

LITERACY SYMPOSIUM

AT THE FOREFRONT OF LITERACY LEARNING



INTRODUCTION

Greetings, fellow educators!

I hope this September issue of *At the Forefront of Literacy* newsletter finds you well.

In line with the 2022 UCF Literacy Symposium theme, *Reigniting Literacy Collaborations*, this month I chose to focus on the importance of ***reigniting our literacy collaborations with parents/families of multilingual students!***

The term *multilingual learners* refers to students who are developing proficiency in multiple languages. This also includes students learning English as an additional language in school (i.e., *English learners* [ELs] or *English language learners* [ELLs]). According to the [Florida Department of Education](#), “Florida is ranked 3rd in ELL population, and although Spanish is the major native language of these students, the English language learners speak more than 300 different languages.”

Our students’ literacy and learning depend on collaborative, supportive, sustained, and productive home-school partnerships. Now and throughout the school year, our collaborations with multilingual students’ parents/families, will help us learn about language and literacy practices at home, improve communication and trust, and build partnerships that will support students’ learning and success.

I hope this newsletter supports your literacy and learning needs. I would love to hear what you think about this content or ideas you have for future topics and resources—feel free to share your feedback here: LitSymposium@ucf.edu.

We hope to see you in our upcoming Fall 2022 virtual webinars!

- For information on our September 22, 2022 virtual webinar on [Reigniting Biliteracy Collaborations with Multilingual Families: The Bilingual Village](#), please see [Upcoming Events and/or Flyer on our homepage](#).
- To see future events on our homepage, please scroll down to the Upcoming Events section of our homepage and click on [View Full Calendar](#).

Until next time, wishing you a healthy and productive September!

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RESEARCH BITES: LONG STORY SHORT

This question guided my search: *In what ways does research inform us about the importance of literacy collaborations with multilingual parents/families?*

I selected a recent article titled, [Bilingual Families' Perspectives on Literacy Resources and Supports at Home](#) (Noguerón-Liu & Driscoll, 2021). This research study examined home–school partnerships through the lens of two bilingual families and how they identified and used relevant literacy and language resources to support their children’s literacy at home and school.

Here are some research bites from this study:

- Learning about parents/families’ home language expertise is an important element in home-school partnerships.
- Families used available local networks (in schools, neighborhoods, and libraries) to access educational and linguistic resources to use with their children at home.
- By attending school workshops, they became aware of literacy resources for their children. Text selection criteria included maintenance of Spanish (home language), conversations about events, and development of academic English literacy.
- Expanding standard school surveys that focus on interests and language to include information about family members’ literacy and digital practices will provide teachers/schools with useful information about students’ reading, writing, and learning.
- Clear communication about literacy instruction, assessments, and interventions with families will better equip parents to understand how their children’s progress is measured and monitored at school.

- Families were invested in helping their children succeed in literacy and other educational progress measures valued in school.



RESEARCH TO PRACTICE TAKEAWAYS

The following takeaways can help you *reignite* your literacy collaborations with multilingual parents/families.

1. For students to succeed and thrive, we need schools, families, and community partners working together.
2. At the heart of partnerships is a trusting relationship. All students benefit when there is mutual trust between the home and school.
3. When families, schools, and community partners engage in collaborative partnerships, students make positive gains in language and reading acquisition, vocabulary learning, conceptual growth, and literacy achievement.
4. Learn about the home language and culture of each family in your classroom. Respect families' funds of knowledge, learn about their literacy practices, and empower them to support their child's literacy by building on what they are already doing at home.
5. Practice a strengths-based approach with all learners and their families. Listen and be responsive to the cultural experiences of all families and, especially, the families of students who are learning English. Diversity and cultural differences are assets for our schools and communities.
6. Encourage multilingual students' language and literacy development in their home language and in the language of the school. Students' learning of their home language supports them to learn a second language at school.
7. Discuss with parents/families ways to draw on home and school languages for students' academic learning.
8. Ask parents/families about access they have to resources (e.g., books, technology) at home to support students' literacy. Discuss literacy supports at home and suggest school or community resources as needed. Invite parents/families to share observations of home language and literacy practices.

9. Seek feedback from parents/families about texts that represent their cultural experiences.
10. Invite parents and families to partner in student progress monitoring and frequently provide them with clear descriptions and explanations in inviting and non-technical language about (a) the student's language and literacy progress and needs, (b) what the teacher will do to support the student at school, (c) what parents/families can do to support the student at home, and (d) the development of goals and interventions as needed.



1 QUESTION FOR YOU

Here's some food for thought...

What is one small, attainable action you can take to *reignite* your literacy collaborations with parents/families of multilingual learners?



RESOURCES

These resources can inspire and facilitate your collaborative goals.

Elementary School

- [6 Ways to Involve Families in Elementary Classrooms](#)
- [10 Key Reading Practices for All Elementary Schools](#) – with grade-level descriptions of what students should know and be able to do
- [Connecting with ELL Families: Strategies for Success](#)
- [Help Your Child Learn to Read](#) -- Tips and Infographics in 16 Languages
- [Partnering with Families for Early Language and Literacy](#)

Middle – High School

- [3 Tips for Supporting ELLs at the Beginning of the Year](#)
- [10 Key Reading Practices of All Middle and High Schools](#) – with grade-level descriptions of what students should know and be able to do
- [Getting to Know Your Students in a Million Words or Less](#)
- [How to Partner with Families of Middle and High School English Learners](#)
- [Literacy Tips for Parents of Adolescents](#)

K-12

- [How to Empower Immigrant Families of Students with Disabilities](#)
- [International Children's Digital Library](#)
- [Let Families Teach You About New Students](#)
- [Partnering with Your Child's School on Language and Literacy](#) – This is a comprehensive resource that includes questions, tips, and resources for discussing children's progress in English and Spanish
- [Understanding Multilingual Learners \(WIDA\)](#)
- [US DOE Newcomer Toolkit](#) – Chapter 5: Establishing Partnerships with Families

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