



# Building Bridges to Proficient Reading for All Children

by BARBARA M. FLORES

*We are living in a global society that is not only biliterate, but also, multiliterate. If this is so, how do we in the United States promote everyday biliteracy in schooling as a social practice?*



## **LITERACY CHAMPION: BARBARA M. FLORES**

Dr. Flores is a pioneer Latina scholar Activist and Leader, Teacher Educator, Children’s Literature Writer, and International Expert in the areas of biliteracy development, teaching/learning based on Vygotsky’s sociocultural theoretical framework, professional staff development, bilingual education, and critical pedagogy. Not only has she published her work in professional journals, books, and chapters, but she is also a sought after keynote speaker throughout the Americas. She has been a professor since 1980 and recently retired in September of 2019. She is Professor Emerita at California State University, San Bernardino.

Dr. Flores holds and has held a number of leadership positions. She has been on San Bernardino City School Board since 2008 and served as Vice President and President. She was reelected in 2013 and 2017 with her term ending in November 2022. Currently Past President on CLSBA Board 2018–2022; served as President of CLSBA from 2014–2018 and also served as Vice President from 2010–2014. She is also currently on the Executive Board of the California Association for Bilingual Education and recently elected as President Elect. She was also past President of the National Association for Bilingual Education and the Alliance for Multilingual Multicultural Education.

## **One to Know: Supporting Bilingual Readers by Building Bridges to Proficient Reading**

Using Mini Shared allows children to have their own book, to touch the book, to experience the text up close, and to engage in mediated exploration and naming of the cueing systems and strategies. It is conducted with three to five children in a small group for about 20-30 minutes, and it takes about four days to complete a cycle of engagement.

Throughout the world, biliteracy is a common social practice in and out of schooling; in fact, multiliteracy and multilingualism are common social practices. In the United States there are many Native Americans and immigrants speaking many languages other than English, including native Spanish speakers who are descendents of the Spanish and Mexican rulers who once occupied what is now the southwestern United States as their nation. Today, we experience biliteracy on television, the news, the radio, packages for purchased commodities, and medicine labels, and in subtitles for movies, airports and airplanes, songs, books, stores, and so on.

*Mini Shared Reading* is effective literacy instruction for children who do not know their letters or sound correspondences. They also do not need to know the concept of a word to participate successfully. We want to engage the students in the act of proficient reading, in their first and second language through repeated rereadings of the book. In other words, we want to teach reading to the potential (proficient reading, Goodman, 1994).

The teaching is organized to the potential and not at the children's developmental levels because if we teach to their developmental level, they will not advance (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, we choose predictable books at least two levels beyond their DRA independent level.

## What to Do: Mini Shared Reading

### Mini Shared Reading

The reading experience is organized to familiarize the children with the predictable book, to engage them in successful act of reading, and to make visible the cueing systems (semantic, syntactic, graphophonic, and orthographic) and universals strategies (predicting, sampling, confirming, self correcting, comprehending) as the reader revisits the text with mediated guidance.

Gather multiple copies of the same predictable text, preferably in both Spanish and English. Bilingual children can learn the book in L1 (Spanish) and then use the English equivalent for their ELD lesson. The Spanish and English versions of the same title facilitate the children's acquisition of literacy and biliteracy through mediated engagement. Assess children using the DRA and EDL (Spanish version).

### Mini Shared Reading Procedures

#### Introduce the Book

- Teacher engages the children by introducing the title. Engage the children by introducing the title and discussing the book's cover.

#### Connect with Prior Experiences

- Next the teacher engages the children by connecting the topic of the book to their own experience.

#### Discuss as Teacher Engages Kids in Picture Walk of the Book

- Walk through and discuss the illustrations in the book. Talking about the illustrations in the book is important preparation for when the text is Read Aloud by the teacher.

### Read Aloud Entire Book as Children Listen and Look

- Read aloud the book as all the children watch as you say the words and sweep your finger under the text.

### Children Echo Read After Teacher Reads Text Again

- Read the book a second time with the children ECHO READING after you as you read each page. This mediated social interaction supports the children and provides them with rehearsal to engage in the act of reading the text again, but together without you unless they need your support.

### Choral Reading

- Read the text a third time—but this time the children read together without you. In this way the children support each other; if one child is unsure, another child who knows can fill in.

### Revisit the Text

- Provide a mini-lesson—after the children have read and reread the text—about the cueing systems highlighting meaning, grammatical, and orthographic patterns that emerged during the children’s reading. Then invite each child to read the book on their own.

### Collaboration

- Guide the children in co-constructing their own text but using the patterns that the original book used. Type the new stories and invite the children to illustrate, share, and read them.

### Independent Reading of Own Text and Original Text

- Engage the children in reading two, three, or four versions of the same patterned, predictable stories.

## Collaborative Text Writing

1. Select the Syntactic Pattern, e.g., *I live here, said ...*
2. Generate the Habitats with the children and list them on chart paper or transparency, e.g.,

Farm	Ocean	Pond	Lake	Garden
Forest	Zoo	Cave	Tree	Rain Forest

3. List the animals, insects, or creatures that live in the habitat.
4. Write the sentences on chart paper or strips of paper.
5. Type little books.
6. Have children illustrate their own book of each version.

# **Finding Language Patterns & Making Visible The Cueing Systems through Mini Lessons During Mini Shared Reading/Revisiting Text**

Questions to guide the teacher:

## **Semantic System**

- Question: How can one make the semantic system visible?  
Answer: Relate the illustration to the text.

## **Syntactic System**

- Pick the recurring noun, verb, or other part of speech that is graphically depicted in the picture and connect it to the illustration.
- Show the children the segment that corresponds to the object or action and have the children bracket the “word”.

## **Graphophonic System**

- Choose reoccurring patterns and connect the letter/sound correspondences and teach the children the patterns of the sounds with the letters.
- Have children talk about the patterns that they see.

## **Orthographic System**

- Pick words and teach about family spelling patterns.
- This is where one can teach about the rules, but with the children’s input.

# Making the Cueing Systems Visible

Cueing System	Mini Lesson Plan
<p><b>SEMANTIC</b> (Relate illustration to text)</p>	
<p><b>SYNTACTIC</b> (Pick the recurring noun, verb, or other part of speech that is depicted graphically and relate it to the picture.)</p>	
<p><b>GRAPHOPHONIC</b> (Choose recurring patterns and connect the letter/ sound correspondences, teach the patterns of sounds and letters. Have children talk about patterns they see. Choose anomalies to teach rules.)</p>	
<p><b>ORTHOGRAPHIC</b> (Pick words and teach about family spelling patterns. This is where you can teach the rules, but with student input.)</p>	
<p><b>MECHANICS</b> (Convention, punctuation, capitalization, etc.)</p>	

# Prototype Weekly Schedule for Mini Shared Reading

<b>Day 1</b>	Follow instructions for introducing the book including echo reading and choral reading, plus, each child reads aloud the book at the end.										
<b>Day 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chorally read text</li> <li>• Revisit text and make other cueing systems visible, e.g., orthographic features.</li> <li>• Generate new text using story pattern on chart paper or sentence strips, e.g.,</li> </ul> <div style="margin-left: 40px;"> <p><b>Espanol:</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>Yo vivo aqui- dijo el delfin.</td></tr> <tr><td>Yo vivo aqui- dijo el Tiburon.</td></tr> <tr><td>Yo vivo aqui- dijo la ballena.</td></tr> <tr><td>Yo vivo aqui- dijo el caballito.</td></tr> <tr><td>Yo vivo aqui- dijo la almeja.</td></tr> </table> <p><b>English:</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>"I live here," said the dolphin.</td></tr> <tr><td>"I live here," said the shark.</td></tr> <tr><td>"I live here," said the whale.</td></tr> <tr><td>"I live here," said the sea horse.</td></tr> <tr><td>"I live here," said the clam.</td></tr> </table> </div>	Yo vivo aqui- dijo el delfin.	Yo vivo aqui- dijo el Tiburon.	Yo vivo aqui- dijo la ballena.	Yo vivo aqui- dijo el caballito.	Yo vivo aqui- dijo la almeja.	"I live here," said the dolphin.	"I live here," said the shark.	"I live here," said the whale.	"I live here," said the sea horse.	"I live here," said the clam.
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<b>Day 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chorally read new text.</li> <li>• Give each child their own book with new text.</li> <li>• Draw and illustrate each page.</li> </ul>										
<b>Day 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner read original/new texts</li> <li>• Individually read both texts.</li> </ul>										
	<p>*EACH SESSION IS 20-30 MINUTES</p>										