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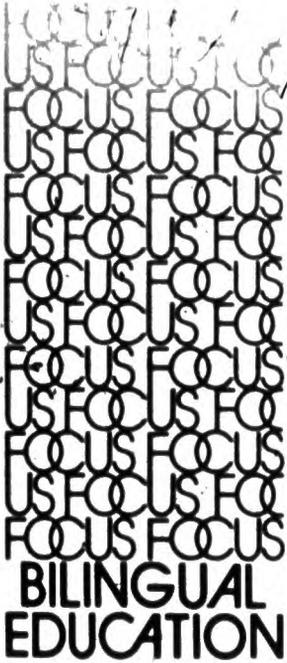
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**ABSTRACT**

With the passing of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1968, a number of school districts turned to the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for help in the area of bilingual education. ETS bilingual specialists began to offer advice and assistance in planning new programs, inservice training, evaluating curricula, and measuring different aspects of bilingual programs. Explained in this document are some of the problems ETS had to consider in providing this assistance: the type of bilingual program best suited to a particular school; the need to establish a program that would receive the necessary local support; and the shortage of qualified teachers. Specific strategies and programs developed, implemented and/or conducted by ETS are detailed. These include language tests, surveys of inservice training programs, minimum proficiency tests for teachers, screening and achievement tests for children, instructional program evaluation, and the development of process and outcome objectives for students in different grades. Some of the established bilingual programs referred to are "Mano a Mano," the Targeted Achievement Reading Program (TARP), Better Understanding of Educational Needs of Others (BUENO), and CIRCUS (EL CIRCO). (EB)

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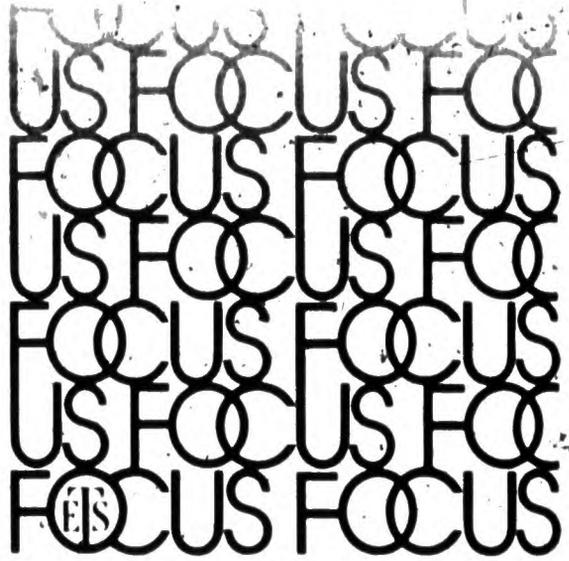
- The Language Barrier
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EDITOR'S NOTE

*FOCUS* is a series of occasional papers describing the work Educational Testing Service is doing on many of the critical problems facing education today. Most widely known for standardized tests, ETS is also the nation's largest nonprofit educational research organization. Our 2,000 staffers apply the tools of the social sciences to educational finance, desegregation, career education, guidance, the question of test bias, and a host of other areas that cry for more knowledge or improved methods. *FOCUS 2* examines an idea whose time has come again: bilingual education. — Arthur Bishop

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## THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

About five million children in this nation do not speak English well enough to succeed in schools that use English as the only language of instruction.

Yet English has not always been the only language used in the schools. For over half a century—up until World War I—parents in Cincinnati had the option of sending their children to public schools that used German in arithmetic, reading, and writing classes. The New York City schools have taught some children in Chinese, French, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and Yiddish for years. In the early 1960s, a school in Miami began teaching Cubans and Anglos in both Spanish and English—a true bilingual-bicultural program. Other schools in many states have been teaching children in their best language, English or not.

But these schools are the exception, not the rule, and many were in technical violation of the law, since those few states that did specify the language of instruction all mandated English in keeping with the melting-pot theory of the function of education. Then the civil rights movement in the 1960s made members of many ethnic groups

aware that their children had as much right to appropriate schooling as mainstream children did. But a disproportionate share of minority children, banished to classes for slow learners and the retarded, had high truancy and dropout rates and did not go on to college.

In four Southwestern states, to cite but one example, 80 percent of the Spanish-surnamed population 14 or older had not completed high school in the late 1960s. In Texas alone, 30 percent of the high school students—but 80 percent of the dropouts—were Chicanos.

The future also appeared bleak for others who speak English as a second language—Puerto Ricans and Cubans along the eastern seaboard, Portuguese and French speakers in New England, American Indians in the southwest and elsewhere, Orientals along the west coast, Aleuts and Eskimos in Alaska, and concentrations of one or more of these and other ethnic groups spotted across the nation, primarily in major cities. By the end of the 1960s, there were signs of progress.

## Assaulting the Barrier

Many educators had long known that the fault lay not with the children but with the schools—but the schools lacked the funds and the political support to do much about it. Then in 1968, Congress passed Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which allocates funds for bilingual programs, primarily for the elementary grades.

At that time, a number of school districts turned to ETS for help. ETS bilingual specialists—some of whom are bicultural by both family background and education—began to offer advice and assistance in planning new programs, inservice training, evaluating curriculums, and handling other aspects of this new kind of program that are amenable to the techniques of measurement.

State governments began to follow the federal lead. In 1971, Massachusetts became the first state to pass legis-

Justice William O. Douglas said the schools' failure to teach the students English denied them 'a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public school system. . . .'

lation mandating and appropriating funds for bilingual education. Within the next few years, about 20 states followed suit and, with both federal and state support, well over 1,000 bilingual programs were under way.

## The Supreme Court Speaks

Then in January 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously in *Lau v. Nichols* that, by specifying English as the sole language of instruction without teaching them the language, the San Francisco school district had violated the civil rights of 1,790 children who spoke only Chinese. Explaining the verdict, Justice William O. Douglas said the schools' failure to teach the students English denied them "a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public school system. Basic English skills are at the very core of what the schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education."

Some states have embraced bilingual education willingly, the rest have had it thrust upon them. In deciding what form of bilingual program to institute, however, local districts can choose from a wide range of options.

## HOW MUCH IS BEST?

There is a consensus among educators that the purpose of bilingual education is to equip children who have little or no command of English to succeed in school. The way to do this, most agree, is first to teach children to recognize

**“ . . . most schools that offer bilingual education have chosen transitional programs limited to the primary grades. ”**

the sounds of their “home” languages on paper (read) and transcribe them (write) while they are learning to speak English so that they can later learn to read and write the sounds of English.

But here the agreement ends. Some say that it is enough to teach children English as a Second Language (ESL) and get them as quickly as possible into classes where English is the means, not the end

Others believe that merely transitional ESL instruction denigrates, by implication, the children’s cultural heritage and thus undermines their sense of self-worth and cripples their academic progress. Some cultural pluralists advocate giving children ESL, courses about their home culture in their home language, and other subjects in English.

Proponents of full-blown bilingual-bicultural education go even further. They maintain that in schools with bilingual students, every course should be taught in both languages, every student should be taught to speak the second language and to appreciate the second culture, and bilingual education should extend from elementary through secondary school and beyond

## The Usual Choice

From this range of options, most schools that offer bilingual education have chosen transitional programs limited to the primary grades. The reasons for choosing this modest level of effort are not difficult to fathom.

First, educators and parents recognize that it is imperative that children have a good command of English if they are to succeed in American society. In their eagerness

to teach children English, adults often overlook the positive value that identification with a proud cultural heritage can have on a child's self-esteem

Second, the difficulties attendant on any new venture make relatively limited efforts more attractive than extensive ones

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL SUPPORT

However ambitious a school district's bilingual program, liaison with the local community is a *sine qua non* to its success. Schools with effective bilingual programs almost invariably make great efforts to keep parents and other local residents informed and often encourage them to become actively involved as members of advisory boards, teacher aides, tutors, or in some other capacity.

This effort is needed because in ethnic communities the distance between residents and the schools is usually greater than in other communities. Most parents and other residents have probably had little direct contact with the schools, and what experience they may have had may well

**“Without community support bilingual education is likely to be no more successful than traditional education.”**

have been negative. As a result, many schools find that they must first convince residents of the value of education in general and then to understand the benefits of bilingual education in order to gain their support.

Without community support bilingual education is likely to be no more successful than traditional education. Opposition can easily develop among parents who believe

that their children will succeed in this society only if they are totally assimilated and who may resent any educational endeavor that takes time away from the "Americanization" process. And if parents, because of a lack of knowledge or understanding, are opposed or indifferent to the bilingual program, it is highly unlikely that their children will accept it or that it will be successful.

## COPING WITH THE SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS

One of the first problems facing school districts in launching bilingual education is to find qualified teachers. Few are available because there was almost no demand for them until the last few years and, consequently, no place for them to be trained.

But some colleges now train prospective bilingual teachers—mostly on the graduate level, and mostly in areas with large populations of a particular ethnic group. Many colleges work with school districts to give teachers inservice training in cultural awareness and even to "re-tread" them into bilingual teachers.

Several universities in the Southwest and others in major cities from coast to coast train prospective bilingual teachers in Hispanic culture. A university in Louisiana trains people to teach programs in Cajun French. One in New Mexico offers Navajo, one in Rhode Island offers Portuguese, and several offer multicultural bilingual programs.

### Inservice Training

Cañada College in Redwood City has a multicultural inservice training program for teachers and paraprofessionals working in the San Francisco Bay area to help them understand and cope with the dynamics of culturally mixed

schools. To assess its effectiveness, in 1974 the ETS Berkeley office conducted surveys both before and after the year-long program. ETS is currently following up some of the participants to see if they are successful in instituting multicultural programs in their school districts.

Some school districts can turn to members of the ethnic group who are already trained teachers. It is more than likely that in a city with a large population of a particular ethnic group, the schools have teachers from that group who can qualify, with or without additional training, as bilingual teachers.

In New York City, bilingual residents, some without even high school diplomas, begin working as teacher aides and climb a "career ladder" as they continue their own

**“Some school districts can turn to members of the ethnic group who are already trained teachers.”**

education. They start at an appropriate level of school and attend as long as necessary while assuming increasingly greater responsibility in the classroom. They eventually graduate from local colleges with baccalaureate degrees in education and become full-fledged bilingual teachers.

## Retraining Foreign Teachers

ETS helped the Chicago schools and the National College of Education in Evanston take another route in 1974. They decided to recruit and retrain "normalistas," graduates of Latin American teachers' colleges, and asked ETS for assistance in selecting applicants. Staff members from the ETS regional office in Evanston and headquarters in Princeton

devised a three-part screening process: proficiency tests of both oral and written English, and a test of professional educational knowledge in Spanish

## Measuring Proficiency In English

To assess oral ability, ETS language testers adapted to English a method they have used to test people in over 200 languages (including such exotica as Ilokano and Fang as well as the more routine Swahili and French). Since the late 1960s, ETS has been training language testers for the Peace Corps, an organization that must be sure its staff members overseas can communicate well in the language of the host country. Using a rating scale initially developed by the Foreign Service Institute of the Department of State,

**“ . . . rather than concentrate on specific features of syntax and vocabulary, the scale measures how effectively a person can communicate in a language. ”**

ETS staff members have trained over 400 native speakers in 50 countries to rate the speaking and comprehension abilities of Peace Corps members.

It is possible to use a single rating scale for all these languages because, rather than concentrate on specific features of syntax and vocabulary, the scale measures how effectively a person can communicate in a language. ETS trains examiners to use the scale to rate speakers of English, French, or Spanish, and the examiners then apply the same criteria to their native tongues. The ratings range from 0 to 5 (the ability of an educated native)

## **“ The third hurdle was a Spanish adaptation of two Common Examinations, part of the National Teacher Examinations. . . ”**

To demonstrate further their ability to communicate effectively in English, the applicants to the Chicago program took the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), a test of reading, writing skills, and listening comprehension developed by ETS for foreign students applying to colleges in the United States.

### **Diagnosing Knowledge of Teaching**

The third hurdle was a Spanish adaptation of two Common Examinations, part of the National Teacher Examinations, a series of ETS tests. The *Pedagogía y Conocimientos Generales*, as it is called, evaluates the general and professional knowledge of education of Hispanics who are interested in bilingual teaching.

The National College of Education used the results from all three measures to decide which applicants to admit and also to plan individual instructional programs that would enable each of the 43 successful applicants to qualify for degrees and certificates as quickly as possible.

### **Setting Oral Standards**

To help identify the minimum proficiency a teacher needs in order to be effective in the second language, the State Department of Education in Illinois is working with ETS and the Bilingual Education Service Center (a federally funded regional organization). ETS language specialists have interviewed and taped a number of teachers speaking both their first and second languages and then rated

their abilities on the six-point scale. Administrators responsible for selecting bilingual teachers then listened to the tapes and rated the teachers as either acceptable or otherwise, without knowing how ETS language raters had evaluated the speakers' ability. The object: to arrive at a rating that Illinois educators consider adequate.

## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

There is no shortage of classroom materials for the language most frequently used in bilingual education—Spanish. It is used in dozens of nations in the world, and although pronunciation and vocabulary may differ somewhat from one nation to another, most of the differences are minor and the grammar is nearly identical.

With other languages, there are problems and decisions to be made. There are no—or at best, very few—materials in most American Indian tongues. Although French books and teaching aids are plentiful, for example, administrators must decide which version of the language to use—perhaps through consultation with parents. If the parents are Portuguese-speaking, do they want their children to learn the language as spoken in Portugal or in Brazil? If they are from Canada, do they prefer their children to speak French as it is spoken in Canada or France?

## SCREENING STUDENTS

Selecting children who need or can benefit from bilingual education is not as simple a task as it may at first appear. Even surnames can be misleading. One Colorado school district, for example, recently had about 600 students with Hispanic surnames. But only 13 children spoke Spanish, and all of them had higher scores on language proficiency tests in English than Spanish.

To select students for classes that use another language primarily, the schools need a new kind of test—a kind



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of test that will identify children who cannot handle English well enough to understand directions written on the blackboard or given orally, express themselves fairly clearly, and grasp subject matter. A California school district has developed such tests for the secondary grades, but few exist for the elementary grades, where the need is greatest. (Existing language tests for the elementary grades are useful for measuring mainstream children's general facility with the language, but they are much too broad to measure classroom functioning of children just learning English.)

Measures of classroom English, with norms for each of the primary grades, would identify children who cannot learn in English and, later, would indicate when they have acquired enough of the language to benefit from classes in which language is the means, not the end.

Developing such tests would not be a quick or easy task, however. Although the effort would entail no particular technical challenge, it would take a considerable amount of work to document classroom usage—since usage differs from region to region, from one instructional setting to another, and according to other factors.

Until such tests are developed, school districts will be forced to rely on observation, subjective judgment, and other expedients to identify children's dominant language.

## EVALUATING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

A basic question about any educational program is simply how good is it? Is it doing what it is intended to do? ETS has been answering questions like these about many kinds of educational programs for many years. Since the late

1960s, ETS has been evaluating a number of bilingual-bicultural (Chicano-Anglo) projects in California and Texas.

In a typical project, ETS helps the staff establish instructional goals in measurable terms, trains teachers to write test questions that meet rigorous psychometric standards, helps teachers create curriculum materials, conducts workshops to sensitize them to cultural differences, screens Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals, and so on.

## Preschool Program

In Fountain Valley, California, the schools have offered a bilingual program for three- and four-year-old Chicano and Anglo youngsters since 1970. The program is designed to raise the children's ability in their native tongues up to the average level by the time they reach kindergarten, to teach Spanish-speaking youngsters English and English-speaking children Spanish, and to develop ways of teaching children to appreciate each other's culture.

Every year, about 100 children take part in the program, and their parents learn to encourage them at home. While evaluating the program during its first four years, specialists from the ETS Los Angeles office gave teachers inservice training and developed instructional materials for the children and their parents.

## Primary-Grade Programs

In El Monte, California, the schools are developing *Mano a Mano*, a fully integrated curriculum in English and Spanish for kindergarten through fourth grade. About a third of the children speak only English, the rest are bilingual and almost half more fluent in Spanish than English.

Every fall and spring from 1970 through 1975, people from the ETS Berkeley office tested pupils in reading, reading readiness, arithmetic, and both English and Spanish.

**“... children who are in the program  
longer do better on the tests than  
children new to the program...”**

language skills. The results show that children who are in the program longer do better on the tests than children new to the program (an indication that the program is successful), and nearly all match or exceed the growth rate of a national standardized sample. Most of the children's parents are enthusiastic about the program.

The California Board of Education is sponsoring a demonstration project in the Azusa Unified School District for children in kindergarten through fourth grade with a variety of bilingual and cultural backgrounds. The object is to identify the child's dominant language, assess his educational needs, and then plan individual educational programs for each. Consultants from the ETS Los Angeles office are helping teachers to develop process and outcome objectives for pupils with particular linguistic and cultural characteristics.

The schools in Dallas, Texas have been comparing children's performance using four reading-instruction systems since the early 1970s. The Targeted Achievement Reading Program (TARP), involving more than 16,000 pupils in 40 elementary school classes from kindergarten through the fourth grade, was expanded in 1973-74 to include multiage, multicultural, bilingual classes. The ETS office in Austin audited the work of the school district's own evaluators for completeness and accuracy.

## Elementary-Grade Program

In a project called BUENO (Better Understanding of Educational Needs of Others) in Hacienda-La Puente, California, more than 1,000 children from kindergarten through

seventh grade learn in both Spanish and English. The effort has been effective despite the fact that, until the 1973-74 school year, the project had no bilingual teachers—only bilingual paraprofessionals and tutors. The program has also helped the tutors, who are high school students identified as potential dropouts, at least three quarters of them have remained in school.

Surveys of parents conducted by the ETS Berkeley office from 1971-72 through 1974-75 revealed that, with rare exceptions, they approved of BUENO. Fall and spring tests showed that the curriculum is effective. Surveys of students' attitudes found that it strengthens the children's self-esteem, and their better attendance records suggest that they valued it. Partially because of the use of relatively low-paid teacher aides, BUENO has one of the lowest per-pupil costs of the many bilingual programs in California.

## Full Bilingual Secondary School Program

In Calexico, California, there is an unusually comprehensive bilingual program in the secondary schools. It allows students, 86 percent of who are native Spanish-speakers, to learn social studies, mathematics, biology, and spoken and written communication in either Spanish or English in grades seven through twelve. To assess Hispanics' facility

““ To assess Hispanics' facility with classroom English, local teachers developed an oral-efficiency test . . . ””

with classroom English, local teachers developed an oral-efficiency test that reveals if a student can function only in Spanish, can get along in English, or is fully conversant in

**“... there is a serious lack of diagnostic and achievement measures with sound psychometric properties.”**

the second language Test results agree quite closely with teachers' observations of students' language abilities

While assisting the program in its first eight years (1967-68 through 1974-75), the ETS Berkeley staff evaluated the effectiveness of the test and locally developed teaching units, developed reading tests in Spanish, and helped train Hispanic paraprofessionals

## DIAGNOSTIC AND ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

Another basic problem in bilingual programs is to find out how much children have learned and what they still need to learn. While there is no shortage of teaching materials, there is a serious lack of diagnostic and achievement measures with sound psychometric properties

The problem of diagnosing the knowledge and abilities children have acquired is particularly acute at the preschool level, where Hispanic youngsters are even more of an enigma to most teachers than their Anglo schoolmates.

### Preschool Measures

While evaluating Head Start programs and doing other studies in early childhood education, ETS researchers have had to devise new measures to generate the kinds of information they need. These efforts led in the early 1970s to the development of CIRCUS, a set of 14 measures that allows preschoolers to show what they can do plus questionnaires for the teacher on the child's interests, coping

styles, and other aspects of his classroom behavior. An exercise called "Noises," for example, measures the youngster's ability to identify real-world sounds, and another, "How Words Sound," his ability to recognize consonants and vowels when he hears them. First offered in 1974, CIRCUS is now used by nursery schools and kindergartens across the nation.

To adapt the CIRCUS measures to the educational needs of young Hispanics, staff members of the ETS Southern Regional Office in Atlanta are working with early-childhood specialists from the three dominant Spanish-

““ **Not merely verbal, the Norwalk tests use puzzles, pictures, three-dimensional objects, and other materials.** ””

speaking groups in this nation—Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Chicano. EL CIRCO should yield information that will not only contribute to sound instructional decisions about these youngsters, but also be useful in evaluating the early education programs designed to benefit them. The development effort is being supported by the Office of Child Development, HEW.

### Criterion-Referenced Tests

ETS made a similar adaptation of special tests for a New England school system. For the Norwalk, Connecticut schools, ETS developed six criterion-referenced tests tailored to the local mathematics and language curriculums in grades K-2. ETS staffers wrote test questions and trained teachers in the rudiments of criterion referencing and the

principles of measurement in general and guided them as they suggested and reviewed test questions

Not merely verbal, the Norwalk tests use puzzles, pictures, three-dimensional objects, and other materials to measure the pupil's level of development and indicate what he is ready to learn next. To put the school system's growing number of Spanish-speaking children on an equal footing, ETS bilingual specialists have adapted the tests for Hispanic youngsters

### Canadian Secondary School Tests

The problem of assessing what children have learned in bilingual programs is also acute on the secondary school level, where little work has been done. When the Canadian province of New Brunswick, for example, wanted to test students in both English and French in its effort to produce truly bilingual graduates, administrators asked ETS for help.

ETS developed proficiency tests for second languages as well as achievement tests in eight other subjects—with parallel forms in both English and French. ETS staff members trained local teachers to write test questions that reflect the Canadian curriculums, to interpret test results, to diagnose students' particular weaknesses, and to use the ETS oral rating scale.

The second-language tests, used for the first time in 1976, measure the ability of ninth-, eleventh-, and twelfth-graders to read, write, listen, and speak the other language. The other eight parallel tests in English and French measure what a student has learned in biology, chemistry, physics, geography, economics, history, and math plus his command of his home language. The results are used for diagnosis and for college entrance.

Since starting this project, ETS has been asked to undertake other bilingual projects in New Brunswick as well as in Quebec and Nova Scotia.

## Junior College Tests

Mexican Americans along the southern border have particular problems. Some of them speak only Spanish and some of them a mixture of English and Spanish—"border dialect." Needless to say, these students do not do well on standard aptitude or achievement tests. In the early 1970s, a group of six junior colleges—the Border Junior College Consortium—asked ETS for help in coping with their students' language problems.

ETS staff members responded with workshops for faculty members and students on the theory of aptitude testing and the techniques of writing multiple-choice questions. Then Chicano faculty members and students



**... Chicano faculty members and students helped create a Bilingual Verbal Aptitude Test ...**



helped create a Bilingual Verbal Aptitude Test—a test with multiple-choice and listening-comprehension questions in English, Spanish, and border dialect. Future investigations will seek to determine if the new test is a better indicator of verbal ability than standard aptitude tests in English.

In an attempt to help these students become fluent in standard English, ETS also devised a diagnostic test that reveals whether they are "thinking in Spanish"—if they are using Spanish syntax or grammar while writing in English.

The first experimental forms of the two tests were tried out on students in the fall of 1973, revised, and given to students in all six members of the Border Junior College

Consortium the following year. The colleges are now investigating how they can use the tests most effectively.

## SOUND MEASUREMENT IS BASIC

As these pages indicate, bilingual education is taking hold at every level across the nation. No longer the rarity it was a decade ago, it is still, however, a relatively new venture, and much pioneering work remains to be done.

As educators devise methods of selecting and training prospective teachers, evaluating programs, identifying students to take part, assessing their progress, and handling other routine educational problems in a new context, sound measurement assumes a critical importance. By accurately describing what is going on, measurement can help educators reach the five million or so youngsters who must start their educations in a language other than English if they are to succeed in school.

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