

Chapter 2

New Teacher Spotlight: Understanding Funds of Knowledge and Their Purpose

Researchers González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) use the term *funds of knowledge* to refer to the varied resources that students bring to school. A funds-of-knowledge stance assumes that in all communities people have valuable accumulated knowledge through their lived experiences, regardless of socioeconomic or linguistic background. Focusing on emergent bilinguals' funds of knowledge helps you to inquire, identify, recognize, and incorporate resources that emerge from their experiences and communities, rather than focus on how they differ from monolingual English students. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and González (1992) link the funds of knowledge to students' personal and academic success—"these historically-accumulated and culturally-developed bodies of knowledge and skills [are] essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 133). We agree that instruction must be linked to students' lives and communities and hold these resources as essential and precious (Muhammad, 2020).

A funds-of-knowledge perspective questions the idea that only certain kinds of knowledge—that which is traditionally valued in school—count. As you think about the community where you teach and the families with whom you work, what do you understand about your emergent bilinguals' funds of knowledge?

- What do I know about the local community where the school is located? What are its strengths? How can you learn more about it? What organizations are there in the community that provide support to families?
- What are areas of expertise do the parents have? In what ways could these be shared in the classroom so the curriculum reflects and sustains the families' and communities' ways of knowing, being, and caring for the world?
- What languages are spoken by the parents and family members? In what ways can these be integrated within the classroom life?