

classroom

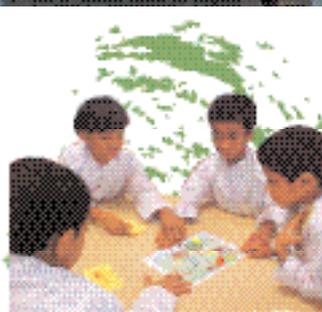
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connections



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LEARNING

COMMUNITIES

Bringing in the Parents: How Shared Reading can help foster a learning community

Ficodina Hyland

School systems, teachers and parents all vary considerably in the emphasis they place on Shared Reading to second language children. However, as the Kuwait study indicates, there are clearly good linguistic grounds for increasing this activity over and above the social reasons for doing so.

Shared Reading has definite implications for planning the curriculum for second language learners of English. With the aid of a Shared Reading program, initiated as early as possible (Kindergarten or Grade 1), children should be able to develop a love for reading along with opportunities for reading development.

However, no education program can survive and prosper without the

support of parents and it is incumbent upon second language educators to ensure Shared Reading's success by convincing parents of its importance. Fortunately, most parents are interested in their child's reading and many parents already engage in Shared Reading as based on the bedtime-story model. However, teachers of English have immense power to enhance the Shared Reading process in many second language homes. This may be done by setting up home-based programs to assist parents in Shared Reading procedures. Additional help could be delivered through the provision of leaflets, information packs, sample lessons and open days for parents to attend.

Along with everything else, Shared Reading can be considered as planting 'seeds' in reaching tomorrow's parents. The second language student who rarely reads with an adult for pleasure is unlikely to grow up to read with his/her own children. Shared Reading, however, improves the chances that the listener/participant will someday read with his or her child and thus strengthen the possibility of future education being a true partnership between parent-teacher and classroom-teacher. ■

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