



CULTURE LINKS, LLC
OPENING MINDS. CONNECTING WORLDS
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Knowledge and Considerations that Support and Encourage Language Diversity

Academic Performance and Engagement

Cognitive flexibility: positive effects on mental growth

- People who speak two languages often outperform monolinguals on general measures of executive function
- Bilinguals can pay focused attention without being distracted
- Also, improve in the ability to switch from one task to another

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Metalinguistic awareness:

Learning two languages makes students more aware of how language works in general

- Generally easier for them to learn more languages later on

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- Compared with students in English-only classrooms or in one-way immersion, dual-language students have higher test scores and also seem to be happier in school

- Better attendance
- Fewer behavioral problems
- Higher parent involvement

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Rather than a symbol of confusion, code switching should be viewed as a strength. Code switching illustrates...

- High levels of syntax – ability to use the governing rules in each language appropriately to insert the terms in correct placement
- Flexibility and increased vocabulary to relay ideas with greater accuracy

Character Benefits

- Raised **intercultural consciousness**
 - Greater sensitivity and understanding of other cultures and other languages
 - Language is embedded in culture
 - Immediately puts someone in the place of deeper understanding of the cultures associated with that language

Increases Empathy

- Young children being raised bilingual have to follow social cues to figure out which language to use with which person and in what setting
 - Results in bilingual children as young as age 3 show a head start on perspective-taking and theory of mind – both of which are fundamental social and emotional skills

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Even More Character and Communication Advantages

Speaking another language with others allows for...

- Ability to connect on a deeper level
- More likely to be flexible in understanding that there are different ways of thinking, traditions, behaviors, etc.

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Employment Benefits

- Wider choice of jobs in various fields as well as in various places, including other countries
- businesses continue to expand into other countries

Health Benefits

Protection against cognitive decline and dementia

- Actively using two languages seems to have a protective effect against age-related dementia — perhaps relating to the changes in brain structure

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Good for Society

Allowing for maintenance of heritage languages would allow for...

- Enhanced International and Cross Cultural Communications
- Improved Global Commerce
- More Successful International Diplomacy
 - Lessen Security Risks

Consider the Variety of ELLs

Everyone is an individual with intricacies relating to their language abilities and skills

Some of the many ideas to consider....

- Age of arrival to U.S.
- What generation American?
- Exposure to other language
- Sibling order
- Fluency in other language

Guidelines for Improving Communications

- Demonstrate genuine interest
 - Maintain focus and eye contact with Speaker
- Match one another's pace
- Help when possible
- Speak clearly/not mumbling
- Be aware of whether Listener comprehends (pay attention to non-verbal cues, as well)
- Confirm and summarize what was said

Increase Engagement through Acceptance and Support

- Increase Student and Community Engagement through giving them a voice!
 - Comfort and Encouragement to do so
 - Must be viewed by all as a priority
 - Provide training for culturally responsive teaching to increase chances for overall success!

Prompt others to show empathy!

What would you want?

- Provide translation support, whenever possible
- Student and Parent led meetings
 - Safe space to discuss challenges and successes with one another in their shared language
 - Share thoughts, questions and concerns with school staff – translators explain to staff

TEDx: Your Name is the Key!

- Use your student names (and your own!) to begin invaluable discussions about language and cultural diversity
 - Every name has a story...
 - Language origin
 - Reason given that name... ie. cultural norms, named after grandfather as part of family tradition, last name includes mother's maiden name and father's last name, named after celebrity, name meaning, etc.)
 - Name changes in family history ie. original last name, ancestor's first names that may have changed over time, reasons for accepting or resisting changes...
 - See and share TED video (YouTube) with staff and students to illustrate the ideas, begin conversations and collaborations that build commUNITY
 - **Free resource** can be found on culturelinksllc.com as a supplement to be used with or without *Teach Us Your Name!*
 - Follow and see @culturelinksllc Twitter posts to see how other educators incorporated this learning in their schools and classrooms
- Also, Facebook and LinkedIn posts at Huda Essa
