

i. Setting up a multilingual library



A multilingual library is a space that has a wide variety of materials and resources in different languages, with the objective of serving the reading needs of a diverse and multicultural community. These libraries offer books, magazines, newspapers, films and other materials in several languages, thus promoting linguistic and cultural diversity and facilitating access to information for people of different nationalities and backgrounds.

Multilingual libraries in schools are of utmost importance as they foster cultural and linguistic diversity, promote the inclusion of students from different backgrounds and facilitate access to a wide range of educational resources in various languages. In addition, they help enrich the vocabulary and understanding of different languages, which contributes to the overall development of students and their preparation for a globalised world.

Below are some considerations for establishing a multilingual library in the school:
(<https://www.multilingualism-in-schools.net/the-multilingual-childrens-library/>)

Consider the context of the school: take into account the different cultures and languages surrounding the school, which often depends on the context of the neighbourhood. This is done in order to meet the needs of all families and to enrich the school.

Other data to take into account (in addition to the languages spoken in the school) are: (a) The ages of the children attending the school: so that the books are appropriate. (b) The number of students attending: to calculate the size of the library.

It is important that everyone feels "equal protagonist", so it can work to have the materials and posters in different languages, or at least among the most spoken within the school.

Promote the library to families: the library needs to be made known. The most powerful tool for promotion is usually word of mouth among families.

It can be interesting, and contribute to integration, that the families themselves bring books in their home tongue, this will strengthen the feeling of belonging and encourage motivation in involvement.

Establish motivational reading initiatives within the library, such as a "Reading passport" carried out at Sheffield's Multilingual Children's Library. ([see our website](#))

Build a warm and welcoming atmosphere: Keep in mind that the multilingual library is also a meeting space, and an opportunity for families to socialise, as it offers the possibility to establish bonds and connections; it is therefore worth taking a few minutes to build a caring space.

Given all the above, the benefits of a multilingual library for plurilingual students and families are very significant. First, it provides access to a wide range of resources in different languages, allowing families to maintain and foster their native languages. This is crucial for preserving cultural identity and strengthening family ties. In addition, a multilingual library offers the opportunity to explore new cultures and traditions through literature and other materials in different languages, which enriches children's learning experience and promotes cross-cultural understanding.

In short, a multilingual library is an invaluable resource for plurilingual families, providing them with the opportunity to connect with their cultural roots and explore the world through different languages.

You will wonder how and where to find the books. This is where your relationships with the families are important. You can ask them where to find them, what type of books are important in their countries. Parents can also provide you with books when travelling back to their home countries. It is important to know how books are important in their countries and what type of books are being used. Keeping in mind that in some cultures, there are no written stories and that the tradition is an oral tradition.