

## Special points of interest:

TABE's 2009 annual conference will take place October 14-17 in Houston at the Galleria Conference Center

TABE continues to advocate for English language learners

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# TABE News

TABE News Volume XVIII

May 2009



## Successful 2008 Conference

Rigor + Relevance  
+Relationships =  
Bilingual Education  
Exito para todos

The 2008 TABE conference was held October 22-25 at the Arlington Convention Center in Arlington, Texas. Over 1200 educators and community members attended the conference. Participants were able to choose from 180 concurrent sessions on topics related to literacy instruction to assessment to parent involvement. Keynote and Featured Speakers addressed topics of interest to educators today. Conference participants

also had the opportunity to attend preconference institutes on dual language instruction, Spanish literacy instruction, secondary education, administrator issues, and for new bilingual directors. Other preconference institutes were provided for parents and for Bilingual Education Student Organization (BESO) attendees.

Local conference co-chairs were Liz Martin, Dr. Gilda Alvarez-Evans, Lidia Morris, Dr. Luis Rosado, and Dr. Bill Pulte.

The TABE Executive Board and the TABE Conference

Planning Committee are now planning the 2009 conference which will be held in Houston on October 14- 17.



2009 TABE conference participants

## New TABE Board Elected

The annual election of the TABE Board was conducted in April 2009. Votes were counted on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in the TABE offices by members of the Academy for Teacher Excellence of UTSA. There were a total of 221 eligible ballots. Witnesses included Dr. Iliana Alanís, current President-

elect; Mr. and Mrs. Manuel Ornelas, and Mrs. Maria Alvarado.

Installation of the 2009-2010 TABE Executive Board will be held June 19, 2009 in San Antonio.

**Congratulations to the newly elected TABE board!**

Dr. Richard Gomez-  
President Elect (RGV-TABE)

Mr. Manuel Ornelas-Vice  
President (SAAABE)

Dr. Fernando Castillo-  
Treasurer (RGV-TABE)

Ms. Elizabeth Quintela-  
Secretary (WTABE)

# Legislative Update



Jesse Romero, TABE Legislative Representative

At TABE we have been actively working with our legislators to amend or dissolve discriminatory laws, introduce progressive bills, and educate our policy making bodies. Policy is at the heart of bilingual education for it is policy that dictates, regulates, and promotes quality bilingual education programs.

Legislative priorities during this 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature include (1) legislation to stop the exiting of bilingual students in the first grade, (2) policy that would help Texas comply with the Judge Justice order, (3) a bill to help produce more bilingual teachers, (4) funding for the dual language pilot program we passed last session, and (5) full funding for ESL textbooks in grades 9-12.

HB 2579 by Rep. Martinez-Fischer would reverse the exiting of bilingual students in first grade. The bill is up for a hearing in the House Public Education Committee and all stakeholders support the bill. TABE will provide expert testimony.

SB 2002 by Senator Leticia Van de Putte would help Texas comply with the Judge Justice order regarding the way ELLs are educated in grades 9-

12. TABE provided expert testimony on this bill and we are still working to try and get it passed out and on to the Senate.

HB 180 by Rep. Alonzo would provide funds to be inserted directly into the budget of the University of North Texas to provide tuition assistance, financial aid and loan forgiveness for students becoming certified bilingual teachers who agree to teach in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area schools. TABE worked closely with Rep. Alonzo on this bill and helped organize support for it. The bill has passed committee and we are working to get it passed in the House and send it on to the Senate.

Last session we passed HB 2814, the dual language pilot program that was signed by Gov. Perry into law. However, conservatives pulled the funding for the program, so we are working to provide the funds to make the program happen for our schools. Currently, there is a budget rider to do just that and it is still in the budget. The rider survived the Senate, now we are working to make it stick in the House.

As your TABE legislative consultant, I am excited about the positive things we see happening in bilingual education in Texas...something we haven't seen in quite some time.

## TABE NEWS

### Advocates Rally at Capital to Celebrate 40 years of Bilingual Education

The Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) held a march to celebrate 40 years of Bilingual Education in Texas and to honor state lawmakers who have contributed to the success of bilingual education in Texas. On Thursday, February 19, 2009, TABE members marched from the main entrance of the Austin Convention Center to the Capitol. The purpose of the march was to support legislative efforts related to the education of bilingual students. These legislative efforts include: SB 452 by Senator Van de Putte, which advocates for developmentally sound practices regarding the exiting of students from bilingual programs; HB 182 by State Representative Roberto Alonzo, designed to certify teachers in critical shortage areas including bilingual education; and the funding of the Dual Language Pilot program that was passed during the 80th Texas Legislature in 2007. "We are proud to be sponsoring this rally for bilingual education under the theme that it is more than education, it is economic develop-

ment", continued Ruiz-Escalante. **"TABE firmly believes that in order to effectively educate the state English Language Learner (ELL) population and close the academic achievement gap between this group and native speakers of English, we must provide students with the most effective researched-based educational programs and practices for increased linguistic and academic attainment"**, said President Escalante.

#### TABE News

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# A Teacher's Perspective



Redefining High Expectations

Cindy Abbott,  
3rd grade  
teacher

The school year began and I was nervously excited about the year ahead of me. Though bilingual students and programs were nothing new to me, this was strangely different: I would be teaching in a Two-Way Immersion program. You try to ask questions to prepare yourself, but it is hard to truly understand. I was told that this program would be an easy transition from my experiences teaching a class of native Spanish speakers to become bilingual. I made the mistake of thinking it would be the same thing, the same program, the same time for planning, and worse: the same expectations.

I had to be immersed to understand.

Now, I have always considered myself to be the High Expectations Queen, defender of all bilingual education children everywhere. I wasn't going to lower my expectations because of my students' ethnicity, socioeconomic status, their home life, their language background.

My students would rise above because they could do it and conquer the world! I worked hard to connect, sometimes taking half a year or more to reach some students. I wracked my brain trying to find another way to differentiate, work at all their levels, balance their literacy, reach out to their parents, sisters, brothers, cousins, and make it relevant to them and their future. I barked at principals, curriculum coordinators, testing gurus, and the librarian's aide about equality for my students. But as I got acquainted with my new Two-Way Immersion students, I began to think maybe my expecta-

tations weren't high enough.

You see, in all those years of pushing some students to work at their level and inch up just enough so we could have more celebrations than tears, today I realize I was really doing those students a disservice. Had I really done enough? Had I really challenged them to the level they deserved to rise to? Had I given them enough tools, or the right tools, for any of it to hold relevance in their future? Hearing my new students speak in English and Spanish while parlaying ideas graciously back and forth, trusting their problem-solving strategies, and seeing them be willing to take risks made me see the negligence I was responsible for the years before. I could have raised the bar for my Spanish speakers. I could have articulated the expectations more clearly. I should have pushed harder. I did not prepare them for the realistic expectations of the world. I should have set my expectations for them higher. And more importantly, I should have done it *not* because they were Hispanic, of low socio-economic status, or English language learners in my bilingual class. I should have done it because they were my third grade students. They deserved more.

After my first year of teaching my Two-Way Immersion students, I reveled in the beauty of a program that works. The goal of students from English and Spanish language backgrounds becoming truly biliterate, bicultural, and bilingual is achievable and currently proving successful. What is the difference? The bar is raised. The goals are clear. It may be tough, there may be struggles, and there are always variables with any classroom. But these variables will not cause me to lower my expectations. My students deserve more. So I end with this simple question: Have you redefined your expectations lately?

"Have you redefined your expectations lately?"

## A Parent's Perspective



Sandra Spivey,  
TABE Parent Representative

“Recordemos ante todo que somos una parte esencial de esta alianza, y que con nuestro apoyo como padres de familia, obtendremos aún más.”

### Alianza

No hay alianza más fuerte que aquella en la que todos los integrantes persiguen el mismo objetivo. Este enunciado se vuelve realmente cierto si lo colocamos en el entorno de la educación, y para hacerlo aún más relevante en esta publicación, hablemos del entorno de la educación bilingüe. Los integrantes de esta alianza son muchos pero los más importantes son: por supuesto los estudiantes, los maestros, y definitivamente los padres de familia.

El propósito de este ensayo es de dirigir a los padres y animarlos a tomar un papel activo en el futuro de sus hijos en general y particularmente de la educación bilingüe. Vivimos un momento que puede ser decisivo para el avance de programas que pueden ser beneficiosos para nuestros niños que están tratando de aprender el inglés, pero también para aquellos que desean aprender otros idiomas, y además mantener el suyo propio.

Es de la mayor importancia mantenernos involucrados, como padres de familia, en todos los aspectos de la escolaridad de nuestros hijos. Recordemos

que para ser realmente efectivos e influyentes en el proceso educativo debemos informarnos acerca de los programas disponibles, no solamente en la escuela a la que asisten nuestros hijos, sino también en otros programas de otras escuelas o distritos que pudiesen beneficiar a nuestros estudiantes.

Por ejemplo, es esencial saber que existen diferentes programas bilingües en nuestra localidad y entender cuál es la diferencia entre ellos. ¿Cómo podemos enterarnos? ¿A quién podemos dirigirnos para pedir información? ¿Cómo saber cuál de estos programas es el que más conviene a nuestros hijos? ¿Quién toma las decisiones acerca de qué tipo de instrucción debe recibir mi hijo/hija? Estas y muchas más preguntas nos conciernen a todos, pero como mencioné en la parte de arriba, es esencial que nosotros como padres de familia obtengamos las respuestas. Es necesario saber que tenemos el derecho de hacer preguntas y confiar en que obtendremos honestas respuestas, tenemos el derecho de exigir la mejor educación para nuestros hijos. Podemos exigir de una manera

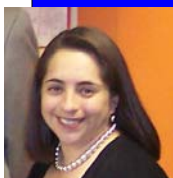
educada y cordial, haciéndole ver a los maestros y directivos de la escuela que exigimos con el propósito de ayudar no de perjudicar.

Confiemos en el sistema al que ya pertenecemos y empecemos en nuestra escuela.

Recurramos a la maestra o maestro de nuestros pequeños como primer paso. Localicemos al Comité de Evaluación de Competencia del Lenguaje (LPAC) que debe de existir en cada escuela. Formemos una red de apoyo entre padres, y hablemos con los que ya tengan más experiencia. Si contamos con los recursos apropiados, investiguemos en la red de información (Internet) en sitios como la Agencia de Educación en Texas (TEA) o en organizaciones como ésta que publica este ensayo, Asociación de la Educación Bilingüe en Texas (TABE), o en la Asociación Nacional de Educación Bilingüe (NABE).

Recordemos ante todo que somos una parte esencial de esta alianza, y que con nuestro apoyo como padres de familia, obtendremos aún más.

## La enseñanza de lectura



por Patty De La Cruz Ramos

A partir del momento en el que eliges ser maestro bilingüe debes estar enterado de que tu papel en la vida de un alumno hispanohablante será muy importante. En muchas ocasiones como maestros bilingües cometemos el error de querer imitar la instrucción de nuestros colegas que no son maestros bilingües.

Damos por hecho que si trabajamos con el mismo nivel de estudiante o en la misma institución escolar, nuestros salones de clase deben ser espejos el uno del otro. Sin embargo no nos percatamos de lo diferente que es la alfabetización en cada uno de los diversos idiomas del mundo. Tenemos idiomas que se leen de derecha a izquierda, idiomas que se representan por medio de símbolos en lu-

gar de letras, e incluso idiomas que son solamente sonidos interpretados por los hablantes de esta lengua en particular.

Es decir, cada idioma tiene su metodología que apoya eficazmente el aprendizaje del mismo. Por lo tanto como educadores bilingües debemos estar conscientes de que habrá diferencias en cuanto al aprendizaje de la lengua. Por ejemplo: las vocales en el idioma español son cinco y tienen cinco sonidos. Sería un error de nuestra parte, en este caso, querer enseñarle al alumno el concepto de que una vocal tiene más de un sonido.

Por otra parte al enseñar las reglas del uso del diálogo en escritura, no es lo mismo utilizar los guiones que las comillas. El diálogo en español va entre guiones o rayas y las comi-

llas se utilizan para sobresaltar títulos. Es incorrecto darles a entender a los alumnos que pueden emplear las dos formas o que existe la opción de escoger la que a ellos se les facilite más.

El uso de las mayúsculas es otro detalle que hay que observar muy de cerca. Insinuamos a los alumnos que no hay nada de malo en escribir, sin querer, los meses del año o los días de la semana utilizando mayúsculas (Junio por junio). Desafortunadamente, al hacer eso es como si aprobáramos que ellos escribieron june por June.

Si somos proponentes del bilingüismo, es preciso hacerlo de una manera eficiente sin permitir el uso inapropiado o incorrecto del idioma, por ningún motivo.

## TABE Mission Statement

Through a balanced program of research, professional development, and public education, **TABE** pursues the implementation of educational policies and effective bilingual-bicultural programs that promote equal educational opportunity and academic excellence for Bilingual/ESL students.

**TABE** firmly believes that only enrichment (additive) forms of bilingual education ensure that Bilingual/ESL students are successful academically and develop age-appropriate English proficiency. To this end, **TABE** fully endorses and promotes the implementation of research-based One Way/Two Way dual language programs and maintenance (late-exit) bilingual programs.

In keeping with this fundamental mission, **TABE** is committed to the following guiding principles:

- To serve as a professional association for persons interested in bilingual education;
- To review and analyze the state of bilingual-bicultural education in Texas schools and exchange ideas and practices for more effective implementation;
- To study legislation at the state and national level affecting the educational needs of linguistically and culturally diverse children;
- To exchange educational data, studies, ideas, practices and information with policy-making bodies, such as the Texas Legislature, the State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency and the United States Department of Education;
- To ensure that Texas public schools provide all students with a program of instruction and cultural development that enhances the student's sense of identity and fosters a positive self-concept;
- To ensure that Texas public schools develop, through academic instruction, the native language and cognitive skills of non-English background students, and that all students become proficient in English plus one or more languages.
- To ensure that language minority parents are involved in the educational development of their children and included in decision-making processes affecting their children's education.
- To collaborate with institutions of higher education to ensure the implementation of quality teacher preparation programs.



## A Student's Perspective

by Malgorzata Grabowski, graduate student at University of Texas-Pan American

"Las lenguas existen para que cada quien las use; no hay dos lenguas que vienen de una experiencia igual, y cada quien utiliza la lengua para comunicar lo que quiere."

Malgorzata. Es raro que aquí en los Estados Unidos alguien que vea este nombre por primera vez sepa pronunciarlo. Diez letras, cuatro sílabas y una combinación de consonantes poco vista en los Estados Unidos hacen que la gente lo mire un rato antes de decidir cómo lo intentarán pronunciar. Y casi siempre una explicación o excusa precede el intento de pronunciarlo: "No sé si lo estoy diciendo bien" o "¿Cómo lo pronuncias?" o "Haré lo mejor posible, pero...".

El nombre es de origen polaco, pero hasta en Polonia hay una simplificación del nombre. Obvio que los polacos saben pronunciarlo. Sin embargo, no me puedo recordar de ni una vez que alguien me ha llamado Malgorzata con la pronunciación correcta, en polaco. Quizás es por eso que nunca he corregido la pronunciación de la gente que intenta pronunciar mi nombre usando su conocimiento fonético de inglés o de otro idioma. Y quizás es por eso que ya me acostumbré tanto a la pronunciación inglesa de mi nombre, que cuando voy a un lugar donde soy identificada por mi nombre completo yo misma lo pronuncio Mal-gor-za-ta usando la pronunciación fonética de inglés, para hacer el trabajo de la gente más fácil. Aparte de eso, aunque me daba vergüenza admitirlo, me sentía incómoda con la pronunciación polaca.

Desde que empecé a identificarme como un individuo, pasando por esa etapa por la que todos los jóvenes pasan, siempre criticaba a la decisión de las dos personas más cercanas a mí de cambiar sus nombres. Mi padre llegó a los Estados Unidos con el nombre de Zbigniew. Otra combinación "rara" de letras, difícil de pronunciar para sus compañeros de trabajo.

Le dieron el apodo de Sebby, y todavía no he conocido a nadie que me explique de dónde llegó ese apodo para Zbigniew. Lo seguro es que no es polaco. Después de hacerse ciudadano, la primera cosa que mi papá hizo, antes de ejercer su derecho a votar, fue cambiar su nombre legal. Lo cambió a la traducción al inglés de su segundo nombre en polaco, que era Stanisław y en inglés es traducido como Stanley. Ahora tiene un nombre más fácil, y quizás más placentero, para la mayoría de los ojos y las lenguas: Stanley Grabowski. La segunda persona que hizo el mismo cambio después de hacerse ciudadana es mi mejor amiga de la adolescencia, quien cambió su nombre ruso Yekaterina a Katya, para que fuera más fácil pronunciarlo. Con el estatus de ser ciudadano, vienen más derechos para que uno rehaga su identidad para caber mejor dentro de la sociedad.

¿Qué era mi nombre de mi vida diaria mientras crecía? En mi casa, siempre he sido Gosia. En la escuela, Margaret, un nombre que me recuerda del sonido de disonancia en la música. En la universidad, mi nombre dependía de la persona que me hablaba porque dos amigas cercanas, las dos que eran asiáticas, empezaron a llamarme Gosia, y me gustó como sonaba este nombre viniendo de dos personas que entendían mi situación porque habían pasado por algo parecido.

Sin embargo, para la mayoría seguía siendo Margaret. Para la familia de mi esposo, soy Margarita, un nombre parecido a él en inglés pero más agradable por terminar con una "a," como mi nombre entero (y por acordar

Continuación-página 7

# Malgorzata

darme de la flor, y de una bebida sabrosa). Para mi esposo, soy su esposa, y aunque use varios nombres para referirse a mí casi nunca usa el nombre frío de Margaret. En mi salón soy Ms. Grabowski, que parece acercarse a mi apellido verdadero, pero en realidad no se acerca a nada de lo que soy. Mi apellido también es una simplificación para caber dentro de los estándares de los Estados Unidos: en Polonia, casi todos los apellidos de las mujeres terminan en "a," así que mi apellido polaco es Grabowska. Aparte de eso, no reconozco este apellido como parte de mi identidad ya que viene sólo del lado paterno, y de una tradición sexista de cómo dar apellidos a los hijos. Con tantos nombres, ¿quién iba a ser?

Como niña, me sentía polaca hasta que mi familia se mudó a un suburbio. Antes de la mudanza, casi sólo conocía elementos culturales polacos: mi comportamiento con la familia en la vida diaria y en días de fiesta, la comida que comía y el idioma que hablaba con mi familia y con mis amigos provenían de la cultura polaca. Fue cuando nos mudamos que empecé a descubrir que era diferente que la mayoría de mis compañeros de la escuela. Me acuerdo, por ejemplo, que todos mis nuevos amigos no podían esperar hasta el día de Navidad para abrir sus regalos,

mientras yo no podía esperar hasta la Víspera de la Navidad. No conocía la tradición del conejo de Pascua, ni la del Día de San Patricio. Aprendí esos elementos culturales bastante rápido. Sin embargo, había diferencias, y las reacciones a esas diferencias de algunas personas me causaron dolor.

Me acuerdo que en el tercer grado tuvimos un Festival de Culturas, cuando cada niño tenía que traer una comida que venía del país de sus antepasados. Mi mamá tardó mucho tiempo haciendo pierogi, y a la mayoría de los niños no les gustaron. La maestra enfatizó cuánto le gustaron a ella, algo que me hizo sentir un poco mejor. En el cuarto grado una amiga vino a mi casa para hacer un proyecto, y dijo que tenía hambre. Mi mamá había hecho naleśniki, y se los dio a mi amiga. A la amiga no le gustaron, y me preguntó dónde estaba la basura. Los tiró allí. Me dolió no sólo el hecho de que no le gustaron, sino también que los tiró a la basura, porque en mi familia (y en muchas familias polacas) no se tira comida. Sin embargo, el momento más doloroso de que me acuerdo pasó en el quinto grado, cuando estaba jugando con una amiga que vivía cerca. Me estaba contando que su familia quería comprar un "gazebo," y ya que yo no había escuchado esa palabra le pregunté qué

significaba. Ella me contestó enojada: "Es una cosa grande... Por qué no regresas a Polonia, donde debes estar."

En la secundaria, mientras los padres de mis amigos les ayudaban con sus ensayos y proyectos de la escuela, yo le ayudaba a mi mamá a escribir ensayos para sus clases de inglés. Todas mis amigas eran inmigrantes que venían de otros países. Me seguía sintiendo diferente que la mayoría de los estudiantes, que eran blancos, habían nacido en los Estados Unidos y hablaban inglés con sus familias. Aunque tenía algunas amigas que no eran inmigrantes, no pude identificarme bien con ellas, y por eso nunca me acerqué mucho a ellas.

Sin embargo, mientras crecí empecé a aceptar algunos valores "estadounidenses," o quizás simplemente valores que no existen en mi familia y que mis padres y parientes atribuían a los Estados Unidos. Me empezaron a interesar las clases de lectura y escritura, y de historia, mientras mis familiares siempre habían puesto énfasis en las matemáticas y las ciencias. No quería comer tanta comida polaca; mientras mi mamá la cocinaba, yo cocinaba platos que venían de otros países del mundo.

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“Es por eso que me he sentido como un oxímoron en esta sociedad.”

Malgorzata, continuada

Cuando llegó el tiempo de aplicar para la universidad, quería estudiar lejos de mi casa, abandonando el deseo de estar cerca de mi familia que muchos polacos tienen. Cuando iba a Polonia de vacaciones, ya no podía identificarme con mis primas: yo ya tenía un acento estadounidense, y no había expandido mi vocabulario desde que era niña. Mis parientes me criticaban por tener seis aretes, o por tener un novio que no era polaco. Aunque no me sentía estadounidense, tampoco me sentía polaca.

Es por eso que me he sentido como un oxímoron en esta sociedad. Y me sentía que cualquier nombre que alguien me quería nombrar funcionaba, porque no tenía mi propia identificación. Sin embargo, me daba vergüenza admitir que mientras criticaba a los que cambiaron sus nombres legales para caber dentro del sistema, yo misma no pronunciaba mi nombre completo bien por querer hacer todo más fácil para los otros. Sentía que estaba completamente abandonando mi identidad polaca y otorgando el poder a los estadouni-

denses de crear mi identidad, ya que estaba identificándome con la pronunciación de mi nombre que ellos me otorgaron. Pero, escribiendo este ensayo, me he reconciliado con esta pronunciación. Porque soy Mal-gor-za-ta. Culturalmente no soy completamente polaca, así que es normal que no me considero Mau-go-zha-ta. Ni soy completamente estadounidense, así que no puedo considerarme Margaret.

A través del mantenimiento de un nombre no conocido por la mayoría de los que hablan inglés, y no pronunciado como “debe ser” en polaco, tengo el poder de apropiarme mi nombre a la identidad polaco-americana con la que me identifico mejor. Las lenguas existen para que cada quien las use; no hay dos lenguas que vienen de una experiencia igual, y cada quien utiliza la lengua para comunicar lo que quiere.

*Nota del autor: Una nota irónica que llamó mi atención mientras estaba escribiendo este ensayo: Como mi Auto corrección de Ortografía sólo subrayaba en rojo los nombres polacos y rusos, llamando aún más mi atención de cómo estas palabras no pertenecen a un producto – este ensayo – creado en esta sociedad.*

## News Reprint and Editorial Policy

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## 2009 TABE Conference

by Iliana Alanís

The 37<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Texas Bilingual/ESL teachers, parents, and community members will be held October 14-17 in Houston at the beautiful Galleria Conference Center. This year's theme focuses on the progress we have made over the last 40 years in bilingual education and the realization that what we do **today** impacts generations of children **tomorrow**. Our work is evident with the increase in enrichment forms of bilingual education in Texas schools and the number of teachers and administrators embracing rigorous curriculum in Spanish. These maintenance or enrichment programs focus on our students' strengths versus their limitations. Teachers not only develop academic biliteracy but open up worlds of possibilities for children.

I know that Bilingual/ESL teachers have a wealth of information, effective strategies and ideas, and fascinating stories to share. That means you have to submit a proposal for this year's conference. How else can you share your successes with other teachers?

Keep in mind our conference organizers have multiple formats for you to consider as you plan your proposal:

Workshops  
(45/90 minutes)

Demonstrations  
(45 minutes)

Research Papers  
(45 minutes)

Symposia  
(45/90 minutes)

This is an opportunity for you to invite students and

parents to present their work, achievements, or thoughts as well.

Our deadline for proposals is June 30, 2009. You can find the request for proposals and additional information at [www.tabe.org](http://www.tabe.org)



Iliana Alanís, President Elect of TABE

Thank you for the work you do and for your commitment to language minority children and their families. I look forward to seeing you in Houston!

40 Years of Bilingual Education: Educating Children Today for a Prosperous Tomorrow

TABE Conference 2009

## TABE Affiliates

The Texas Association for Bilingual Education has 13 affiliates. TABE affiliates are found in Austin, Bryan, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Harlandale, Houston, the Metroplex, Midland, the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio. In addition, there is a Suburban Houston Affiliate, a Southwest Texas Affiliate, and an affiliate for West Texas. TABE also is proud to have 14 Bilingual Education Student Affiliates. To find complete information about TABE's affiliates, please visit [www.tabe.org](http://www.tabe.org).

*Quien sabe dos idiomas vale por dos*

# Critical Attributes of Dual Language Enrichment Programs

By Dr. Leo Gómez and Dr. Richard Gómez Jr

Dual language enrichment (DLE) programs demonstrate the evolution of the field of bilingual education as it has moved from a *remedial* to an *enrichment* paradigm. The success is largely due to the adherence of the programs to empirically-based research citing the most effective practices for educating bilingual learners (BLs), students *inappropriately* referred to as LEP or ELL. This paper discusses the *critical attributes* inherent in dual language enrichment models, including sound pedagogical principles that have long been substantiated as *best practices* for all learners. As practitioners consider, plan and establish these programs, they soon find out that they exemplify what we all consider effective instructional classroom practices. We also discuss other fundamental tenets that all dual language enrichment programs adhere to culminating in a combination of structures that build and support one another as students learn content through two languages. In summary, both BLs and native English speakers in these programs are successful because these schools employ a combination of research-based pedagogical, linguistic and cognitive practices that best educate all types of learners.

## Critical Attributes of Dual Enrichment Programs

### **Long-Term Implementation**

Learning in one language is developmental and requires consistency in that same language as learners build on prior linguistic and cognitive structures. Learning in two

languages only adds to the existing process of learning in one language. Therefore, achieving biliteracy through dual language enrichment programs require a minimum of 6-7 years of implementation. The second language is exactly that, a second language that, similar to the first language develops in stages, but does not have the benefit of pre-school home development. The second language for most learners begins in school and therefore requires the same amount of time to develop as the first language. The goal of biliteracy for both language groups engaged in a dual language education is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade goal, assuming 6-7 years of dual instruction. The development of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) applies to each language and while students will reach CALP level in their first language first, due to it being their home language, reaching CALP in their second language will take a few more years. Moreover, as the learner acquires CALP in his first language, the faster and stronger the development of CALP will be in the second. It is recommended that dual language enrichment programs be implemented throughout the elementary years and if possible extend into middle school. This long-term commitment suggests a reexamination of yearly language and content-area assessments, recognizing that some content is being learned by some learners in a second language, and may require testing modifications consistent with second language learners.

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“Learning in one language is developmental and requires consistency in that same language as learners build on prior linguistic and cognitive structures.”

# Critical Attributes of Dual Language Enrichment Programs

## Administrative Commitment

A cursory review of the literature confirms that behind most successful dual language enrichment programs is strong leadership. As the bilingual education field moves toward an enrichment paradigm, so it must bring with it educational leadership that understands and supports this paradigm. A key element found in dual language enrichment programs is administrative commitment by all levels of leadership in the respective school and district. It is imperative that administrators in central office not only be apprised of the program, but be philosophically and pedagogically in line and fully aware of various program components. Another non-district, yet powerful body that must also be educated in this new paradigm is the public school board. These folks quite often are not well-versed in existing mainstream educational principles, much less in enrichment bilingual education practices. A successful dual language enrichment program does its homework and fully prepares its administration for complete buy-in that is based on clear understanding, and the role it will play in potentially adjusting district policy and/or monetarily supporting program development, implementation and sustainability.

## Sufficient use of Minority Language

Consistent with all dual language programs is the importance of ensuring that the minority language is used no less than 50% of the instructional day. Although DLE programs emphasize equal commitment to and

development of both languages, English continues to enjoy greater prestige and validation both within the school system and the general public. It is therefore imperative that the quality of the minority language be as strong and consistent as possible, with high cognitive demand as an attempt to compensate for the inequality of respect for the two languages. For all learners in DLE schools, it is not too uncommon to see lesser gains of full literacy in the minority language upon completion of the program. On the other hand, high levels of English literacy are quite consistent among most learners. This is the primary justification for ensuring that a minimum of 50% of the curriculum be delivered in the minority language. It also explains the evolution of 90/10 DLE models. The 90% minority language immersion in the early grades attempts to make up for the general inequities that exist within our society between the two languages of instruction. This critical attribute is extremely important for all learners but even more critical for *native English speakers* that typically have less opportunity to practice their second language (minority language) outside of the school environment. Traditionally, non-English speakers have greater opportunity to practice their second language (English) outside of school.

“Behind most successful dual language enrichment programs is strong leadership.”

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## Critical Attributes of Dual Language Enrichment Programs

### Establishing a School-wide Dual Language Environment

Dual language enrichment schools recognize that although there is equal commitment to both languages, the languages are not equal both in their local community and in the greater society. English has and continues to enjoy higher status and prestige than Spanish or other minority languages. Therefore, it is critical that schools recognize this and take action to create a greater balance of the two languages across the campus. The first action to achieve language equity is to ensure equal usage of both languages in the classroom both by the teacher and learners. Schools readily and easily do this by dividing the use of the two languages by time or by subject (see separation of languages). However, it takes careful thought to control for language equity beyond the instructional time periods. That is, controlling for equal use of the two languages used by adults and learners during non-instructional time periods such as morning activities, classroom routines, hallways, cafeteria, playground, restroom break, and end-of-day clean up. These non-instructional time periods are invaluable opportunities for learners (and adults) to learn key vocabulary that supports their bilingualism development and content-area learning. In addition to the instructional benefit, equal usage would also validate the two languages as having equal status which in turn motivates learners, teachers and parents. It is recommended that, as part of their deliberation, schools beginning a program should

install a mechanism to promote equal use of both languages on a school-wide basis.

### Learner-Centered Classrooms

One of the underlying principles of dual language enrichment programs is use of effective pedagogy that supports and promotes curricular understanding of first and second language learners. Dual language enrichment schools are constructivist schools in that they adhere to pedagogical practices where the learner is at the center of the instruction and constructs knowledge by thinking and doing. These classrooms are at the forefront of facilitating a learner's constructive development of a foundation of knowledge, skills, strategies, values and attitudes the learner will use as lifelong coping processes. A consistent characteristic of dual language enrichment schools is the use of learner-centered instruction. A classroom that is learner-centered focuses on the learner as an evolving human being with dynamic thinking and learning capacities to construct knowledge through experiences, learn about relationships among and within the central themes of various disciplines while also learning *how* to learn. These classrooms encourage discussion in which both the teachers' and the learners' opinions are shared and valued and integrates other disciplines, learners' interests, and technological resources so that learners consider the central themes of the subject matter from as many different cultural and intellectual viewpoints as possible.

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"Dual language enrichment schools recognize that although there is equal commitment to both languages, the languages are not equal both in their local community and greater society."

## Critical Attributes of Dual Language Enrichment Programs

Learner-centered teachers build a community of learners in which an atmosphere of trust and openness produces a stimulating exchange of ideas, mutual respect and support. The classroom encourages self-directed learning and engages learners in developmentally appropriate activities designed to engage interest in learning. It encourages various types of learners to shape their own learning through active engagement, manipulation, and examination of ideas and materials. As a result, learners work independently and cooperatively in a positive and stimulating learning climate fueled by self-discipline and motivation. Learners engaged in this environment take responsibility for their own learning, develop a sense of valuing learning, and begin to value themselves and other learners. In summary, learner-centered classrooms build a relationship between the curriculum and community cultures and are sensitive to all learners which encourage them to share and use their skills and talents. There is an appreciation for learners' cultural heritage, unique endowments, learning styles, interests, and needs and views differences as *opportunities for learning* and cross-cultural experiences as an integral part of the learner-centered classroom. It is an environment in which learners work cooperatively and purposefully using a variety of resources to understand themselves, their immediate community and the world in which they live.

### Challenging, Interactive and Authentic Classrooms

Learning and development are processes in learners that begin at birth. Long before they enter our schools, learners have engaged in learning, and they bring with them a wealth of knowledge. Any learning activity in school is related to a learner's history or prior knowledge. A learner's prior knowledge has generally been acquired in a nurturing, interactive environment -- the home. Learning and development are interrelated, as children grow and learn, they are challenged by additional knowledge leading to more knowledge, and so on. Learning, as described by Vygotsky (1978), is an internal developmental process that requires interaction with people and the environment, and collaboration with peers. In essence, school learning is a social act, a social function that follows the natural development and learning process of the home. Therefore, a DLE classroom is challenging, interactive and authentic (CIA).

#### Challenging

Too often we have heard the phrase "we must raise expectations." Although raising expectations is certainly synonymous to challenging learners, we must be careful to not simply raise expectations without modifying and optimizing the learning environment.

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"Long before they enter our schools, learners have engaged in learning, and they bring with them a wealth of knowledge."



## Critical Attributes of Dual Language Enrichment Programs

Along with high expectations come sound pedagogical practices for all learners. Too often we accept the *pobrecito* or poor child syndrome, or what is generally referred to in the literature as the *deficit theory*, acting on skills learners are lacking versus what they possess. When applied to a language deficit (English), this translates into lower expectations and limited access to higher-level knowledge and skills. This deficit mentality then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in learners; they begin to legitimize their condition. Many times a classroom that is passive, rather than interactive or authentic will perpetuate this deficit mentality because learners perform poorly due to participating in non-supportive, passive environments. This point is especially critical in dual language enrichment programs due to the pervasive remedial attitudes present prior to moving toward an enrichment paradigm. In some cases, it takes considerable time and concerted effort by dual language schools to challenge particularly BLs because of the many years of remediation.

### Interactive

Learning is a social process, and learners learn by thinking and doing. That is, they learn by being engaged in active thought-provoking tasks. Paulo Freire (1970) distinguishes between two types of learning methods: "banking education" and "libertarian education." Freire uses the analogy of banking in teacher-centered classrooms where students are regarded as passive learners and receptacles of inform-

tion, and teachers are regarded as the depositors of information, analogous to depositing money at a bank. In these classrooms, there is little or no interaction. Learners basically receive, memorize, and repeat information. In contrast, libertarian education occurs when there is a partnership between teachers and learners. Interaction among learners is often referred to as *cooperative learning*. Cooperative learning is a social function that enables learners to engage in discussions about content. Using this type of interaction facilitates the conceptual understanding of content and the development of language and builds strong relationships of trust and support. This is especially critical when learners are learning content in a second language or learning a second language. Learners benefit in several ways when they learn in groups. First, they are able to negotiate meaning through discussion. This means that they are able to assist one another in understanding the nuances of the first or second language and the concepts being addressed. Research indicates that we learn and retain 40% of what we discuss with others, and 80% of what we experience with others (application). Secondly, learners develop language through discussions about content. The more learners are provided opportunities to use content language, the more CALP language develops. Individual assessment of learners should take place once they have had the opportunity to discuss, negotiate conceptual meaning and apply what they have learned.

"Learning is a social process, and learners learn by thinking and doing. That is, they learn by being engaged in active thought-provoking tasks."

## Critical Attributes of Dual Language Enrichment Programs

### Authentic

From both linguistic and cognitive points of view, creating authentic learning environments greatly benefit learners. Cognitively, learners make sense of and are able to relate to new knowledge if it is deemed meaningful to them. For instance, selecting an authentic story that relates to their cultural or community experience will promote greater comprehension and increase motivation to engage in the activity. Similarly, extending knowledge or understanding concepts is supported when children are able to create on their own rather than use ready-made materials. In other words, children must be given ample opportunities to create original products such as the alphabet, the selection and drawing of pictures that represent the letters, the writing of class rules, or drawings of their own clocks as they learn to tell time. In summary, dual language classrooms are classrooms that engage learners in challenging, meaningful and culturally relevant curricula with ample opportunities for interaction with other learners and the teacher.

### **Separation of Languages and Concurrent Translation**

One important attribute of DLE programs is that first and second languages are developed through content and the two languages must be kept separate during instruction. Although content is learned through the use of the two languages, specific concepts learned in one language are not repeated in the other language. In addition,

although there are variations among selected languages for specific content-area learning, periods of instruction remain pure to the selected language, while making instruction comprehensible. Concurrent translation, although a common practice in transitional bilingual education, is prohibited in DLE programs. However, it is important that content and concepts being learned in a student's second language be well understood so that the students do not fall behind in the respective content-area yet are linguistically and academically challenged to develop the second language. Teachers must consistently use sheltered instructional approaches to ensure comprehension of concepts being learned without concurrent translation. The inherent problem with concurrent translation is that understandably, the learner will wait for the explanation or clarification in his or her first language and will potentially not fully grasp the targeted second language vocabulary of the respective lesson. In other words, translation ensures the understanding of the concept but hinders the academic development of the second language. In essence, DLE teachers are second language teachers at all times because they are either using English as a Second Language (ESL), or Spanish as a Second Language (SSL) instructional strategies to successfully teach content to their second language learners in the classroom.



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# Scenes from TABE's Annual Conference in Arlington, Texas, October 2008





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