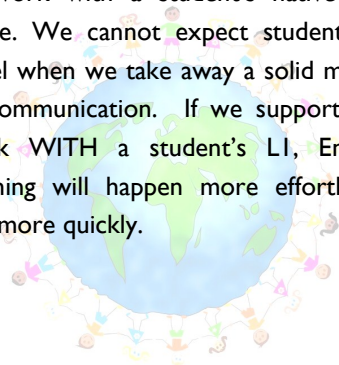


Is development of a student's native language (LI) important?

Aren't we suppose to be teaching them English?

Yes! LI development IS important. It has been proven that L1 and L2 skills are interdependent. This means as students learn one language, they are dependent on their knowledge and skills of their other language (Cummins, 2005). They work together to increase linguistic learning. This is not dependent on how closely linked or similar the two languages are. Even if the languages have completely different alphabets, print organization, or word origins, students have plenty to draw upon when they have been successful and active in learning their native language first.

So, yes, while we are suppose to be teaching English, we must also continue to work with a student's native language. We cannot expect students to excel when we take away a solid means of communication. If we support and work WITH a student's LI, English learning will happen more effortlessly and more quickly.



A parent's guide to...

Using your Native Language to Promote English Language Development



Bibliography

- Cummins, J. (2005). Language proficiency, bilingualism, and academic achievement. In P. A. Richard-Amato, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Academic Success for English Language Learners: Strategies for K-12 Mainstream Teachers* (pp. 76-86). White Plains, NY: Pearson Education Incorporated.
- Forrest, S.N. (2004). Implications of No Child Left Behind on family literacy in a multicultural community. In R. D. Robinson, & M. C. McKenna (Eds.), *Issues and Trends in Literacy Education* (4th ed., pp. 167-174). White Plains, New York: Pearson Education Incorporated.
- Freeman, D. E., & Freeman, Y. S. (1993). Strategies for promoting the primary languages of all students. *Reading Teacher*, 46 (7), 552-558.
- Towell, J., & Wink, J. (1993). *Strategies for monolingual teachers in multilingual classrooms*.

By Jenovia Chunyk

Myths vs. Truths



Myth: A student's home language is irrelevant to their L2 acquisition and sometimes even a barrier.

Truth: A student's home language is deeply connected to their acquisition and understanding of their L2. The more skilled they are in their L1, the easier time students will have learning English.

Myth: Language instruction should only be focused on English development. The more a student is immersed in a language, the faster he or she will learn.

Truth: Research has shown that bilingual and dual-language immersion programs are highly successful. Studies have proven that students in these programs outperform students from all-English programs.

Myth: Limited English Proficient parents cannot contribute to their student's literacy development and L2 acquisition.

Truth: Parents play a vital role in their child's acquisition of English. Although some parents may not be able to assist with English literacy, the *can* promote literacy in their own language which will transfer over to their child's L2 acquisition.

Strategies for Promoting the L1...



Student Publishers

Give ELLs the opportunity to publish and share stories and books that they have written in their L1.

Collaboration

Connect your student with parents, community members, or other students who speak the same native language.

Videos & Other Media

Use videos and other media resources in your student's L1 to motivate and build background knowledge.



Guest Speakers

Invite community members, storytellers, and speakers into your classroom/home that speak the different native languages heard in your classroom.



Need More Resources?

Check out the Whatcom Hispanic Organization for great resources and events for your family.

<http://whatcomhispanic.org/index.html>

360-840-7896

Home Written Language

Surround your home with signs, posters, labels, and photos that exhibit both your native language and English.

Home Library

Begin creating a rich and extensive home library with a variety of non-fiction and fiction texts in your child's native language.



Read with your Child

Read with your child in your native language. In addition to books, have newspapers and magazines available in your L1 as well.



Journal Writing

Allow your child the time to write in journals using their choice of L1 or L2. These journals can be content journals, response journals, or even personal journals.



Pen Pals

Organize a pen pal relationship with another school that connects students with the same native languages. Pen pal relationships could be with international schools as well.