

# Culturally relevant materials

## What are culturally relevant materials?

Books, activities, images and subject content that is familiar to students.

## Students learn best when they understand the content

Using culturally relevant materials

- Create a bridge between students' home and school lives
- Meets the expectations of the PNG curricular requirements, and
- Students develop and/or maintain cultural competence

## Text comprehension

Reading is not just decoding the words on the page. Comprehension involves the person's own background knowledge. Any new information, concepts or ideas can only have meaning when they are related to something the reader already knows.

Texts with content based on the reader's own culture are easier to read and understand than those from other cultures because the reader has the background knowledge.

## Mirrors and Windows

Mirrors - texts in which a reader sees a reflection of their identity and experiences

Window – texts in which the reader sees into the world of others

We need texts that are both mirrors and windows. In PNG there are far too many books that are windows. We need more books that are mirrors.

*“When children cannot find themselves reflected in the books they read, or when the images they see are distorted, negative, or laughable, they learn a powerful lesson about how they are devalued in the society of which they are a part.” (Bishop, 1990, p. ix)*

## **First, second and third language learning**

Children must be able to communicate effectively in their homes before they can communicate out in the community or at school. Research shows that children with strong first language skills are more ready and able to learn a second or third language. Children cannot build a second language if the first language foundation is not established and supported while the second language is being learned.

Let children clarify questions and discuss concepts and their meaning in the native language. Code switching, or the alternating between two languages, is a normal part of communication in bilingual individuals, and it does not promote confusion. It's perfectly acceptable and appropriate for bilinguals.

Children need to hear **quantity** and **quality language input** in order to have strong language skills.

**Professionals, educators, and parents should be working together so that the native language is flourishing at home and second and third language learning is flourishing at school!**

Taken from <http://www.multilingualliving.com/2013/04/15/why-should-parents-talk-to-their-children-in-their-native-language/>

## **Dual language books**

Dual language books are written in two languages, for example English and Tok Pisin and are intended to be read simultaneously in both languages

They help readers become literate in second or third language by allowing readers to use higher order vocabulary skills from their first language. Readers can extend their first language literacy and link it to second language literacy and transfer conceptual knowledge and skills across languages

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