Bilingual Books on the Brain: Their Approaches and Effects

Creating the book / Creando el libro

Why this project?

My Objectives:
- Create product that embodies both of my majors, Elementary Education and Spanish
- Educate others about the benefits of being a bilingual human
- Spark a love of books in my future students at a young age
- Provide a tangible product to showcase my research
- Create a product that will be enjoyed by children as well as utilized by teachers and parents

It is important: This project further educated me in teaching bilingual students and in considering the types of literature I provide in my future classroom. As I worked on the book and research, I learned about the benefits that code-switching in books has for children — bilingual or not. My research helped me discover that bilingual books encourage more enthusiasm for reading and help children better learn second languages. This project directly effects the quality of education I give my future students. If I can better choose literature that is quality in any language, and know how types of bilingual books effect my students, I will be a more qualified instructor... something all children, bilingual or not, deserve.

Brain Benefits of Bilingualism

- Prevents language delay
- Maintains and preserves students’ home language
- Enhances executive control students have better problem solving skills, memory, and thought processing skills
- Benefits attention span
- Promotes problem solving students will use a book’s illustrations and symbols to aid their understanding when learning to read books that are in their second languages
- Decreases cognitive decline and dementia later in life
- Builds cross cultural-social awareness as children learn about others and develop new perspectives

Unpacking the Terms

Bilingualism: the ability to speak two languages and speaking them habitually

Bilingual Books: books that use two languages to communicate with the reader

Full Text Translations: When the entire story is presented in two languages; both languages on one page

Single Language Translations: The entire book is translated and created into another

Embedded Text: Tells a story in one language with some words/phrases in another

Code-Switching: Alternating between two or more languages (or varieties of) in a single conversation

English Language Learner (ELL) Instructional Programs programs below
- Dual Language Classroom (DLC): Where ELL & English speakers are taught together in both languages (both groups become proficient in both)
- English as Second Language (ESL) Pullout: Students are in general classroom for part of the day and in ELL instruction the other part (put what each learns like you did above)
- English Immersion: Students are taught by a teacher proficient in their home language who only uses English to instruct (put what each learns like you did above)

Bilingual Books & Their Classroom Connection

- Encourages parents, who many not be proficient in English, to read to their kids
  - This keeps parents involved in their student’s education, especially when parents know that their home language is not an obstacle for their kids, but a positive asset.
- Better linguistic competency and general metalinguistic awareness
  - More often, they transfer concepts of grammar, phonemic awareness, phonics, syntax, and vocabulary across languages, making them more efficient in linguistic areas.
- Bilingual children often struggle with having small vocabularies in both of their languages. Bilingual books help to develop and increase their vocabularies
- Students will see accurate portrayals of themselves in the books they read. They won’t feel alienated from or because of the culture in social and educational settings

CHECK THIS OUT

Schools are moving away from traditional ELL programs which focus on getting students to English proficiency ASAP. Now, programs are instructing across subjects to both English speakers and English learners so all students are exposed to both languages and can be bilingual and biliterate at a young age.

10% of students in Portland, Oregon were put in a DLC through a lottery. These students outperformed non-dual language students in reading and language arts by an ENTIRE year of education

The book / El libro

My Method:
1. Examined and took notes on examples of Spanish-English books for children.
2. Decided on topic of camping with a student poll. (Group of 15 students in grades kindergarten through 5th grade)
   - 12 of 15 voted for the topic of camping –
   - 3 of 15 voted for the topic of how to make an apple pie
3. Researched approaches to bilingual books and the books’ effects on students and their learning.
4. Created product that showcases my research
5. Wrote and Illustrated book on story/humor based on students who chose the computer program BookWriting.
6. Summarized research findings for the poster presentation while book was created and printed.

Conclusion:

The English translations of each page rhyme in order to better motivate students learning English to read the English translations. I put the Spanish translations (non-rhyming) first on the pages for the same reason. Each page is full of descriptive, sensory vocabulary that appeals to all ages, but especially younger ages (as there are statistically more ELL in younger grades). Each page is accompanied by either: a colorful night time drawing, created using gel and sketch pens, or a photograph of local Iowa landscapes.

Stats at a Glance

California has the largest population of ELL students

About 80% of the 5 million ELL students in the U.S. are Spanish speakers

Table 1. Detailed Languages Spoken at Home by English-Speaking Ability for the Population 5 Years and Over 2011

| Population 5 years and over | Spoken only English at home | Spoken English at home | Spoken another language at home or English only | Spoken another language at home in ELL
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>291,224,901</td>
<td>239,824,760</td>
<td>28,992,510</td>
<td>6,394,360</td>
<td>3,574,070</td>
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<tr>
<td>90,277,001</td>
<td>89,848,519</td>
<td>2,802,504</td>
<td>24,186</td>
<td>23,352</td>
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No matter the type of program, it is vital that ELL instructors provide equal attention to these 3 academic areas

- General metalinguistic awareness
- Structural awareness
- General linguistic awareness

Hence the need for more bilingual books in the primary grades

Creating Las luces en la noche / The Lights in the Night