Language, Reading and Skill Transference

The skill of reading comprehension is transferable across languages. This means that what is learned in the first language helps learning and transfer to English. This we know from many studies. But as Dr. Thonis (1983) pointed out, children must have guidance. Primary language support, at school and at home, provides immediate access to higher critical reading skills (Slavin & Cheung 2003). Educators want children to develop high critical levels to resolve a problem, come to a solution, or infer solutions from a story. Don’t you want your child to think at the highest level possible?

Research by Dr. Kenji Hakuta (1990) reported two very important findings:

♦ “...greater elaboration of the native language results in more efficient acquisition of the second language.”

♦ “… native (primary) language and second language are complimentary rather than mutually exclusive.”

This means that as a parent, you are critical and have the power to elaborate and expand your native home language, even if the school does not. Such power and knowledge can be used to improve the likelihood of your child’s academic success cognitively, socially and emotionally (Halle et al. 2014).