

WinkWorld March 2005

Hello Friends,

You may recall that last month I said that we would focus on bilingual education this month. Steve Krashen, the passionate reader and writer, has generously shared with us. In addition, I am sharing part of a speech, which Paulo Freire gave in 1993; the entire speech is available from:

Wink, J. (2005, 3/e, pp. 83 to 86). *Critical pedagogy: Notes from the real world*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

[Excerpt](#)

Bilingual educators, I want to direct you to the evolving Bilingual Home, <http://www.joanwink.com/scheditems/bilhouse.pdf> which a student, Gina Grgich, prepared last semester, with the collaboration of her colleagues. If you look carefully, you will see, Cummins' quadrant (in the window); the CUP/SUP principle is reflected by the cup in the window; Krashen's affective filter is off to the right with the flowers being watered; Cummins' threshold hypothesis is symbolized on the door; and the dual iceberg can even be seen on the hilly background. Now, I'm thinking that we need to add Tove Skutnabb-Kangas water lilies in a pound out in front. Are we missing anything else, which needs to be added? Thanks for your thoughts.

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas: Metaphor of the water lily:
<http://www.joanwink.com/gifs/bilingual-waterlily.jpg>

A real water lily for your use:

<http://www.joanwink.com/gifs/waterlily.jpg>

Please click on WinkLinks <http://www.joanwink.com/links.php> to locate good bilingual resources for your use.

In addition, I want to direct you to a terrific interview with Jim Crawford in the January 2005 issue of *Language Magazine*. <http://www.languagemagazine.com>

Bilingual Education: What's Missing?

Steve Krashen

<http://www.sdkrashen.com/main.php3>

Bilingual educators really do get it: They understand the difference between conversational language and academic language, understand that developing literacy in the first language is a short-cut to second language literacy, and understand that teaching subject matter in the first language promotes cognitive development and provides background knowledge that makes English input more comprehensible. They understand that the proper use of the first language accelerates second language development.

Bilingual educators also understand the advantages of continuing to develop the heritage language after English is acquired: They understand that those who achieve high levels of bilingualism have practical and cognitive advantages, and are able to learn from elders as

well as other members of the heritage language community.

What's missing? Plenty. Many bilingual educators are not yet fully aware of the most powerful tool we have in language education: Recreational reading. Scientific research and case histories, as well as common sense, tell us that recreational reading, or "free voluntary reading" is the major source of our literacy development. It is the major source of our writing ability, our reading ability, vocabulary, spelling, and mastery of complex grammatical constructions. Also, those who read more, know more. They know more about literature, history, and even know more about the "practical" aspects of life.

If literacy development in the primary language is a short-cut to English literacy, recreational reading in the first language makes a direct contribution to learning to read in English. Continued free reading in the primary language and recreational reading in English are powerful means of developing academic language and gaining the knowledge children need to do well in school. In fact, it may be impossible to develop academic language without it. We also know that free reading is an effective way of maintaining and developing the heritage language (e.g. Tse, 2001).

Several factors are in our favor: We are now living in a Golden Age of children's and adolescent literature. Quality is high and enthusiasm is high: The yet unpublished sixth Harry Potter book is already the number one overall best-seller at amazon.com. The problems are access to books and a curriculum that actually discourages free reading.

Studies show that children of low-income families tend to live in neighborhoods with inferior public libraries and few bookstores, and have few books in their homes. They also attend schools with inferior school and classroom libraries.

In addition, the current obsessions with skills and standardized testing leave little time for free reading, and push the curriculum toward workbook oriented test-preparation activities, even though studies show that those in classes that include more reading do better on the tests. The profession appears to be embracing a delayed-gratification approach, even though the research, in my view, supports a more pleasant path.

Our bilingual programs are doing quite well. They would be even better with a modest investment in classroom and school libraries, and with allowing and encouraging wide, self-selected reading in both languages.

Krashen, S. 2004. *The Power of Reading*. Westport, CN: Libraries Unlimited/ Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Tse, L. 2001. Resisting and reversing language shift: Heritage language resilience among U.S. native biliterates. *Harvard Educational Review* 71(4): 676-706.