



Reviewed work:

*Reading and Writing in More Than One Language: Lessons for Teachers.* (1999). Elizabeth Franklin (Ed.). Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

[http://www.tesol.org/s\\_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=6&DID=7](http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=6&DID=7) Pp. 149 ISBN 0939791765. \$20.95 (TESOL members \$15.95)

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This book is an edited collection which includes contributions from Katherine Davies Samway, Monica Ford, Elizabeth Franklin, David and Yvonne Freeman, Sarah Hudelson, Mary Maguire, Carlyn Syvanen, Carole Urzua, and Kathryn Weed. It is designed as a support for mainstream teachers in primary and secondary schools who teach learners of English as an additional language. The majority of chapters report on studies in primary schools, although the Freeman's chapter explores the notion of success for learners in secondary schools. For a busy teacher, just reading through the summary and suggestions at the end of each chapter would give a wealth of ideas that could be readily applied to the classroom, though some ideas need to be read in the context of the chapter to be more fully understood. The book also provides opportunities for readers to follow the progress of learners who have been given an opportunity to read from books and materials in their mother tongue, then to write in their first language before relating their home and community experiences to those of the school.

The format followed in each chapter will appeal to many readers, as it describes real classrooms using scenes, vignettes, conversations and art produced by bilingual students. There are examples of successful classroom practices which enable students to read and write more effectively. Each chapter closes with a list of suggestions for teachers ranging from techniques for using artwork along with story telling to enhance literacy with young learners, to tips for setting up cross-age tutoring, to ideas for improving your understanding of learners and their background and the relationships between the school and the family.

The editor states four key aims of the book on the back cover. These aims are not addressed sequentially – some chapters are relevant to one aim and others to several aims.

1. *Learn about the language and literacy strengths of bilingual learners and the knowledge students bring to school from homes and communities.*

Hudelson (Chapter 5) details a case study of a young girl who attends a school with an extensive bilingual programme in Spanish up to third grade. This school allowed children who were more comfortable using Spanish to begin their formal literacy in Spanish, which continued to grade three. The teachers were looking for ways to document progress that were more in line with the ways they were teaching. They collected samples of children's work and used this to provide themselves, parents and children with a more complete picture of their learning than report card grades.

Franklin (Chapter 6) studies the fiction writing of two Dakota first grade boys using both qualitative and quantitative methods examining both self-initiated and teacher directed writing and categorising them according to genre, theme and style. This chapter also notes how children's writing can change in response to extensive reading of multicultural literature.

Maguire (Chapter 7) follows one 8-year-old girl (in a group of 32 students followed for three years). She focuses on how the girl acquired the social practices that surround written language in different sociocultural and linguistic contexts and in two domains, home and school. A fundamental result, she believes, of listening to children's voices, noticing, and understanding their biliteracy, is the development of a deep respect and support for diversity and appreciation of the diverse contexts in which bilingual children live. This chapter is especially useful in encouraging teachers to discuss home and school literacy practices with parents, children and other teachers as they come to acknowledge the "intricate relationships between children's texts and their contexts" (p. 146). Maguire uses looking, listening and documenting as ways to understand children and their progress. She advocates that teachers' theoretical beliefs about language and literacy provide "different but not equal opportunity for children to engage in language learning and literacy" (p. 147).

2. *Discover teaching techniques that allow L1 literacy to support the development of L2 literacy.*

This aim is dealt with in two chapters focusing on primary level: one by Weed (Chapter 4) using story-telling, discussion and art; the other by Hudelson (Chapter 5) who follows one reader's progress to bi-literacy. However both chapters presume that the teacher can converse with the learner in the mother tongue and has first language readers available. For teachers who have such resources at their disposal the chapters will be useful.

Samway (Chapter 3) describes and outlines how to implement a cross-age tutoring programme with ESOL students. Samway's procedure was to get half each of the students in two classes to exchange for a period and share books in pairs. The common language could be mother tongue or English. The reading books may be bilingual, English or another language. During the lesson one child may do more of the reading or the students may take more equal turns.

3. *Find ways to evaluate bilingual learners so as to understand their strengths and biliteracy development.*

Hudelson (Chapter 5) centres on a bilingual programme in a primary school, evaluating one child's progress through observing her reading, checking her reading log and reading response record, and examining the teacher's anecdotal records as well as the learner's response letter to books she read in third grade. The detail involved in this long-term individual qualitative case study may not be too relevant for use with a class of learners, though the anecdotal comments and ideas might be. The author argues that "this detailed observation and documentation of children, and this utilization of children's processes and products, is precisely the kind of evaluation for which whole language professionals should be advocating and working to implement" (p. 92).

Freeman and Freeman (Chapter 1) focus on success for secondary learners and outline the challenges secondary teachers face that limit the possibility of success for students who are learning English. Two such challenges are: accurate assessment and awareness of learners' needs because many may simply become invisible. Another challenge is providing a suitable curriculum to allow learners to develop their linguistic and academic abilities. The second half of this chapter considers in detail what it means to acculturate rather than assimilate, following Cortes' (1994) multiculturation model. This model challenges teachers and students to work together to achieve the goals of multiculturation and success and provides interesting, detailed ideas to explore.

4. *Be able to work with parents so that the language valued by the learners' families is also present in the classroom*

Several chapters make reference to this aim. Urzua (Chapter 2) challenges and motivates teachers to have a wide variety of texts in the classroom from many different genres, including some in L1, and to highlight purpose in reading – "children learn what language is because they know what language does" (p. 30) A key question then is "What do I want my students to do?" Urzua outlines a list of literate behaviours rather than skills, and describes what they might look like. She also describes some useful activities such as dialogue journals and cross-age tutoring. She promotes authenticity of language and literacy as a key to growth. Many of her suggestions for teachers are useful for working with parents and other members of the community.

*Reading and Writing in More Than One Language* is of particular relevance to mainstream primary teachers who have students with English as an additional language. The book has a very readable format with descriptions of real classroom literacy activities and includes practical suggestions at the end of each chapter. Those teachers who value the richness that bilingual and multilingual students bring from their communities will be encouraged by the breadth of ideas and the warmth of interactions between communities and schools. There are also ideas to stimulate and encourage and techniques for reflective practice that will make for more effective teaching.

## Reference

Cortes, C. (1994). Multiculturation: An educational model for a culturally and linguistically diverse society. In K. Spangenberg-Urbschat & R. Pritchard (Eds.), *Kids come in all languages: Reading instruction for ESL students* (pp.22-35). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

## About the Reviewer

Jeannie Martin Blaker is a senior lecturer at Unitec NZ and has taught immigrants learning English for 20 years. She has been a language teacher educator of a graduate diploma and of home tutors. She has trained bilingual tutors around New Zealand to teach English literacy to pre-literate learners and has been involved in family literacy projects.