



# International Reading Association

*A membership organization of literacy professionals*

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## RESOLUTION

### **On Initial Literacy Instruction in a First Language for English Language Learners**

WHEREAS, the ability to communicate effectively in English is vital to the social and economic success of anyone living in a predominantly English-speaking country (e.g., US, UK, Canada); therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the International Reading Association endorses the research-based conclusion that literacy instruction in a home language is not harmful to learners at any age:

There is no indication that bilingual instruction impedes academic achievement in either the native language or English....Where differences were observed, they favored the students in a bilingual program.... Rather than confusing children, as some have feared, reading instruction in a familiar language may serve as a bridge to success in English. (National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth, Chapter 14 (Erlbaum 2006)

RESOLVED, that the International Reading Association opposes government initiatives and legislation that restrict opportunities for children and youth to benefit from initial instruction in reading and writing in their native language, that restrict the use of the native language within English literacy instruction, or that prohibit the combination of native language and English literacy instruction.

*This resolution is a revision of the 1998 resolution on "Initial Literacy Instruction in a First Language"*

(Date: May 2006)