

Make the Connection

Celebrating Language Diversity to Improve Achievement

Why Celebrate Language Diversity?

Celebrate to improve student achievement and to provide books in English Language Learners' native languages.

Research indicates:

- Extensive reading of materials written for ELL students promotes literacy development in the target language.
- Students are more motivated to read materials when they see their culture affirmed and reflected in the pages of the book.

The research confirms the importance of providing a variety of reading materials that reinforce the significance of the native language in conjunction with the target language.

To start celebrating language diversity, librarians can:

- Think reflectively about personal assumptions around language use other than their own.
- Select web pages in different languages, or use sites like the International Children's Digital Library www.icdlbooks.org.
- Select reliable print resources whose translations make sense to a native speaker.
- Use valid and responsible vendors when buying international materials to ensure the materials are authoritative and accurate. Capstone Press uses Dr. Martín Luis Guzmán-Ferrer, a retired consultant and translator at the Barahona Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for

Children and Adolescents at California State University San Marcos, for translations to ensure the integrity of their titles.

Try using bilingual books like:

- Lindeen, Carol K. *Pez payaso/Clown Fish*
- Schuette, Sarah L. *Autos Fórmula Uno/Formula One Cars*
- Lindeen, Carol K. *El canguro gigante/Giant Kangaroo*
- Doeden, Matt. *El hundimiento del Titanic/The Sinking of the Titanic*

Use interactive books to help students learn in hands-on, engaged environments in English and Spanish. The audio component allows students to actively listen to the story, teaching new vocabulary and improving their reading ability. Try interactive books like:

- Marks, Jennifer L. *Bajo las olas 1,2,3: Vamos a contar la vida marina/Under the Sea 1,2,3: Counting Ocean Life*
- Doeden, Matt. *Camionetas monstruo/Monster Trucks*

Go beyond including multiple language resources in the collection. Include books with main characters who acknowledge the importance of speaking multiple languages, speak their home languages in public spaces without guilt and ridicule, and/or triumph in the cultural alliance that exists between a speaker and those who speak his/her native language.

Ensure comprehensive selection by choosing attention-getting books:

- Written in students' native languages

- Which include issues, themes, and characters of interest
- Which contain text-to-self connections of common experiences, like struggles learning a new language and culture, or universal topics like love, acceptance, or sense of self.

Spark dialogues about language use by selecting books for book club discussions that include English Language Learners, characters who are fluent speakers of English and at least one other language, and/or characters who speak English but are immersed in a culture that requires the familiarity of another language.

Use professional resources that help you select and use multicultural materials in meaningful ways in your library like *Integrating Multicultural Literature in Libraries and Classrooms in Secondary Schools* by Kaavonia Hinton and Gail A. Dickinson, published by Linworth Publishing, Incorporated.

Apply the mission of the school library program to each student in the school, not just most students, to ensure effective users of information and ideas (AASL/AECT, 1998). Draw a circle around your library program and make sure all your patrons are included within it. ■

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