

WHITEPAPER

# FOOTSTEPS<sup>2</sup>BRILLIANCE FOR SPANISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

## Empowering Spanish Language Learners with Footsteps2Brilliance





# FOOTSTEPS2BRILLIANCE FOR SPANISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



## Footsteps2Brilliance is founded on research-based principles.

Footsteps2Brilliance is a comprehensive bilingual English and Spanish early literacy program founded in the latest research. The following principles are the foundation for instruction in Footsteps2Brilliance:

- Oral language and vocabulary provide a foundation for literacy development.
- Parental involvement is critical to a child's success in school.
- Literacy development begins before children enter school.
- Emergent readers need to understand how print works.
- Rapidly recognizing individual letters is a critical determinant of reading proficiency.
- Phonological awareness plays a critical role in learning to read.
- Beginning readers need to understand the relationships between written letters and spoken sounds or the alphabetic principle.
- Beginning readers need practice reading and listening to a variety of texts.
- Beginning readers need to develop automatic word recognition skills so they can pay attention to meaning.
- Readers should practice spelling and writing new words.
- Readers need practice reading orally with expression and with automaticity.
- Comprehension strategies can help emergent and beginning readers to better understand what they read.
- Emergent and beginning readers should practice writing connected text to express ideas and to learn basic grammar and usage skills that improve their writing

## **Footsteps2Brilliance offers built-in differentiation through student driven learning, immediate feedback, and unlimited repetition.**

Unlike many educational technology tools where students passively watch long demonstrations and/or explanations, Footsteps2Brilliance puts students in the drivers' seat. We believe that students learn best from first-hand experience. Each book, song, game, puzzle, and writing activity is carefully designed to encourage interaction, exploration, and play. Immediate feedback and hints help to guide the student toward mastery. This hands-on strategy enables language learners to work at their own pace and to focus their attention. For example, students can play with interactive tiles to hear phonemes repeatedly. They can tap picture cards and illustrations in books to hear audio labels. Even more powerful, nearly every written word on the screen can be tapped to hear it read aloud



## **Footsteps2Brilliance is an ideal curriculum to support RTI and personalized learning.**

Footsteps2Brilliance makes learning relevant, differentiated, and appropriate to each student. In an RTI model, Footsteps2Brilliance enables teachers to provide differentiated reading instruction for all students (Tier 1) by varying the amount of time, content, and degree of support and scaffolding each student receives. Because Footsteps2Brilliance focuses on developing vocabulary, oral language, fluency, phonics, phonological awareness, critical thinking, writing, and comprehension, teachers can also use the program to target foundational reading skills for intensive, systematic instruction for students who score below the benchmark on universal screeners (Tier 2 and Tier 3).

Footsteps2Brilliance also makes it easy for teachers to find books that are just right for a student's current independent reading level. Footsteps2Brilliance books present the following readability measures on the inside front cover of each book and in the Teacher Toolkits:

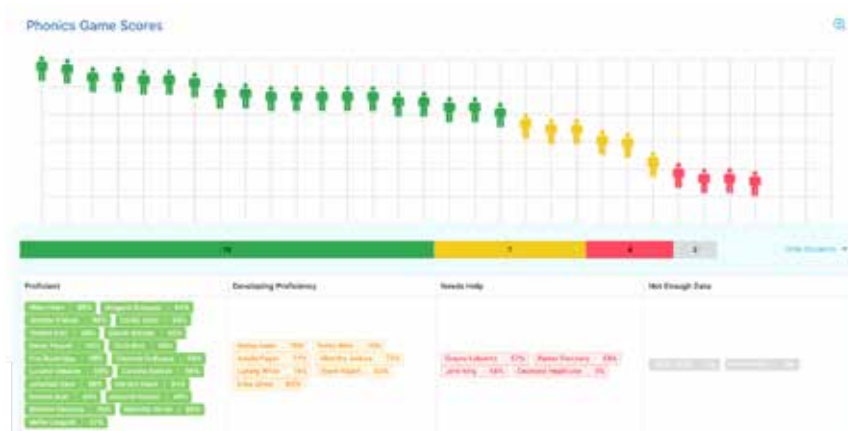
- Lexile Level
- El Sistema Lexile Para Leer (for the Spanish version of the book)
- Guided Reading Level (Fountas & Pinnel)
- Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease
- Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level
- Automated Readability Index

# Footsteps2Brilliance enables personalized, data-driven instruction.

Footsteps2Brilliance monitors proficiency on foundational skills and literacy with every game students play. Using sophisticated scoring algorithms, we provide insight on

student strengths and weaknesses so that teachers can easily differentiate learning, target interventions and monitor progress—no matter where students are learning.

## Flexibly group students by strengths and weaknesses.



## Understand each student's profile & monitor growth.

## Easily monitor when and where students are spending time.





## Footsteps2Brilliance develops listening skills in Spanish and English.

Footsteps2Brilliance supports English or Spanish language learners in developing listening skills by creating a language rich environment where students direct the learning.

Footsteps2Brilliance offers a unique opportunity for students to “stop language in time” by allowing them to click any element on the screen to hear it read aloud or labeled orally. For language learners, this becomes a powerful tool for exploring language in a safe environment where they can be guided by their own interests and they can repeat words, sounds, and music without limit. Students can even record themselves reading text or answering questions and then listen to their own recording.

While working on Footsteps2Brilliance, children will hear a wide variety of fluent speech in both English and Spanish. In addition to hearing books and songs read aloud, students continually follow instructions and prompts in order to complete activities and games in Footsteps2Brilliance. Each game has unique interactions, requiring the students to listen carefully and respond promptly. Immediate feedback with visual cues guide students toward correct responses. A speaker button throughout the App enables students to hear all on-screen text read aloud—or students can tap word by word and element by element for individual audio labels. After children read a book, they demonstrate their comprehension through the Book Buddies game that presents literal, inferential and lexical comprehension questions. Built into Book Buddies is a hint feature that enables children to reference the text in order to find answers and fine-tune comprehension.

## Footstep2Brilliance develops biliteracy in English and Spanish.

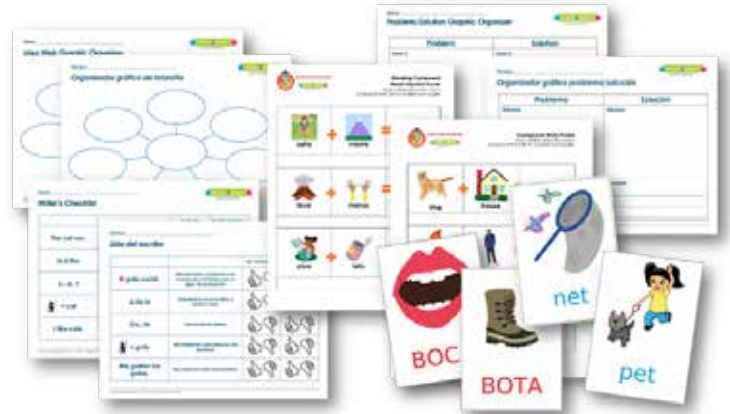
Footsteps2Brilliance offers an unprecedented level of English and Spanish language and literacy development to support dual language learners. A unique toggle switch in Footsteps2Brilliance allows children and families to switch between English and Spanish at the touch of a button to experience the same material in the other language. By allowing users to toggle languages at any time, Footsteps2Brilliance supports the language and literacy development of both Spanish-speaking students and their parents.

## Footsteps2Brilliance develops speaking skills in Spanish and English.

Footsteps2Brilliance supports English and Spanish language learners in developing speaking skills by creating a non-threatening language-rich environment where children can apply their newly acquired language skills.

As a highly-interactive digital literacy program, Footsteps2Brilliance provides students with a safe environment to explore their newly acquired language skills. Language learners working with the program can put on headphones and not worry about making mistakes in front of teachers and peers. With Footsteps2brilliance, English or Spanish language learners are often willing to take risks with the language and engage orally where they may be silent in a classroom environment. Teachers report that students often become verbal while using the program--repeating words and phrases as well as singing along with the songs.

Because oral language is so critical to literacy development, Footsteps2Brilliance has created powerful features in the apps that encourage students to speak. For example, Talk Time



activities direct students to record themselves answering questions related to a book they have read and then listen to their recording. These activities give language learners a unique opportunity to generate novel verbal responses and monitor their verbal abilities. Other games and activities direct students to record themselves reading connected text or record the words they have created. Together Time activities recommend offline learning activities for caregivers and teachers to extend the curriculum into their home or classroom. Offered in English and Spanish, each activity includes open-ended question prompts for grownups to encourage dialog.

For teachers, lesson plans include prompts with meaningful questions that give students opportunities to talk about what they have read. In particular, the Aesop's Fables books and lesson plans include opportunities for students to strengthen their vocabulary knowledge through activities that focus on words with multiple meanings, analogies, and shades of meaning as well as idiomatic expressions. Such activities are particularly valuable for language learners who may not have been exposed to this kind of figurative language.

Finally, a Printable Materials, Game Card Maker and Recipes for Success activity library in Footsteps2Brilliance enable teachers to create language-rich activities for their classroom in English and in Spanish.



# FOOTSTEPS2BRILLIANCE DEVELOPS READING AND WRITING SKILLS IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH.

Because of the English-Spanish toggle button, the collection of interactive eBooks and associated comprehension, vocabulary, and writing activities include built-in support for students learning Spanish. For each interactive eBook in Footsteps2Brilliance, students experience a combination of the following activities in English or in Spanish as demonstrated below through one of our STEM eBooks entitled "Ilene the Iguana."



Students read an engaging, interactive eBook about iguanas (see Spanish page from the book to the left). Regardless of language, students can:



- Click to hear the entire page read with highlighted text syncing.
- Click individual words to hear each word read aloud.
- Click the illustrations to see animations that contextualize the story with labeled vocabulary words.
- Click to record themselves reading the page and listen to their recording.
- Click to toggle the page from English to Spanish and back again. (Note that teachers can set the app to one language for a student, if desired.)



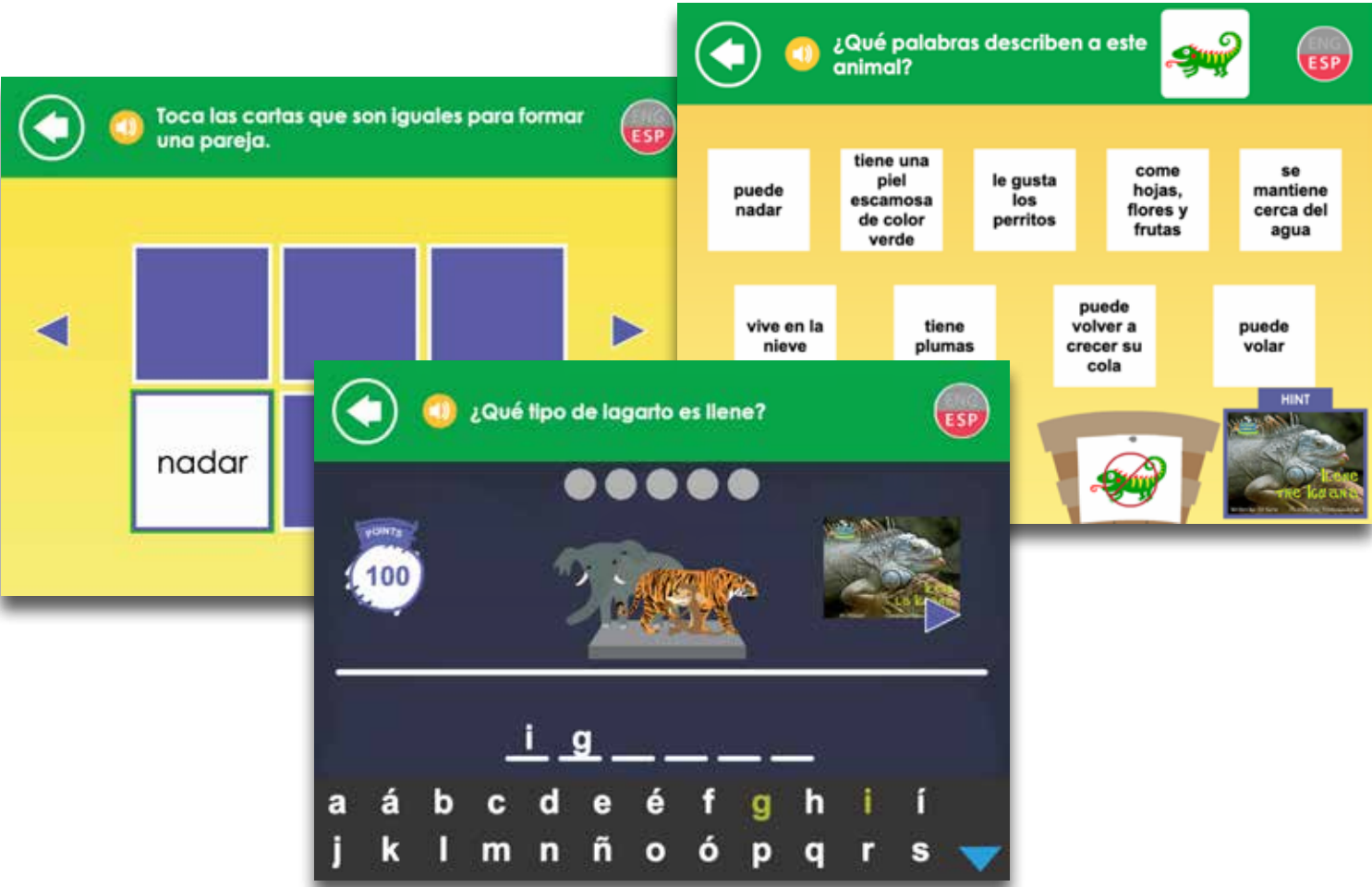
# 2

Students play a Book Buddies game to answer questions that demonstrate literal and inferential comprehension as well as understanding of words based on context.



# 3

Students engage in a variety of fun sorting, matching, and guessing games to apply understanding of the text and target vocabulary words.

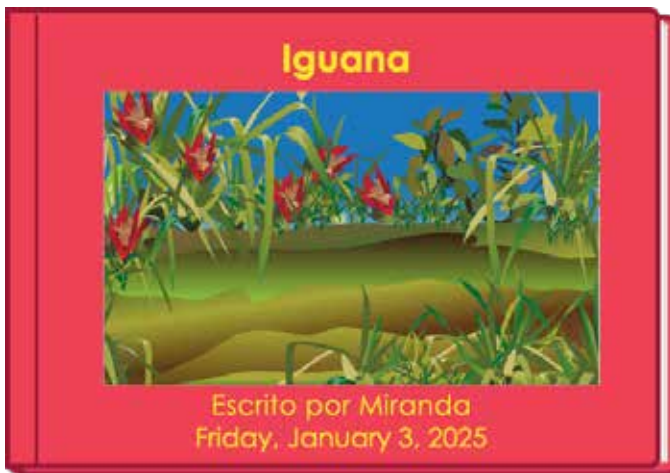


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Finally, students apply and synthesize their understanding as they create their own story using the words, illustrations, and themes from the book.

Create-a-Book and My Journal enable students and teachers to write, edit, print, and email books and expository texts using words and artwork from the books they read. All books are saved into a digital portfolio that students and teachers can easily showcase and

review. The following sample pages are written by a kindergarten dual language student after reading *Ilene the Iguana*. The facts in the student's book reflect learning from the *Footsteps2Brilliance* book.



Iguanas tienen dientes filosos.



Las iguanas saben como nadar.



Me gustan las iguanas.

## Students develop foundational skills in Spanish based on research-based strategies.

In addition to eBooks and their associated research-based comprehension, vocabulary, and writing activities in English and Spanish, Footsteps2Brilliance includes hundreds of skill practice games with strategies that specifically support Spanish literacy.

When a child toggles to Spanish in a skill game, they will find research-based strategies to support Spanish literacy development. For example, whether a child is learning to read English or Spanish, the ability to hear the sounds of the spoken language (phonemic awareness) is crucial. In English, beginning phonemic awareness games present children with interactive phoneme tiles to build simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words. By comparison, in Spanish, the natural gateway to hearing sounds in language is syllables. When a child toggles to Spanish in Footsteps2Brilliance, they build Spanish words using interactive syllable tiles. The Spanish version of this game also follows a research-based sequence to support children toward decoding multi-syllabic words much more quickly than they will in English.

English  
wig  
C-V-C



Spanish  
mano  
two open syllables



## Hundreds of Games to Support Complete English & Spanish Literacy!



### Phonemic Awareness



### Letter Sounds & Digraphs



### Syllables & Decoding

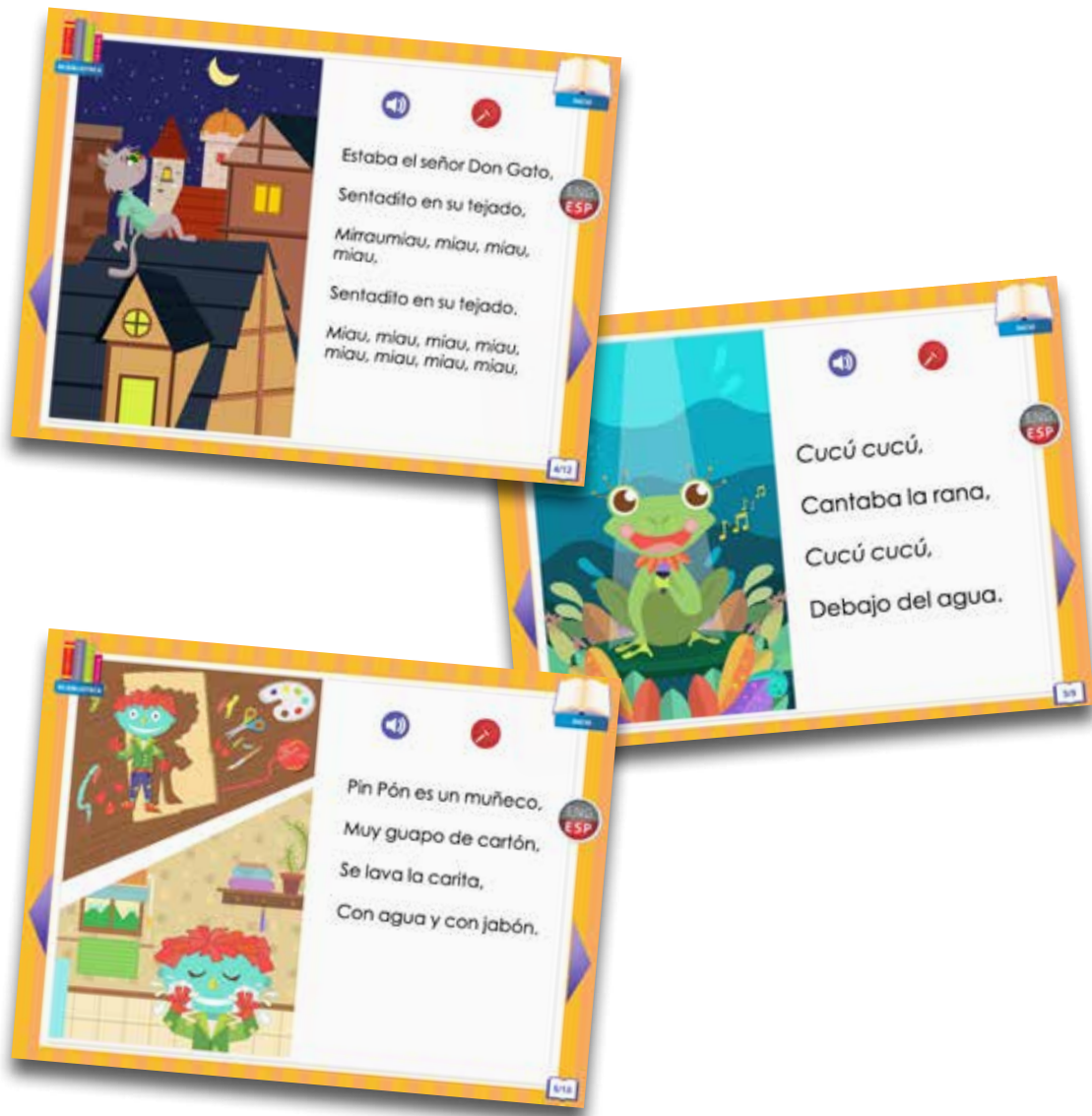


### Automaticity (Sight Words)

## Students experience authentic Spanish.

Finally, students experience authentic Spanish songs, chants, and texts. Footsteps2Brilliance trans-adapts each book from its original language in order to overcome linguistic and cultural nuances. Trans-adapted books ensure that the

vocabulary is at an appropriate level and the overall meaning remains intact. Songs and nursery rhymes are trans-adapted to maintain rhythm and rhyme. Students and teachers delight in the quality of the bilingual experience in Footsteps2brilliance.





## ABOUT FOOTSTEPS2BRILLIANCE

Footsteps2Brilliance is the leading provider of effective next-generation digital tools, bilingual content, and learning experiences that connect school and home, and enhance, not replace, excellent teaching. Since 2012 we've committed our research and resources to closing the reading achievement gap for all students from birth through elementary school using a collaborative impact approach. In partnership with educators, families, and communities we are unlocking brilliance and empowering students to realize their full potential.

Learn more at [www.Footsteps2Brilliance.com](http://www.Footsteps2Brilliance.com).

### References:

*The Education Recovery Scorecard. The First Year of Pandemic Recovery: A District-Level Analysis* by Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University and The Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University. January 2024 <https://educationrecoverycard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ERS-Report-Final-1.31.pdf>

Fisher, Doug and Frey, Nancy. (2020) "Make Deliberate Practice Part of Your Classroom Routine." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Vol.63 (5), 593-596.

