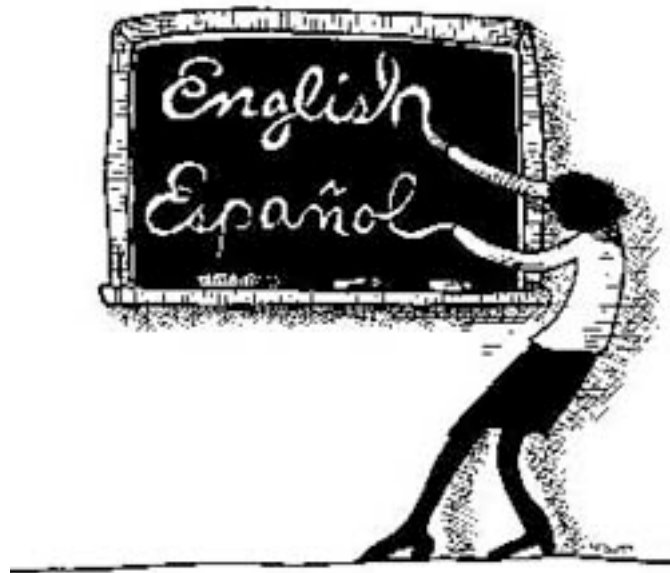


Cogidos de la Mano:
*Addressing the Achievement Gap Through Bilingual
Education*



Alyssa Anderson
EDUC 395
R. Kurth-Schai
5-29-07

Assessing the Problem

Schools exist in order to develop the knowledge, skill, and character of students. As the bedrock of American democracy, schools have created the middle class by providing academic and social resources regardless of station.¹ In addition, schools have served an important cultural role by reproducing the values and character of American society through impressionable youth.²

The Role of the Achievement Gap

During the past few decades, however, the gap in academic achievement between students of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds has been continuous and increasing. The achievement gap, manifested in grades, standardized test scores, course selection, graduation rates, and college completion, illuminates the fact that students are struggling to successfully enable the learning of all students since it shows students of color falling behind their white peers.³ The achievement gap is not restricted to urban schools, but can be seen in suburban and rural districts as well. Combined with the recent increased focus of the federal government on standardized test scores in K-12 education through acts such as No Child Left Behind, the issue of the achievement gap has definitely come to the forefront of national debate about schooling and education and has set off the alarm signal that something has to be done.⁴ While this is a national problem, urban schools -- with their diverse ethnic, economic, and linguistic populations -- are important

¹ Dr. Bill Green, Class Presentation, May 24, 2007; David B. Tyack. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974, p. 244.

² David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of Urban Education*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974. p. 279.

³ Robert C. Johnston, and Viadero, Debra, "Unmet Promise: Raising Minority Achievement", *Education Week*, vol. 19:27, March 15, 2000, p. 1-5.

⁴ Johnston.

environments in which to investigate and work, in order to find solutions to the achievement gap and eventually return to focus on the primary objectives of schools.

Identifying Urban Populations

One of the most vital areas to explore in urban education is bilingual education because of the large and increasing Spanish-speaking immigrant population from Latin America. Recent immigrants tend to settle in major metropolitan areas because neighborhoods of their own ethnic group already exist within the city.⁵ In fact, looking at four major cities in 2000, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Houston, the Hispanic populations make up 41, 36, 22, and 37% of the city's total population respectively, and are becoming the largest minority group, at approximately thirteen percent of the national population.⁶

Addressing Specified Needs

The Hispanic population has specific needs, especially in schools, and due to its growing influence these needs cannot be overlooked. "The data suggest that recent immigration among African and Latino communities may have an impact on the increased need for special services based on students' economic and cultural circumstances."⁷ The fact that "most of the Hispanic immigrants who originated in Mexico have come for economic reasons" suggests that communities with high proportions of Hispanic residents are becoming poorer in relation to their neighboring White non-Hispanic communities.⁸ This means that these communities have a higher need for special services in aid to their economic status such as free and reduced lunches,

⁵ Dennis R. Judd, and Swannstrom, Todd, *City Politics: Private Power and Public Policy*. Harper Collins , New York, New York, 1994, p. 396

⁶ United States Census Bureau, "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: Census Brief 2000."

⁷ Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP), *2006 State of Students of Color Report*, p. 15.

⁸ MMEP, p. 11.

and to cultural and linguistic roadblocks such as English-language learner (ELL) services. “In 2004-05, 74 percent of Hispanic students were eligible for free and reduced price lunch, a five point increase from 2000; 53 percent of Hispanic students were eligible for English language services, up three percentage points from 2003...”⁹ As Pedro Noguera writes in *City Schools and the American Dream*, “If urban schools are to become a source of support and stability to young people and their families in economically depressed urban areas, they must find ways to address the academic and nonacademic needs of children that affect their welfare and ability to learn.... To provide the extra services that disadvantaged children require, schools will need to form partnerships with local governments, churches, and neighborhood-based service agencies.”¹⁰ This sentiment suggests the importance of an educational system that matches the needs of its students, and specifically for Hispanic students, this means acknowledging their needs as non-English speakers.

In considering Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and its implications in contemporary teaching practice, one can see how imperative it is for current teaching methodology to address the issue of diverse needs in a classroom. In a language classroom, for example, “the challenge for the language teacher is to recognize and help learners appreciate these differences and similarities in the language classroom, and to design differentiated instruction so that each learner has opportunities to enhance thinking skills and learn how members of other cultures express themselves.”¹¹ However, it is clear through synthesizing the given data that problems and solutions pertaining to the achievement gap

⁹ MMEP, 15.

¹⁰ Pedro A. Noguera, *City Schools and the American Dream*, (Teacher’s College Press: New York, 2003), p.41.

¹¹ Judith L. Shrum, and Glisan, E.W., *Teacher’s Handbook: contextualized language instruction*, (Thomson Heinle: Boston, 2005) p. 315.

have implications far beyond the individual classroom, and it is essential to address the fact that the needs of students of color are not being met by the schools in the form of special services. This need is causing a lack of rigorous academic training sufficient enough to prepare a student for college. Unless immediate action is taken, the achievement gap between students of color and White non-Hispanics will continue to grow and cause irreparable damage to our schools and communities nationwide.

An Introduction to Bilingual Education

Bilingual education, “the use of two languages in school-by teachers or students or both-for a variety of social and pedagogical purposes,” has attempted to meet the needs of the Hispanic students, and thus help alleviate the achievement gap.¹² The National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) outlines several goals of bilingual education that include: teaching English, fostering academic achievement, acculturating immigrants to a new society, preserving a minority group’s linguistic and cultural heritage, enabling English speakers to learn a second language, developing national language resources, or any combination of the above.¹³ According to psychologist Lev Vygotsky, language is a mediator that both guides thought and helps shape social development; therefore, bilingual children develop a highly diversified set of skills as they perceive, process, store, and recall informational input of different languages.

Due to all of the developmental research backing the benefits of bilingual education, it has extremely salient and positive consequences of implementation as a method of educational reform. It is especially interesting to consider the lasting effects

¹² National Association for Bilingual Education website, <http://www.nabe.org/education/index.html>.

¹³ Ibid.

bilingual education can have on student achievement in secondary schools when the program is implemented at the elementary level, yet a significant problem exists in how the language barrier of standardized tests is preemptively hindering the achievement of minorities. While recognizing that they are other groups of students with pronounced need in urban schools, given the population size and the achievement statistics of Latinos, it seems necessary to first address Latino students' needs and the impact Spanish has on the broader society.

Unveiling the Benefits of Bilingual Education

Because many of the Hispanic students entering the school system do not speak English, the necessary services required to help them successfully complete school become even more imperative to be provided. The best way to not only aid the students who are English language-learners, but also to embrace the growing richness and diversity of our society, is to provide schooling that incorporates both English and Spanish. The idea of bilingual schooling has been investigated, and many positive benefits have been found for both the ELL student, and students who already speak English proficiently.

Closing the Gap

One of the most valuable benefits to bilingual education is its possibility to help close the achievement gap and raise the test scores of students on the verge of failure. Submerging students into a schooling system that speaks a completely different language than their native language has been shown to cause poor academic achievement and an insufficient command of both the first language and the second language.¹⁴ Rather, the

¹⁴ Aarts, Rian, & Verhoeven L. (1999). Literacy attainment in a second language submersion context. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 377-393.

students' native language should be used as a base from which to learn and eventually transfer knowledge and skills between the native and new languages.

By learning in both their native language and a second language, students will be able to transfer their knowledge between the two languages and be less frustrated academically. Teaching students partly in their native language has not only been effective in teaching non-English speaking students English, but student test scores from these bilingual schools are consistently higher than those of students in monolingual schools.¹⁵

Furthermore the education that bilingual education provides for both English and Spanish speakers successfully enables both academic and social learning. "Studies of bilingualism and cognition reveal that children who begin to study a second language in the early years reap cognitive, academic, and attitudinal benefits." They develop especially advanced skills in the areas of metacognitive processing, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.¹⁶

For native English-speakers, bilingual education has the potential to develop academic competence in a different way. Acquiring a second language will be useful to these students, not based on basic skills development, but rather in the way it will enhance their ability to process their native language in sophisticated ways. As the cognitive theorist Chomsky (1965) proposed in his research, all humans are born with the innate ability to process language through a "language acquisition device" (LAD) which

¹⁵ Bialystock, E., Luk G., & Kwan E. (2005). Bilingualism, biliteracy, and learning to read: Interactions among languages and writing systems. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 9, 43-61; Hutchinson, J. M., Whiteley H. E., Smith C. D., & Connors L. (2003). The developmental progression of comprehension-related skills in children learning EAL. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 26, 19-32.

¹⁶ Shrum and Glisan, 97. (Foster & Reeves, 1989)

contained abstract principles of language that are universal.¹⁷ In this way, children take all language input and as their LAD is activated, rules specific to that language are triggered. The internal negotiation of meaning that takes place during this type of interchange is natural and essential to obtaining sophisticated competence in one's native language as well as foreign languages.

Development of Cultural Identity

By integrating bilingual education into main stream school systems, students will receive a culturally relevant curriculum and gain a sense of self worth in their academic abilities and culture. When English language learners are thrust into mainstream schools they often feel as though their native culture and language are marginalized, ghettoized, and viewed negatively. In one study, researchers stated that “[T]he social environment [in main stream schools] may create ambivalence toward the minority language and the minority group, in addition to promoting low self-esteem among its members.”¹⁸ By being able to use their native language and learn about their cultural history while learning the basics of American culture and academics, it will be possible for students to maintain a higher sense of self-esteem and to remain engaged in the school system.

Connecting with the Community

According to the National Association for Bilingual Education, one of the main goals of bilingual education is to connect communities and parents with schools. A bilingual program would enable the community to both encourage pride in students' native culture, while still learning to achieve in the new American culture. Connection between communities and schools is a problem in all schools across the country, and

¹⁷ Shrum and Glisan, 12.

¹⁸ Aarts, Rian, & Verhoeven L. (1999)

districts are constantly looking for ways to help the community invest in its children and its schools.

As Pedro Noguera's quote in the section on identifying needs suggests, marginalized families and community members, especially those from minority and immigrant groups, may be included in the bilingual school community. The academic benefits of parental involvement in schools have been well documented, yet this type of community building can have important implications outside of the school. Since I am concerned with the broader political, economic, and social context within urban communities, empowering families and giving them space for organization and input can have a profound effect on social networking and civic engagement.¹⁹

Moreover, learning a second language has become a type of currency in our increasingly globalized world that can help all students of bilingual education succeed in broader communities. Europeans have long held the value of multilingual education, and it is now time that Americans also recognize the academic benefits for all students. Since language learning occurs most quickly and easily in the early years of development as mentioned earlier, bilingual programs can be the surest path to obtaining linguistic and cultural skills that enhance local and global communities.

Given an exploration of these benefits, it seems necessary to increasingly incorporate bilingual education in a meaningful way more widely within schools.

¹⁹ "Two Languages are Better Than One: Parents and Students Work to Save Bilingual Education", Third Force, Oct 31, 1996.

Challenges to Bilingual Education

Despite the myriad benefits bilingual education has been proven to attain, many still assume that the idea of bilingual education is to go easy on limited-English-proficient (LEP) students in order to postpone the pain and confusion of acquiring a new language. Many also argue that bilingualism threatens to harm our sense of national identity and divide us along ethnic lines while sending the wrong message to immigrants by encouraging them to believe they can live in the United States without learning English or conforming to “American” ways.²⁰ The current attack on bilingual education denies young students a basic human and civil right - the right to learn in their native language. Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of a Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1989 (and ratified by all nations except the United States and Somalia) states that "the education of the child should be directed to ... the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values." Article 30 states that "a child belonging to an [ethnic, religious, or linguistic minority] should not be denied the right ... to use his or her own language." Some of these challenges are practical and require innovative solutions. Others result from the general public's lack of understanding about the functions and goals of bilingual programs, so with better communication strategies between policy makers, schools, and communities these can hopefully be eliminated. Finally, some question the underlying value placed on bilingual education, which will require deeper societal inquiry if they are to be resolved.

²⁰ “Two Languages are Better Than One: Parents and Students Work to Save Bilingual Education”, Third Force, Oct 31, 1996.

It is my hope, however, that by enumerating the challenges to bilingual education we can work towards more thoughtful solutions.

High Mobility Students

One of the main issues confronting bilingual education is the mobility of students within the program. These *city migrants* move short distances from school to school multiple times throughout the school year based on unstable family and living situations.²¹ According to research, it takes approximately 4-7 years for students to adequately acquire language skills, so students that enter bilingual education late or leave early will not be able to fully take advantage of the program.²² The mobility of the immigrant population in many urban schools would cause a problem for a K-8 bilingual program where there is an emphasis placed on following the program through in its entirety. Despite this, it has also been shown through research that *informal fluency* can be acquired through only 2-3 years of language instruction, which would create a base of knowledge significant enough to reap academic benefits even for highly mobile students.²³

Assisting the Transition to High School

In addition to concerns that students will enter bilingual programs at different stages, many worry that even students with a consistent bilingual background will struggle in monolingual high schools. This challenge to bilingual education is easily

²¹ Nakagawa, K., Stafford, M. E., Fisher, F. A., & Matthews, L. (2002). The "City Migrant" Dilemma: Building Community at High-Mobility Urban Schools, *Urban Education*, 37, 97.

²² Hutchinson, J. M., Whiteley H. E., Smith C. D., & Connors L. (2003). The developmental progression of comprehension-related skills in children learning EAL. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 26, 19-32.

²³ Aarts, Rian, & Verhoeven L. (1999). Literacy attainment in a second language submersion context. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 377-393; Carlisle, J.F., & Beeman M.M. (2000). The effects of language of instruction on the reading and writing achievement of first-grade Hispanic children. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 4, 331-353.

refuted given the structure of most bilingual programs. In order to successfully prepare students for a predominantly English-speaking high school experience, bilingual programs gradually increase the amount of English instruction, especially in middle school. This structure can explain why students who have received English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, followed by immersion in English, eventually begin to experience large decreases in their reading and math scores, as compared to students in bilingual programs.²⁴ Thus, the concern that bilingual students will experience a difficult transition to high school is largely unfounded with a sound program.

Threat to Americanization

Given the proven academic benefits of bilingual education, one might expect that administrators would be easily convinced to adopt it. Administrators often perceive that bilingual education is a threat to our national identity and that it divides us along ethnic lines. It is also argued that bilingual education sends the wrong message to immigrants, encouraging them to believe that they don't have to learn English or conform to "American" ideals to live in the United States.²⁵ One salient example of this argument is former house speaker Newt Gingrich's comments that "we should replace bilingual education with immersion in English so people learn the common language of the country and they learn the language of prosperity, not the language of living in a ghetto." In 1995, he also claimed that it caused "long-term dangers to the fabric of our nation" and that "allowing bilingualism to continue to grow is very dangerous."²⁶ Gingrich's

²⁴ Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia Collier, "A National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement," Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence. University of California at Berkeley. 2002.
<http://crede.berkeley.edu/research/llaa/1.1_es.html>.

²⁵ "Two Languages are Better Than One: Parents and Students Work to Save Bilingual Education", Third Force, Oct 31, 1996.

²⁶ Hunt, Kasie. "Gingrich: Bilingual Classes Teach 'Ghetto' Language", Associated Press. Apr. 1, 2007.

comments indicate the difficulty of convincing politicians and administrators of bilingual education's positive impacts; however, given the proven growing populations of Hispanic communities throughout the United States administrators won't be able to refute the influence and needs expressed by this group in the near future. America's history as a pluralistic nation that accepts, celebrates, and incorporates a variety of cultures is yet another important aspect to highlight in contradicting the aforementioned claims against bilingual education as a threat.

Funding Costly Innovations

As we have seen, school administrators are concerned with a variety of issues, and program costs continue to be among the most significant. Many perceive that bilingual education is extremely expensive. Case studies, by contrast, show that schools can implement bilingual programs relatively cheaply. In 1996-1997, Texas spent approximately \$3,510 for basic education per pupil. For children in bilingual programs, the cost was about \$230 more per pupil annually, accounting for less than a one percent increase in the state's education budget.²⁷

Recruiting Teachers

Finding qualified bilingual teachers has been a significant challenge to expanding bilingual education and another deep concern of school administrators. Of over forty urban school districts surveyed by the non-profit group Recruiting New Teachers, two-thirds indicated an immediate demand for bilingual and ESL teachers.²⁸ As Latino populations increase and schools see an influx of Spanish-speaking students, the demand

²⁷ Maria Robledo Montecel. Intercultural Development Research Association. IDRA Newsletter. January 1998. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/48/8c.pdf>. p. 2.

²⁸ Mary Ann Zehr, "Un Día Nuevo for Schools," Editorial Projects in Education, Inc. *Education Weekly*. Vol. 20, No. 10. Nov 8, 2000, p. 6.

for bilingual teachers continues to rise. Unfortunately, steady channels do not exist to fill these needs. As a result, eighty percent of the urban schools in the survey revealed that they hire unlicensed teachers to respond to the shortage of bilingual teachers.²⁹

Expanding bilingual education would surely increase this gap and cause added stress on school districts to find highly qualified personnel with both English and Spanish proficiency. Jean Anyon proposes “parent training as reading tutors and mentors, the establishment of bilingual lending libraries for parents, a new bilingual teacher-training program for neighborhood parents interested in becoming teachers, and collaboration with Chicago State University to offer these courses at the neighborhood school at no cost to participants,” as a response to this dilemma providing hope not only for increased community involvement, but also the possibility of teaching jobs for parents who already possess the language skills needed to participate in bilingual education.³⁰

Convincing Parents

Beyond recruiting teachers and students to participate in bilingual education, parents play a crucial role in the success of these programs. Both native and non-native parents may be resistant to bilingual education for varying reasons. First, parents clearly care about maximizing the quality of their children’s education and thus may have concerns about the benefits of bilingual education. Although the benefits of bilingual programs have been proven for non-native speakers, immigrant parents may worry that their students will not have enough English language exposure. Similarly, since we have already established that students learn best in their native language, native English parents may rightfully question whether learning partially in Spanish will promote the

²⁹ Zehr, 6.

³⁰ Jean Anyon, *Radical Possibilities*, New York: Routledge, 2005. p. 158-9.

most development in their English-speaking children.³¹ Although researchers have proven that language learning comes most easily at an early age and can enhance students' abilities in their L1, parents might question the diminished time devoted to speaking and learning in English.

Secondly, bilingual schools may have difficulty in continuing communication with parents once their students are enrolled in the school. Given the diverse language, economic, and social needs in a bilingual school, teachers and administrators face the weighty task of engaging all parents. In order to foster productive relationships with native and immigrant parents, the school must engage in sustained work to draw in non-native parents and communicate school successes. This can be manifested in a variety of ways such as the creation of bilingual school newsletters, community translators for PTA meetings, and parent advocates.

³¹ Aarts, Rian, & Verhoeven L. (1999). Literacy attainment in a second language submersion context. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 377-393; Carlisle, J. F., & Beeman M. M. (2000). The effects of language of instruction on the reading and writing achievement of first-grade Hispanic children. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 4, 331-353.

Addressing Challenges and Proposing Change

Reform Initiative: K-8 Bilingual School Prototype

In light of the aforementioned issues and challenges facing bilingual education, I have developed a response in the form of a K-8 bilingual school prototype, Justly Uniting Nations Together as One Society, or JUNTOS, based on the Telpochcalli School in Chicago, Illinois.³² This school would ideally be implemented in various neighborhoods with high populations of Spanish-speaking students, and would serve to better prepare those students for an all-English high school curriculum as they would be learning alongside English-speaking students and cultivating their identities as multicultural citizens. Although the school proposal would require intensive work by a number of individuals and community groups, the initial ideas for the school are as follows:

Content-Based Curriculum

At JUNTOS students receive instruction in both languages, English and Spanish, in all subject areas, known as content-based instruction (CBI). Originally introduced as the foundation for immersion and foreign-language programs for K-12 students in the 1960s, CBI employs the content, learning objectives, and activities from the traditional school curriculum as the vehicle for teaching language skills. Documented research shows that CBI results in increased motivation, self-confidence, language proficiency, and cultural literacy.³³ Due to the fluidity and flexibility inherent in CBI, students and teachers are able to negotiate meaning in content and language skills simultaneously using both languages at appropriate levels depending on the skills of the learner. Although the primary textbooks used are in English, a variety of authentic texts in

³² Interview with Rafael Estrella, May 14, 2007.

³³ Shrum and Glisan, p. 78.

Spanish are also integrated into the curriculum to supplement the text and offer opportunities to gain more specific cultural knowledge. Authentic texts include poetry, newspaper and magazine articles, realia, literary excerpts, audio recordings, visual media, radio broadcasts, and any other material that is prepared by and for native speakers that reflect societal values and details of everyday life within a culture.³⁴ Galloway (1998) asserts that

“authentic texts, as total communicative events, invite observation of a culture talking to itself, not to outsiders; in its own context; through its own language; where forms are referenced to its own people, who mean through their own framework of associations and whose voices show dynamic interplay of individuals and groupings of individuals within the loose general consensus that is the culture’s reality.”³⁵

Teachers

In order to most effectively implement the use of CBI within the curriculum, most of the teachers at JUNTOS are completely bilingual; although fluency is not required. To compensate for teachers’ lack of fluency in either English or Spanish, team-teaching and cooperative arrangements are encouraged. In addition, specialized bilingual education training is provided for all teachers both initially and throughout their careers via frequent staff development opportunities in order to create a cohesive curriculum and unified sense of purpose. Teachers are urged to motivate their students to operate in both languages in the classroom, and to push each student to place more emphasis on responding in their L2.

³⁴ Ibid., 74.

³⁵ Ibid., 74.

In response to recruiting a sufficient number of bilingual-capable teachers, JUNTOS employs initiatives aimed at making the school more accessible to parents and community members whose aid and participation in school happenings is highly encouraged to cultivate strong partnerships between various community constituents. As Jean Anyon states in her book, *Radical Possibilities*,

"Among the accomplishments of LSNA [Logan Square Neighborhood Association in Chicago, founded in the 1960s] and parents are construction of seven new school buildings, evening community learning centers in six schools, mortgage lender programs to offer incentives for educators to buy housing in the area, parent training as reading tutors and mentors, the establishment of bilingual lending libraries for parents, a new bilingual teacher-training program for neighborhood parents interested in becoming teachers, and collaboration with Chicago State University to offer these courses at the neighborhood school at no cost to participants."³⁶

As mentioned earlier, Anyon's suggestions promote not only increased community involvement, but also the possibility of creating teaching jobs for parents who already possess the language skills and cultural knowledge needed to participate in providing bilingual education to students.

Parents

Parental involvement is an important effort in the success of JUNTOS, and as such there are after school tutoring programs for *both* students and parents as well as PTA meetings conducted in both languages with the aid of translations by teachers or other community members, schools newsletters in both English and Spanish written by

³⁶ Jean Anyon, *Radical Possibilities*, New York: Routledge, 2005. p. 158-9.

parent volunteers, and parent advocates who serve to disseminate information about the goals, successes, and benefits of bilingual education throughout the community. In this way I hope to engage parents more immediately in the happenings of the school and the education of their children by providing them access to information and research as well as a forum in which to voice their concerns, opinions, and suggestions.

“[A]t a time when conservative legislators and organizations are seeking to make bilingual education the next target on their political agendas, parents are emerging as one of the most effective and powerful protest groups. But it is not only parents of English learners but all progressives who must recognize the value of bilingual education and take an active role in strengthening their district’s programs.”³⁷

Assessment

Assessment at JUNTOS reflects the diversity in the student population by providing two forms of testing. All students are tested in their second language (L2) in reading, writing, grammar, and listening comprehension just as would occur in a traditional language classroom; however, in all other subjects testing occurs in English to best prepare students for the all-English curriculum employed at the high school level. In this way, both English and Spanish-primary students are held responsible for gaining comprehension in their respective L2 through authentic assessment that reflects the methods of teaching employed. That is to say, language assessment takes a variety of forms in order to accommodate diverse learner needs in the classroom, and correspondingly reflects the differentiated instruction provided combining both formative

³⁷ “Two Languages are Better Than One: Parents and Students Work to Save Bilingual Education”, Third Force, Oct 31, 1996.

and summative measures within real-world contexts to allow students the opportunity to exhibit creative and divergent responses. Moreover, “[t]eachers inform students of how they will be assessed prior to an assessment, and they show students samples of performance that would meet and exceed expectations. Additionally, they provide rich feedback that describes how students could improve their performances.”³⁸

High School Transition

As students near entry into high school, extra emphasis is placed on test-taking in English and preparation for standardized tests to help ameliorate possible challenges students might face upon entry into a monolingual school. Tutoring programs continue to provide support for JUNTOS students even after they move on to high school, and in addition to traditional Spanish grammar classes several “Spanish for Spanish-Speakers” classes are offered at the high school for students from this program or others whose language skills are very advanced.

Conclusion

Demographics do not lie; the Latino population in America is growing. It is imperative that we acknowledge and meet the needs of both immigrant and native students in order to promote the ideal of unity and cultural affirmation. As David B. Tyack discusses in *The One Best System*, American schools have a long history of mistreating and miseducating non-white students. Thus, in order to provide the most representative educational system in our country, we need to explore alternative paradigms, including bilingual education. Hopefully, bilingual urban schools will open doors to adequately meet the needs of all different types of students.

³⁸ Shrum and Glisan, 358.

Annotated Resources

Anyon, Jean. *Radical Possibilities*, New York: Routledge, 2005.

This book problematizes certain federal and metropolitan public policies that influence the poverty experienced by schools and communities in cities across America and in a variety of segregated, low-income suburbs. It then discusses equitable and progressive solutions that focus on putting “education at the center” in order to work towards gaining economic and educational justice. This work is especially important in investigating the crucial role of community involvement in these social movements and how it can play a direct role in the function of schools.

Green, Dr. Bill. Class Presentation. May 24, 2007.

Dr. Bill Green is the superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools and visited the *Issues in Urban Education* class at Carleton College to discuss and answer student questions about urban schooling and the fate of Minneapolis schools under the current stresses of NCLB legislation and dropping enrollment. His insights on the essential role of teachers, funding concerns, and shifting enrollment were particularly important in considering this reform initiative.

Estrella, Rafael. Personal interview. May 14, 2007.

Rafael’s personal experiences in a K-8 bilingual school near Chicago were imperative in developing the vision of this initiative. His responses about the logistics of the program in which he was involved as well as his insight into his own experience as an English language-learner student provided inspiration and highlighted points of re-consideration when developing the various aspects of the JUNTOS school.

Hunt, Kasie. “Gingrich: Bilingual Classes Teach 'Ghetto' Language”, Associated Press. Apr. 1, 2007.

This news article discusses Newt Gingrich’s comments on bilingual education where he clearly states his position in favor of complete English immersion for ELL students. Although his stance is in complete opposition to this initiative, Gingrich’s comments help to more clearly pinpoint the arguments against bilingual education held by policy makers. Thus, these arguments could be directly addressed and refuted in the issue assessment portion of this work.

Minnesota Minority Education Partnership. “2006 State of Students of Color.” St. Paul, MN: 2006.

This booklet of statistics about Minnesota students of color provided the necessary demographics, enrollment percentages, and immigration patterns to accurately comment on the Hispanic population and its characteristics in relation to special needs such as ELL/ESL services and free/reduced lunches.

National Association for Bilingual Education website,
<http://www.nabe.org/education/index.html>.

The NABE website is an excellent resource for information about what bilingual education is and the myriad ways in which it can be implemented in schools. It also provides links to and information about other research supporting bilingual education.

Noguera, Pedro. *City Schools and the American Dream*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2003.

Pedro Noguera's book served as an excellent source of first-hand research and discussion about students in San Francisco, Oakland, Berkeley, and Richmond that come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Noguera comments on the influence of demographics, socio-economic status, drug use, violence, and social capital on the achievement of students and their schools.

Shrum, Judith L., & Glisan, E.W., *Teacher's Handbook: contextualized language instruction*, Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2005.

This textbook intended for instruction on methods of teaching foreign languages contains critical information about teaching methods such as CBI, cognitive benefits of learning a second language, and vital theories by many educational psychologists and linguistic scholars. Instruction and assessment strategies were drawn from ideas presented in this text.

"Two Languages are Better Than One: Parents and Students Work to Save Bilingual Education", Third Force, Oct 31, 1996.

This article is what originally piqued my interest in bilingual education, and through a class discussion of the issues raised by this story I was able to develop a plan of inquiry about bilingual education that jumpstarted this project. Also, the testimonies of parents and community members helped to support the reasoning behind the extensive parental involvement in JUNTOS.

Dissemination Plan

In order to make the K-8 bilingual school, JUNTOS, an accessible reform initiative several steps must be taken to ensure that both the people who have decision-making influence as well as those who would benefit from such a reform are aware and informed of the numerous benefits and positive repercussions of its implementation. First, the ideas could be presented at a PTA or School Board meeting so that parents, teachers, administrators, and other community members would be fully informed about the issue at hand and the specific ways that bilingual education could be employed within schools in the community. Another option is to meet with policy makers and discuss more specifically the consequences outlined in the issue assessment and how bilingual education would be able to address those concerns as well as make strides towards closing the achievement gap for minority students. Additionally, this reform initiative could be published for broader access and implementation nationwide; posting the publication on educational websites, submitting it to educational publications, and sending it to the Secretary of Education would also help broaden the scope of influence this reform has the potential to achieve.

General Resources

- Aarts, Rian, & Verhoeven L. (1999). Literacy attainment in a second language submersion context. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 20, 377-393.
- Anyon, Jean. *Radical Possibilities*, New York: Routledge, 2005. p. 158-9.
- Carlisle, J. F., & Beeman M. M. (2000). The effects of language of instruction on the reading and writing achievement of first-grade Hispanic children. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 4, 331-353.
- Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: The New Press, 1995.
- Green, Dr. Bill. Class Presentation. May 24, 2007.
- Estrella, Rafael, Personal interview, May 14, 2007.
- Hunt, Kasie. "Gingrich: Bilingual Classes Teach 'Ghetto' Language", Associated Press. Apr. 1, 2007.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.
- Mahmoud, Eric. Interview at Harvest Preparatory Academy. April 26, 2007.
- Minnesota Minority Education Partnership. "2006 State of Students of Color." St. Paul, MN: 2006.
- Montecel, Maria Robledo, Josie D. Cortez, and Albert Cortez, "What is Valuable and Contributes to Success in Bilingual Education Programs?" Intercultural Development Research Association, San Antonio, TX: 2002.
- Nakagawa, K., Stafford, M. E., Fisher, F. A., & Matthews, L. (2002). The "City Migrant" Dilemma: Building Community at High-Mobility Urban Schools, *Urban Education*. 37, 97.
- Intercultural Development Research Association. IDRA Newsletter. January 1998.
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/48/8c.pdf>. p. 2.
- National Association for Bilingual Education website.
<http://www.nabe.org/education/index.html>.

- Noguera, Pedro. *City Schools and the American Dream*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2003.
- Shrum, Judith L., & Glisan, E.W., *Teacher's Handbook: contextualized language instruction*, Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2005.
- Thomas, Wayne and Virginia Collier, "A National Study of School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students' Long-Term Academic Achievement," Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence. University of California at Berkeley. 2002. <http://crede.berkeley.edu/research/llaa/1.1_es.html>.
- Two Languages are Better Than One: Parents and Students Work to Save Bilingual Education", Third Force, Oct 31, 1996.
- Tyack, David B. *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- United States Census Bureau, "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: Census Brief 2000." <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-1.pdf>>. March 2001.
- Zehr, Mary Ann. "Un Día Nuevo for Schools," Editorial Projects in Education, Inc. *Education Weekly*. Vol. 20, No. 10. Nov 8, 2000, p. 6.