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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Teaching Math to Multilingual Students* by Kathryn B. Chval, Erin Smith, Lina Trigos-Carrillo, and Rachel J. Pinnow.

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Explicitly Positioning Multilingual Learners as Leaders

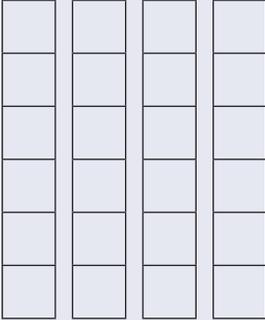
In Ms. Martínez's fifth-grade classroom, where every student was a multilingual learner, she positioned students as contributors, family members, teachers, role models, and experts through her words and actions. At times, she made these positions explicit through her expectations, such as when she stated,

“*So Dalia was asking Alejandro, and Alejandro didn't know what to do. Alejandro wasn't participating because he never asked for help. So, somebody over here. Anybody. You move around. I'm only one person. Move around quietly and ask each other. You can teach each other. Walk around. Help each other. I can't help all of you at the same time.* (Chval, Pinnow, Smith, & Rojas Perez, 2018, p. 123)”

Ms. Martínez clearly communicates that in her classroom multilingual learners are not spectators and can teach their peers. This took place at the beginning of the school year. It was so interesting to watch how her students responded. They were quite surprised by this new norm that they had never experienced. Historically, in earlier grade levels, the students were expected to stay seated, but now Ms. Martínez gave them more powerful positions as teachers in her classroom.

In Transcript 2.3 (from Smith, 2018), you'll peek inside Ms. Bristow's classroom. In this transcript, the class is sitting on the carpet while Lorena, a multilingual learner, shares her way of approaching the problem. As you read, consider the ways Ms. Bristow positioned Lorena for mathematical success.

Transcript 2.3

TRANSCRIPT	POSITIONING ACTS
<p>Ms. Bristow: You know, I saw some kids who did a much better job than I did drawing efficient pictures. So, I wanted to talk to you—I wanted a few of those kids to come up. Lorena, you're my first friend to come and share. We're going to talk about number two. Ms. Bristow gave six pieces of candy to Jake, Avery, Carl, and Erica. How much candy did she give out all together? Tell us about your picture.</p> <p><i>Lorena's work is shown on the board. She has the following drawn on her paper:</i></p>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> $6 + 6 + 6 + 6 = 24$ </div>	<p>Positioned Lorena as an efficient drawer in front of her peers</p> <p>Positioned Lorena as a student who can explain her thinking to peers</p> <p>Scanned Lorena's work so she could use gestures to enhance her explanation of her strategy</p>
<p>Lorena: Well, first I made four groups that have six . . . I did 6 plus 6 plus 6 plus 6 equals 12, I mean 24. And then I added. I had to draw a picture of six and then I added them and . . .</p>	<p>Did not interrupt Lorena as she self-corrected when describing her strategy</p>
<p>Ms. Bristow: So, um, your picture—did it take very long for you to draw that picture?</p>	<p>Asked Lorena to reflect on the efficiency of her picture in front of the class</p>
<p>Lorena: <i>[Shakes head no]</i></p>	
<p>Ms. Bristow: No. And you were able to quickly count that there were 24 of them? Wonderful. That's very efficient. Do you guys have comments or compliments for Lorena?</p>	<p>Repositioned Lorena as an efficient drawer in front of her peers; expected peers to attend to Lorena's mathematical thinking</p>

Source: Smith (2018).

STRATEGIES FOR POSITIONING MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS AS LEADERS

Here are some strategies you can use to position multilingual learners as leaders in your classroom (see also Try It! 2.2):

- ▶ Ask multilingual learners to share their mathematical thinking with the class during discussions. Ensure all students are respectful listeners as the student presents.
- ▶ Have multilingual learners present their ideas at the board. Scan their work so it can serve as a visual referent.
- ▶ Encourage multilingual learners to “teach” peers.
- ▶ Assign ownership of mathematical ideas or strategies to multilingual learners, such as “Lorena’s strategy.”
- ▶ Point out what is valuable about a multilingual learner’s idea, strategy, approach, or representation—for instance, “Marco was being very efficient,” or “If you want to be more efficient, you might use Esme’s strategy.”
- ▶ Give multilingual learners time and space to process and communicate their thoughts.

Sometimes the multilingual learners in your class may not yet possess the competencies to communicate their mathematical thinking in English. In such cases, you may

- ▶ ask multilingual learners to share their mathematical thinking in their first language (as opposed to English), which demonstrates to the class that these students have mathematical ideas worth sharing;
- ▶ ask multilingual learners to read in their first language if they have this competency, which shows a different aspect of these students to peers—specifically that they can read and know things;
- ▶ ask students who have learned words and phrases in different languages to share their knowledge and language with the class, which positions multilingualism as valued; and
- ▶ provide multilingual learners time to share their ideas with you as the teacher before sharing with the class as a whole as this provides space and time to practice speaking their ideas aloud to others.