

Three premises for teaching for biliteracy:

Teaching for biliteracy is different than teaching for monoliteracy because ...		
...Spanish is a minority language in a majority culture	...students use both their languages for literacy development	...both Spanish and English are governed by distinct linguistic and cultural rules
Therefore, we must elevate the status of Spanish in the classrooms and schools.	Therefore, we must plan for the strategic use of all linguistic resources, and explicitly teach language transfer skills and strategies.	Therefore, we must avoid the wholesale import of methods from English and create methods that reflect Spanish in the United States.
How? • Bilingual teachers speak Spanish with each other, even when the students are not present. • Teachers and staff display and promote all the home languages represented in the school. • Invited guests and scheduled presentations highlight the benefits of being bilingual. • Bilingual teachers hold their meetings in Spanish. • Signage, announcements and communication home are done in both English and Spanish. • Bilingual teachers continually develop their own academic Spanish, and academic English.	How? • Oracy is a key goal in both Spanish and English, and the teacher carefully plans opportunities for students to listen and speaking using academic language. • Instructional strategies are used to support student development in the target language (sentence prompts, Word Banks, etc.) • U.S. Spanish (<i>bleediando</i>) is accepted and analyzed in the classroom. • Instruction is characterized by the strategic use of two languages (three linguistic spaces: Spanish, the Bridge, English) instead of the random use of language. • Instruction focuses on moving from student “informal” language (<i>tochar</i>) to formal language (<i>empujar</i>) in Spanish, and these comparisons are captured in word walls.	How? • The <i>dictado</i> is used to teach the mechanics of Spanish writing (phonology, spelling, grammar, syntax, language use). • Syllable segmentation is one of the major word study areas of focus in the primary grades in Spanish. • Texts originally written in Spanish are preferred to translations. • Materials and resources are modified according to the rules of the language (example, the sounds of the letters are taught in Spanish and not their names; word walls are adapted to reflect Spanish and not English.) • Word walls in Spanish highlight the “tricky letters” and look different from English word walls.

Beeman, K. and Urow, C. (2013). Teaching for Biliteracy: Strengthening Bridges between Languages. Caslon Publishing: Philadelphia, PA.