This chapter reports on research pertaining to African American, Latina/o, and other students from linguistically diverse backgrounds who receive language arts instruction in what Ball (2009) termed culturally and linguistically complex classrooms (CLCCs). Our goals in preparing this chapter were to locate empirical research that illuminates effective and innovative curriculum, instructional, and teacher preparation approaches to improving teaching and learning in CLCCs.

Culturally and Linguistically Complex Classrooms

Rapid changes in student demographics and continuing underachievement of a disproportionate number of students from linguistically diverse backgrounds have increased the need for more critical attention from the research community and improved instruction for these students. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2006) reported that by 2020, over 50% of the U.S. public school population will be classified as students of color—from Latina/o, African American, Pacific Islander, and American Indian backgrounds. Concern about the linguistic complexity these students bring to the language arts classroom is a nationwide phenomenon. Table 4.1 below illustrates the prevalence of language diversity in some of the nation’s largest urban school districts and lists some of the many languages spoken in these districts.

The districts listed below serve students from over 170 different language groups and all are faced with the challenge of teaching the language arts to students in CLCCs.

In keeping with these national trends, classrooms around the globe are faced with this challenge. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2005) reported that while half of our linguistically diverse global populations now live in urban areas, that figure is expected to rise to two-thirds—or about 6 billion people—by 2050. Urban classrooms around the globe are experiencing the largest influx of students from diverse backgrounds since the beginning of the 20th century. As Ball (2009) points out, by the time these students reach the secondary grades, previously segregated groups often come together in linguistically diverse classrooms with teachers who feel under-prepared to teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and low college graduation rates among low income, culturally and linguistically diverse students are far too frequent in these classrooms (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2005). Yet a growing body of research demonstrates how linguistic diversity among African American, Latina/o, and other students can be recruited as a resource for teaching and learning in language arts classrooms.

Research on African American Students

Studies of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) speakers have provided foundational understandings about teaching and learning the language arts in CLCCs. An ERIC search for peer-reviewed studies published from 2000 to 2009 using the key terms “African American Vernacular” or “Black Dialects” and “Language Arts” or “Reading” or “Literacy” or “Writing” or “Curriculum” or “Instruction” or “Assessment” or “Technology” resulted in only 35 studies, 13 of which were directly related to using AAVE as a resource in teaching and learning the language arts in K–16 classrooms. An additional search of Education Full Text using identical parameters resulted in 71 studies, an additional seven of which focused on our topic. Overall, the majority of the studies documented the benefits of encouraging AAVE in instructional talk (e.g., Lee, 2006; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007); exploring with students scholarship about language ideologies and sociolinguistics (e.g., Godley & Minnici, 2008); using literature and popular culture materials written in AAVE or hybrid language texts (e.g., Lee); and teaching African American students to code switch both orally and in writing to promote meaning making and communication while maintaining their cultural and linguistic identities (e.g., Williams, 2006).
Research on Diverse Students in Culturally and Linguistically Complex Language Arts Classrooms

TABLE 4.1
Language Diversity in Largest U.S. School Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>% English Learners</th>
<th># of Languages Spoken</th>
<th>Example of Languages Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City Public Schools</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>Spanish (68%); Chinese (11.2%); Bengali (2.9%); Arabic (2.5%); Haitian Creole (2.3%); Russian (1.9%); Urdu (1.8%); French (1.3%); Korean (0.9%); Albanian (0.9%); Polish (0.7%); Punjabi (0.7%); Other (5.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://schools.nyc.gov">http://schools.nyc.gov</a></td>
<td>(148, 401)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Unified School District</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Spanish (94%); Korean (1.1%); Armenian (1%); Tagalog (0.9%); Cantonese (0.4%); Farsi (0.3%); Vietnamese (0.3%); Russian (0.2%); Other (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://notebook.lausd.net">http://notebook.lausd.net</a></td>
<td>(240.249)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Public Schools</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Spanish (79.9%); Polish (2.7%); Cantonese (1.6%); Arabic (1.3%); Urdu (1.1%); Vietnamese (0.7%); Tagalog (0.6%); Bosnian/Serbian (0.5%); Assyrian (0.3%); French (0.27%); Ukrainian (0.27%); Gujarati (0.26%); Other (10.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cps.edu">http://www.cps.edu</a></td>
<td>(54,425)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami-Dade County Public Schools</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>100+</td>
<td>Spanish (54.5%); Haitian Creole (5.1%); French (0.6%); Portuguese (0.5%); Other Chinese languages—i.e., not Mandarin or Cantonese (0.2%); Arabic (0.1%); Russian (0.1%); Urdu (0.1%); Vietnamese (0.07%); Hebrew (0.07%); Other (39.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.dadeschools.net">http://www.dadeschools.net</a></td>
<td>(51,772)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston Independent School District</td>
<td>30.87%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Farsi, Mandarin, Arabic, Urdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.houstonisd.org">http://www.houstonisd.org</a></td>
<td>(61,899)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District of Philadelphia</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>Spanish, Chinese, Khmer, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian, Creole, Albanian, Malayalam, French, Portuguese, Ukrainian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.phila.k12.pa.us">http://www.phila.k12.pa.us</a></td>
<td>(10,925)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 These data were retrieved in July, 2009 from the pertinent school districts’ websites as indicated in the table. The percentage of students speaking each of the various languages in the Houston and Philadelphia school districts was not available.

Using AAVE in Instructional Talk. Some studies have linked AAVE to the secondary language arts curriculum and instructional discourse and interactions (Ball & Lardner, 2005; Lee, 2006; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). Lee documented the benefits of this approach in her longitudinal curriculum project on Cultural Modeling, which she defined as “a framework for the design of curriculum and learning environments that links everyday knowledge with learning academic subject matter, with a particular focus on racial/ethnic minority groups, especially youth of African descent” (p. 308). Lee described, for instance, a literature unit on symbolism that drew on students’ cultural data sets, or everyday cultural knowledge, that included rap lyrics and short films that were steeped in symbolism. In this form of instruction, she posited, classroom talk and participation structures necessarily change as students, who are experts of their cultural data sets, educate their teachers about cultural concepts with which they may be unfamiliar. Teachers then scaffold students’ transfer of discourse about local knowledge into academic language. Lee described the genre African-American English improvisational argumentation and documented how students’ reasoning is highest when they dominate classroom talk. She found that sanctioning students’ use of AAVE in classroom talk encouraged high levels of engagement and participation that facilitated learning (see also Cooks & Ball, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz, 2007). In their review of literature on AAVE and adolescents’ literacy learning, Cooks and Ball reported that teachers’ positive attitudes toward students’ use of AAVE in the classroom encourages students’ positive self-concepts about using AAVE and supports their school achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction in Language Ideologies and Linguistics. In their review, Cooks and Ball (2009) noted several strategies for educating students about the linguistic resources they possessed and making them critically aware of language ideologies. These included: making explicit connections between the home/community language and that of the school; incorporating literacy community practices into classroom learning; facilitating students’ work as critical ethnographers of their individual and community literacy practices; and implementing critical language pedagogy where students examine language ideologies that stigmatize their home languages. Drawing from their synthesis of research in Black English and dialect shift, Greene and Walker (2004) laid out several strategies through which teachers can support AAVE-speaking students’ acquisition and use of Standard English (SE) while recognizing and embracing the value of AAVE. One strategy entailed teachers demonstrating an understanding and respect of Black English and learning and teaching students the history of AAVE and its development in relation to SE.

Sealey-Ruiz (2005, 2007) experienced how validating the language backgrounds of her African American students served as a catalyst for the students’ writing. Sealey-Ruiz engaged students, all of whom spoke AAVE, in conversations about their language varieties and their language ideologies. They also read scholarship about AAVE as
a rule governed language. Her intent was for students to recognize that their goal of becoming better writers could only be achieved by using all their language resources. In one strategy, she encouraged students to use AAVE to sound out and write words for which they were unsure of the SE English pronunciation or spelling. Another strategy entailed using a range of curriculum materials that represented students’ languages and sociocultural experiences. Godley and Minnici (2008) implemented what they called critical language pedagogy with African American students in a 10th-grade language arts classroom to encourage them to develop critical perspectives on language. This pedagogy involved (a) critiquing dominant language ideologies, (b) emphasizing the diversity of dialects spoken in the United States and in the students’ communities, and (c) raising students’ awareness of the ways that they used language for different purposes and audiences.

**Instruction in Code Switching.** Godley and Minnici (2008) designed instructional activities where students practiced code switching in writing and other linguistic tasks. They found that such strategies improved students’ understandings about the grammatical patterns of privileged and stigmatized dialects while helping them apprehend underlying issues of power that privileged SE. Williams (2006) and Wheeler and Swords (2006) also recommended using students’ AAVE speech patterns to teach SE grammatical conventions. And Greene and Walker (2004) recommended that teachers themselves code switch to promote students’ engagement in effective code switching and that they model for students how meaning can be affected by language choice.

**Assessment.** Research stresses the importance of including teachers from diverse cultural backgrounds in assessing the work of AAVE-speaking youth (Cooks & Ball, 2009). Ball found that African American teachers, more so than European American teachers, emphasized the content and quality of students’ ideas and balanced these with writing conventions and forms (Ball, 1997, in Cooks & Ball). Ball also argued that teachers should learn about the language patterns of their students, communicate and negotiate with them about writing expectations, and intensively support them in meeting writing objectives (Ball, 1999, in Cooks & Ball). Greene and Walker (2004) also recommended communicating expectations for language use in the classroom including explaining which varieties of English are appropriate for different classroom occasions or activities.

Standardized assessments provide a limited account of AAVE-speaking youth’s knowledge and abilities; alternative and more multifaceted assessments should be explored (Champion, Hyter, McCabe, & Bland-Stewart, 2003; Cooks & Ball, 2009; Greene & Walker, 2004; Thomas-Tate, Washington, Craig, & Packard, 2006). Greene and Walker encouraged teachers to use criteria such as appropriate language use, organization of thoughts and ideas, delivery, and other communications competencies when developing assessments. Assessments, they proposed, should be structured and incorporated over the scope of the course. The authors further suggested creating culturally reflective assignments such as tribute speeches that allow students opportunities to further develop proficiency in code switching while affirming their cultural identities. Implementing some of these strategies, Sealey-Ruiz (2007) noticed her students distinguishing and choosing between writing in either AAVE and SE and using AAVE to support their understanding and use of SE. Students, she reported, also used AAVE or a combination of AAVE and SE for creative writing assignments thus enriching their written work.

**AAVE and Technology.** Studies related to AAVE and technology are limited. However, existing studies show that technology can be used to improve AAVE-speakers’ development of literacy skills (Hall & Damico, 2007; Judge, 2005; Redd, 2003). Hall and Damico concluded that using culturally relevant pedagogy with African American youth facilitated their production of digital texts that contained complex meanings. The students employed various features of AAVE: tonal semantics, sermonic tone, call and response, and signifying in producing their digital texts. In her U.S.-based composition course, Redd encouraged her students to use AAVE in online discussions. She also initiated expansion of their literacy communities to include South African students so that her students could discuss South African literature with these cultural insiders. Redd’s students also engaged in culturally relevant multimodal literacy activities, for example, collaboratively building an African American literature website with students from another university. They also utilized various informational websites to foster their understanding of literature throughout the course.

**Teacher Preparation.** Teacher educators need to provide in-depth instruction in AAVE and address teachers’ attitudes toward it if teachers are to value and draw on the language variety in teaching diverse students (Dixson & Dingus 2006; Fogel & Ehri, 2006). Fogel and Ehri familiarized a group of predominantly White SE-speaking teachers with AAVE to see whether their attitudes toward this language variety and their dispositions toward teaching with it in their classrooms would improve. Across three subgroups that received varying amounts of exposure to and instruction in AAVE, the researchers concluded that all teachers improved their knowledge about and positive attitude toward AAVE. However, teachers who received the most training in AAVE exhibited the greatest attitude shifts. Additionally, these teachers were less likely than other teachers to advocate a teacher-directed rather than a student-directed instructional approach and less likely to favor correcting dialect-based errors in students’ reading and writing assignments. This work suggests the potential of teachers studying AAVE and exploring their language ideologies.
Research on Latina/o Students  Over the past 10 years, researchers have increasingly drawn attention to the various linguistic resources—or linguistic repertoires of practice (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003)—that Latina/o students bring to our nation’s classrooms. The review that follows highlights recent studies that emerged in our search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Social Sciences Index databases from 2000 to 2009 using key word descriptors that included language diversity, Latina/o students, Spanish-speaking students, literacy, and language arts.

Latina/o Students’ Linguistic Repertoires. Compton-Lilly (2008), Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner, and Meza (2003), Sánchez (2007), and Sayer (2008) have all conducted research that illuminates the linguistic repertoires that Latina/o students bring to the classroom. Taken together, this research underscores the fact that this supposedly monolithic group of students exhibits diverse and expansive linguistic repertoires, which include “standard” English, “standard” Spanish, regional, and vernacular dialects of both languages, various indigenous languages, Spanglish/ Spanish-English code-switching, and interpreting/ translating, among other everyday language practices. Noting that such resources are often overlooked in schools, these scholars have emphasized the potential for leveraging Latina/o students’ language practices and experiences as resources for teaching and learning in English language arts classrooms. Orellana et al., for example, suggested that bilingual Latina/o students’ experiences translating and interpreting between languages can be used to support the within-language paraphrasing that is valued as an academic literacy skill in schools. Sayer argued that there is value in using Spanglish—a hybrid mixture of English and Spanish—as a tool for academic content learning. Similarly, Martínez (in press) identified parallels between the specific skills embedded in middle school students’ use of Spanglish and the skills that these students were expected to master according to California’s sixth-grade English language arts standards. He argued that students’ skillful use of Spanglish could be leveraged as a resource for helping them to develop these academic literacy skills.

Leveraging Spanish as a Resource. While there is no shortage of research literature on the potential for leveraging Latina/o students’ linguistic resources, few studies have explicitly addressed the issue of how such resources might be practically leveraged in the classroom. Some studies have approximated this focus by highlighting how Latina/o students draw on Spanish as a resource within English Language Arts classrooms and related learning contexts. Michael, Andrade, and Bartlett (2007), for example, studied curricular and instructional arrangements at a New York City high school that served first-generation Latina/o immigrant students. The authors argued that one of the key determinants of the school’s success was the way in which faculty, staff, and students “treated Spanish language and literacy proficiency as a resource” (p. 173) and worked together to “culturally construct the Spanish language as a resource to be developed and supported through the curriculum” (p. 174). Similarly, Gort (2006) examined the writing processes of emergent bilingual Latina/o students during writing workshops at an elementary school in the northeastern United States, noting that students successfully drew on their knowledge of Spanish to compose monolingual texts in both English and Spanish. These studies suggest that students’ knowledge and use of Spanish can serve as powerful resources for learning English language arts.

Drawing on Everyday Language and Discourse Practices. Other studies have broadened their focus on Latina/o students’ linguistic resources to include attention to discourse style and hybridity. Herrero (2006) studied the use of Dominican oral literature and discourse as a resource for literacy learning among “low-achieving” students from the Dominican Republic. She found that students produced more elaborate writing in both English and Spanish when they were allowed to draw on patterns of language and discourse used in their everyday language practices. In a similar study, Martínez-Roldán and Sayer (2006) explored how bilingual third-grade students used language during story retellings. They found that students demonstrated greater comprehension of the stories when they used Spanglish to mediate their retellings than they did when retelling stories using only English.

Translating and Interpreting Practices. Finally, some studies have focused on Latina/o students’ everyday engagement in the practices of translating and interpreting. Borrello (2007) studied middle school students’ involvement in a program designed to promote their academic success by training them in the skills of translation and interpreting. His analysis of standardized test scores, observational data, and interview data revealed an overall positive impact on students’ academic achievement. Similarly, Martínez, Orellana, Pacheco, and Carbone (2008) worked with a group of Chicana/o sixth graders at a middle school in East Los Angeles. The authors found that, when engaged in lessons and activities that leveraged their translating skills and experiences, students could successfully apply those same skills and experiences to academic writing tasks that required them to shift voices for different audiences.

Preparing Teachers to Leverage Students’ Linguistic Repertoires. Most of the studies cited above have focused on how students drew on their own linguistic repertoires within English language arts contexts. Although these studies have contributed a great deal to our understanding of Latina/o students’ linguistic repertoires, there is a need for more empirical studies that deliberately and explicitly examine (a) how teachers can leverage these various resources for English language arts instruction, and (b) how teacher education programs can prepare teachers to recognize and effectively leverage Latina/o students’ linguistic resources. Some studies have begun to move
in this direction. Vacca-Rizopoulos and Nicoletti (2009), for example, explored pre-service teachers’ reflections on working with Latina/o English learners. Analyzing these pre-service teachers’ observations in urban classrooms and their conversations with in-service teachers, the authors emphasized the lack of preparedness that many teachers felt, and they underscored the critical importance of building on students’ linguistic resources. Similarly, Cadiero-Kaplan and Rodriguez (2008) critiqued the context of teacher preparation in light of No Child Left Behind legislation. Noting the lack of responsiveness implicit in this legislation, they described alternative efforts in California towards preparing teachers to recognize and build on English learners’ linguistic strengths. Future research in this area should explore what happens when teachers deliberately leverage specific language practices as resources for learning in English language arts classrooms and when teacher education programs deliberately prepare teachers to recognize and leverage these resources.

Research on Students in Linguistically Complex Classrooms Recent increases in the incidence of CLCCs are a result of changing birth rates, migration, and immigration patterns that result in a growing number of students whose language backgrounds include not only African American and Latina/o, but also Arabic, Hmong, Tagalog, Cantonese, Urdu, Vietnamese, Bosnian/Serbian, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, and other language groups in the same classrooms. The review that follows highlights studies conducted within the last decade on teaching students who bring multiple linguistic backgrounds into CLCCs. Our recent search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database from 2000 to the present used the descriptors language diversity, linguistic diversity, and language arts to generate 83 entries. Additional database searches included the Social Science Research Index and the table of contents of relevant journals on teaching the English language arts. A review of the entries that emerged revealed that research on CLCCs falls primarily into two categories: (a) research on curriculum, instructional strategies, and pedagogical approaches in classroom and/or community contexts and (b) teacher education, professional development, and the preparation of teachers to work with diverse student populations. Using these two categories to organize the information, this review focuses on the major findings that have emerged.

Curriculum, Instructional Strategies, and Pedagogical Approaches Lotherington’s (2007) study took place in a school in Toronto where more than two thirds of the students spoke a language other than English or French at home and where over 30 languages were spoken in the community. The participants in Lotherington’s study included Tamil, Vietnamese, Turkish, English, and Guyanese Creole speaking students across six classes. The students used digital technologies to rewrite traditional children’s literature from localized cultural and linguistic perspectives as a means of inexpensively supporting home language maintenance, fostering language awareness, and aiding learning English as a second language in the community. Lotherington and her colleagues successfully guided students in creating a variety of multilingual stories although they encountered some problems such as unequal support for the many languages students spoke. Students also experienced some difficulty producing linguistically personalized texts.

Moore-Hart (2004) investigated students’ literacy learning using multicultural literature and information technology within a reading/writing curriculum. The students in two classes came from African American, European American, Native American, Chinese, Japanese, Latino, Hmong, and Indian backgrounds. The use of multicultural literature and links to a hypermedia program allowed students to access information related to other cultures about which they were reading. Moore-Hart learned, however, that access to multicultural books, resources, and technology was not enough for deep student learning. She found that teachers must use a process approach to learning that provides meaningful learning contexts based in the students’ cultural and personal experiences.

Dagenais, Walsh, Armand, and Marielle’s (2008) study in Montreal and Vancouver, Canada, examined how collaborative language awareness activities encouraged students to draw on collective language resources to approach languages unknown by the majority. The researchers found that these language arts activities enabled teachers to engage students in focused discussions about language diversity and fostered the emergence of a community of learners who had access to a repertoire of languages that expanded beyond the official languages. Valuing and sharing knowledge of diverse languages in classroom discussions fostered the discursive construction of new knowledge about the evolution of languages, relationships between languages, as well as a critical stance on the relative status of languages.

Teacher Preparation. During our review of the research literature, several studies emerged that focused on the development and support of teachers’ abilities to draw on students’ rich linguistic repertoires when they enter CLCCs. Ball (2006) investigated the use of writing as a pedagogical tool to motivate and facilitate teacher ideological change as they participated in a teacher education course. She also investigated the use of writing as a pedagogical tool for documenting the changing perspectives of transitioning teachers as they began to envision themselves becoming effective teachers in CLCCs. Several other studies have investigated the use of specific writing strategies in teacher education programs to prepare teachers to teach in CLCCs (e.g., Abbate-Vaughn, 2006; Moore & Ritter, 2008). Moore and Ritter engaged pre-service teachers in a homogenous university location with a classroom of linguistically diverse learners at various stages of writing development. The project afforded the pre-service teachers rich understandings of the children’s diversity and reshaped their perceptions of their roles as teachers in supporting and responding to each child’s individual strengths.
Ball (2009) reported on research designed to advance our knowledge concerning what and how teachers must learn from professional development programs in order to successfully teach in CLCCs. Ball concluded that generativity plays a critical role in the preparation of teachers to meet the educational needs of their students in CLCCs. By generativity, Ball means that teachers must have the ability to add to their understanding by connecting their personal and professional knowledge with their students’ knowledge in ways that allow them to produce new knowledge that is useful to them in curricular planning and pedagogical problem solving. She argued that teachers must envision their classrooms as “communities of change” where transformative learning and emancipatory teaching take place. Such learning, she asserted, can educate not only a generation of teachers who are generative thinkers, but also a new generation of students who will themselves become generative in their thinking and literacy practices as well. Such learning requires the incorporation of critical consciousness pedagogy as a crucial part of teacher and student knowledge. This work requires a research agenda that focuses specifically on preparing teachers for work in CLCCs and for pre-service and in-service programs that envision CLCCs as communities of change. To accomplish this, Ball proposed a model of generative change that can be used in the restructuring of teacher education programs and replicated in the classrooms of teachers working in CLCCs (see Ball for a full discussion).

Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

Our review of the literature points to the need for more research that undergirds the development of pedagogical strategies that allow students in linguistically heterogeneous classrooms to learn from each other and about each other concerning the rich linguistic heritage that makes up our pluralistic society. In reporting research findings, researchers should share more detailed information on the data and analytical approaches. Doing so would allow other researchers to see the explicit processes through which teachers can draw on students’ linguistic resources to achieve particular instructional goals, the challenges encountered, how those challenges were addressed, and the degree to which instructional goals were met (see Williams, 2006, for a good example). For example, while many researchers recommend drawing on AAVE as a resource, much more research is needed on how to draw on AAVE as a resource for teaching and learning in the English language arts classroom. In addition, more large scale, longitudinal studies are needed that document the substantive value and the long-term effects of using particular strategies that leverage AAVE as a linguistic resource for teaching and learning. Primarily due to the lack of sufficient funding to support the work, there is very little recent research that systematically supports the leveraging of AAVE as a linguistic resource for academic learning or for teaching and learning within the disciplines.

Our review of the research also revealed that we need to hear more from the students themselves about their experiences and understanding of how curriculum and instructional practices can help them achieve not only the instructor’s learning goals but their own academic, social, and personal goals. Much of the research on how to use linguistic diversity as a resource in English language arts classrooms is occurring in college composition classrooms. More research is needed at the elementary and secondary levels where students must develop the confidence, motivation, and academic skills to pursue higher education. We also found that studies related to language diversity and technology were very limited. In the burgeoning field of digital literacy, it is critical that serious attention be paid to how linguistic diversity can be leveraged to support the development of linguistically diverse students’ competencies.

There is also a need for more studies that examine how teacher educators and pre-service teachers engage with available research on using language diversity as a teaching and learning resource, the impact of professional development on teachers’ subsequent practices within CLCCs, and how teachers develop curriculum and instructional resources with and for their students. Furthermore, more collaborative studies are needed where researchers work alongside teachers and students to produce knowledge for the wider education community about how to draw on diverse students’ linguistic backgrounds. And, as Ball (2009) argues, we need to study closely how teachers’ generativity can be fostered so that they can continuously innovate effective teaching and learning approaches in the evolving linguistic landscapes of their classrooms.

Finally, we close this chapter by noting that teaching the English language arts to multiple language groups at the same time within the same educational context is indeed a very complex task. The vast majority of research on language diversity has been small scale, single site studies that have taken place with one minority language group. Perhaps this is understandable because there are many communities where monoethnic, monolingual communities remain the norm. However, with rapidly changing classroom demographics, we urgently need large scale, longitudinal, systematic studies to update our understanding of linguistic diversity and how to meet the needs of students in CLCCs. The international research community seems to be providing leadership in the area of studies on CLCCs; however studies are needed from the U.S. context as well. There is much that we can learn from the international community, but there is much that we can contribute to the conversation as well.

References


