

## Chapter 7

### **New Teacher Spotlight: Organizing Your Writing Tools**

As a new teacher, consider carefully how to organize the writing tools that students use in your classroom (variety of paper, markers, crayons, watercolors, pencils, pens, blank books) as well as dictionaries, technology tools, and texts in various forms that reflect the children's language practices and lived experiences along with other forms of writing such as magazines, newspapers, recipes, menus, instructions, book reviews, advertisement, and so on. Ask yourself:

- What types of writing tools are available? Do emergent bilinguals know how to use them? Or are they new to them?
- Do students have easy access to the writing materials or is the teacher the only one who can access and distribute them? Do emergent bilinguals know how to access the tools and ask questions about them?
- What multilingual writing supports in children's languages other than English are available to students, and do they know how to use them?
- Do the children have writer's notebooks and/or writing folders? Do emergent bilinguals know the expectations for notebooks and/or folders and how to talk about them?
- Do students have access to technology for writing? Do they use it to create writing that goes into the world whether it is digital writing or on paper?
- Are the children invited to write using their entire linguistic repertoires, including languages other than English, throughout the writing process?
- Is the writing on display in my classroom diverse and does it include multilingual voices?

Be sure to showcase children's writing that represents the range of languages spoken in your classroom. This sends a message to all children that writing is important, that they have something interesting to say, and that it is perfectly normal to write using your entire linguistic repertoire.

### **New Teacher Spotlight: Structuring Time for Writing**

Students should have time to write each day—during a designated writing time and across all content areas. You want to make sure you organize this daily writing workshop in ways that allow you and your students to have time for a mini-lesson,

independent writing time, conferences, and sharing time. Writing time needs to happen every day.

Children need to know how to access their writing materials, how to put them away, where to sit during the mini-lesson, how to transition from whole group to more independent writing time, what it means to be a writer in this group during this time, how teacher-student or student-student conferences are conducted, how to return to the whole group, how to keep one's work in order, and so on. Most important, they need to know that each of these components of their writing time can be carried out while capitalizing on their entire linguistic repertoire. As a teacher of writing, you are teaching the writer and all the complexities of what it means to participate in this community of writers that embrace translanguaging.

### **New Teacher Spotlight: Becoming a Teacher Who Writes**

To teach writing well, you need to be a teacher who writes. Katie Wood Ray (1999) makes the good point that we would not take piano lessons from a teacher who does not practice playing the piano, but too often we place children with writing teachers who don't write. Her point challenged us to reflect carefully about our writing lives:

- Are we taking time to write?
- Do we challenge ourselves to write in genres that are uncomfortable?  
How do we balance our writing lives and do our writing lives reflect our entire linguistic repertoire?
- In what ways do we capitalize on our entire linguistic repertoires when we write?
- Do we engage in the same type of writing we ask of our students?
- What do we need to do to grow as writers?
- How does our own writing inform our teaching of writing to emergent bilinguals?

Your students should be aware of at least some aspects of your writing life. They should hear you talk about your writing, including the parts you find challenging.