



# TEACHER SUPPORT MATERIAL

LINGUISTICALLY AND  
CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE  
TEACHING PRACTICE



**Supporting Pasifika learners  
through dual language texts**

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**Fa'afetai, fakaaue, fakafetai, mālō, meitaki**

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# FOREWORD

*Kia orāna, fakaalofa lahi atu, mālō e lelei,  
mālō nī, tālofa lava*

The *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources consist of:

- ▶ dual language flip-books for shared reading with Pasifika students
- ▶ support material for families
- ▶ online audio support in Pasifika languages and English
- ▶ teacher support material (TSM), including online resources that “unpack” the dual language books.

Pasifika children are exposed to a range of early language and literacy experiences in the home, at Pasifika early childhood centres, at church, at Sunday school, and in other Pasifika community settings. These early language and literacy experiences are sometimes in Pasifika languages and sometimes in English. The *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources offer opportunities to build on all the early language and literacy experiences that Pasifika students bring to school, not just their experiences in English.

The *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources are designed to help teachers of junior class students to work in partnership with Pasifika families and communities to ensure that, when students start primary school with a background of early language and literacy experiences in a Pasifika language, teachers and families are able to build on these experiences. The resources have been developed with new entrant class programmes delivered in English in mind. Many of them first appeared in the Ready to Read and Tupu series.

Using these resources, teachers, students, families, and Pasifika communities will be able to work together to take advantage of all the early language and literacy experiences and skills that Pasifika students bring to their first years at school.

The dual language resources are in English and:

- ▶ gagana Sāmoa
- ▶ gagana Tokelau
- ▶ lea faka-Tonga
- ▶ reo Māori Kūki 'Airani
- ▶ vagahau Niue.



## INTRODUCTION

*A tele sulu, 'ua tele figota.  
Nifi eni kae nafa 'amui.*

*More torches, more shellfish.  
Small now, great later.*

The *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources have been developed for New Zealand teachers in English-medium classrooms who are working with bilingual Pasifika students. The resources will help you, as you work in partnership with your students' families and your local Pasifika community, to support your students' development of oral language, reading, and writing in English through the transfer of knowledge from their Pasifika languages. As you use the dual language resources, you are not expected to teach your students how to understand, speak, read, or write in Pasifika languages.



*In this resource, the phrase “Pasifika community” refers to the culturally distinct Pasifika communities that together make up New Zealand’s Pasifika community.*

Even if you have little or no familiarity with a Pasifika language, the teacher support material (TSM) explains how you can use the dual language books and supporting audio material with bilingual Pasifika students. It offers suggestions for building partnerships with families so that they will use the books at home, too.

In addition to this generic TSM, *Linguistically and Culturally Responsive Teaching Practice*, separate online *Unpacking the Books* documents “unpack” the resources in each Pasifika language, and also provide:

- ▶ some information about each culture and language
- ▶ some useful classroom language and reading prompts in the language
- ▶ the titles of some other resources that might prove useful.

The dual language resources are designed to help you:

- ▶ connect the students’ learning at home and in the community with their learning in the classroom
- ▶ make connections between the Pasifika languages the students bring to school and the learning they do in English.



Pasifika students start school with varying degrees of bilingual proficiency. Their proficiency will range from *some* understanding to considerable fluency. For more information about the range of bilingual proficiencies that students bring to school, see the table on page 33.

This TSM introduces research about additive bilingualism and teaching practices that support bilingual students to successfully learn how to read and write in English. It is meant to be a practical resource. It introduces ways in which you can use the language that students bring to school as the foundation for learning. It acknowledges the challenge that many Pasifika students face as they attempt to gain the academic English-language skills they need to access the New Zealand Curriculum, including how to read and write in English. It recognises the challenges you face as a teacher. These do not include teaching – or teaching in – a Pasifika language.

In the material that follows, you will find advice on how to incorporate the use of the dual language books in your language and literacy teaching programme. In the accompanying online *Unpacking the Books* resources, you will find references to other resources that could help you to support your students to bridge the gap between what is familiar and what is new.

Though you could work through this TSM by yourself, a better approach would be to partner with others to explore the new ideas, try out the recommended approaches, and share what you learn.

We encourage you to share your inquiry with families and other members of the Pasifika community to build genuine learning-centred partnerships with the families of the students. Encourage them to share their learning with you. With this in mind, a resource is provided to share with families: *Supporting Your Child’s Learning through Reading*. We recommend that you do not send this booklet home without explanation. A more effective approach is a face-to-face meeting with families to explore the contents of the family support material together. On page 12, you will find a letter for families to share at this meeting, including questions that it may be helpful to ask. This approach is strongly recommended. For Pasifika language versions of the letter and questions, look in *Unpacking the Books* – there is an *Unpacking the Books* for each language. For more information about *Unpacking the Books*, see page 48.

The resource to share with families is provided as a dual language flip booklet. For example, here are the covers of the version in English and gagana Sāmoa:





# 'O le Tū'uga



Liz Tui Morris

Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts



# SECTION 1 – ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

## Partner with the Pasifika community

Reciprocal learning partnerships between school and the community are critical to all learning, including literacy development. Considerable attention has been given to this issue in New Zealand, particularly the relationship between schools and the families and communities of students whose cultural background differs from the majority culture of their teachers (Gorinski and Fraser, 2006). Reading Together and the Home-School Partnership Programme are examples of initiatives in which schools and teachers have built relationships that connect students' learning in and out of school.<sup>1</sup>

Recent research (Si'ilata, 2014; Si'ilata et al., 2012) identifies specific literacy practices that work for Pasifika students. As well as classroom practice and school leadership, this research has important messages about community partnerships. An important message is about the difficulty of achieving *genuine* reciprocity. Schools that value empowering parents and other family members to support learning achieve improved learning outcomes for their students.

*Can I incorporate my Pasifika students' out-of-school family and community literacy practices into their learning in my classroom? What are these practices? How can I build on them?*

- ▶ The community engagement site<sup>2</sup> is an excellent source of information and ideas.
- ▶ The *LEAP* resource<sup>3</sup> has a section focused on “Family background and teachers”.
- ▶ *Connections and Conversations: Making Links for Learning* (Ministry of Education, 2006a) provides ideas for making connections with Pasifika communities.

## A letter for families

The following letter is designed to be handed out at a home-school partnership meeting with your students' families. Dual language versions are available in the accompanying online *Unpacking the Books* teacher support resources. Included with the letter are some questions. They are designed to help you gather some information from the families of your Pasifika students about the languages they use at home.

In the following example, reference is made to lea faka-Tonga, but to ask the same questions about another Pasifika language, simply look in the appropriate *Unpacking the Books*.

<sup>1</sup> The Best Evidence Synthesis (BES) on *The Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement* found that genuine home-school collaboration could lift children's achievement significantly.

<sup>2</sup> <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/Principles/Community-engagement>

<sup>3</sup> <http://pasifika.tki.org.nz/LEAP/What-helps-students-to-learn>

## Greetings

Our school supports bilingual students who speak a Pasifika language and English. These students bring early language and literacy skills and experiences in two languages to school – which we can build on when your child is reading at school in English. So some of the books your child will bring home may be in both your family's Pasifika language and English. Read them to your child in your strongest language.

We will be using these books to build connections between what your child knows about your language to help them to read in English. Many of the skills of reading in a Pasifika language can be transferred to reading in English. Dual language books give us a chance to build on all the language and reading experiences and skills that your child brings to school.

The following information would help me, but it is up to you whether you wish to share it.

## Thank you



Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: \_\_\_\_\_



Which languages are spoken in your home?

- Lea faka-Tonga
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



What languages do other family members usually speak at home?

- Lea faka-Tonga
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



What language does Dad usually speak at home?

- Lea faka-Tonga
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



Has your child attended a Tongan-language early childhood centre in New Zealand or a pre-school in Tonga?

- Yes
- No



What language does Mum usually speak at home?

- Lea faka-Tonga
- English
- Other languages: \_\_\_\_\_



Does your child attend a Sunday school where lea faka-Tonga is spoken?

- Yes
- No

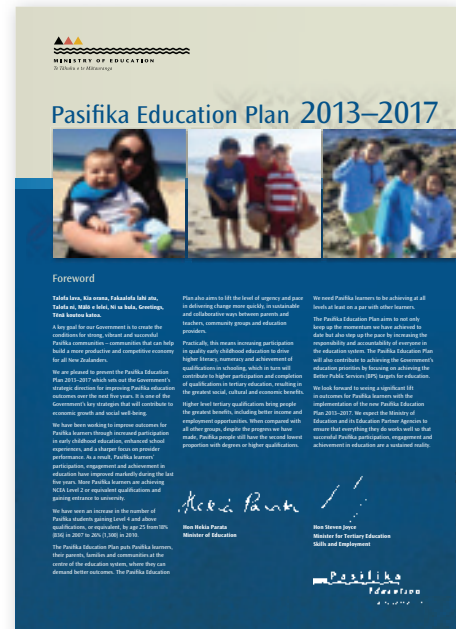
*Thank you*

# The Pasifika Education Plan

The vision of the *Pasifika Education Plan* (Ministry of Education, 2012) is to see “Five out of five Pasifika learners participating, engaging and achieving in education, secure in their identities, languages and cultures and contributing fully to Aotearoa New Zealand’s social, cultural and economic wellbeing.”

One of the actions for achieving this vision is to “Provide language and learning intervention to support a smooth transition to school for learners coming from Pasifika immersion early childhood centres, and particularly Pasifika learners that have not participated in early childhood education” (Ministry of Education, 2013–2017).

*Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources are designed to help you achieve this vision.





## Build your knowledge of Pasifika home and community language and literacy practices and how these help students to learn

Examples of ways to develop learning-focused relationships with Pasifika communities are suggested below, organised in a way that highlights reciprocity. These suggestions originate from practices observed in schools investigated by Si'ilata and her colleagues (2012).

Although 7 percent of the total New Zealand population is Pasifika, more than one in ten school-age students are Pasifika. Approximately half of these students are Sāmoan. After English and te reo Māori, gagana Sāmoa is the third most-widely-spoken language in the New Zealand school-age population (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). However, all Pasifika languages are important and, as teachers, we need to work with the language skills and experiences each student brings to school.

It goes without saying that every Pasifika community is unique – with its own individual language and culture. And of course, there are variations within these Pasifika communities. Some Pasifika families, for example, have been in New Zealand for many generations. Other Pasifika students may have been born in the Pacific islands, in Australia, or elsewhere.

It helps to understand that, in Pasifika cultures, older siblings and cousins, grandparents, aunts and uncles, other relatives, and the wider community are involved in a child's early language and literacy experiences.

The extent to which Pasifika students speak a Pasifika language and English varies. In New Zealand, it is not uncommon for Pasifika students to speak two first languages at home. In addition, a growing number of students belong to mixed-ancestry families and consequently bring exceptionally rich literacy and language resources to their learning at school. Some of the *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources reflect this.

The English used by Pasifika students is sometimes criticised, but it is a valued first language (L1) when it is the language used in the home. As teachers, we need to explore all the language that our students use – and make connections between this and the academic language of school.





## Share insights into literacy practices

The critical message throughout this resource is the importance of finding out about Pasifika home and community literacy practices and using them as a resource for learning. These don't just include traditional practices. Modern technology affords opportunities for communication that is prompt, responsive, and learning-centred.



**Ask the families of your students whether they use – or would like to use – a Pasifika language for:**

- ▶ text messages and email
- ▶ reading Pasifika community newspapers
- ▶ listening to Pasifika-language radio programmes
- ▶ social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.



**Ask yourself, is there scope for families to use their Pasifika language for:**

- ▶ e-portfolios, such as Storypark<sup>4</sup> and Mahara<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ your school's intranet.

Keep looking for opportunities to build your understanding of language and literacy practices in the Pasifika communities. Create a two-way flow of information between school and home. As you provide opportunities for parents and others in the community to gain a better understanding of school literacy practices, you can find out more about what they are doing at home.

For example:

- ▶ Hold meetings with Pasifika parents and other family members, either at school or at a local church. Ensure that the purpose of a meeting is for sharing information both ways.
- ▶ Have carefully planned three-way conferences to share important concepts. These are invaluable moments for finding out more about home and community language and literacy practices.
- ▶ Encourage parents to value the language in which they are most competent and use it with their children. Hold workshops on the value of reading and writing in the students' home languages, dispelling any misapprehensions that their home language poses a barrier to learning. You could reinforce the key messages in the family support material at these workshops.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.storypark.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://mahara.org/>



Keep accessing family knowledge to inform what goes on in your classroom. Be responsive to family needs, requirements, and feedback. For example:

- ▶ Find out about your school's relationship with families and the local Pasifika community – for example, does your school have a community liaison person? If so, work with this person.
- ▶ Be accessible to Pasifika parents, caregivers, and extended family members and deliberately plan ways to engage with them.
- ▶ Draw on the knowledge and expertise of Pasifika church and other community leaders.
- ▶ Create opportunities for parents and other family members to come into your classroom.
- ▶ Choose classroom topics that draw on the valued knowledge of Pasifika families and the Pasifika community.

Here is an example of one teacher's experience:

*I have been running parent education modules in the area of literacy. It has been so good to hear from the parents what their expectations of education have been. A chord that came through from most of my ESL parents was a misunderstanding about English. They had thought using their first language for reading and writing was bad, as their children were in an English setting at school. Feedback from the parents after the new information has been great – the parents have been creating iPad stories using things like Book Creator, comics, and iWord Q in their home language to reinforce their own language and English as well. One of my mums excitedly shared an experience where her family chopped out pictures from magazines and papers. Then they created a story using both their first language and English, which was very engaging for everyone in the home.*

Felicity Apperley





## Use the family support material

Few things in education are as important as the relationship we build between home and school. The family support material is designed to help you build this relationship. The content introduces Pasifika families to ways they can support their children's learning at home. It emphasises the value of having more than one language and encourages families to foster and extend their children's proficiency in their home language.

The fact that two languages appear together in the material is significant. While you are likely to focus on the English versions of the stories and families are likely to focus on the Pasifika-language versions, it is through your combined, complementary efforts that the most benefit will be realised for your students.

*Respect underpins relationships within Pasifika cultures.*

## SECTION 2 – USING THE DUAL LANGUAGE BOOKS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Choose the *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* books that most closely match the English reading level of your students. The simplicity or complexity of the text in English is not precisely the same as the simplicity or complexity of the text in the Pasifika language. The Pasifika language version may be a little more difficult. Students are not expected to read the Pasifika language, but an understanding of the story read to them by their family in their home language will help them learn when they read the story in English.

### Use the texts for oral language, reading, and writing

#### **Step 1:**

Set up a meeting with parents to explain how the books can be used at home and school. Explain that you will be sending the books home so that the parents and other family members can read and discuss them with their children. The *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources are designed to be used for shared reading. Keep the focus at home on “reading to”.

At the meeting, use the books to demonstrate how to ask questions about the pictures, predict what will happen next in the text, and relate what happens in a story to similar things that the students may be familiar with. Encourage the parents to do these things at home, using their strongest language so that the students bring the books back to school with a really good understanding of the stories.

#### **Step 2:**

Introduce and read the books with the students as you would do with any new reader, but make a point of eliciting what the students can tell you about the stories as a result of their experience with the books at home.

You will gain confidence over time with moving between the Pasifika language and English versions of the texts and supporting students to transfer their vocabulary knowledge, sentence knowledge, and ideas from one language to another.

Use Pasifika expertise to enhance learning in your classroom:

- ▶ Use the expertise of bilingual teacher aides, especially those who have taken part in the specially designed professional programmes for people working with Pasifika students and English language learners – the Supporting Pasifika Bilingual Teachers Aides in Mainstream Classrooms and the English Language Assistant (ELA) programmes.
- ▶ Use the expertise of older Pasifika students as peer tutors. This builds on a Pasifika home literacy practice.
- ▶ Train parents, caregivers, or extended family and other Pasifika community members to work with you in language, reading, and writing sessions in your classroom.
- ▶ Use the expertise of students who speak the language to help you with the pronunciation of words in a particular language.

With the *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources, you have both print and audio versions of the text in the Pasifika language and English. Go to <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Pasifika-dual-language-books> for the audio versions, where PDFs of many of the resources are available as well.





## Link oral language, reading, and writing using a dual language text

As far as possible, “Learning tasks should integrate the modes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, although often a task will focus on one mode” (Ministry of Education, 2008, *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, page 10). At this age, oral language is the most important aspect of language and literacy development. Reading and writing come next.

Here are some examples of learning tasks that make effective use of the dual language books and provide students with the opportunity to practise in different modes.





## Language experience

“Language experience involves (mostly) planned and purposeful activities that create opportunities for ‘doing and talking’ together, *followed by* writing and reading about the experience” (Ministry of Education, 2009a, page 78). The experience provides the opportunity for making explicit connections between oral and written language.

Ideally, the experience will be one that you have participated in with the students, but an alternative is to encourage the students to talk about their own experiences of one of the contexts or settings in the books (for example, collecting shellfish or growing talo in a garden). Prompt the students to tell you their stories while you record them in English, using words from the English version of the dual language book with occasional key words in the students’ Pasifika language. You could make this into a book for the students to illustrate and read with peers and at home.

An alternative is to co-construct a story with the students. The ideal writing process would include lots of discussion first – about choosing the right words, sentence construction, and grammar. Encourage lots of talking and negotiation between the students, as well as with you. Keep in mind the importance of oral language.

You could also encourage families to use similar language experiences at home. For example, after reading *Tono’s Talo Garden* to their child, family members could talk about growing other vegetables in a garden. They could encourage their child to draw a picture of a garden and, with help, label the vegetables growing in it.



How can I keep bringing Pasifika family members into my classroom?

## Dramatic play

You could use the dual language books as the basis for dramatic activities, such as a puppet play, that could involve other students and provide the opportunity for students to explore and experiment with language and ideas in a purposeful and meaningful way.

*Playing Our Stories: Classroom Drama in Year 1-6* (Ministry of Education, 2006b) provides an example of an extended role-play in a South Auckland school that builds upon the students’ experiences of the local weekend market. Remember that five-year-old Pasifika students may have taken part in short plays at Sunday school and at a Pasifika-language early childhood centre. Play an audio version of one of the books while the students perform the actions in the illustrations. Then take a reader’s theatre approach and record the students reading the text, as if they were reading it on the radio. For free software to help you do this, see Booktrack Classroom at <http://www.booktrackclassroom.com>

## Sequencing tasks

Sequencing involves using the pictures from a text to sequence the story and then talk about it. Provide a speaking frame, if you need to (see page 45). Support the students to sequence the pictures first, as a way of expanding and generating language, before sequencing the written text. Use the audio versions. After the students are familiar with the story, they could sequence the text using cut-up sentences, as well as by matching text with pictures. You can find more information about picture sequencing in *The Pasifika Teacher Aide Handbook: Supporting Pasifika Teacher Aides in Mainstream Classrooms* (Si’ilata, 2007, page 37) and *Working with English Language Learners* (Haddock et al., 2008, page 42).



Could families do this at home, too?

## Support reading comprehension and vocabulary by using a dual language text

Reading comprehension and vocabulary enrichment are areas where early readers in year 1 typically need support, especially those readers learning in an additional language. In this, as in all teaching and learning, we need to be explicit. By sharing the purpose for learning and by telling them how they will know if they've been successful, we help students to be aware of and take control of their own learning.

Our bilingual students are already thinking about the words they will use, their meaning in different languages, and how words are shaped to create meaning. Encourage them to recognise the work they are doing working between languages and praise them for this accomplishment.

Below are three examples of learning tasks that use dual language books to support students to acquire new vocabulary and improve their comprehension.

### Matching words with pictures

Write the high-frequency words (particularly the topic-specific nouns) on a sheet of paper and ask the students to illustrate them with pictures. Put the pictures with the matching words on cards so the students can play a version of Snap.

Give the students a picture that includes some of the target vocabulary. This could be a photocopy of an illustration from one of the books. Tell the students to use the words in the book to label the items in the picture.

### Skills flow

A skills flow activity is similar to the sequencing task (see page 23). The students use all four modalities of language – listening, speaking, writing and reading – with one skill flowing on to the next. The process is described on *ESOL Online*.<sup>6</sup>

### Say it

Say It is a spoken role-play activity that supports students to try new structures and vocabulary in a small-group setting. Once the students are familiar with the contents in a dual language book, you could try using a Say It. The activity is described on *ESOL Online*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Reading>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Teacher-needs/Pedagogy/ESOL-teaching-strategies/Oral-language/Say-It>



**Mum's Octopus**  
Don Long  
Singapore's First Language Series

**Ko e Feke 'a Mami'**  
Don Long

**MOHAKA**

## Assessment

It is hard to build on a bilingual student's linguistic resources when you don't understand the full extent of their language proficiency. You can expect proficiency to vary between their languages and across the different language domains.

You may need the help of a member of the appropriate Pasifika community to gain an insight into a student's proficiency in a particular language.

There are resources you can use to assess students' English language proficiency. Three are:

- ▶ *The English Language Learning Progressions: A Resource for Mainstream and ESOL Teachers* (Ministry of Education, 2008)<sup>8</sup>
- ▶ the section in *LEAP: Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika* (Ministry of Education, 2007)<sup>9</sup> that addresses "How do you assess bilingual EAL students?"
- ▶ the *ESOL Progress Assessment Guidelines* (Ministry of Education, 2005b).

Assessment is best when it is purposeful. Use the information you get from assessment to inform your teaching, and include students, your colleagues, and your students' families in the process of unpacking the data and reflecting on its meaning. The Sāmoan concept of talanoa captures the idea of people sharing stories and reflecting on what they mean. Even when a different context applies, the underlying idea is the same.

<sup>8</sup> You can find the Progressions, along with support for their use, on ESOL Online at <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Student-needs/English-Language-Learning-Progressions>. Note that *Supporting English Language Learning in Primary School (SELLIPS)* (Ministry of Education, 2009c) is a related set of resources that gives suggestions for developing students' academic language in curriculum contexts.

<sup>9</sup> <http://leap.tki.org.nz/How-do-you-assess-bilingual-EAL-students>



# SECTION 3 – NEW LEARNING

## Key messages from the research

A considerable body of research suggests that bilingualism has significant advantages. Much of this research focuses on the cognitive advantages of being able to think in two languages. The *LEAP: Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika* resource (Ministry of Education, 2007, pages 11–13) expands on the following four areas of cognitive development that are enhanced in bilingual learners.

1. **Cognitive flexibility:** Bilinguals are more creative and flexible in their thinking.
2. **Metalinguistic awareness:** Bilinguals demonstrate greater awareness of language and how it works.
3. **Communicative sensitivity:** Bilinguals are more sensitive to nuances in communication.
4. **Field independence:** Bilinguals are often able to orient themselves and detect hidden patterns and figures more easily.

The key message from all the research, including five international meta-analyses (cited by Espinosa, 2013), and research specifically into the experience of Pasifika students in New Zealand schools (for example, Franken et al., 2005 and 2007) is that bilingual students do best – in terms of their English achievement – when they have opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write in their home language.

The following research findings come from an extensive literature review by Franken et al. (2005):

- ▶ The languages that bilingual students bring with them to school are a key linguistic resource and a crucial foundation for their learning.
- ▶ Bilingual students learn better when they are able to use their first or home language at school.
- ▶ Teachers are more effective when they understand how bilingual students learn and when they know and implement the principles of effective language teaching and learning.
- ▶ To succeed at school, students must know and understand academic language. While this is true for all students, this has specific implications for bilingual students and their teachers in English-medium classrooms.
- ▶ Teachers can make academic language accessible to students through deliberate, explicit instruction.
- ▶ Students learn in English at school faster when they are taught in effective and focused ways and not just left to “pick the language up”.
- ▶ Teachers can help students to learn how to listen, speak, read, and write in English through deliberate, explicit instruction.

## Build on what you know

Starting school is a major transition for any child, but particularly so for many Pasifika students, who step into a world where the language and culture can be so different from their own. These students bring resources to their learning – resources that include their Pasifika language, identity, and culture – but the gap between what they experience at home and what they encounter at school can be significant. Your role is to provide the scaffolding they need to bridge that gap. Support your students to build and expand on what they already know and can do.

As you use the *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* resources, you are not expected to teach your students how to understand, speak, read, or write in a Pasifika language. Rather, the expectation is that you will do what you would do for any student – support them to make connections between what they already know and new learning.

The dual language books, the MP3 files, and the information and suggestions in the teacher support material and the family support material, will help you to provide the bridge needed when Pasifika students bring a background of early language and literacy experiences in more than English to your new entrant or junior class. The suggestions derive from evidence-based principles of effective teaching and specialised knowledge about what enables bilingual Pasifika students to learn how to read and write in English.

The information in this section will help you to tap into your students' prior knowledge encoded in their home language.

As New Zealand teachers, we are well-versed in the principles of inclusive teaching for diverse students. We know about the importance of making connections to prior knowledge and experiences and the value of planned scaffolding for learners. We know about using assessment for learning, having high expectations, and the need to scaffold learning to achieve learning outcomes that are just beyond learners' current level of independent competence. As teachers of early literacy, we have already successfully applied this knowledge. Much of it is embedded in:

- ▶ *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4* (Ministry of Education, 2003)
- ▶ *Learning through Talk – Oral Language in Years 1 to 3* (Ministry of Education, 2009a)
- ▶ *The English Language Learning Progressions: A Resource for Mainstream and ESOL Teachers* (Ministry of Education, 2008)
- ▶ *Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools: A Guide for Teachers of Years 1 and 2* (Ministry of Education, 2009c).

This TSM assumes that you are familiar with these publications. But many of us are less familiar with the evidence about how to teach students who are bilingual. It is important to understand that teaching bilingual (and multilingual) students is consistent with effective practice for all. This section gives you access to some of that knowledge.







## Build cultural capital in your classroom

In New Zealand, “there has been an increasing realisation of the central role of the cultural dimensions of classroom practice” (Alton-Lee, 2003, page 32). Research shows that, where there is a significant gap between the culture of the home and school, student progress and achievement suffers. When we narrow the gap between home and school, student progress is enhanced (Alton-Lee, 2003).

For example, one group of New Zealand researchers interviewed Pasifika students and their teachers and parents about what they thought supported or hindered literacy learning (Fletcher et al., 2006 and 2009). They found that literacy learning is enhanced for Pasifika students when the values, language, and cultures of their homes and communities are made an implicit part of teaching and learning. The term “cultural capital” is often used to explain this phenomenon.

*The notion of cultural capital holds that students’ academic achievements are shaped by the family’s and the school’s social and cultural resources.*

(Bourdieu and Passerson, 1977, cited in Fletcher et al., 2009, page 24)

A Pasifika facilitator on Literacy/English/ESOL Online challenges us to take a five-level approach to using the cultural capital – the home languages, knowledge, and experiences of Pasifika students – as a valuable learning resource in our classrooms:

- ▶ **Level 1** (surface inclusion) – using Pasifika greetings and pronouncing Pasifika names correctly
- ▶ **Level 2** (classroom environment) – ensuring that our classroom walls reflect diversity
- ▶ **Level 3** (curriculum) – including a diverse range of texts among our classroom resources
- ▶ **Level 4** (pedagogy) – varying our teaching style to reflect diversity and ensure that it reflects the specific cultural needs of our students
- ▶ **Level 5** (assessment) – assessing student achievement in culturally diverse and appropriate contexts.

## Additive bilingualism

Jim Cummins is a Canadian researcher who has had a profound impact on the field of bilingual education. He coined the term “additive bilingualism” to describe educational contexts in which bilingualism is seen as a positive phenomenon and both languages are valued and encouraged. He contrasts this with “subtractive bilingual” contexts in which a student’s home language (L1) is regarded as “interfering” with the learning of a second language, such as English, and is actively discouraged. In additive bilingualism, the student’s total language repertoire grows, compared to subtractive bilingualism, where the student’s language repertoire diminishes.

Cummins’ (2007 and 2008) research reinforces the message that we need to build upon our students’ cultural and linguistic resources to support effective learning.



## Cross-linguistic transfer

### What does a bilingual five-year-old look like?

All students bring at least one language to their learning at school – many Pasifika students bring two – and some bring three or more. Proficiency in their languages varies in relation to a number of factors, including:

- ▶ their personality traits and learning dispositions
- ▶ whether they are new migrants
- ▶ whether their families attend church
- ▶ whether they have attended an early childhood centre, and whether that centre was a Pasifika-language early childhood centre.

It will also vary in terms of their exposure to language and literacy at home. A critical element is whether members of their family choose to communicate with them using a Pasifika language and/or whether they are attempting to communicate with their children in an additional language (that is, a second language) in which they are less fluent.

Bilingualism occurs in a continuum that extends from limited receptive (listening and reading) capabilities through to fluently productive (speaking and writing) proficiency. The following table introduces some aspects of this continuum.<sup>10</sup>

VARIETIES OF BILINGUALISM	
TERM	MEANING
balanced bilinguals	People who can use two or more languages with similar levels of proficiency. A person's language proficiency may vary according to the domain in which they are operating (for example, an adult may be more proficient in using gagana Sāmoa at church and English at work).
biliterates	People who can read and write (as well as speak) in two languages, such as English and vagahau Niue. (Sometimes bilingual people speak two languages but can only read and write in one of them.)
consecutive (or "sequential") bilinguals	Bilinguals who learned their second language (or further additional languages) after their first, usually at school and/or as a result of shifting to another country.
passive (or "receptive") bilinguals	People who understand more than one language but only speak one of them. Often in migrant communities, where there is language shift, younger generations understand some of their parents' language but are reluctant to speak it, sometimes because they do not feel confident in their command of the language.
productive (or "fluent") bilinguals	People who can speak and/or write in two or more languages, as well as listen and/or read them both.
simultaneous bilinguals	Simultaneous bilinguals learn both of their languages from early childhood. They have two mother tongues. Some dual language programmes develop students' simultaneous bilingualism by promoting language and literacy development in two languages.

<sup>10</sup> The primary source for this table is the *LEAP* glossary at <http://leap.tki.org.nz/Glossary>

New Zealand census language-use statistics suggest that:

- ▶ a considerable number of the Pasifika people in New Zealand who are under the age of fifteen speak a Pasifika language with some degree of fluency
- ▶ some speak a Pasifika language, but with fairly minimal fluency
- ▶ some only speak and understand English.

The pattern in immigrant communities in New Zealand is for fluency in home languages to reduce with each subsequent generation.

Younger language learners tend to need less time than older students to catch up with the English-language level of native speakers of the same age. However, they still face a complex challenge and need our support to gain the academic English skills required to fully engage with the curriculum.

## Teach for transfer

It is a common assumption that people learning an additional language (L2) should do so, as much as possible, in the target language. However, Cummins (2007 and 2008) has shown the value of instructional strategies that explicitly support language learners to transfer their knowledge and skills from one language to another.

Cummins sets out three theories that challenge the monolingual principle and support teaching for cross-linguistic transfer:

### 1. The role of pre-existing knowledge as a foundation for learning

Bransford et al. (2000) show that a key process in learning for all people is to engage with prior knowledge. Cummins (2008) points out that this knowledge is encoded in a person's first language. Therefore, "when students are being educated through a second language ... instruction should explicitly attempt to activate their prior knowledge and build relevant background knowledge as necessary" (page 68).

### 2. Interdependence across languages

Cummins (2007) shows that, in the course of learning one language, people acquire a set of skills and implicit metalinguistic knowledge that can be drawn upon when working in another language. That is, while the surface aspects of different languages (such as their pronunciation) vary, there is nevertheless a "common underlying proficiency" that can be transferred from one language to another. The message for teachers is that:

*Learning efficiencies can be achieved if teachers explicitly draw students' attention to similarities and differences between their languages and reinforce effective learning strategies in a coordinated way across languages.*

(Cummins, 2007, page 233)

### 3. Multilingualism is a qualitatively different system from monolingualism

Cummins (2007) cites researchers such as Cook and Jessner, who suggest that the presence of two or more languages in the same mind results, not just in overlap, but in the development of cognitive abilities and skills that are qualitatively different from the abilities and skills of monolinguals.





## Types of cross-lingual transfer

Five major types of cross-lingual transfer ... operate in varying ways, depending on the sociolinguistic and educational situation:

- ▶ transfer of conceptual elements (e.g., understanding the concept of photosynthesis)
- ▶ transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies (e.g., strategies of visualising, use of graphic organisers, mnemonic devices, vocabulary acquisition strategies, etc.)
- ▶ transfer of pragmatic aspects of language use (willingness to take risks in communication through L2, ability to use paralinguistic features such as gestures to aid communication, etc.)
- ▶ transfer of specific linguistic elements (knowledge of the meaning of “photo” in “photosynthesis”)
- ▶ transfer of phonological awareness – the knowledge that words are composed of distinct sounds.

(Cummins, 2007, page 233)

Cummins and his colleagues (Cummins et al., 2005) demonstrated the principle of cross-linguistic transfer with the example of a monolingual teacher in Toronto. This teacher set up a learning activity in which a recently arrived student from Pakistan worked with two classmates to create a book in both Urdu and English that described the experience of acclimatising to a new country. Because the text provided the opportunity for the students to invest aspects of their identity (including language, imagination, thoughts, and feelings) into the learning process, the researchers called this an “identity text”. The following comment, written by one of the students, gives an insight into how this activity provided the opportunity for the transfer of concepts and strategies across languages:<sup>11</sup>

*When I am allowed to use Urdu in class it helps me because when I write in Urdu and then I look at Urdu words and English comes in my mind. So it helps me a lot. When I write in English, Urdu comes in my mind. When I read in English I say it in Urdu in my mind. When I read in Urdu I feel very comfortable because I can understand it.*

(Cummins et al., 2005, page 236)

Sneddon (2008) describes the implementation of a related research project in the United Kingdom. In that project, dual language books were the tools for strengthening students’ proficiency in the language of the home, which differed from that of the school. The parents and the school worked in partnership, with mothers developing and using the books at home with their children. The study found multiple benefits, including improvements in students’ English literacy, students’ confidence and personal identity as bilinguals, and parental engagement with the school.

Knowledge of how transfer enhanced learning in these projects points to ways we can build on the skills bilingual Pasifika students bring to our classrooms.

<sup>11</sup> Spelling and grammar are original.





## Connect oral and written language

With the exception of people who are profoundly deaf, “Oral language underpins all learning and all social interaction” (Ministry of Education, 2009a, page 7). Oral language knowledge and skills are fundamental to learning across the curriculum and are essential to developing expertise in reading and writing.

*The relationship between oral language and literacy learning is strongly reciprocal. Children draw on their oral (or signed) language when they learn to read and write and, in turn, their progressing literacy learning enriches and expands their oral language and their metalinguistic awareness.*

(Ministry of Education, 2009a, page 70)

For this reason, it is essential that our programmes provide students with many opportunities to produce meaningful language outputs. Interactions with peers structured around curriculum learning tasks are particularly helpful in developing a student’s academic language proficiency. In the field of second language acquisition, these are called “communicative tasks”. As *LEAP: Language Enhancing the Achievement of Pasifika* (Ministry of Education, 2007, citing Swain, 1998) explains, communicative tasks are supportive for the following reasons:

- ▶ During an interaction, students may notice a gap between what they have said and what the target language form is. This can help them realise that they need to gain control over a particular grammatical feature or vocabulary item.
- ▶ Conversation provides the opportunity for students to try out new language forms in a context where they can get instant feedback – in the form of requests for clarification or repetition.
- ▶ Peers in interaction talk about and ask each other questions about language. This is called “metatalk”. Metatalk can centre on when and where to use certain words or forms.

## Examine your expectations

Viewed through an additive bilingual lens, we know that many young Pasifika students bring significant linguistic resources to their learning. However, these may be masked by their inability to fluently speak English, a lack of confidence, or our inability to comprehend their Pasifika language and a misunderstanding of what is usual progress in the development of an additional – a second – language.

Conversely, students' needs may also be masked by apparent fluency. To understand this, we need to understand the difference between social language and academic language. The following explanation comes from *The English Language Learning Progressions* (Ministry of Education, 2008).

- ▶ Social language is for communicating in interpersonal contexts and can be either spoken or written. It may take place at school (in social exchanges in and out of the classroom) or outside school. It may include “functional language”, which is used for buying something at a shop, making an appointment, getting information, and so on.
- ▶ Academic language is for learning and communicating in educational contexts. It can be either spoken or written, and its main purpose at school is for learning within the curriculum.
- ▶ Social language is sometimes called basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), and academic language is sometimes called cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). BICS usually take less time to acquire than CALP (Cummins, 2008). In a school setting, learners will probably acquire social language more quickly and easily than academic language.

Fluency in basic interpersonal communication can mask a need to strengthen academic language proficiency. Inappropriate teacher expectations can lead to a self-fulfilling cycle of underachievement, where students are presented with content and tasks that fail to lift them to higher levels of achievement. *Picking up the Pace* (reported in Phillips et al., 2002) was a large schooling improvement project that succeeded in accelerating progress in early literacy achievement for Māori and Pasifika students in Mangere and Ōtara. Over half of the students had a home – a first – language other than English. A focus of this professional learning was on teacher expectations of students. Teachers in Mangere and Ōtara had tended to delay formal instruction because they thought English language learners needed to first go through a long developmental period. After the intervention, teachers said:

*Before (this programme) ... we've always had these kids down here (at the earliest text levels) and we've always kept them down there.*

*I realise that they actually know more about book knowledge than I was aware of before, like where a book starts and ends, all that sort of thing. I wasn't really focusing on that before, but now ... I can see kids come in with that knowledge already.*

(Cited in McNaughton, 2007, page 10)

These teachers realised that they had underestimated the knowledge and skills of their young bilingual learners. To set appropriate expectations, we need to understand the natural developmental patterns of a student learning a second language. *The English Language Learning Progressions* (Ministry of Education, 2008) set this out in detail and include an explanation of factors, such as age and strength in L1, that affect the progress of individual learners. The text in the box on page 42 draws from *The English Language Learning Progressions* to summarise the stages of additional language acquisition (L2).



## Stages of additional language acquisition

In the *foundation stage* of additional language acquisition, the learner's language will contain many errors in structure and meaning. Most learners will go through three phases.

1. A silent period of several weeks during which they soak up the sounds of the new language and assign meanings to these sounds but produce very little of the target language themselves.
2. The production of formulaic chunks: groups of words that learners think of as one item, often without understanding the individual words (for example, "How are you?"). They may also use chunks based on simple sentence patterns that have been modelled for them (for example, "My name is ....").
3. The use of original chunks of language, using simple structures and vocabulary.

Learners then gradually develop a bank of vocabulary and an understanding of the structure of the language and rely less on formulaic chunks and models. They benefit from explicit teaching about language (for example, through targeted vocabulary teaching and explanations of how texts work at word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, and whole-text levels).

*Finally*, the learner's ability to comprehend and produce text comes to approximate those of a native speaker. The time taken to get to this point will vary depending on many factors, including the learner, the teacher, the learning environment, and the quality and duration of the teaching programme.

(Paraphrased from Ministry of Education, 2008, page 5)



## Early language and literacy experiences – build on what the students bring

The central message of *Supporting Pasifika learners through dual language texts* is that “diversity in the classroom can be regarded as a rich resource rather than a difficulty” (Dickie, 2008, page 110). Stuart McNaughton (2002) uses the term “incorporation” to describe the effective teacher practice of “building on the familiar”.

*Effective connections for the learner happen when the activities in an (often unfamiliar) instructional programme incorporate features of some familiar expertise that until then have been situated in out-of-school activities. Transfer of learning occurs as a result of this incorporation.*

(McNaughton, 2002, page 27)

The students illustrated in the dual language books participate in a wide range of language and literacy practices at home, at school, and in the community. These include:

- ▶ talking at home in more than one language
- ▶ talking to one person in one language and to another in another language
- ▶ reading books in more than one language
- ▶ writing in more than one language
- ▶ attending a Pasifika-language early childhood centre (language nest)
- ▶ sharing stories with a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle, or an older brother, sister, or cousin.

You may be familiar with some other Pasifika literacy practices that are not portrayed in the books. If you have students who have participated in White Sunday, for example, you may be aware of the elaborate preparations for special days in the Pasifika communities. For children, these preparations include learning to clearly and accurately read passages from the Bible in their Pasifika language or English, memorising and reciting extracts from the Bible, and preparing dramatic re-enactments of Bible stories. Many of these preparations are made at Sunday school, where children learn to read and write about Biblical and other topics. You may also be aware that the literacy practices of the church are often transferred to the home, with many families gathering each day to pray, read from the Bible, and talk about their understanding of its messages.

A reservation held by many teachers is that these practices do not foster comprehension or critical thinking. The first of these concerns is easily dispelled. Jim Dickie (2008 and 2010) has carried out extensive research into Pasifika literacy practices at school, church, and in the community. His informants, who include church representatives, are very clear that the purpose of these practices is to deepen the children’s understanding of God’s word and its meaning for their lives. One catechist explained:

*I think it’s very important to us for our young people to read and to understand.*

(Dickie, 2010, page 30)

Church-based strategies for building comprehension include making explicit links to background knowledge and children's own lives (for example, through showing and talking about pictures).

On the issue of critical thinking, Dickie (2010) found that:

*The authority of the Bible is not to be challenged in a critical-literacy sense, where it would be interpreted in relation to power, but the individual reader or hearer of God's Word is able to interpret the writings and apply them to their own world and their own behaviour.*

(Dickie, 2010, page 30)

Like families everywhere, Pasifika families share their own stories with each other, and these often include traditional folktales and legends. These stories provide the opportunity for rich learning in multiple modes that could include your whole class. While Dickie's research was with students in years 7 and 8, it is worth noting that the influence of popular culture that he reports is shared by younger siblings. Young Pasifika children, like their older siblings, are aware of and use the language of music, fashion, and computers. This is reflected in one of the dual language books, in which a girl in New Zealand uses Skype to talk with her grandmother, for example.

The following are some suggestions for ways you can incorporate literacy practices typically found in Pasifika homes and communities into teaching and learning in your classroom. The suggested activities foster integrated learning in both the receptive and productive modes. Activities that foster reading also provide opportunities for listening, viewing, speaking, writing, and presenting.<sup>12</sup> Keep in mind that oral language comes first.

<sup>12</sup> Some of the examples in this TSM have been adapted from *ESOL Online, Working with English Learners: A Handbook for Teacher Aides and Bilingual Tutors* (Haddock, Nicholls, & Stacey, 2008), and *LEAP* (Ministry of Education, 2007). Another useful source is *The Pasifika Teacher Aide Handbook: Supporting Pasifika Teacher Aides in Mainstream Classrooms* (Si'ilata et al., 2007)



## Use recitation and memorisation

McNaughton (2002) suggests that we incorporate recitation skills into activities focused on developing decoding skills.

*A child could draw on their memory skills, honed by recitation, to learn the frame in a simple text such as “Here is the dog. Here is the cat.”*

McNaughton warns that a reliance on recitation alone may interfere with the development of other reading processes and ultimately, with reading for meaning. However, this does not mean discarding the strategy. Instead, integrate it with other strategies that foster the ability to identify ideas, infer, and evaluate. The activities on pages 45–47 do this.

## Speaking frames

One way of drawing on Pasifika students’ abilities to memorise and recite – thereby supporting them to produce longer chunks of oral language – is to use speaking frames based on the content in the dual language books. *ESOL Online* explains that:

*Speaking frames are a type of sentence frame that provides sentence starters and models for English-language learners who may not have sufficient knowledge of standard sentence structure to be able to create sentences independently.*

Speaking frames provide English-language learners with the opportunity to orally practise and then produce grammatically correct, longer, and more complex oral language. If you provide a word bank, a speaking frame also provides the opportunity to experiment with vocabulary. Use speaking frames to prompt students to discuss text, sharing their ideas and opinions, and justifying their viewpoint – the reading for meaning skills that McNaughton (2002) references.

Examples of speaking frames are shaded below. For further information about speaking frames – and about writing them – see *ESOL Online*.

*My Cat*

My cat is \_\_\_\_\_

My cat likes \_\_\_\_\_

I like my cat because \_\_\_\_\_

Another option for this activity and the one that follows is for students to carry out the activity first in a Pasifika language – if necessary with the help of a Pasifika bilingual teacher aide who is a member of the student’s language community – and then in English.

## Disappearing text

Disappearing text (sometimes also called “vanishing cloze”) is a strategy that builds on Pasifika students’ memorisation and recitation skills by helping them to remember an important idea and use specific language structures to express it. The students read and repeat the text as chunks are gradually removed. This enables students with less English to hear the text several times before they have to say and write it themselves.

Because the students are reading the text aloud, they get practice in listening and speaking, as well as reading and writing, and weaker students get support from hearing stronger students.

Only use disappearing text with important information and specific language structures that the students need to remember and use. A text should not be so long that it’s too hard to remember. It could be just one sentence for younger students.

Use these six steps with groups or individual students.

1. Write the text on a whiteboard.
4. Rub out one word at a time, but not in the order they are written, and replace each missing word with a line the length of the missing word.
5. The group reads the whole text aloud, replacing the missing words as they read.
6. When all the text has been rubbed out, the whole group repeats it from memory. The students can then write the text.
7. Each student compares what they have written with the original text to make sure it is accurate.
8. The next time the group meets, each student repeats the text to a partner to make sure they have remembered the language structure.

There is more information about disappearing text on *ESOL Online*.

## Make a dual language alphabet frieze

To focus attention on the similarities and differences in the sounds and letters of English and Pasifika languages, you could make bilingual alphabet friezes with your students. The letters could be in upper and lower case. Support the students to notice the letters that are shared and not shared by the different languages, and discuss the different sounds they make. The students could illustrate the letters with words they know in English and the Pasifika language they speak at home, including their names. Display the friezes on your classroom wall as a reference tool for your class to use. Introducing the friezes to all your students will help grow everybody’s knowledge about the Pasifika languages spoken by students in your class. However, don’t try to compare alphabets until you know that the students are familiar with them.



Other ways in which you can support your Pasifika students to learn about letters and sounds include:

- ▶ while reading to them, prompt them to notice the sounds they hear that demonstrate differences between their Pasifika language and English (for example, the “g” sound in the gagana Sāmoa term “Aso Gafua” (Monday) could be compared to the “ng” sound in a familiar Māori word, such as “ngā”, or the “ng” in the English word “singing”, which differs from the hard “g” in an English word such as “garden” and even the soft “g” in “giant”);
- ▶ while reading with the students, prompt them to find specific initial letters and make the appropriate sound – using their names is a great place to start;
- ▶ teach your class alphabet songs, remembering that some students may have already learned an alphabet song at home, at Sunday school, or in a Pasifika-language early childhood centre. While it is relatively easy to find alphabet songs in Pasifika languages on the Internet, look in the More Resources section of the appropriate *Unpacking the Books* too.

## Concepts about print

The concepts about print, which the dual language books help to establish, are set out in *The Literacy Learning Progressions: Meeting the Reading and Writing Demands of the Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2010). Some of your Pasifika students will have already developed concepts about print in a Pasifika language before they start primary school. With your support, they will be able to apply these concepts to their reading and writing in English. Others will have begun to do this even before they start school.



## SECTION 4 – UNPACKING THE BOOKS

Each set of dual language resources is supported by an online resource called *Unpacking the Books* – there is an *Unpacking the Books* resource for each language. To access the different versions of *Unpacking the Books*, go to <http://literacyonline.tki.org.nz/Pasifika-dual-language-books>

Book by book, language and cultural aspects of the books are unpacked. The following information is also provided:

- ▶ some aspects of the culture that it would be useful to know about as you work in partnership with Pasifika families and the Pasifika community
- ▶ more information about each language
- ▶ a dual language copymaster of the letter and questions provided in this TSM on page 12
- ▶ useful expressions in the language you could use in your classroom, such as how to say hello and give a word of praise
- ▶ some classroom vocabulary (which would be useful, for example, if you would like to have some dual language signage in your classroom)
- ▶ some reading prompts in the language
- ▶ a brief guide to further resources, such as dictionaries and collections of songs.



*It's fun to use words in another language. Create a classroom environment that celebrates the total language resource of your students.*





## SECTION 5 – REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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