthermore, supporting African American students using their first language while learning another language is also not groundbreaking. Translanguaging is a pedagogical idea that incorporates *code-switching* into language practices, allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoires to understand the content and develop both of their languages. The idea is empowering because it does not value one language over another and validates students’ language. This concept relates to others’ discussions of culturally relevant teaching (Hammond, 2015; Ladson-Billings, 1992). However, the purpose of this paper is to provide an examination of how working from the students’ linguistic perspective will assist them in accepting their own relevance in the global conversation and allow them to engage with learning other languages.

There are interesting comparisons between Baker-Bell (2020a) and García (2009) beyond what is mentioned above. Baker-Bell (2020a) discussed three different forms of language instruction used among African Americans, which have similarities to the differences discussed among García’s (2009) *monoglossic* and *heteroglossic* perspectives that she used to differentiate types of bilingual programs. Monoglossic pedagogies, she explains, focus on languages in isolation where there is no believed interaction between two (or more) languages. Heteroglossic pedagogies, conversely, focus on languages and language learning as a dynamic process where each language influences the other and the development of a language cannot occur in isolation. Baker-Bell’s lowest form of language pedagogy related to Black language (see Table 1 below), “eridacationist” (p. 28), is a *deficit* approach that does not acknowledge the rich language repertoire that students speaking Black language bring to the classroom nor the history of its development. The eradication of the student’s Black language is the goal and correcting this *deficiency* is the method employed. This language pedagogy is not comparable to any form of bilingualism or language support currently developed for classroom use, though it is closest in the descriptive form to *submersion*. Wright (2019) described submersion as a “violation of federal law” through the common practice of providing no support in the mainstream classroom where students are expected to “sink or swim” (p. 117) (see Table 1 for a comparison of Black language and bilingual pedagogies). Were Black language any other (such as Spanish), instruction without acknowledgment of the first language would be unsupportable. However, the political decision *not* to deem Black language as a language allows for such a policy, and this policy continues through its support of “improving” or “educating” our African American children. Eridacationist is the most common form of teaching African American children today (Baker-Bell, 2020a).

**Table 1**

***Comparing Black Language and Bilingual Pedagogies.***

Black language pedagogy	Equivalent Bilingual Pedagogy
Eridacationist	Submersion or English-only
Respectability Language Pedagogies	Monoglossic pedagogies, like ESL or transitional bilingual education
Antiracist Black Language Education and Pedagogy	Heteroglossic pedagogies, like dual-language bilingual education or heritage language education

Baker-Bell’s (2020a) middle form of Black language pedagogy is “Respectability Language Pedagogies” (p. 28). These pedagogies allow for the use of Black language in the development of their use of White Mainstream English to move African American students away from the use of Black language in more academic and “professional” situations where it would be more “respectable” to use White Mainstream English. Respectability Language Pedagogies aim to transition from Black language use to the complete acceptance of White Mainstream English, like the monoglossic view, in which the focus is on “subtracting” a student’s primary language. An example of this type of pedagogy is transitional bilingual education (TBE) (Baker & Wright, 2017; García, 2009; Wright, 2019), which “transitions” multilingual users from their first language to White Mainstream English (though there are many other forms of monoglossic language education policies) (García, 2009).

Baker-Bell (2020a) proposes a move toward an “Antiracist Black Language Education and Pedagogy” (p. 28), which supports the development of Black language using a heteroglossic approach that accepts both languages as equal and

promotes both languages equally in the educational programs. She suggests that we need to use an understanding of Black Language forms and structures and literature written appropriately in Black language, such as Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*. Through the use and acceptance of Black language, educators can empower African American students to accept the idea of learning languages and to understand that other languages, like White Mainstream English, are also useful. This antiracist pedagogy is consistent with the heteroglossic views of several bilingual pedagogies, most notably forms of immersion, developmental, dual language, and content-based or content- and language-integrated learning (García, 2009; Wright, 2019). Baker-Bell (2020a) made a compelling argument for their use in the way García (2009) and others have argued for the benefit of heteroglossic pedagogies because of the idea of social justice and enabling the first language identities of students so that they are empowered to learn and engage with their education.

### **Bilingual Pedagogies for Black Language**

One of the tenets of bilingual education is that students need to learn in their first language (García, 2009); otherwise, psychological and linguistic harm can be done to students. This idea is shared by Baker-Bell (2020a). She developed three terms related to the relationship between Black language and White Mainstream English: 1) *anti-Black linguistic racism*, which indicates the unconscious support of the dominance of White Mainstream English; 2) *linguistic double consciousness*, which describes an understanding that there are issues beyond linguistic related to the use and propagation of the two different languages; and 3) *Black linguistic consciousness*, which describes a person or position in which students, teachers, and others understand that Black language has been suppressed through white linguistic hegemony, perpetuating the linguistic superiority of White Mainstream English. As Baker-Bell (2020a) wrote,

It is well known within multilingual education that literacy development and language learning should not happen at the expense of losing one's mother tongue. Black students are not exempt from this theory, although they are often excluded from it. Undoubtedly, there are numerous examples of Black students' linguistic features being viewed from a deficit perspective to eradicate their language and replace it with White Mainstream English. (pp. 71-72)

Here, Baker-Bell connects what bilingual instructors do with our multilingual users and acknowledges that there are languages that requires support to be addressed when developing bilingual programs. Perhaps it is time to address this challenge and ensure that more generations of Black language speakers are not lost or forced to learn two or more languages independently.

An example of this concept was relayed by García (2009). She described a bilingual child who was comfortable to discuss in English how language discrimination occurs when teachers do not realize the benefits of knowing two languages. For example, a child mistaking one similar word for another when reading a text aloud (a typical learning process) is a uniquely "bilingual problem" for a teacher, and the teachers may infer that the student mistakes the word "pear" with "pail." In this case, the child is using two of three different strategies that all students use to read unknown words: using a word with the same phonemic beginning, using a word with a similar meaning, or using a word with a similar grammatical purpose—not a bilingual problem, but an everyday learning strategy.

Translanguaging, according to García (2009), is "a pedagogical practice which switches the language mode in the classroom" (p. 45). This definition encompasses many practices, like using one language for one activity and another for a different activity, even if both are related. Translanguaging allows students to use "their entire linguistic repertoire" (García, 2009, p. 36) to support language development in both languages. Furthermore, translanguaging is a natural process; as Baker & Wright (2017) suggested, bilingual children quickly learn that when speaking to monolinguals, they must limit the translanguaging behavior that they typically use with their bilingual peers. The question here is, why not allow translanguaging in classrooms that have Black language speakers?

### **EFFECTIVENESS OF HETEROGLOSSIC PEDAGOGIES**

A body of literature (Baker-Bell, 2020a; Baker-Bell et al., 2017; Flores & Rosa, 2015; García, 2009) discussed the challenges associated with evaluating racialized language speakers—namely, people who come from ethnic minorities and speak a language other than White Mainstream English. The challenge, as presented by Flores and Rosa (2015), is that it is the perception of the "white listening subject" (p. 160) that makes judgments of language based on the appropriateness of language use, defined by white linguistic hegemony and a monoglossic language ideology (one that presupposes that languages are distinct and should be used separately from each other). Flores and Rosa indicated that this perspective is

embedded in racism and linguicism. Consequently, Baker-Bell et al. (2017) examined how their use of a culturally sustaining pedagogy provided their students with an understanding of the need to choose an appropriate language based on the audience's needs—and an understanding of the usefulness of their native language. This perception does not alleviate the challenges discussed by Flores and Rosa in terms of the white listening subject accepting the diversity of languages so that it becomes more generally accepted, nor does García's (2009) heteroglossic ideology and dynamic language pedagogies, which suggest all students benefit from both sides learning from each other and in the process learning appreciation for the language used by the other group. However, it does provide students with a greater appreciation of their own language, and it shows how successful bilingual or trilingual Black language speakers are able to use linguistic flexibility (code switch) to become more acceptable in different language situations (e.g., Barack Obama). Though Flores and Rosa (2015) would argue that despite these advantages, the existence of racism and linguicism would make it impossible for these speakers to be considered successful by all-white listening subjects.

Regarding other measures of success of Black language pedagogy, the research (Baker-Bell, 2020b; Baker-Bell et al., 2017) is limited in this regard. Baker-Bell et al. (2017) discussed the understanding of Black language and how a class of students came to accept the validity of that language, leading to an increased understanding and appreciation of themselves. Nevertheless, these findings may be limited in their implications due to sample size and research methods.

The author would point to the body of research discussing the success of students in dynamic or additive bilingual programs in this and other countries since Baker-Bell (2020a) discussed the relationship between Black language pedagogy and multilingual education (as discussed above). Another way to look at this would be to look at the success of similar versions of bilingual education. There have been many studies, meta-analyses, and one meta-analysis of meta-analyses (McField & McField, 2014) of the effectiveness of bilingual education (Baker & Wright, 2017; Genesee et al., 2006; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; McField & McField, 2014; Slavin & Cheung, 2005). The consensus of these studies is that bilingual education is not only at least as effective as other forms of language education (Genesee et al., 2006; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; McField & McField, 2014), but that heteroglossic forms are usually considered more effective than other forms of bilingual education (Lindholm-Leary, 2001; McField & McField, 2014). In regard to content, students fared as well or better than English-only education students in reading (for both native English speakers, including African Americans, and speakers of other languages) (Lindholm-Leary, 2001) and math (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). While the effects show remarkable consistency, there are concerns about selection bias for students who enter bilingual programs. It is possible that parents who agree to have their children in bilingual programs are more supportive, which would be an unaccounted factor in assisting their education (Baker & Wright, 2017; Slavin & Cheung, 2005).

## **LEARNING FROM ANTIRACIST BLACK LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY**

Baker-Bell (2020a) acknowledged the importance of linguistic methodologies in her book, but her antiracist Black language pedagogy went beyond some of what was previously developed. She provided a social justice framework in her antiracist Black language pedagogy. This framework examined students' perspectives on their relationship with language and culture and how these ideas relate to the political environment. She posited ten framing ideas (see Table 2) for antiracist Black language pedagogy, including those that examine how language and political linguistic decisions made in this country have been used to keep minorities from developing agency. These ideas helped her create a pedagogy that assists students in understanding the socio-historical context in which Black language was developed, how it became a language of resistance, and how students can position themselves in terms of their language(s) and the political structures that are still in place to suppress them. There were also ideas for administrators and teachers in bilingual schools, whether or not schools have Black language students.

Baker Bell (2020a) discussed the need to examine white linguistic hegemony in her first framing idea (see Table 2). This can be done by administrators examining the role of monoglossic programs in suppressing minority languages and preventing the home language and culture development in native areas. The assumption that the *English* language is one monolithic ideal that all students must strive for, and that all students who do not come with the same linguistic background knowledge are considered inferior, has to be set aside as the racist, linguicist ideals that they are. It is essential to consider the student's background when making decisions regarding educational policies. Care must be made to ensure that no language is suppressed (intentionally or not) because of policies that are comfortable and based on past practices. It would be difficult to enumerate the many ways that language can be used to discriminate against individuals and groups of students. A thorough examination of current administrative policies and how they relate to linguistic justice would be a valuable way of examining how each policy might be influenced by cultural and linguistic bias, especially if stakeholders are present from

various linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Something as simple as requiring a student to look you in the face could be a challenge to students whose culture requires the opposite.

**Table 2**

***Ten Framing Ideas for Antiracist Black Language Education and Pedagogy***

1	[C]ritically interrogates white linguistic hegemony and Anti-Black linguistic Racism
2	[N]ames and works to dismantle the normalization of Anti-Black Linguistic Racism in our research, disciplinary discourses curriculum choices, pedagogical practices, and teacher attitudes.
3	[I]ntentionally and unapologetically places the linguistic, cultural, racial, intellectual, and self-confidence needs of Black students at the center of their language education.
4	[I]s informed by the Black Language research tradition and is situated at the intersection of theory and practice.
5	[R]ejects the myth that the same language (White Mainstream English) and language education that have been used to oppress Black students can empower them.
6	[A]cknowledges that Black Language is connected to Black people’s ways of knowing, interpreting, resisting, and surviving in the world. (Richardson 2004, Sanchez, 2007, as cited in Baker Bell, 2020a)
7	[I]nvolves Black Linguistic Consciousness-raising that helps Black students heal and overcome internalized Anti-Black Linguistic Racism, develop agency, take a critical stance, and make political choices (Kynard, 2007, as cited in Baker Bell, 2020a) that support them in employing Black Language “for the purposes of various sorts of freedom” (Richardson, 2004, p. 163, as cited in Baker Bell, 2020a)
8	[P]rovides Black students with critical literacies and competencies to name, investigate, and dismantle white linguistic hegemony and Anti-Black Linguistic Racism.
9	[C]onscientizes Black students the historical, cultural, political, and racial underpinnings of Black Language.
10	[R]elies on Black Language oral and literary traditions to build Black students’ linguistic flexibility and creativity skills. Provide students with opportunities to experiment, practice, and play with Black Language use, rhetoric, cadence, style, and inventiveness, which is necessary to use language effectively in a multilingual, multicultural world.

(Baker-Bell, 2020a, p. 34)

Baker-Bell’s (2020a) second framing idea acknowledges that antiracist Black language pedagogy considers all aspects of education and research and how students are treated because of their different linguistic perspectives (see Table 1). Administrators and other educators need to challenge the attitudes of teachers and other educators and their use of first languages in education and communication in the classroom. This idea is a part of translanguaging, but something bilingual educators need to continue to address. Baker-Bell also extends it to multilingual users, discussing aspects of the discipline, curriculum, and research. This idea resonates with practices suggested by Hernández (2022), who discussed the roles administrators and professional development need to take in challenging teachers’ deficit perspectives of students from divergent language backgrounds. Culturally, we need to move away from connecting discipline problems with students of color by simply discussing challenging students without referring to them by their racial or ethnic background. Further, we must treat all students as the individuals they are rather than as problems to be solved because of exceptionalities like linguistic or cultural differences from the white mainstream norm—ideas supported by Hammond (2015). She discussed the challenges associated with students’ success in school while they are being disproportionately disciplined because of differences that relate not to disciplinary needs but instead to understanding needs by teachers and administrators. Also, researchers in the field of language education need to argue that the decision of language dominance is a political decision, and acceptance of this decision automatically precludes the idea of a language hierarchy, which is not supportive of a healthy multicultural community, nor is it empirically measurable in any way. We need to continue to make our peers aware that such decisions are discriminatory.

Several of Baker-Bell’s (2020a) framing ideas examined how the cultural background informs linguistics and language education of the first language that students speak (framing ideas three, five, six, and eight). Framing idea five discusses how language education has been used to perpetuate oppression, an act which has continues to this day, as García and Otheguy (2017) have demonstrated with their discussion of the *language gap*, or vocabulary gap, and how these recent activities have been used to perpetuate linguisticism in early childhood education. Hammond (2015) has attributed challenges

with students of color to a lack of school opportunities for critical learning skills because it is assumed that the students cannot learn.

It is crucial for administrators to understand that language and identity are closely intertwined. Further, it is important for them to know that these framing ideas raise issues related to how students understand their world and connect with it based on their understanding of the importance of the language they grew up with and its influence in the world. Explaining the socio-historical dimensions of Black language and white linguistic hegemony helps students place themselves in the world of language development and understand the importance of their language in history and today. Showing them that people of all races understand and appreciate this will go a long way towards making students of all races value the diversity that Black language and African Americans bring to American culture.

## **DISCUSSION**

The idea that administrators can continue doing what they have been doing with some added social justice patches to fix their more challenging issues is not a solution that will work in the long term. This is like painting the leaves of the culture tree (Hammond, 2015), which ignores the root problems that are more difficult to address. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds are attending schools, experiencing the *white listening subject* and are subject to “that *fill in the blank* student is causing problems again.” Baker-Bell’s (2020a) framing ideas call for a more thorough understanding of the conditions students come from. Understanding white linguistic hegemony and the reasons Black language speakers have been oppressed is a beginning to this process. Understanding the historical significance of the situation is also a beginning, but it needs to be followed by a continual examination of all the potentially aggressive behaviors that may inhibit student growth. When Black language speakers (or any linguistic minority) self-evaluate their own speech as inferior to their peers from other cultures (Baker-Bell, 2020a), a deeply ingrained problem needs to be addressed systemically. A solution to this is to learn about Baker-Bell’s (2020a) antiracist Black linguistic pedagogy and understand how it could train students to examine their role and the role of those who would perpetuate linguisticism. Another solution to the problem is incorporating translanguaging principles of acceptance of students’ first languages (Baker-Bell, 2020a; García, 2009; García & Otheguy, 2017; Hammond, 2015).

García (2009) has additional ideas that empower students. Students from different cultures need to be enabled to maintain their first language through translanguaging. Many bilingual programs in the United States, especially ESL support programs, are monoglossic and fail to promote first language development when engaging with a new second language. Schools that employ these programs engage in a process of acculturation that forces students to lose their home culture in favor of white mainstream culture. Many different cultures and situations have employed heteroglossic pedagogies with significant success (even if short-lived), where students are empowered through learning in their first language while engaging with students in their second language. The success of these programs (as demonstrated by Baker and Wright, 2017; Lessow-Hurley, 2013, and others) shows that the benefits outweigh the challenges, including benefits to students from white mainstream culture.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

No single answer will solve the challenges associated with linguisticism and racist practices. The most straightforward, but perhaps the most difficult, is to equitably fund the institutions with students of color with the same level of support as institutions with white students—a disparity noted in the literature (García, 2009 among others). Short of that, the ideas of translanguaging and the framing ideas proposed by Baker-Bell (2020a) will go a long way toward enabling the learning abilities of students who speak a language or dialect that is not empowered. As García and Otheguy (2017) have reiterated, the idea that there are distinct boundaries between *named languages* is an unstable proposition that works against the very understanding that linguists and language instructors have regarding how children learn and use languages. Translanguaging is a natural state, and teachers and administrators should be aware of this and allow for its use within the classroom, empowering their students and enabling them to engage in understanding and appreciation of White Mainstream English.

Beyond that, compassion for students of color and understanding their identities (both cultural and linguistic) are essential to developing the kinds of relationships that Hammond (2015) suggests are the backbone of culturally responsive pedagogy. Without an appropriate relationship with students of all cultures in the school, engaging these students in the classroom is difficult and will become increasingly challenging. Students who are respected will respect the school's culture, and to respect students, you must understand them. Representation is one form of understanding, but another is compassion (Hammond, 2015).

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**STEVEN K. SHARP**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Division of Teaching and Leadership at Governors State University. His major research interests lie in the areas of multilingualism, multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching and learning, higher education research, and ethical use of technology. Email: [ssharp@govst.edu](mailto:ssharp@govst.edu)

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