USING BILINGUAL BOOKS TO ENHANCE LITERACY AROUND THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on approaches and practices for developing biliteracy and bilingualism across diverse international settings. The authors present a framework for why bilingual books can be used to develop both native language and second or other languages through reading and writing activities. Bilingual books and a basic taxonomy of types of bilingual books are described. A rationale for their use is provided in that bilingual books provide linguistic resources such as vocabulary development for students to develop across two languages (Ernst-Slavit&Mulhern, 2003) while also fostering awareness of cultural and social awareness (e.g., Botelho& Rudman, 2009). The authors provide specific examples of both linguistic and cultural support. Specific activities that promote bilingualism and biculturalism as an aim include read-aloud, shared reading, and writing instruction which can incorporate the use of student-created books in both languages. These student-written bilingual texts can draw on local cultural and linguistic practices in their composition (e.g., Dworin, 2006). Finally, the authors conclude with ways that cross-age reading and family involvement can support bilingual development by using bilingual books.

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