

The **Bloomsbury Handbook** of  
**CULTURE AND IDENTITY**  
**FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD**  
**TO EARLY ADULthood**

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## Developing Their Best Reading and Writing Selves for Bi/Multilingual Students and Families

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*It feels nice because you feel close to your child, as a human. As I said, before when we'd read a book, we'd read a book and that's it – Camilla, Mother*

Camilla,<sup>1</sup> the mother quoted above, participated in three trainings, in partnership with the urban school her children attend, to learn how to implement Read Two Impress Plus (R2I+), a reading intervention grounded in repeated readings of text that *impresses* reading fluency through a systematic combination of auditory, kinaesthetic and visual strategies facilitated by a more experienced reader. Her words illustrate a key finding of this study; this intervention increased children and families' positive feelings about reading, *their closeness* around reading, which for children translated into heightened confidence in recreational reading and proficiency in academic reading.

Jimenez (2003) calls for research on identities that consider what practices might facilitate children's reading identities and help Latinx children in particular grow academically and socio-emotionally. Responding to Jimenez's (2003) call, we partnered with an urban, primarily Latinx serving school to adapt and implement our adaptation of Read Two Impress (Young et al., 2015). This is a strategy for struggling readers<sup>2</sup> where a more experienced reader, seated on a student's dominant side, reads aloud a challenging text expressively and faster than the student. The student then rereads each page of text. Our adaptation of this teaching practice is multifaceted; this is why we name the strategy Read Two Impress *Plus* (R2I+). First, R2I+ requires students answer comprehension questions throughout their reading. Second, R2I+ engages students with culturally and linguistically authentic books that create mirrors and windows into their identities (Bishop, 1990). Unlike previous studies on this intervention, our study engaged families in sharing culturally authentic and bilingual texts. A family partner-reader apprentices the student in expressive, fluent reading, providing guided practice with proficient oral reading while supporting the student with word recognition and comprehension. Whereas previous studies looked only at the relationship between a challenging text and a student's performance, we wanted to investigate the extent to which challenging, high-interest culturally and linguistically authentic texts facilitate student's ability to perform at the outer limits of their zone of proximal development (Young et al., 2015).

## Theoretical Framework

Our work connects to a sociocultural conceptual framework (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theory views learning as shaped by ‘cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic factors, along with personal interests and situational dynamics’ (Dyson, 2013: 5). As students are paired with a more experienced reader, they work within what Vygotsky (1978) terms the zone of proximal development or the distance between what a learner can perform independently or with guidance (Young et al., 2015). Furthermore, sociocultural theory takes an ontological stance towards learning, recognizing that it involves more than simply knowing but also a sense of being within social contexts (Packer and Goicoechea, 2000). In this tradition, ‘learning involves the construction of identities’ as it ‘implies not only a relation to specific activities, but a relation to social communities’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 53). This perspective views learning as entangled in and with social and cultural experiences; ‘because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity’ (Wenger, 1998: 215).

## Literature Review

Within this sociocultural perspective, we draw from literature on identity broadly and reading identity specifically. When viewed through a lens of thinking about identity broadly and reading identity specifically, the Read Two Impress Plus intervention can be one tool to help families, educational stakeholders and children develop their best reading selves. Thus, we also share literature about Read Two Impress Plus as a partnership-centred intervention to help schools, children and families work together to improve reading achievement.

### *Identity Development*

People’s best reading selves, their identities as readers, are constructed and shaped by social, cultural, linguistic and historical group knowledge derived from people’s discursive interactions in homes, communities and schools (Skerret, 2012; Wortham, 2006). There is no singular definition of identity and how it impacts students’, teachers’ or families’ school and classroom interactions around reading (Alvermann, 2001; Brown, 2004). Bucholtz and Hall (2005) define identity as a result of symbolic systems arising from local power relations and processes. This perspective forefronts the ways that different kinds of identities reflect differential power dynamics stemming from broader sociopolitical relations and ideologies.

Sfard and Prusak (2005: 15) view identity as the ‘missing link’ in the ‘complex dialectic between learning and its sociocultural context’. Norton (2000: 5) defines identity as ‘how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space and how the person understands possibilities for the future’. Lave and Wenger (1991: 53) further describe the situated nature of learning, how ‘identity, knowing and social membership entail one another’ and that ‘learning is not merely a condition for membership, but itself an evolving form of membership’ (1991) in the social world. Furthermore,



Wortham (2004: 6) points to the embedded nature of identity through elucidating the concept of ‘models of identity’ or ‘explicit accounts of what some people are like’ (2006). These models are deeply rooted within historical and cultural contexts. The home, surrounding community and school are distinct but overlapping within these contexts, which Holland et al. (1998) call figured worlds. People can acquire or be assigned any number of identities based on the models that exist in a particular context. In mathematics, for example, positive self-identity relates to sustained engagement in the field (Boaler and Greeno, 2000). A math identity creates ‘a sense of personal affiliation ... [and] a sense of group membership within a mathematics community’ (Cribbs et al., 2015). Nasir identifies the ‘intertwined’ nature of identity, goals and learning, as explored through the development of mathematical learning in the cultural practice of basketball and dominoes (2002). In literacy, the models of identity as *struggling readers*, *unmotivated students* and *uninvolved families* are similarly based on and constructed in school and home contexts. These models of identity are built on mutual interactions and learnings, constituting what Gee (2002) calls discursive identities. However, discursive identities can be manipulated by adoption of the characteristics associated with the desired identity or by repressing characteristics connected to undesirable identities (Hall, 2010).

### *A Partnership-Centred Strategy to Foster Positive Reading Identities*

Schools hold unbalanced power in shaping children’s reading identities. This power plays out in prevalent top-down models of literacy intervention and family engagement, which often disempower students and disconnect families from schools (Rasinski and Stevenson, 2005). At the same time that schools can have unbalanced power in shaping the identities of readers through top-down approaches, schools can also create contexts of learning that can shape reading identity through partnership-centred (Sheridan and Kratochwill, 2007) approaches to family literacy that place books in the hands of families and provide support for the use of those materials that have demonstrated marked success and have been correlated with student achievement (DeBruin-Parecki, 2007; Rasinski and Stevenson, 2005). Preparing families to implement reading interventions such as Read Two Impress Plus (R2I+) can create a space focused on ‘meaningful parent involvement’ by reaching out to parents, providing families with resources and creating a welcoming environment (Edwards, 2016: 118). Strong evidence demonstrates that partnership-centred (Sheridan and Kratochwill, 2007) programmes create important roles for family members to play in their child’s learning and increase students’ opportunities for success in schools (Epstein, 2013; Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Sanders, Sheldon and Epstein, 2005; Sanders and Epstein, 2007).

Within a partnership-centred approach, children who have adopted a model of identity as a struggling reader and then learn strategies that can help them with reading are able to participate positively in academic and social activities involving reading. Thus, through partnership approaches, schools can become ‘crucibles wherein children are transformed’ (Packer, 2001: 1).

In a recent national study of urban, pre-kindergarten through third grade, high-performing teachers’ language and literacy practices (Nash and Panther, 2019; Nash, Hollins and

Panther, 2016; Nash, Panther and Arce-Boardman, 2018), one observed practice included the *method of repeated oral readings* (Samuels, 1979). A version of the method of repeated reading has been called Neurological Impress Method (NIM), NIM Plus and, more recently, Read Two Impress (R2I) and R2I+. This type of dyad reading is an intervention for readers of all ages who read below grade level, where a tutor, seated on a student's dominant side, reads aloud a slightly challenging text expressively and slightly faster than the student while guiding the student's finger to track the text (Eldredge and Quinn, 1988; Heckleman, 1966, 1969). Heckelman (1966) first identified this method through observation of an adolescent female whose reading level increased three grade levels after just twelve hours of tutoring. He observed the tutor using kinaesthetic, auditory and visual reinforcements to support the young woman's reading fluency in brief 10–15-minute sessions.

Repeating the method with twenty-four middle and high school students, Heckleman found that after 7.5 hours of instruction, the mean reading grade-level gain was 1.9 with gains within a range of 0.8 to 5.9 (1969). Additionally, experimental and non-experimental studies find positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes associated with the implementation of Neurological Impress Method (NIM), NIM+ and R2I (Flood, Lapp and Fisher, 2005; Henk, 1983; Young et al., 2015) although more recent studies have shown mixed results (Young et al., 2017).

The method became popular in special education (Arnold, 1972) and appeared in handbooks on reading fluency throughout the next several decades (Crowley and Merritt, 1996; Schreiber, 1980). NIM has experienced a resurgence with the development of NIM Plus (NIM+) which includes comprehension questions after the completion of the intervention (Flood, Lapp and Fischer, 2005) and R2I, which follows the steps of NIM but adds the step of students rereading each page independently after the initial echo reading (Young et al., 2015). Like its predecessor, R2I has led to increases in comprehension and fluency (Young et al., 2017).

As noted, we have further adapted this intervention in multifaceted ways; this is why we name our version R2I+. Like NIM+, R2I+ adds steps where students answer comprehension questions and reread the text throughout their reading (Young et al., 2015). Furthermore, R2I+ engages participants with reading culturally relevant and authentic texts that create windows and mirrors (Bishop, 1990). A small study on R2I+ with families and their second graders, in the same region but at a different urban school, showed that when families ( $N = 23$ ) assisted children in practising reading using R2I+ for eight weeks, children's fluency grew one quarter more than their peers who did not participate in the intervention (Nash and Michael, 2018). Multiple studies have linked the use of bilingual texts with increased fluency (Rodríguez-Valls, 2011). Studies also link the use of culturally and linguistically authentic texts with increased engagement in reading (Bishop, 1990; Boutte, 2002; Brooks and McNair, 2009; Feger, 2006; Rodríguez-Valls, 2011) and academic achievement (Bell and Clark, 1998; Rodríguez-Valls, 2011). Furthermore, using such texts results in gains in comprehension and fluency (Garth-McCullough, 2008; McCullough, 2013). In a report completed for UNESCO informing how to enhance learning for children from diverse language backgrounds, Ball (2010: 42) states that 'books and learning materials in other languages or dual-language books (even home-made ones) are important to promote bilingualism and to raise the status of the language spoken by the children and their families'. Yet bilingual texts that reflect diverse cultural backgrounds are scarce. Data from the Cooperative Children's Book Center, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, from 2018, shows that diversity representing Latinx characters and culture in children's books accounts for only

5 per cent of the 3,134 books reviewed. As well, only 10 per cent of these books portray African or African American characters and culture (Huyck and Dahlen, 2019).

## Methods

We approached this mixed-methods study from an interpretative or constructivist paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Leavy, 2017), informed by community-based participatory research (CBPR), which involves collaborative partnership between researchers and non-academic stakeholders. In CBPR, researchers' partner with community-based organizations and their members, in order to actively involve the communities, aim to serve in the research process. Our study stems from the identified need, reported by the teachers, of helping struggling readers from grades two to eight.

As researchers, we acted as participant observers in this study, meaning that we 'assume[d] a variety of roles within a case study situation and actually participate in the events being studied' (Yin, 1994: 87). As many of us work closely with the teachers, families and children in this school outside of this study, being embedded in the context under study offered the kind of 'firsthand involvement' and full 'immersion' that are essential elements of qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman, 2006: 100).

The overarching question of the study is, how does valuing and forefronting family-centred partnerships and culturally and linguistically authentic texts in schools help children develop their best reading selves? Then, two sub-questions we identified are (1) how does the experience of the R2I+ strategy contribute to and define positive reading identities of bi/multilingual children and families? and (2) how do culturally and linguistically relevant and authentic texts solidify positive reading identity for bi/multilingual children and families?

## Sampling

We relied on criterion sampling to obtain study participants (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). In order to be selected for the study, the children needed to have been identified as struggling readers, performing at least two grade levels below the expected grade reading level. Based on the results from the authentic, informal assessments conducted at the beginning of the school year, the teachers selected the children. They selected only children performing at two levels under expected grade level and invited them and their families to participate in the study. The participants selected met these criteria and were drawn from second through seventh grades. School personnel and teachers helped with contacting families before each training session.

## Participants

The participants were a total of sixteen children, six from second grade, six from third grade, one from fourth grade, two from sixth grade, one seventh grader and their parents ( $N = 16$ ).



Some of the children were siblings, accompanied by the same family member. No children from eighth grade participated in the study. Six family members and children who participated were Latinx and bilingual, one was African American and monolingual, and two were white and monolingual. The children were five females and eight males. The participating parents were thirteen females and three males. From the sixteen children that participated, only nine completed both the pre- and post-survey; data from these nine children is the ones presented in the findings. Of sixteen parents, nine completed the pre- and post-survey and participated in the focus groups. Qualitative and quantitative data presented here stems from these nine participating children and their parents.

## Context

This study took place in a school with a student population that is 62 per cent Latinx, the largest subgroup of Latinx students in the school district. Forty-two per cent of children are learning English as a second language. Thirty-two per cent of students are African American and 6 per cent of the school population is white or multiracial. There are 1,000 total students in the school. Bilingualism is centred within the school – the principal and many of the teachers and personnel are bilingual, and the school's consistent weaving of Spanish/English signage and messaging throughout the school day and the physical building indicates that this is a place where Spanish is not merely viewed as an add-on, but is viewed as valuable and as a resource. It is also one of the only schools in the large district that is currently offering a dual-language programme.

## Data Collection and Analysis

We collected quantitative data through the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna and Keer, 1990) and scores from DIBELS and iReady assessments<sup>3</sup> conducted at the beginning and middle of the school year. We administered the survey prior to and after the R2I+ intervention. The reading attitude survey is composed of two subscales: recreational reading attitude and academic reading attitude. Qualitative data included observations, collection of artefacts and audio-recorded focus group interviews with participating family members.

We analysed the quantitative data collected from survey responses and children's performance on the DIBELS and iReady assessments through descriptive and inferential analysis of mean differences pre- and post-intervention. We analysed the qualitative data from the focus groups independently through an open-coding process (Charmaz, 2006) engaging in an iterative process of pattern analysis. We then generated *Nvivo* codes (Charmaz, 2006), stemming directly from participants' responses, which we corroborated by engaging in a process of intercoder negotiated agreement, comparing codes and reconciling any of the coding discrepancies that emerged (Campbell et al., 2013). This process of data analysis facilitated intercoder reliability (Lavrakas, 2008) and triangulation of the themes we determined through the data analysis process (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014).

## Study Design

The study took place between the months of October and November of 2019 at the school site. We provided three training sessions. In all three sessions the children took home books of their choosing, given that home literacy practices are often addressed by the number of books in the household and the frequency of shared storybook reading activities (Licandro, 2016). Families were provided with a folder which contained a reading log, where they were to record the books they read and the number of minutes they read with their child(ren) at home. We encouraged families to practise the strategy for at least forty minutes per week, in brief ten-minute intervals. Also, the families were provided with time to practise the strategy with their child or children during the training. Furthermore, each family participant was paid twenty dollars per child for each session attended and dinner was provided for the families at the start of each session.

The first session was a training workshop on the R2I+ strategy. In this session we collected the pre-intervention survey data. In the second session, we provided training to new families joining the study and allowed more time for guided practice. We also followed up with how the strategy was being implemented at home and looked at the reading logs the families were keeping, tracking their reading after participating in the first session. The third and final session consisted of conversations in focal groups with the parents, while the children selected new books to continue practising the strategy at home. In this last session we also collected the post-intervention survey data.

## Findings

The quantitative findings indicate that the intervention had a positive impact on the participating children in terms of their attitudes and performance in recreational and academic reading on both surveys and norm-referenced reading assessments. Through analysing the qualitative focus group interviews, where families shared their observations, learnings, questions and insights about the intervention, we identified several themes that augment the quantitative findings. A primary theme of the focus group interviews was also related to the positive overall impact on most of the children's reading identities. As the families discussed in focus group interviews (verbatim data shared below), children expressed the positive impact both in terms of their reading identities and their academic performance.

Specifically, children demonstrated an increase in reading fluency (the ability to read accurately and expressively) and increased amount of talking about texts, and in addition, they appreciated the closeness facilitated by the intervention, experienced an increase in excitement and motivation to read and empowerment and connection with the school. Finally, findings reiterate the value of culturally and linguistically authentic texts. All of the findings seem to indicate that the partnership-centred intervention had a positive influence on reading identities of the children and families.



## Reading Attitudes, Reading Identities

The Elementary Reading Attitude Survey measures children's attitudes about recreational and academic reading. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of both pre- and post-intervention surveys as a whole as well as each subscale were high ( $\alpha = .91$ , recreational reading attitude  $\alpha = .82$ , academic reading attitude  $\alpha = .88$ ;  $\alpha = .85$ , recreational reading attitude  $\alpha = .82$  and academic reading attitude  $\alpha = .7$ ). Table 11.1 shows the means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum scores for each of the subscales.

These data show that the children had a more positive attitude towards recreational reading than academic reading in general, but the increase in the children's attitude of academic reading from the pre-intervention to the post-intervention was higher than that of recreational reading. Figure 11.1 visualizes the mean differences between children's attitudes captured in pre- and post-intervention surveys.

The descriptive statistics, shown in the figures, help us confirm positive changes among the children's attitudes towards recreational reading as well as academic reading. We also assessed whether the mean differences in pre- and post-intervention were statistically meaningful. While Mann-Whitney test results showed that the mean differences between pre- and post-study surveys were not statistically significant (i.e. recreational reading attitude  $p = .2$ , academic reading attitude  $p = .07$ ), this does not indicate that the positive changes in children's attitude towards recreational and academic reading are unimportant. As the sample size greatly influences the statistical calculation, it would disservice the readers to place too much emphasis on the statistical significance in this analysis (Wassertein and Lazar, 2016).

On the contrary, taking advantage of the small number of participants, we closely examined each individual child's responses in the pre- and post-intervention surveys. Figures 11.2 and 11.3 show individual children's attitudes towards recreational and academic reading, respectively.

As noted in the figures, positive changes were captured in the post-intervention survey. In particular some children (i.e. Sal, Sabrina and John) showed noticeably more positive attitudes towards both recreational and academic reading in the post-intervention survey. These positive attitudes translated to children's feelings and motivation towards homework and reading practices at home. Although parents and teachers indicated that many of the children did their homework and read at home before the intervention, after the intervention, many parents expressed that their children were more motivated to talk about their reading and

Table 11.1 Descriptive statistics

|                      | Pre-intervention |     |     |     | Post-intervention |     |     |     |
|----------------------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                      | M                | SD  | Min | Max | M                 | SD  | Min | Max |
| Survey total         | 2.31             | .68 | 1   | 4   | 2.97              | .55 | 1   | 4   |
| Recreational reading | 2.41             | .69 | 1   | 4   | 3.08              | .63 | 1   | 4   |
| Academic reading     | 2.21             | .73 | 1   | 4   | 2.86              | .60 | 1   | 4   |

( $N = 9$ ) M = mean; SD = standard deviation; min = minimum; max = maximum.

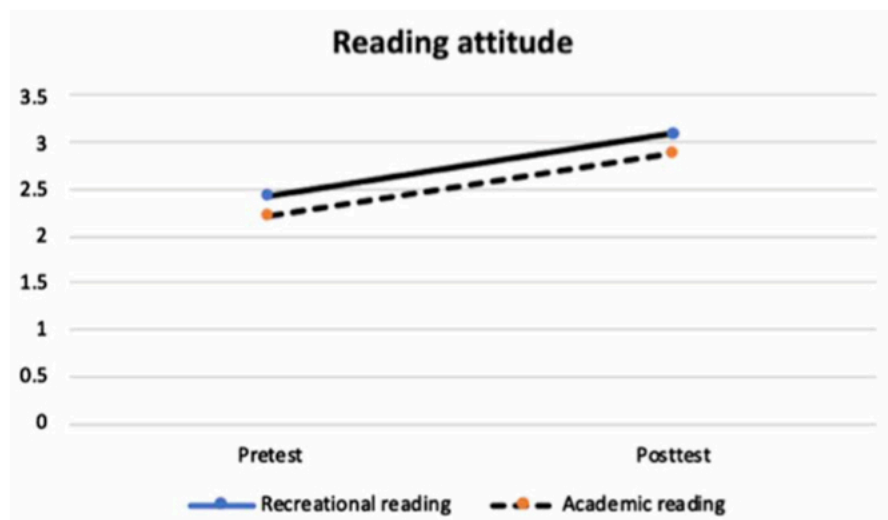


Figure 11.1 Reading attitude survey results

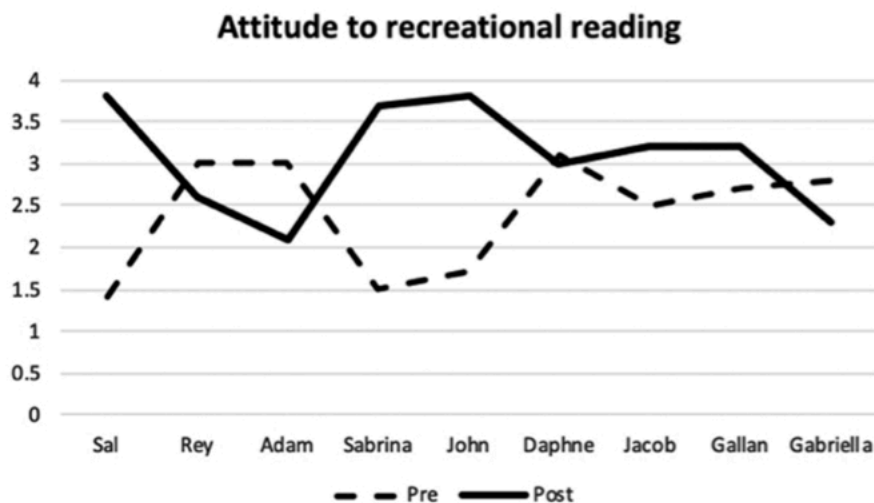


Figure 11.2 Individual participants' recreational reading attitude

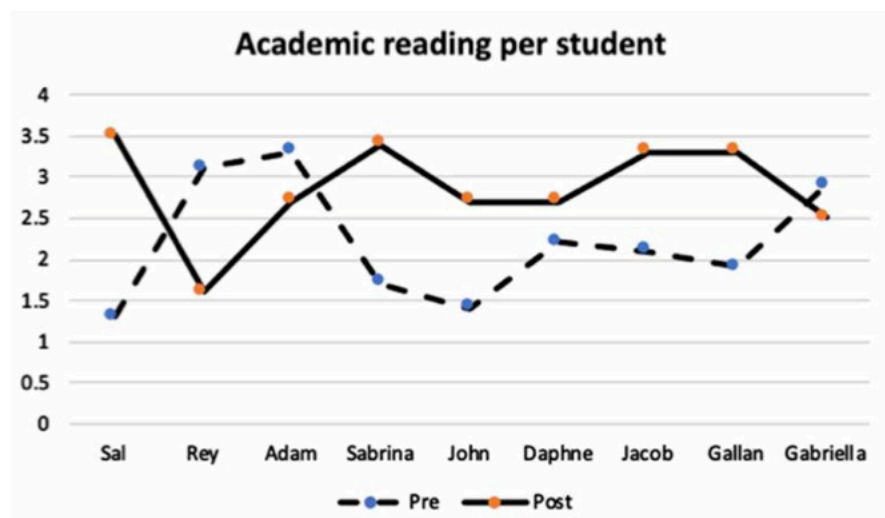


Figure 11.3 Individual participants' academic reading attitude

complete their homework than before. For example, one father, Fabian, discussed how, before learning about the intervention, his child, Rey,

would read, but he'd read and that's it. Now, it's not like that. Now, he asks me questions, or sometimes, we talk about the book or what it said. So, he says, 'It's about this,' which he wouldn't do before.

This same father went on to describe, 'Now, he asks me questions, or sometimes, he tells me, "Daddy, this is about the pirate and this and that," and he starts talking.' Similarly, another parent, Camilla shared,

I think that they pay more attention because they know that we're going to ask them. They think, 'if my mom asks me, she'll say, "well, are you reading or not?"' They start forgetting and they know. Before now, I didn't ask them anything, but I might ask them later and if they can't reply, I'll say, 'Then, did you read it, or were you just reading to get it out of the way?'

Talking about texts in natural, meaningful ways is an important part of building children's reading comprehension (Shanahan et al., 2010). The increases in children's positive attitudes about academic reading can likely be linked to the meaningful talk about texts going on at home and at school.

Before learning about R2I+, many parents spoke about how reading at home had been a chore. One parent, Julia, said she previously had to 'force her [child] to sit and read it to me'. Parents also discussed how, before they participated in the intervention, they did not feel their children were as motivated to read resulting from a lack of books at home or a lack of access to books. Fabian said, 'Before these things, it was mostly with the phone because I hardly have any books,'



and Zaneta said, 'We don't have books, but she (referring to her daughter) can understand the letters in the Bible.' But after participating in the R2I+ trainings, she noted her child, Daphne, was more eager to read at home, as indicated in her words 'now we sit together and I sit on her dominant side and it seems better because she is listening to me'.

Such positive attitudes towards both recreational and academic reading were also reflected in students' increased motivation towards reading. As one parent, Lena, said,

I think it is something that encourages the child; it develops them and draws their attention. I think that this kind of program motivates the child. Afterward, they carry on by themselves, but to a large extent, the one who has the main responsibility is you, the parent.

Lena spoke both about how learning the intervention helped motivate her child, while at the same time causing her to reflect on her great responsibility with facilitating her child's reading as a parent. Lena also spoke to the impact of the regularity of the ten-minute intervention:

I think that it's because you keep reading with them and they like books more. They keep reading. If you tell them every day that you're going to read with them for at least 10 minutes, then they really pay attention to you.

Lena expressed, reflecting the sentiments expressed by almost all of the participating families, that now, 'The children read with more confidence. They feel more confident.' Another parent, Natalie, talked about how her child was so engaged in reading at home now that she reads to her when she feels sick and even reads to the family puppy:

Sabrina likes to – I just got out of being sick the last five days, so she's been reading to me every day since I was sick. Sabrina also reads to the new puppy. She'll sit there with the puppy and still do her little finger thing. There's a puppy sitting on her lap having no clue what's going on, but she's just sitting there reading to the dog about the dog named Spot.

Another parent, Zana, also expressed that her children had increased confidence and motivation to read and enjoyed coming to the school to participate in the interventions and choose books that were of interest to them. She said that on the night of the trainings, her children would say to her, 'Mommy, let's go and read books. Let's go and read books.' She discussed how at home now her children 'also feel motivated to keep reading books'.

The R2I+ intervention has a more experienced reader read a culturally and linguistically authentic text while seated close to and on the dominant side of the reader. The partner-reader places their hand over the child's hand while reading the text slightly ahead of the reader, who echoes them. This positioning and way of reading creates partnership around the reading act – it's like the parent and child, as Natalie described, are 'singing a song' together. The positive feelings about reading, which translated to increased home engagement and motivation to read with families at home, seem to have been connected to the *closeness* afforded by R2I+. Over and over, we heard children and families express how they loved the 'bonding' and 'closeness' afforded by this intervention. Maria reflected on how, prior to learning about the intervention, reading was *enforced* in the household. Maria and her husband would say, 'Sit here and read a book, each one of you.' After learning this way of reading Maria said she felt 'when they sit with

you and you hold their hand to point with their finger, they feel more comfortable with you'. Others also shared how their children appreciated the closeness of the intervention, saying, 'He loves it when I'm close to him teaching him' and 'they do feel your affection, your warmth. When you're teaching them that, perhaps they think, "My mom is teaching me here with me." To me, that was beautiful, to sit them here and teach them'. Camilla also spoke about how the closeness brought on by the intervention made her feel 'nice when he sits with you. He almost falls asleep on me. I was holding his hand and he was also hugging me'. Some parents said that while they 'always read close' to their children, the hand-over-hand practice proved especially helpful in creating that bond. For example, Maria said, 'Reading with the finger, it does feel more close.' Lena reflected,

The doctor tells you that, in order to form your child's character, in the first place, you need to hold him here against your chest. Imagine the act of sitting them next to you and holding their hand. It's like a display of affection for your child, that the person who they admire, and love is teaching them the way things should be. I really liked that technique.

While most families thought the hand-over-hand aspect of the intervention helped facilitate closeness, it should be noted that two parents discussed that their children 'did not like' that part. This was especially true for the older children who had become accustomed to reading without physical touch. However, the physical touch is a key part of the intervention, as it is part of what is impressing reading through the kinaesthetic modality.

Children who struggle with reading often take on the 'identity' of a reader who struggles (Hall, 2010; Skerrett, 2012). Parents' reflections on their children's progress showed that the children had higher engagement, confidence, motivation and positive attitudes towards school-related home engagements, thus the intervention seemed to support children's development of discursive identities around reading (Gee, 2002). In other words, the students were able to adopt some of the characteristics associated with the identity of a good reader.

### *Academic Reading Proficiency and Identity Development*

Depending on their grade levels, the children were administered either DIBELS or iReady reading assessments in the beginning (BOY) and the middle of the year (MOY). The majority of children obtained 2–23 per cent higher scores in MOY than BOY (except for one child (Daphne), whose test scores decreased 1 per cent). These general improvements in academic reading were also noticed by family members, in particular with regard to their reading fluency. Fluency is the ability to read accurately and with expression. When asked about their experiences with using R2I+, many parents spoke to the impact on their children's fluency. For example, Natalie commented, 'She loves when we read together. It's different when she reads it and then I read a book, but she says it sounds better. When we're both [reading], she says mom it's like we're singing the same song.' Karina commented that after using R2I+ her daughter 'can read faster than I can'. When the interviewer followed up, asking 'She can read faster than you?' Karina responded by saying:

Yeah, I gotta keep up with her now ... So now when we read, we cuddle and then she's chasing my echo when reading. She is reading things she used to read within half the time as she used to. She knows all these words and she reads so fast and it's like I gotta keep up with her now. So, it's like, this is fun.

Furthermore, Julia expressed that her 'daughter, [Daphne] she will be faster than I get like slow down ... I'm like ... I can only read that fast in my head'. Two parents expressed awe over their children's increased fluency:

Karina: Now it sounds like she just reads [like] a busy bee.

Natalie: Right.

Karina: Yeah. [She says] 'Can I read, Can I read?!' I mean even though she might have been reading before, it's like it tripled now. I am in awe actually. You know since we've been doing it together, she's ... it is ... she is smart, very smart. It's like I hear her read. It's like I have to follow her.

Karina: And I like it because when she gets to the part that is difficult, I am right here. I used to be like, she would read only because 'all right fine, Mommy you told me to', or I got do this. Now it's like, are we gonna go read!! Cool. Let's go read mom and she'll sit on my lap and that's our time.

Finally, Julia shared, in both wonder and exasperation, 'I can't, you know, catch up to my child. It's like come on!'

Multiple studies have shown links between iterations of the NIM and R2I intervention and improvements in student fluency (Arnold, 1972; Crawley and Merritt, 1996; Flood, Lapp and Fischer, 2005; Young et al., 2015). Fluency development has links to comprehension development, which in turn influences literacy proficiency (Young et al., 2015). Increased fluency leads to feelings of being a *good reader*. This identity facilitates increased positive experiences, motivation and engagement with reading. Such links between improvement of academic reading and positive associations towards reading have been a consistent trend in studies of this intervention (Flood, Lapp and Fisher, 2005; Henk, 1983; Young et al., 2015).

### *Culturally and Linguistically Authentic Texts and Identity*

This study also sought to examine the extent to which using culturally and linguistically authentic and high-interest texts with the R2I+ intervention would positively impact children's reading identity and proficiency. Although we cannot fully determine the extent to which the texts directly influenced reading ability and fluency, many families spoke to the value of bilingual texts. For example, some parents talked about how their children did not select Spanish or bilingual books which were available to them and although they were happy that their children selected high-



interest texts, they felt they were not able to support their children as much with reading those texts because they were still learning English themselves:

- Interviewer: Well, I guess the topics mattered as much as the children liked them.
- Fabian: That's right.
- Maria: They like them. It draws their attention. He'd pick his books.
- Fabian: Because he likes it. At least he likes pirates, so that was something interesting. Well, I didn't have any problem because it's what he likes, and I didn't think it was that bad because it was about pirates. So, he had more to talk about. It was more interesting.
- Maria: Yes, the one he picked was big, but it was interesting, and it was about teachers and children. The book was really interesting.

However, when the children selected bilingual Spanish/English books, families found their engagement more mutually beneficial, as they discussed in the following exchange:

- Zaneta: In Spanish, it's better.
- Camilla: Yes, these are in Spanish and English.
- Zana: Oh, that's nice because it has both.
- Zana: Yes, it has both.
- Camilla: Here it is, this up here is in English and this is in Spanish. My son can already speak English a lot. He reads here and I read here.
- Zaneta: It's easier. Meanwhile, I tell my children to pick one that's in Spanish because the Spanish – I don't know why, but they can read better in English than in Spanish. I tell them – Well, it would've been nice if they'd picked the ones with both because, that way, they can start reading both, because they're struggling a little bit to read in Spanish.
- Interviewer: In Spanish??
- Zana: Yes, even though they have bilingual classes.
- Interviewer: Are your children in the bilingual program?
- Zana: Yes, but they're struggling a little to read in Spanish or explain things to me in Spanish. Sometimes, they tell me stuff in English, but they struggle a little bit to explain them to me in Spanish.
- Interviewer: Exactly.
- Zana: Yes, even though we only speak Spanish at home. I don't know why they struggle. [chuckles]

Only one parent, Lena, commented on the value of both the linguistic and cultural authenticity of a book her child selected:

Lena: My son only took one [bilingual book about another culture]; it was about a girl from El Salvador who'd sell roses. He only took one. I only have one son here, the older one, because the little one isn't in school yet, but he – It was about a poor family and the girl would sell roses to make money. At first, she'd go by herself. Afterward, the family would go with her and she'd have more fun. My son loves that book. He's always like, 'Bring out that book about the roses.'

Interviewer: That's good.

Lena: The book is very nice, but it's from El Salvador. He really likes that one. I always keep it in his room because he likes to read it. He really likes it.

Lena: I think that also helps us learn more English. At least I feel that way; I don't know about all of you. Since he reads in English, I read in Spanish, then he also starts reading in Spanish with me, I think that the words I don't know how to say in English since he says them, I listen to the way he says them and I can say them with him. So, I think that this strategy is very nice.

Lena: I feel like he helps me learn words. I even learn from him. I feel that way.

As noted, studies have linked culturally authentic texts to increases in comprehension and overall reading proficiency (DeBruin-Parecki, 2007; Rasinski and Stevenson, 2005). While Lena reflected on how her son loved the book that took place in El Salvador, our study primarily shows the important role of bilingual texts in the process of bilingual families' implementation of R2I+. As Zaneta, Zana and Camilla discussed, bilingual texts create a mutually beneficial and reciprocal process of reading between bilingual parents and children. A similar study reveals the connection between family literacy programmes that honour and extend families' linguistic knowledge, both in terms of families' active participation and their students' academic performance (Rodríguez-Valls, 2011).

## Implications and Conclusion

This study brings to light several implications. First, since the majority of families in our study were bilingual, future implementations of this study with bilingual families should include culturally authentic bilingual texts. Although we did not utilize such pedagogies actively enough in this

study, a second and related implication is that translanguaging pedagogies should be incorporated in future R2I+ trainings with similar populations. García (2009) defines translanguaging as the complex, dynamic and flexible ways bi/multilingual people mesh languages and codes through a rich repertoire of fluid linguistic acts along a 'continua of biliteracy' (Hornberger and Link, 2012: 240).

We asked the research questions, how do valuing and forefronting family-centred partnerships, culturally and linguistically relevant and authentic texts in schools help children develop their best reading selves? how does the experience of R2I+ contribute to and define positive reading identities of bi/multilingual children and families? and how do culturally and linguistically relevant and authentic texts solidify positive reading identity for bi/multilingual children and families?

While limited to a small number of participants, both the quantitative and qualitative findings show that the R2I+ intervention contributes to and defines positive reading identities of all children and family participants, whether bi/multilingual or not. Our study findings show that creating spaces for meaningful parent-school involvement by providing families with resources such as bilingual texts and training in a reading intervention that facilitated closeness and fostered roles increased students' success in schools (Epstein, 2013; Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Sanders and Epstein, 2007; Sanders, Sheldon and Epstein, 2005), specifically in their feelings about academic and recreational reading and improved fluency. Through this partnership-centred approach, the school becomes a place where families feel close to their children; this is the kind of place where 'children are transformed' (Packer, 2001: 1) into their best reading selves.

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