



Words Were All We Had: Becoming Biliterate Against the Odds (Language & Literacy)

Maria de la Ruz Reyes

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This engaging collection examines the personal narratives of a select group of well-respected educators who attained biliteracy at a young age in the era before bilingual education. Their autobiographical accounts celebrate and make visible a linguistic potential that has been largely ignored in schools and underscores the inextricable and emotional ties that Latinos have to Spanish. Teachers can glean important lessons about the individual potential of their Latino students from the lived experiences of successful Latinos whose life stories dispel the myth that Spanish is an obstacle to learning. These stories of tenacity and resilience offer hope for a new generation of bilingual learners who are too often forced to choose between English and their native language.

Book Features:

- Unique views of how Latino students navigated a restrictive schooling system that continues to ignore Latinos' linguistic and cultural resources.
- Powerful accounts of the support that Latino parents provided to help their children to do well in school and strive for excellence.
- Illustration of the important role that caring teachers can play in a child's life when they encourage students to learn in two languages.

María de la Luz Reyes is Professor Emerita at the University of Colorado–Boulder. Her books include *The Best for Our Children: Critical Perspectives on Literacy for Latino Students* (with John J. Halcón).

Contributors: **Steven F. Arvizu, María V. Balderrama, Lilia I. Bartolomé, María E. Fránquiz, Josué M. González, John J. Halcón, Carmen I. Mercado, Sonia Nieto, Pedro Pedraza, and Concepción M. Valadez**

“In this wonderful volume you are about to read elegantly crafted, heartfelt, and insightful autobiographical narratives. They moved me and instructed me as few writings have in our field of study.”

—From the Foreword by **Luis C. Moll**, University of Arizona

“The stories included in this collection reflect in extraordinary ways the importance of bilingualism and biliteracy for Latino children.”

—**Guadalupe Valdés**, Bonnie Katz Tenenbaum Professor of Education, Stanford University



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