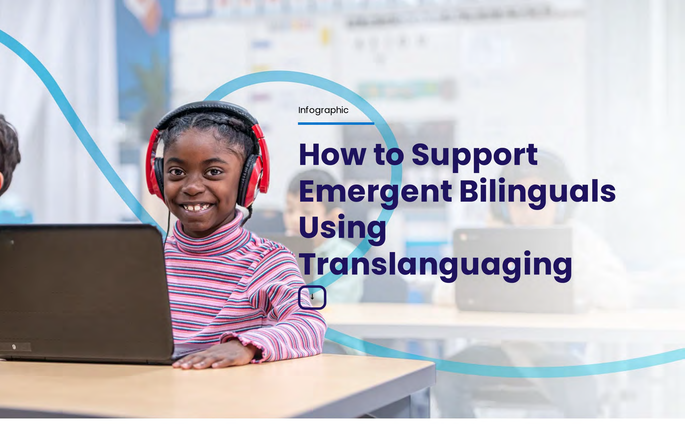

Infographic

How to Support Emergent Bilinguals Using Translanguaging

Translanguaging is an approach that encourages multilingual students to use their home language to enhance English language development and expression.

Unlike translation, which focuses on converting text or speech from a student's home language to English, translanguaging allows Emergent Bilinguals to use all of their languages flexibly to make meaning of academic content.

Translanguaging offers students:

- Enhanced comprehension of the English language and texts
- Opportunities to develop linguistic practices in an academic setting
- A positive perspective toward bilingualism and multilingualism
- Recognition of cultural identities across home, school, and community[1]

Why is Translanguaging Becoming Increasingly Important?

Classrooms have become linguistically diverse during the past decade.

10%

of children are Emergent Bilinguals[2]

32%

of all children younger than age 9 are considered Dual Language Learners[3]

The number of dual language programs in the United States has

tripled.[4]

Translanguaging Pedagogy: What Does It Involve?

- The belief that students' linguistic backgrounds are valuable resources to be built upon
- A strategy to integrate students' home languages into the design of units, lesson plans, and assessment
- The ability to make instructional shifts based on students' needs and feedback[5]

Here Are Some Simple Ways To Support Translanguaging in the Classroom.

- Pair together students who share the same home language to support collaboration on projects
- Encourage students to use their home language to describe content before presenting it in English
- Permit students to submit written work that includes both languages
- Label classroom resources in other languages to help students make connections between English and their home language
- Post bilingual word walls and other visual aids in multiple languages to support vocabulary development[6]

What Does Translanguaging Look Like for Students?

Translanguaging encourages students to use their home language to build on existing knowledge and acquire new skills. When multilingual students have the freedom to communicate in a way that feels natural to them, they build confidence as they learn English. When translanguaging is being used effectively, students might:

- Use their home language to contribute to classroom discussions
- Work out math problems in another language before sharing solutions in English
- Take notes or make annotations in Spanish, Chinese, or other languages
- Read texts in their home language before tackling an English composition assignment[7]

Translanguaging Results: Positive Outcomes for All

Emergent Bilinguals learning through translanguaging may eventually outperform their monolingual peers as they become more flexible in thinking about and using language in academic contexts. They can:

- Develop academic language and literacy abilities in their home languages
- Better demonstrate what they know
- Think critically and at a higher level
- Engage with the knowledge they bring from home
- Affirm and build upon their multicultural identities[8]

All students can benefit from translanguaging; few use academic English at home, regardless of their home language.

When students observe multilingual classmates switching between languages, it helps them better understand the similarities between languages, which can improve their overall reading and writing skills.[9]

Equip multilingual students with the tools to support academic success.

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