



Literacy as a Lifeline

by SUSAN B. KATZ

Bringing bilingual books to life leads to opportunity, agency, and success for children from diverse backgrounds with different learning styles. From rhyming patterns to key curriculum concepts and academic vocabulary, exposure to print is the single most influential factor that predicts a child's academic achievement and social-emotional growth.



LITERACY CHAMPION: SUSAN B. KATZ, NBCT

Susan B. Katz, NBCT, is an award-winning, bestselling, Spanish bilingual author/illustrator with Scholastic, Simon & Schuster, Penguin Random House, Bala Kids (Shambhala), Barefoot Books, Callisto Media, Capstone, Lerner, North South, and Heinemann. She has 14 published titles, one of which she wrote in Spanish for Scholastic, and 16 more books forthcoming in 2021. Her book, *The Story of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*, recently hit #18 on Amazon's overall Bestseller List as well as #9 in children's books. *Meditation Station*, a picture book about trains and mindfulness, won the 2020 International Book Award for Best Mind/Body/Spirit Children's Book and was selected as an Amazon Editor's Pick for Best Non-Fiction Book for Kids. Ms. Katz also earned the Moonbeam Gold Award for Best Picture Book in celebration of *My Mama Earth*. In 2020, Susan released seven books, including six early reader biographies of diverse leaders such as Gandhi, Frida Kahlo, and RBG. For more than 25 years, Ms. Katz worked as a bilingual



elementary educator, National Board Certified Teacher, and literacy specialist. She is a frequent keynote speaker and workshop presenter, who launched and ran Facebook's author vertical out of their headquarters. Susan founded and runs the non-profit www.ConnectingAuthors.org to bring authors into schools as role models of literacy.

One to Know: Seek Out Quality Literature

Differentiating instruction, and addressing the needs of all learners, starts with quality literature. When children learn to love language, and predict its patterns, they unlock myriad fictional worlds and a plethora of non-fiction knowledge. Multilingual Learners need specific skills in order to make sense of a language that has as many exceptions as it does rules. What we really want, as educators and authors, is for students to fall in love with literature—reading and writing it! Above all, the world of words should welcome them with open arms, inviting them into fantasy and fiction, and preparing them for college and career.

What to Do: Read and Sing and Read Some More

- **Visit the library/bookstore** or locate a free, online reading platform: games, books, Apps, and even functional literacy in the form of print in a child's environment (e.g., grocery lists, maps, menus, cookbooks, etc.) all build up concepts of print and an understanding of the purposes of language.
- **Read to your child** . . . and have them read to you, every day. At least once! Children who are read to every day before entering kindergarten start school with 20,000 more words in their vocabulary than children who are not read to.
- **Sing, chant, and recite nursery rhymes.** Kids love music! It increases engagement, excitement, and retention. Think about a song you haven't heard in a long time. When it comes on, you know the lyrics right away! Learning through song is one of the most evergreen and powerful forms of literacy.
- **Build a home library of books** that your child can access. Don't be afraid to reread or repeat books they love. That is how they learn to "cloze" or predict the ending word in a sentence. I know I learned to read by memorizing *Green Eggs and Ham!*

More to Know and Do: Read and Share

As a bilingual educator, and multilingual lifelong learner, I want to emphasize that you should read to your child in whatever language you feel most comfortable. Literacy skills transfer. The important activity is to share the book, point to the pictures, follow along with your finger, and talk about what happened in the book, afterwards, for comprehension.

How to Follow and Reach Susan B. Katz

You can find out more about Susan's books and virtual visits on her Facebook author page or IG: @susanbkatzauthor, on Twitter: @susankatzauthor, or on her website www.SusanKatzBooks.com and <https://www.behance.net/susanbkatz> (her wildlife photography).

https://www.amazon.com/Susan-B-Katz/e/B0034EVBLQ?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_3&qid=1619820956&sr=8-3

See Susan in Action

As a seasoned keynote presenter and workshop facilitator, I engage adult learners in the following topics, both virtually and in-person. I also love bringing my books to life for kids:

- Differentiated Instruction
- Best Practices for Multilingual Learners
- Guided Reading
- Mindfulness in Schools
- Bilingual Instruction
- The Making of Mavens: How to Get Kids to Talk Up Books
- Writer's Workshop
- STEAM/STEM education



Endorsements of Susan's Presentations

"Her enthusiasm and energy are impressive and contagious!"

—Julie A.

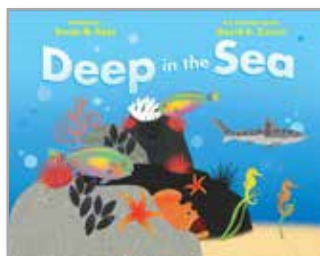
"Spectacular! A charming presenter. Extremely practical—well-planned, filled with interesting anecdotes. I picked up useful, detailed tips. I'd sit through this again just to pick up more!"

—Denise B.

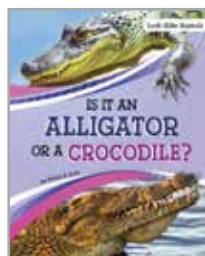
"After attending this workshop, I felt eager to go back to the classroom!"

—Yesenia O.

Forthcoming



(Simon & Schuster/Little Simon, July 2021)



(Capstone Pub, August, 2021)

