Researchers know language minority students face substantial literacy challenges in addition to the cultural challenges normally present when one is in a different language environment (August & Shanahan, 2006). In an effort to address this, researchers have discovered that a critical role can be played incorporating different languages in the literacy process while engaging students in a variety of linguistic forms and texts present in their multilingual environments (Naqvi et al, 2013, 2014). In fact, scholars agree that innovative methods need to be implemented to increase literacy levels and engagement among both language minority students and those in the general student population (Cummins, 2015).

I will discuss three multilingual projects conducted in early and middle school years where I brought together several languages and used dual language books to support language awareness strategies in mainstream educational contexts. I will provide examples of practice that demonstrate how the benefits of bilingualism/multilingualism can be realised in the classroom. Results indicate how partnering language awareness with cultural knowledge in a culturally responsive classroom can promote both students' identities as capable learners as well as their value as multilinguals. The results also demonstrate how parents, and students mobilize funds of knowledge by expanding the educational space to include multiple languages and cultures, and create on-going interactional spaces that are empowering and identity-affirming for parents, students, and teachers.

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