

I am pleased to be invited to introduce this excellent collection of research reports centered around literacy development. It is a rich and diverse collection but the individual studies share a common focus on putting literacy in a social cultural context. Though the subjects in the studies range from first grade pupils to adults the studies all show literacy in use and in development.

The first article, *Developing Emergent Biliteracy: Guiding Principles for Instruction* draws an important distinction between ESL programs in the United States in which the goal is transition from a home language to English and what are called in Colombia and other countries binational schools in which the goal is parallel literacy in both languages from the beginning. "The main goal of these binational schools is for full bilingualism and biliteracy in Spanish and a prestige language (e.g., English, German, French, Italian); thus, creating elite bilinguals." This notion of the parents wanting their kids to be part of a "bilingual elite" is in sharp contrast to the common view of bilingualism in the US.

Using Paulo Freire's concepts and a critical literacy framework " *Circles of Culture: Literacy As A Process of Social Inclusion*, reports a current adult literacy program in Northeastern Brazil.

The authors of *Revaluing the Reading Process of Adult ESL/EFL Learners Through Critical Dialogues* believe that "ESL/EFL learners reading in English often have difficulties understanding references...in various popular texts, not because of complexity of grammar or vocabulary but due to their unfamiliarity with socio-cultural aspects of the English material they read." A problem in becoming fully literate in English is that international students "rarely consider that what they know about their reading in their first language can support their reading and in the second language." The authors present the experiences they provide for their graduate students to help them use their L1 literacy abilities in reading English.

A second grade classroom study, *Crossing Consciousness: A literature discussion exploring Friends from the Other Side* looks at bilingual children constructing meaning during a book discussion. The children were linguistically and economically diverse. The discussion centered on issues in their young lives.

Developing emergent biliteracy: Guiding principles for instruction

The author of *Characterizing preservice teachers' responses to literacy* used read-alouds in an English class for pre-service teachers. The author found that "Students benefited from the reading-alouds in terms of opportunities to interact among themselves, practice their oral and written skills, and enjoy the pleasures of reading, thus building ground to a positive experience that may be emulated in their future teaching"

The next article, *Affirming Diversity Through Reading*, reports a study in which college students critiqued a selection of texts written by non-canonical, female and Afro-American writers. The researcher studied, through their oral discussion, their beliefs regarding gender and ethnicity.

Guided by Emilia Ferreiro's findings of the comparative study of monolingual children use of punctuation in texts, the authors of *An exploratory study of punctuation in bilingual children's texts* analyzed the distribution of punctuation marks in bilingual first/second grade children's texts when writing the story of *Caperucita Roja*.

In *Reading the world as a literacy practice: a teacher's reflection*, the researcher reports development of a book club in a facility adults displaced by the turmoil in Colombia, a common social reality there. The author used critical pedagogy theories to analyze the process of development of the club and the responses of the displaced adults.

In the paper, *Design of Literacy Activities to Promote Writing with Children: An Experience with Second Graders*, another bilingual teacher of 2nd grade pupils describes herself as a "kid-watcher" who carefully observed her pupils as they became writers able to express their response to the world they were growing up in.

Both teachers and researchers should find these articles useful in considering ideas for further studies and classroom innovations.

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