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Advantages of bilingualism

According to Professor Colin Baker of the University of Wales, one of the world's leading experts on bilingualism, these are the advantages of bilingualism that have been identified by research projects around the world:

- Bilingual children have two or more words for objects and ideas, so the links between words and concepts are looser, allowing more fluent, flexible and creative thinking.
- They can communicate more naturally and expressively, maintaining a finer texture of relationships with parents and grandparents, as well as with the local and wider communities in which they live.
- They gain the benefits of two sets of literatures, traditions, ideas, ways of thinking and behaving.
- They can act as a bridge between people of different colours, creeds and cultures.
- With two languages comes a wider cultural experience, greater tolerance of differences and, perhaps, less racism.
- As barriers to movement between countries are taken down, the earning power of bilinguals rises.
- Further advantages include raised self-esteem, increased achievement, and greater proficiency with other languages.

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