

The power of multilingual picture books

Picture books can be more than stories, they can be mirrors, windows, and sliding doors for our learners. In this contribution, Nicola Daly from Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato explores the power of multilingual pukapikitia to reflect identities, support language reclamation, and invite tamariki into diverse worlds.

Over the last 15 years I have been working with picturebooks featuring more than one language, in particular, English and te reo Māori. Together with colleagues and students at the University of Waikato, we have shown the power of these dual language picturebooks in developing language attitudes and supporting language reclamation. This work led to a series of collaborations with ECE kaiako to explore how tamariki and kaiako respond to pukapikitia (picturebooks) featuring Pacific languages. Underpinning this work is a powerful metaphor which compares children's literature to windows, mirrors, and glass sliding doors (first proposed by Professor Rudine Sims Bishop). Bishop explains the importance of children seeing themselves in books (mirror); seeing other ways of being (windows), and the potential for books to invite readers to step into another person's shoes (sliding doors). Our work in three different ECE settings has shown the power of pukapikitia which reflect the tamariki and their families both in illustration and language(s). Picturebooks are an effective way to draw on the rich cultural and linguistic heritage in educational settings.

- Do your pukapuka reflect your learners' identities and languages?
- Whose stories are missing?
- What do multilingual books say about the value of te reo Māori and Pacific languages?
- Which books act as mirrors, windows, or sliding doors for your learners?
- How can you use pukapikitia to support language and identity?
- How might you involve whānau in choosing or creating multilingual resources?