

Two Languages, One Community. An Examination of Educational Opportunities.

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Changing Schools for Changing Students

**An Anthology of Research
on Language Minorities,
Schools & Society**

Co-Edited by

**Reynaldo F. Macías and
Reyna G. García Ramos**



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Publication**

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Changing schools for changing students <i>Reynaldo F. Macías & Reyna R. García Ramos</i>	v
K-12 Classroom Research	
Dialogue journal writing and the mediated development of writing: How do second language learners engaged in authentic writing activities develop as writers? <i>Sharon Ulanoff</i>	1
Supporting bilingual students' learning: Teacher and students in cooperation <i>Patricia L. Prado-Olmos</i>	35
Two languages, one community: An Examination of educational opportunities <i>Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group</i> <i>(Ana Floriani, Ana Inés Heras, María Franquiz, Beth Yeager,</i> <i>Louise Jennings, Judith Green, Carol Dixon)</i>	63
Changing instructional discourse for changing students: The Instructional conversation <i>Genevieve G. Patthey-Chavez & Claude Goldenberg</i>	107
The Power of reflectivity: Two teachers' views on reflective teaching in the multicultural classroom <i>Alexander B. Casareno</i>	137
Interventions and contextual forces	
Doubling school success in highest-risk Latino youth: Results from a middle school intervention study <i>Katherine Larson & Russell Rumberger</i>	157
Integrating science concepts into intermediate English as a second language (ESL) instruction <i>Rochel Gelman, George Meck, Laura Romo, Betty Meck</i> <i>& Catherine Fritz</i>	181
Immigrant Latino parents' future orientations for their children <i>Leslie Reese, Ronald Gallimore, Claude Goldenberg</i> <i>& Silvia Balzano</i>	205

Two languages, one community: An Examination of educational opportunities

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to build an argument for understanding the patterns of life in classrooms as a process of community construction. We argue that *a form of community* is constructed in all classrooms through the actions and interactions, norms and expectations, and roles and relationships that are negotiated and established by members as they affiliate over time. The types of communities that are constructed constrain or support the development of repertoires of possible actions that students might take, how students might display knowledge, and how they might view themselves as learners. In the bilingual sixth grade which formed the basis for the study described in this paper, this concerted activity led to the construction of one community with two languages, a

¹ The team of authors writing this project is composed of members of the research team in this classroom, the sixth grade teacher, and members of research teams engaged in concurrent studies in other classrooms. Other members of the research team, the students and the other participants in the class, are not recognized by name, but their contributions to the writing of this paper are visible in the representations of the life they have written together in the classroom and in excerpts from some of their writings. Order of authorship is not indicative of contribution. This research was funded by the California Writing Project. Publication under the Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group is a deliberate action to represent this community endeavor.