

Making Every Moment Count

In the Bilingual Classroom

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Introduction

As bilingual teachers we are faced with the daunting task of providing our students with a strong foundation in early literacy in their first language, while at the same time building oral language competencies in English. Our children must meet the same goals and objectives in their native language as their English-speaking counterparts and still show steady progress as second-language learners. Yet some children come to us with limited fluency in either language and we must work quickly to develop their oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

The following pages will present some quick and simple strategies and activities for making every moment count in the bilingual classroom. We will look at how ordinary activities that take place routinely in most classrooms can be adapted and extended to carry over into other parts of the day. Many of these activities involve the use of traditional stories, songs, rhymes, and poetry and can be used during transition times, literacy centers, and for both whole and small group instruction. Some can even be reinforced at home when we help parents realize what a valuable resource they can be in developing early literacy skills in their children.

A common thread running through all of these activities is the goal of making stories, language, songs, and poetry come alive for our students. They need opportunities to practice their oral language skills and early literacy behaviors in purposeful ways in a variety of settings. The more concrete, meaningful, and attractive we make these experiences for children the more quickly they will become truly fluent and literate in two languages.

Quick and Simple Activities to Make Every Moment Count in the Bilingual Classroom

1. Daily Read Alouds in both Spanish and English

- Ideally at least three times a day
- Provides vocabulary and exposure to book language so critical for second-language learners
- Reread familiar books and children's favorites over and over, first in Spanish later in English
- Should be interactive so children can respond, predict, and make connections to texts

2. "DEAR" Time to Create a Community of Readers

- Books available in your whole group area where everyone can read together
- Can be at beginning or end of day, during transitions, before or after lunch, or anytime children have a free moment
- Keep adding books as year progresses, store in baskets labeled by themes
- Consider having both a large library area for reading together as a group and also a cozy, intimate area for other times of the day
- Use this time to do "lap reading" with individuals or small groups of children
- Listen to children retell familiar stories
- Informal assessment of print concepts, book handling skills, etc.

3. Play with Language using Traditional Songs, Poetry, Rhymes, Finger Plays, and Circle Games

- Use props and physical movement where feasible to keep children active and engaged
- Do orally at first, then with charts, big books, pocket charts, etc. using authentic literature whenever possible
- Give children access to these throughout the day, in settings such as Listening, Drama, Pocket Chart, Big Book, and Overhead Centers

4. Dramatize Familiar Stories

- Start with whole group dramatizations, move to simple stories with repetitive texts
- Try to do once weekly, create system for keeping track of who has taken part (tongue depressors, binder, etc.)
- Improves comprehension, develops oral language and self-confidence, encourages use of “storybook language”
- Excellent for practicing English in a familiar context

5. Daily News and other Real Purposes for Writing

- Children see their words in print, later share the pen and take over more of the writing task
- Can be extended as literacy center activity, allowing for more practice and interaction with text
- Include many genres of writing: labels, lists, notes, letters, recipes, instructions, etc.
- Have a system for daily sign-in that evolves as the year progresses

6. Individual Literacy Tubs

- Make small-book versions of favorite songs and rhymes, as well as books with simple repetitive text during small group instruction
- Store books in tubs or plastic bags rather than sending home right away
- Revisit these books to reinforce concepts of print and one-to-one match
- Can be done whole group, with a partner, or as independent activity during center time
- Keep tubs close to whole group area for quick access during transitions and spare moments
- When books do go home let parents know they are a treasure and offer suggestions for their use at home
- As children begin guided reading, include leveled books they can read independently

7. Class Books

- Can be story response, innovation, or celebration of classroom events
- Each child contributes, teacher can take dictation or allow child to assist with writing
- Store in classroom library so children can revisit often
- Consider checking out class books for home use

8. Story Baskets

- Put props from a familiar story in basket with copy of book for retelling

- Find props and small toys in discount stores, dollar stores, party goods stores, etc.
- Improves fluency and comprehension through repeated retellings of familiar texts
- Can also be done whole group, with a partner, or independently during center time
- Model how to use correctly and work with a partner (One can read book while the other acts out story, for example)

9. Literacy Center Activities to Develop Oral Language, Fluency, and Comprehension

Listening Center

- Record a variety of materials: favorite stories, nonfiction books, music, poetry, magazine articles
- Record songs from classroom routines in both English and Spanish to reinforce basic concepts
- Record your own voice or the children's voices reading, singing, chanting, etc.
- Allow for oral or written responses to tape, such as "Stop and talk to your partner" or "Draw a picture of what you were seeing in your mind"

Overhead Projector Center

- Make transparencies of familiar rhymes, poems, finger plays, books with simple text
- Provide small pointers for tracking print
- Children can retell favorite stories using props
- Pair with a partner who can serve as language model

Dramatic Play Center

- Real life scenarios to stimulate oral language and vocabulary development
- Prop boxes and costumes to inspire imaginative play
- Puppets, flannel board, or magnetic board with story pieces for retelling familiar stories (Story baskets may be included here)
- Story props can be downloaded at sites such as:
www.littlegiraffes.com, www.hubbardscupboard.org,
www.drjean.org, www.kizclub.com
- Choose simple, sequential, repetitive texts for retelling
- Provide writing materials to record each others' stories for dramatization
- Group verbal, more confident children with quieter ones to serve as models for dramatization activities
- Shy children can blossom here with good models and opportunities to practice!

A Few Words about Parent Involvement

Another area in which bilingual teachers face a special challenge is in the effective communication with parents about early literacy activities in the classroom. Parents of bilingual students may have received a very different kind of education outside the United States where the emphasis was on rote learning, copying words written by the teacher, etc. Our goals for their children may seem strange and unfamiliar to them at first.

Suggestions for more actively involving parents:

1. Welcome parents into your classroom. Invite them to stay in the morning to read to their children, or to come at lunchtime and on special occasions. Allow them to bring younger siblings to school events.
2. Present information about the reading and writing processes, offering concrete suggestions for helping children at home. Model simple strategies they can feel comfortable trying on their own.
3. Discuss community resources available for their use. Many recent immigrants are not aware of how accessible books and other resources are through the public library system for example.
4. Help them to understand that a solid foundation in oral language and literacy development in Spanish leads to eventual proficiency in English. Parents are eager for this to happen quickly and sometimes resist instruction in Spanish.
- 5. Most importantly, help parents understand what a valuable resource they can be in developing early literacy skills in their children. Encourage them to share the stories, songs, rhymes, and circle games they themselves learned as children.**

Resources for parent education and involvement materials in Spanish:

www.colorincolorado.org Information, activities, and advice for Spanish-speaking parents

Cuando un niño lee... and *Cuando un niño escribe...* (Seedling Publications) These booklets explain the reading and writing processes in simple language for parents with suggestions for activities to do at home.

Sing, Chant and Dramatize:
A Compilation of Spanish Resources for Early Literacy

Good Sources for Spanish Songs, Rhymes, and Fingerplays

- 1) Anything by José Luis Orozco
Such as: Diez Deditos, De Colores, Fiestas, Lírica Infantil, Arrullos
Published by Scholastic
- 2) ¡Pío Peep! Traditional Spanish Nursery Rhymes
Selected by Alma Flor Ada & F. Isabel Campoy
Published by Evelyn Aron
- 3) Cántame en Español (Sing to Me in Spanish) with tapes
By Evelyn Aron
Published by Evelyn Aron
- 4) Los pollitos dicen (The Baby Chicks Sing)
By Nancy Abraham Hill & Jill Syverson-Stork
Published by Scholastic
- 5) Tito, Tito (Rimas, Adivinanzas y Juegos Infantiles)
By Isabel Schon
Published by Editorial Everest S.A.
- 6) Doña Blanca and other Hispanic Nursery Rhymes and Games
Collected & translated by Isabel Schon
Published by T.S. Denison & Company, Inc.
- 7) El toro pinto and other songs in Spanish
Selected & Illustrated by Anne Rockwell
Published by Aladdin Paperbacks
- 8) Tortillitas para mama and other Nursery rhymes (Spanish & English)
Selected by Griego, Bucks, Gilbert, & Kimball
Published by Henry Holt & Company
- 9) Mis primeros poemas y canciones
Antología infantil
Published by Scholastic
- 10) ¡Cancionero!
(Level A, Songs for Spanish phonics and rhyming)
Published by Hampton Brown
- 11) Días y días de poesía
Anthology selected by Alma Flor Ada
Published by Hampton Brown
- 12) Colección "Deditos" from Lectorum Catalog
Spanish nursery rhymes (8 titles)
Colección "Pequeñitos" from Lectorum Catalog
Nursery Rhyme Collection (4 titles)

Good Stories to Dramatize in Spanish

(***denotes recommendation by several teachers)

- 1) Cuentos tradicionales published by Rigby
Spanish adaptations of 12 traditional stories
(i.e. The Gingerbread Man, 3 Billy Goats Gruff, 3 Little Pigs, Little Red Hen, Jack & the Beanstalk, Ugly Duckling, Chicken Little, etc.)

- 2) Rimas y Risas published by Hampton-Brown
8 titles:
 - Los seis deseos de la jirafa
 - Sale el oso
 - El chivo en la huerta
 - La gallinita, el gallo, y el frijol
 - Veo, veo, ¿qué veo?
 - Una semilla y nada más
 - Pinta, pinta Gregorita
 - Pan, pan, gran pan

- 3) Un cuento más series published by Hampton-Brown
4 titles:
 - Chirrinchinchina, ¿qué hay en la tina?
 - El oso más elegante
 - ¡Manzano manzano!
 - Pequeño coala busca casa

- 4) Translations of any story that can be dramatized in English,
i.e. Froggy & Clifford stories, Robert Munsch stories, etc. Good sources for Spanish versions of these:
 - Lectorum Catalog
 - Scholastic Catalog
 - Permabound Catalog

Some favorites(***) include:

Palmas Palmitas (Clap Your Hands) by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

De la cabeza a los pies (From Head to Toe) by Eric Carle

Se venden gorras (Caps for Sale) by Esphyr Slobodkina

trans. Teresa Mlawer

Las lechucitas (Owl Babies) by Martin Waddell

trans. Andrea B. Bermudez

La Cucharacha Martina: A Caribbean Folktale (traditional Spanish tale)

La semilla de zanahoria (The Carrot Seed) by Ruth Krauss

Nadarín (Swimmy) by Leo Lionni

La vaca que decía oink (The Cow that went Oink) by Bernard Most

Vamos a cazar un oso (Going on a Bear Hunt) by Michael Rosen

La casa adormecida (The Napping House) by Audrey and Don Wood

La señora lavatodo (Mrs. Wishy Washy) by Joy Cowley

La oruga muy hambrienta (The Very Hungry Caterpillar) by Eric Carle

Catalog Resources for Quality Spanish Materials

1. Arte Público Press, www.artepublicopress.com (Piñata Books)
2. Bilingual Educational Services, Inc., www.besbooks.com
3. Del Sol Books, www.delsol.com or www.almaflorida.com
4. Hampton-Brown, www.hampton-brown.com
5. Heinemann Classroom, www.heinemannclassroom.com
6. José Luis Orozco Books and CD's, www.joseluisorozco.com
7. Lectorum Publications, Inc., www.lectorum.com
8. Libritos Míos (Spanish versions of Keep Books), The Ohio State University, (614) 292-2909
9. Mariuccia Iaconi Book Imports, www.mibibook.com
10. National Geographic School Publishing Nonfiction Literacy Catalog, www.nationalgeographic.com/education
11. Newbridge, www.newbridgeonline.com
12. Pearson Learning Group, www.pearsonlearning.com
13. Permabound, www.permabound.com
14. Rigby English Language Learner and Spanish Resources Catalog, www.rigby.com
15. Santillana USA, www.santillana.com
16. Scholastic Bilingual/ELL Catalog, www.scholastic.com
17. Scholastic en español, aqui@scholastic.com
18. Songs for Little Ones/Canciones para Pequeños, www.thefeltsource.com
19. Steck-Vaughn, www.steck-vaughn.com
20. Wright Group Spanish Catalog, www.WrightGroup.com

â€˜Make every moment countâ€™ is an entirely different construction. To begin with, â€˜makeâ€™ here is an imperative verb. This is the tense we use for orders, suggestions or instructions and is generally in the 2nd person plural or singular - â€˜youâ€™. You have two entirely different sentences here. In â€˜Every moment countsâ€™, the subject is â€˜every momentâ€™ and the verb is in the present simple. The conjugation of this verb tense is as follows: I count, You count, We count, They count, but He/She/It counts. â€˜Every momentâ€™ is the 3rd person singular - â€˜itâ€™. Hence the verb must be â€˜countsâ€™ here. â€˜Make every moment countâ€™ is an entirely different construction. To begin with, â€˜makeâ€™ here is an imperative verb. Making Every Moment Count, 03:59. When I Get My Name In Lights, 03:04. I Couldn't Have Done It Without You, 03:43. Install the free Online Radio Box application for your smartphone and listen to your favorite radio stations online - wherever you are! other options. Now playing: Eagles Hotel California.