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INTRODUCTION

OVER THE COURSE OF our combined careers, we have spent several decades as teachers, teacher educators, and researchers working to understand and enhance the educational opportunities of immigrant children and their families. We consider ourselves very fortunate to have engaged in this work as it has enabled us to gain important insights into the lives of a population that has made many important contributions to U.S. society. Immigrants have fueled our economy through their employment, spending, and tax contributions, and enriched our society as they have shared their cultures, values, and experiences. As people who have immigrated to the U.S. and/or are embedded in networks of friendships and family relations that include immigrants, we are grateful for the contributions immigrants have made to our personal wellbeing, understandings of the world, and decisions about what matters in our lives.

In recent years, an important segment of this population, youngsters who are both newcomers to the U.S. and new to English, have been particularly vulnerable. Along with their families, many have experienced poverty, violence, and/or political oppression in their home countries. Their journeys to and experiences in the U.S. have often left them traumatized and anxious, particularly in the case of those who have come without their parents or who have been separated from their parents upon their arrival. Further, the current administration, supported by some politicians and members of the public, have maligned them and called for and instituted inhumane policies that have harmed them, thereby conveying a very clear message—they do not belong in the U.S. and the U.S. must maintain its sovereignty at the expense of their wellbeing. Fortunately, schools in this country are obligated to educate newcomers, regardless of their immigration status, and many are responding well to this situation, with compassion and understanding.

Despite efforts to meet the needs of newcomers, our education system in

the U.S. is struggling to meet the needs of these students. We know English language development (ELD), bilingual, mainstream, and content-area teachers who know how to work with and address the needs of newcomer students. However, even in states where there are large numbers of newcomer English learners (ELs), there are relatively few quality bilingual or ELD programs, and teachers often feel overwhelmed when working with newcomer students. Also, there is a shortage of experienced specialist bilingual and ELD teachers. Unfortunately, the learning experiences often provided to newcomer students are typically inferior to and less challenging than those provided to other students. Further, from our own experiences as teachers in four well-regarded teacher preparation programs, we know only too well how ill prepared teachers often are to work with newcomer ELs. With the increasing demand from politicians and government entities to limit the length of teacher preparation programs, this reality is further exacerbated. In fact, when teachers are surveyed, one of the most pressing issues they say they need help with is how to work with ELs (e.g., Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2006; Pease-Alvarez & Samway, 2014).

The central premise of this book is that newcomer students who are also new to English are best served by teachers who assume an advocacy role both in and outside their classrooms. Consequently, we do not subscribe to the all-too-common view that teachers are technicians responsible for implementing a mandated curriculum. Instead, we argue for a form of teacher advocacy that conceives of a) teachers as active agents in promoting educational equity and b) newcomer students and families as legitimate, valuable, and active contributors to the future of a democratic and equitable society. Building on this perspective, we make recommendations in this book about how teachers can act as advocates for newcomers through:

- Their curricular choices and classroom practices.
- Their actions beyond the classroom, paying special attention to collaboration with families and colleagues.

While our focus is on newcomers' development of English and subject matter knowledge in English, we see that goal as inextricably linked to the languages, cultures, and experiences that newcomers bring to school. These resources are the basis of their future learning, wellbeing, and civic participation. We focus on K–8 newcomer students because there is a dearth of professional literature on this topic.

Throughout the book, we include scenarios and examples based on what we have experienced and/or observed as teachers, researchers, and staff developers; some of our examples are composites of these experiences and observations. Names of teachers and students are pseudonyms. Chapters address the following issues.

Chapter 1: Who Are Our Newcomer Students? This chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book by describing the political, social, and economic contexts that have resulted in the recent flow of immigrants to the U.S.; the range of newcomer students' experiences in their home countries; the nature of their journeys to the U.S., including challenges they may have faced in making their journeys; and their experiences once they arrive in the U.S., including how they are schooled.

Chapter 2: Welcoming Newcomer Students. We describe what teachers need to know and what they can do to make schools and classrooms safe, nurturing, and welcoming environments for newcomer students and their families.

Chapter 3: Foundational Understandings about Second Language Learning and Teaching. This chapter focuses on foundational concepts underlying the meaning- and activity-based perspectives on learning and teaching English and content that we describe in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4: Assessing Newcomer Students. This chapter addresses a range of assessment-related issues that impact the schooling of K–8 newcomers, including the role and limitations of standardized testing, the use of ongoing formative assessment, and linking assessment to instruction.

Chapter 5: Developing Newcomers' Listening and Speaking. In this chapter, we put a spotlight on instructional practices designed to support newcomers' listening and speaking development in English.

Chapter 6: Developing Newcomers' Reading. This chapter focuses on how to support newcomers' development as readers of English. We emphasize the importance of using ongoing assessment to guide instruction, as well as ways to modify frequently encountered reading experiences in U.S. classrooms to meet the needs of newcomers.

Chapter 7: Developing Newcomers' Writing. In this chapter, we focus on how to support newcomers' writing development in English, with an emphasis on using an inquiry, learner-centered approach to teaching writing that draws on and extends newcomers' knowledge and expertise.

Chapter 8: Engaging Newcomers in Content Learning. This chapter focuses on how to engage newcomers in learning content, including science, social studies, and math, as they develop English. We highlight inquiry approaches to teaching and learning and the integration of language and literacy with content.

Chapter 9: Teachers Advocating for Newcomers Beyond the Classroom. In this chapter, we focus on what teachers can and have done beyond classroom settings as advocates for their newcomer students and their families. We focus on teachers' relationships with students' families, ways teachers can support families' efforts to enhance the learning of their children, and teacher activism.

We are lucky to have experienced and observed the impact of teachers of K–8 newcomer students taking on an advocacy role. In fact, we have been impressed with how many mainstream, bilingual, and ELD teachers have been very active and successful advocates for their students and their students' families and strive to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences. We hope that through this book many more mainstream, bilingual, and ELD teachers will become strong advocates for ELs, particularly newcomer students and their families. We also hope that our book will be supportive of preservice teachers as they learn to become teachers and that this will lead them to becoming strong advocates for their own students.