

Crisis in the Southwest

Bilingual Education Program Inconsistencies

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Staff development is too often inadequate or overlooked in bilingual education. Rather, bilingual educators are forced to seek outside resources and strategies because of inconsistencies in school district bilingual programs. In this article we, four bilingual teachers, will offer a “crash” course for other teachers who may be looking for solid information about bilingual education.

We will first define and discuss bilingual education and its history. We will report on our analysis of the current bilingual programs in a Southwestern United States border city, and explain why we find them lacking. Based upon this information, we present then a research-based ideal bilingual program that focuses on student success.

Bilingual Education Defined

In order for us to develop our plan of action, we first agreed on a definition for bilingual education. From our perspective, bilingual education is a compilation of multicultural views through which diversity is enriched and bilingualism becomes the ability to communicate effectively in two or more languages with a similar degree of proficiency. Hence,

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bilingual education is a process, one which educates students to be effective in a second language while maintaining and nurturing their first language.

As Necochea and Cline (2000) state:

Primary language support is a validation of the child’s language and culture which facilitates self esteem to be maintained, stress to be reduced and education to be a positive experience as access to the core curriculum is provided. (p. 323)

Key Terms

Following are key terms we will employ in our presentation and analysis:

LEP: Limited English Proficiency

ELL: English Language Learners

ESOL: English for Speakers
of Other Languages or English
as a Second or Other Language

LAS: Language Assessment Scale

TAKS: Texas Assessment
of Knowledge and Skills

Introduction

LEP, ELL, ESOL, sheltered, what shall we label you? Bilingual education has been the subject of debate for many decades. Yet we are living in a society that needs to look forward to world interaction and self-improvement. Individuals are valued for the ability to speak and think in different languages. Teaching for and assuring a quality education for all must include these abilities and values.

In the United States, and specifically in the Southwest, a quality education must

prepare all students to succeed in the bilingual employment market. It is an injustice if students are not given the tools necessary to learn, write, read, and experience such knowledge. To examine such issues, our analysis looks at, compares, and contrasts bilingual programs in three of the largest districts in a southwest city in Texas.

While discussing the bilingual education programs that exist in and near our city, we came to the conclusion that something must be done about the lack of consistency within school districts between districts. The curricula reflected in the current bilingual education programs in our Southwest border city are not consistent in meeting the needs of ELL students from classroom to classroom and district to district. We feel it is imperative to develop a bilingual curriculum that meets the needs of all ELL children through the same standards, expectations, and goals across the city in order to close the current gaps and assure success for all students.

If we do not prepare our students for the future we will undoubtedly isolate them from a multilingual world that involves interaction among various languages, peoples, and countries. Some school districts in our Southwest border city are not addressing these needs. There are many gaps in the infrastructure of the bilingual education programs we have studied. Our goal has been to analyze each of the three main school districts in our city and then to suggest an ideal bilingual program customized through our research and interviews.

A Look through Time

We found that Limited English Proficient (LEP)¹ students in the United States were being discriminated against, most particularly Hispanics in elementary and secondary school settings. A significant number of Hispanic students are being held back in school and their dropout rates were alarming. The U. S. Department of Education “estimates that there are 2.4 million national-origin minority school children who have limited English language skills which affect their ability to participate effectively in education programs and achieve high academic standards” (OCR, 2000).

Before 1970, schools were placing LEP students in mentally retarded classrooms and keeping them out of college preparation classes. In May of 1970, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) sent information to school district officials regarding equal opportunity for all students. The memorandum was to clarify the responsibility of the school districts and stated in part,

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority-group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students. (Smith, 1990)

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy stated that funds from taxpayers, of all ethnic backgrounds, must be used without discrimination. This sparked the creation of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, indicating that schools must “provide any alternative language programs necessary to ensure that national origin minority students with limited-English proficiency [LEP students] have meaningful access to the schools’ programs” (Williams, 1991).

Title VI forbade discrimination against persons with limited English proficiency. However, in the late 1960s the U. S. Department of Education found evidence that the LEP population in schools was still being denied their rights and assumed the federal responsibility of collecting data regarding bilingual education. This was one of the first steps toward at least the potential equality of education for LEP students.

Among other things, the schools were held responsible for advertising school activities in a language that parents could understand. “When children arrive in school with little or no English-speaking ability, ‘sink or swim’ instruction is a

violation of their civil rights,” according to the U. S. Supreme Court in the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* decision. This class-action suit against the San Francisco Public School District ruled that Chinese students were being denied their rights under Title VI. The lawsuit made it illegal to place LEP students in a classroom without support for acquisition of the English language.

In more recent years, a new law has emerged that “...neglects the special situation of English Language Learners” according to Josefina Tinajero, a keynote speaker addressing the Texas Association for Bilingual Education Conference in October 2005. Tinajero suggests that the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act hinders students learning English as a second language because it emphasizes assessment instead of a quality education. The pressure resulting from NCLB has forced districts to weaken native language instruction by focusing heavily on second language, or English, instruction.

District Backgrounds

Our study compares three school districts in a southwest city in Texas, which we shall refer to as “South City.” South City is a border city with Mexico, which is, of course, a Spanish-speaking country. Our city has a population of 592,099, of which 76.6% are Hispanic. Districts A, B, and C serve a large population of ELL students, nearly all of whose first language is Spanish. We have interviewed a total of fifteen bilingual teachers in South City who work within these three districts.

District A serves 46,278 students, of which 24.4% are labeled LEP. It has 61 campuses and has an annual bilingual education expenditure of \$2,661,779 supporting a total of 66 bilingual educators.

District B is the largest district in our city, serving 63,000 students, of which 30.8% are labeled LEP. The district has 92 campuses and an annual bilingual education expenditure of \$41,608,053 and employs a total of 840 bilingual educators. This district was the home of the first English Language Acquisition program.

The student population in district C is 34,251. Currently 89% of these students are Hispanic, and 29.4% of them are identified as LEP. The district has 37 campuses and has an annual bilingual education expenditure of \$20,694,086 with a total of 372 bilingual educators. Among the three districts, District C has the smallest student population. Geographically it serves two small counties outside the larger district A.

In school district A we talked with

three third grade bilingual teachers. Mrs. Palomino has four years of teaching experience, Mrs. Viera has 14 years experience, and Mrs. Calderon has five years experience. We also spoke with a special education bilingual teacher of three years, Mrs. Sanchez, and with Mrs. Diaz, a bilingual educator of 14 years teaching fifth grade.

In school district B we interviewed five fourth grade bilingual teachers, Mrs. Calderon has taught two years, Mrs. Miller has 11 years of experience, Mr. Sandoval has taught for 10 years, and Ms. Dominguez and Ms. King have both taught for 15 years.

Finally, in the school district C we spoke to two monolingual fifth grade teachers, Mrs. Ramos and Ms. Flores, both with 10 years experience, and three bilingual fifth grade teachers. Mrs. Peterson has nine years experience, Mr. Gomez has 17 years of experience, and Ms. Martinez is a teacher with 20 years of experience.

The Reality

We examined many situations that serve to illustrate our own experiences and those of other bilingual educators in the city, and in the following sections we describe the current realities in a collaborative compilation. Our focus is on the lack of consistency within the three school districts. We will guide you through the protocols of the bilingual programs used by districts A, B, and C, and we will highlight the inconsistencies that make and break the bilingual curriculum in each district.

Bilingual Programs in Place

Due to the large ELL population and the close proximity to the Mexican border, school districts A, B, and C each had to implement a bilingual program to help LEP students master the English language. The current transitional bilingual programs are designed to help students learn the new language while they are also receiving instruction in their native Spanish language.

At the elementary level, the programs start in pre-kindergarten. Gradually the amount of English used should increase as instruction in Spanish is decreased. Students should both become more proficient in their native language while their ability in English is getting stronger.

Students should also be able to understand new concepts as they are learning the new language. For example, a student who is enrolled in second grade and has little knowledge of English should be able to understand the lectures, because part of the instruction is given in Spanish.

Although some of the lecture is in English, the teacher should employ different methods, like the use of manipulatives or body language, so that the student can comprehend even as the new language is being acquired.

With the implementation of such programs, students should become proficient in Spanish while they are acquiring English. In pre-kindergarten, most instruction is given in Spanish, so students learn and develop literacy skills in their native language. At the same time, English is introduced and gradually students should begin to read, write, and speak in the new language.

The implementation of specific bilingual instructional models varies from school to school. One of the models district C offers is the Transitional Bilingual Program (TBE), which is an early-exit program in which subjects are taught in two languages—English and the native language of the LEP students. Thus, English is taught as a second language. The primary purpose of the TBE program is to facilitate the LEP student's transition to an all-English instructional environment while receiving academic subject instruction in the native language to the extent necessary.

TBE programs vary in the amount of native language instruction provided and the duration of the program. The typical duration of the program is approximately three to five years, and teachers are encouraged not to exit a student any earlier than the end of third grade.

Other campuses in these school districts follow the 90/10 model, in which students begin with 90% of their instruction in Spanish and 10% of their instruction in English. Each year, the time spent on Spanish instruction should decrease by 10% and the amount of time for English instruction should increase by 10%.

A small number of schools offer dual language programs, which combine monolingual English students with monolingual Spanish students, teaching them all in both English and Spanish. This option, where available, is offered to parents at the beginning of kindergarten.

To be successful in a monolingual program, the district C's perception is that by the third grade, most students have a well-developed foundation in their native language and have developed a proficient level in English. English language skills, grade promotion, and graduation requirements are emphasized. This program is the most widely used in these three school districts.

In districts A and B, students have

three options: exit the transitional program, stay in the program up to fifth grade on the teacher's recommendation, or be able to pass the Reading TAKS in English. Students do not typically reach an exiting point before 5th grade, but they can be exited and placed in a monolingual class if they meet the program goals.

Using observations and assessments, teachers make a recommendation if they feel a student is ready to take the TAKS in English and pass the test, and based on such recommendations the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) makes decisions about individual students. Another option often available to students is to pass the TAKS test in English as third graders. This gives students the ability to show that they can work at the same English level as a monolingual student.

According to data collected from the Academic Excellence Indicator System, a systematic model developed by the Texas Education Agency to keep school records in the state, LEP students fall behind by seven to twenty percent in test scores when taking the test in English or Spanish. This means that students are not being successful in either language. The program has serious faults which we highlight in this study.

Faults in...

Assessment: We found that students in districts A, B, and C are required to take two main evaluations, the Language Assessment Scale (LAS) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). LAS is an oral exam given to the student upon enrolling in school. It measures the amount of language a student possesses in English and Spanish. Once a student reaches a proficient level in any language the test is no longer administered.

When interviewed about LAS, Ms. Palomino stated "It is outdated" when asked if it was a good form of evaluation. Ms. Viera says that the need for evaluation is warranted, but agrees with Ms. Palomino about the outdated format. She described a question that asks a student to point out the typewriter in the picture and adds that most children today have not seen a typewriter.

Some teachers interviewed also told us that the same exact LAS test is given to students every year. This is an indication to students of the expectations teachers and their schools have of them and if they see the same exam every year they assume that there is little demanded of them. Expectations should always be set high for students to be successful (Brisk & Harrington, 2004, p.110). Ms. Viera

tells us that by third grade, students are so familiar with the test that it becomes boring and "old news" to them.

Starting in third grade, expectations are raised suddenly when TAKS comes into the picture. Students are pressured to take the exam in English by fifth grade, and sometimes earlier. In conjunction with the LPAC, the LAS is being used as a pre-qualifying assessment for deciding in what language the student will take TAKS.

Ms. Calderon is a bilingual teacher who has been teaching for five years. She talks about the bad translations in the TAKS and in other materials that the district provides. "We do not have appropriate materials to teach lessons in the students' native language," she says, adding that "the TAKS examination our children must take has poor translations."

Some teachers interviewed said that while there may be funding allocated for bilingual programs, the choices and availability of resources are limited. "I would like to use "rich literature" that has "depth" and that "students can really get into," Ms. Calderon related to us. Some teachers have gone to Mexico to purchase books and other materials that contain an accurate use of the students' native language.

Support: Many teachers find that support in the form of bilingual education training, district communications, and school site administration is sorely lacking. "Information is not readily available," said Mr. Sandoval. The information that is obtained is from peers, not from a district leader who comes in and offers teachers a complete oversight of the district's goals.

Ms. Viera said she has not been given any training specifically for bilingual education in "six years." She also told us that when they did offer bilingual training it was very limited with respect to academically rich strategies: "They were mostly games at very low cognitive levels." Any overall direction from the school districts or any new initiative among the districts is non-existent.

Another flaw that most teachers see within the bilingual programs in their school districts is the lack of support in providing appropriate teaching materials. In particular, there are never enough Spanish materials available for teachers and students. Professional development is geared for immersion settings and does not offer material in the native language, in this case Spanish.

Overall, the professional development for bilingual educators is very disappointing and depressing. From the teachers' point of view, they are simply not being supported. Bilingual teachers are looking

forward to support at the school site level, but no district administrative efforts have been forthcoming. No one at the district or school site levels monitors individual teachers or the implementation of bilingual education programs.

Differences and Concerns with Programs

Existing programs are not at all consistent, because if a student moves within one of the school districts you are not sure what to expect at the next school site. This is also the case if one moves from district to district. Too often children at the receiving end of these bilingual program inconsistencies may not recover educationally.

Also, too many teachers are uncomfortable with their own second language skills. Teachers are not collaborating with their peers and most feel they are competing with each other in schools and districts that focus too much on state testing.

Other concerns are equally significant. Parent involvement is missing. Teachers find that parents are not involved in their children's education for many reasons. There is not enough intervention when students clearly cannot demonstrate mastery of a second language. There is no camaraderie among bilingual and monolingual students.

What Works

District A does use school campus initiatives that improve the bilingual programs. Some campuses provide teacher support through the use of literacy leaders who work on improving teacher morale and student success. While this is a step in the right direction, we found that since each school campus chooses to use or not use initiatives that may help bilingual education teachers and students, there is no certainty or consistency involved in the programs. There needs to be a coherent plan that every campus can adopt to provide consistency for students.

An important benefit in district B is when parents are able to help their children with homework. Most parents like to be involved with their child's education but in most cases they cannot because of the parents' lack of experience in English. To often parents want to help but are unable to do so because of the language barrier. In district B the bilingual education program actively seeks to have more parental involvement.

The Rosetta Stone district-wide initiative in district C is another program that is being implemented at all grade levels and with parents throughout the district. It is an enrichment tool and a tutoring

tool. It uses real-life images, written text, and voices of native speakers to teach language. Each lesson tries to connect words and meaning from the inside.

District C also has a bilingual program director who currently works with three elementary instructional specialists and two instructional specialists for grades 6-12. This team has divided their area into three feeder patterns and team members are available to aid bilingual students and teachers. Site-based decision-making models allow for flexibility within the C district. Overall district C has adopted these initiatives to facilitate their bilingual program, and the district anticipates this will enhance students' performance.

Along with district C, district B is also working with the Reading 1st Initiative, through which all students are provided an uninterrupted 90 minute block of Language Arts instruction. Teachers are given with rigorous training and all the necessary materials. Here is another program that shows promise of real help for students, but currently it is not district wide and it is focused only on the upper level grades.

The districts also use sheltered instruction, a traditional methodology used in many of the bilingual programs. Through a series of methods and techniques, teachers help LEP students to understand and acquire English knowledge and skills. It raises teacher and student expectations, dispels myths about LEP, and attempts to increase achievement in content areas by accelerating second language acquisition.

The districts use a significant portion of their budgets to serve their bilingual students. They spend over 15% of their total funds for these programs and they have implemented various strategies and timelines to achieve success for all their students.

Nevertheless, the question still remains, if we have bilingual programs, why are ELL students still struggling to learn the language? A possible answer is the districts' lack consistency within their programs. This is why we are proposing what we see as an ideal program that connects the missing pieces of the bilingual education puzzle with the good programs that these districts already have, binding them together to create a solid foundation for success for each ELL student.

Implications

Despite all these bilingual educational programs and special initiatives, the districts still continue to struggle. Within these districts, LEP students still score

low on state mandated tests. Current data shows that students taking these tests in Spanish did not perform as well as their native English-speaking counterparts.

Current district administrators do note that the districts' bilingual education program does not seem to maintain a consistent curriculum among its schools. They are currently working towards having every campus involved in a single scope and sequence plan in order to assure that everyone is on task. The districts are also optimistically working to improve their current Spanish TAKS scores at all of their school campuses.

These initiatives will require a significant commitment of time to achieve consistent results. Such goals have been a long time coming and are much anticipated by taxpayers, parents, students, teachers, and administrators. To facilitate further positive movement, we offer the following proposals.

A Proposal of Action: The Ideal World

We have compared bilingual programs used within the three school districts. Now we will propose a series of enhancements for the bilingual programs that are in place in "South City," Texas. According to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), there are essential elements for an English Language Learning (ELL) plan to work and we believe the following are "...key components of a comprehensive plan."

Proposed Curriculum

Our belief is that all students should be provided with an equal opportunity for learning, including ELL students. Our goal as a bilingual community is to empower students to be successful members of society. Also, we recommend following federal policies and guidelines and being knowledgeable about current federal and state bilingual mandates.

To identify the ELL students, districts must use the Home Language Survey, already in place. This information will be used to place each student in the appropriate classroom setting to meet individual educational needs. The survey should be explained to parents and guardians in order to stress the importance of appropriate placement.

Upon entering a school for the first time, a student will be evaluated on the amount of language he or she possesses. In order to ensure that each student is placed in the appropriate setting, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee must review and agree to the placement process. The results should be utilized by the

teacher to enhance teaching methods and strategies for addressing the needs of the students.

We will follow the Bilingual Transitional Model and our program suggests that students in kindergarten start at an 80/20 ratio. In the first grade they will be at a 70/30, second grade 60/40, third grade 50/50, fourth grade 40/60, and fifth grade 20/80.

Table 1 displays our model for bilingual education, one that targets the native language and gradually increases a second language as a student moves on to the next grade. It shows the amount of minutes of instruction in Spanish (native language) and English (second language), along with a description of the curriculum to be taught in each language.

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers must be “highly qualified” and monitored by the Professional Development Assessment Scale. The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee’s guidelines require tracking students’ progress throughout their schooling. The school will be responsible for maintaining student portfolios, which includes all assessment. The entire community—administrators, teachers, and

parents—must be informed, involved, and willing to participate in the ELLs’ development.

Schools effectiveness is enhanced when the district, administrators, faculty, and parents all agree on clear and specific goals for the students’ learning. Having shared goals helps to keep everyone focused on the desired outcome. Table 2 reinforces the guidelines that should be followed to have a positive effect on bilingual students’ achievement.

Administration

All studies on effective schools point to the importance of leadership. Administrators must support the bilingual program, its teachers, and its students. (Brisk, 1998)

Within each school district, school site administrators should work together towards implementing a coordinated and consistent bilingual education program. If a teacher or student moves within the district or across district lines, they should feel comfortable in knowing there is consistency.

At the school level, the principal assumes the responsibility for assuring full implementation of the bilingual program. The principal must keep up with the

district, state, and national mandates, visions, and goals. They must constantly monitor the progress of all bilingual students and provide interventions for those who are not demonstrating mastery of the second language.

An administrator must provide more information to parents regarding such things as the home Language Survey, the school goals for the bilingual program, and how the program and teachers will be monitored. They need to inform parents about the bilingual models, goals, expectations, assessments, what the laws expect regarding bilingual students.

Administrators also need to follow guidelines regarding federal funding. The monies set aside for the bilingual program must be spent on the bilingual program. Administrators should be held accountable for how the money is allocated and spent. Administrators need to make sure the classroom teacher has the necessary supplies to make the program successful.

Administrators need to find a way to monitor teachers in bilingual classrooms. They need to make sure the teacher follows the guidelines that should be implemented. A well defined goal must be clearly stated for all bilingual teachers. Administrators

**Table 1
Proposed Model for Bilingual Education**

Grade	Model/Minutes	Spanish	English
Kindergarten	80/20 308/77	Reading and writing in language arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, P.E., Fine Arts. Build on child’s strengths.	Create environment for learning second language. English Language Development, Math - Problem of the Day, Phonemic awareness, Choral reading, Echo reading, build assessments into curriculum.
First	70/30 270/115	Reading and writing language arts, P. E., Fine Arts. Build on child’s strengths. Test on Tejas Lee Logramos, EDL/DRA.	Create environment for learning second language. ESL Benchmarks, transition into reading after 9 weeks, Math, Social Studies, Phonics, Vocabulary development, comprehension, phonemic aware, fluency, build assessments into curriculum.
Second	60/40 230/155	Native language academic support for cognitive development through literature, manipulative, visuals, PE., Fine Arts. Build on child’s strengths, Test DRA/EDL.	Create environment for learning second language. Language Arts reading and writing, Math, Science, Social Studies. Test TPRI, ITBS.
Third	50/50 192.5/192.5	Native language academic support for cognitive development through literature, manipulative, visuals, PE./ Fine Arts. Build on child’s strengths.	Create environment for learning second language. Language Arts reading and writing, Math, Science, Social Studies. English TAKS and Test TPRI.
Fourth	40/60 155/230	Native language academic support for cognitive development through literature, manipulative, visuals for immigrant students just arriving. Build on child’s strengths.	Create environment for learning second language. Language Arts reading and writing, English TAKS, Math, Science, Social Studies, PE., Fine Arts. TPRI, TELPAS.
Fifth	20/80 77/308	Native language academic support for cognitive development through literature, manipulative, visuals for immigrant students just arriving. Build on child’s strengths.	Create environment for learning second language. Language Arts reading and writing, English TAKS, Math, Science, Social Studies, PE., Fine Arts. TPRI, TELPAS.

need to provide ample training for all teachers. They should promote the sharing of ideas so that teachers cooperate rather than compete against each other. An administrator needs to break the traditional competitive mindset and promote the well being of all students.

Personnel

Personnel with the will to educate students monitor quality of instruction, embrace innovation, and persist in their commitment to students and to improving education. Staff commitment goes beyond delivering the curriculum. (Brisk, 1998)

With this in mind, teachers must be kept informed about any and all changes to the bilingual program. Teachers should be given small group settings to provide for meaningful teacher instruction. They must meet state certification requirements and attend bilingual trainings to ensure the comprehension and knowledge of how to create a learning environment in a bilingual classroom where all students will be engaged. The Los Angeles Unified School District (1985) recommends: simplifying input by speaking slowly and enunciating clearly; use manipulative and concrete materials; use of nonverbal language; and checking frequently for understanding.

Students

Having high expectations for students and providing opportunities for success are vital in educating bilingual students. Bilingual classrooms must be democratic

and inclusive, where all students' opinions are heard. Teachers and students should be able to dialogue in class about different topics. Through conversations, much information is obtained about an individual, and being able to express personal ideas make each student feel part of society. Giving them opportunity to wonder beyond the information presented in textbooks and allowing for their own opinions, students will be able to think more critically.

Students will be able to connect the information provided by teachers to own experiences and have a better understanding about the subject at hand. Students should be given as many opportunities as possible to gain many language experiences.

School effectiveness is enhanced when the district, administrators, faculty, and parents all agree on clear and specific goals for the students' learning. Having shared goals helps to keep everyone focus on their desired outcome. Table 2 describes the roles parents, students, and school personnel can play to guide communities in creating a well-balanced and successful bilingual program. Reinforcing these key roles is crucial for the bilingual program to have a positive effect on students' achievement.

Closing Thoughts

Bilingual education is a compilation of multicultural views through which diversity is enriched. Reaching and motivating each individual student while utilizing everything that he or she has to offer must

be a priority in a bilingual program. Multicultural education creates a community in which everyone feels comfortable and achieves success.

By looking through someone else's eyes we acquire new perspectives. Through education each ELL student is trying to arrive at a similar place, to gain as much knowledge, and become that first member in the family to attend school, to graduate from high school and go on to college, and to be successful.

Having high expectations for all and a plan of action that is cohesive and consistent are essential for a successful bilingual education program. The districts discussed here have good initiatives, great teachers, and students with unlimited potential, but they currently lack the formula of cohesiveness and consistency that we propose, critical factors that will empower students to succeed.

About the Authors

Yadira Gallo: I am a product of bilingual education at a latter stage of my educational career. I entered the United States at the age of 13, and was in an ESOL setting in which I was submerged in a "sink or swim" situation. I was unable to speak, read, write, or understand English and I had to survive and quickly learn the new language. Now, as a bilingual teacher, I can see the discrepancies in the bilingual strategies, program implementations, and staff development, and the pressing need for consistent and supported programs.

**Table 2
Roles for District, Administrators, Teachers, and Parents**

District's Role	Administrator's Role	Teacher's Role	Parent's Role
Be supportive of school administrators.	Be supportive of teachers and staff.	Be supportive of parents and students.	Be supportive of teachers and administrators.
Have access to accurate accountability data that measure the skills and applications of learning taking place at school sites.	Have access to accurate accountability data that measure the skills and applications of learning taking place at school sites.	Have access to accurate accountability data that measure the skills and applications of learning taking place at school sites.	Have access to accurate accountability data that measure the skills and applications of learning taking place at school sites.
Collect program evaluations regularly from schools.	Collect data from teachers on progress of students and programs.	Compile data, record-keeping on students' progress.	Monitor student's progress through class work, grades, tests, . . .
Set standards for equitable expenditure of bilingual funds.	Set standards for equitable expenditure of bilingual funds.	Check on expenditures of bilingual funds.	Demand accountability for bilingual funds.
Review policies and rules to ensure they are unbiased.	Review policies and rules to ensure they are unbiased.	Review policies and rules to ensure they are unbiased.	Review policies and rules to ensure they are unbiased.
Be flexible and understanding to avoid undue punishment.	Be flexible and understanding to avoid undue punishment.	Be flexible and understanding to avoid undue punishment.	Be flexible and understanding.
Create positive climates.	Create positive climates.	Create positive climates.	Create positive climates at home.
Form liaisons between schools and institutions of higher learning.	Form liaisons between schools and institutions of higher learning.	Form liaisons between students and institutions of higher learning.	Contact institutions of higher learning.

Martha Garcia: I am not sure if I am a product of bilingual education since I was in bilingual education for kindergarten and first grade only. Upon entering second grade I was placed in a monolingual classroom. It seems I was immersed. My home language was Spanish. I received an education from both public and private schools in California school system and I do not feel I ever received an acceptable foundation in my native language. Now, as a bilingual special educator, I see the struggles ELL students face and I am uncertain about the strategies, program implementations, and staff development, and obvious lack of each.

Lucia Pinuelas: I am a product of bilingual education programs that faced many of the issues we are seeing today. I remember that I had so many obstacles to overcome and was not challenged in English as much as I challenge my students now. I have found myself questioning bilingual strategies, program implementations, and staff development. I feel that our ELL students are not being served properly.

Irene Youngs: I am not a product of a bilingual program. I was immersed into a monolingual classroom, while my home language was Spanish. As a bilingual teacher I have witnessed many of the successes and failures of bilingual programs. My motivation for the research for this article was that I feel that there is not enough equality, materials, or support for our bilingual programs. When I look into the eyes of students in our bilingual programs and realize that they are not making sufficient progress, I doubt the value of the curricula that are currently in place. I also question the lack of professional staff development; there are too many teachers trying to implement too many "of their own" strategies with no set guidelines.

Note

¹ LEP is an acronym used by many educators to label students whose native language is not English and who therefore are seen as having 'limits,' as the title suggests, rather than referring to them as English Language Learners (ELL).

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