Session XI

Biliteracy of Esperanza (Hope):
Breaking the Cycle of Monolingualism in Public Schools
Grades PK-12

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Biliteracy of Esperanza [Hope]:
Breaking the cycle of monolingualism in public schools

12th Annual Academic Success Institute San Jose, CA
March 8, 2014

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Migrant Students and their families

- Currently, there are close to 125,000 migrant students in California eligible for services.
- More than 90% of these students have English as their second language.
- Migrant students use their first language, e.g., Mixteco, Hmong, Triqui, Punjabi, Zapotec, Spanish in daily basis.

Migrant Students are already bilingual. The next step is to build the bridge between bilingualism and biliteracy.

Breaking the Cycle of Monolingualism

- There is a contradiction in the idea of looking for global education for migrant students and at the same time asking them to become monolingual.
- Global education includes different worldviews, which implies different languages and diverse cultures.
- Biliteracy enhances educational processes with the humanity all committed participants bring when participating in projects that attempt to transform and change our society.
Closing the Achievement Gap

- To close the linguistic gap between migrant parents speaking Spanish and their children entering an English-only educational system calls for a pedagogical switch.

- If the language and culture of migrant parents previously developed at home are added to the language and culture reinforced in schools, migrant families would be able to benefit from their literacy knowledge and cultural heritage (Lee, 2003; González, 2006).

- The idea is to show migrant parents that their linguistic knowledge is an asset for their children’s biliterate education (Bernhard, 2010).

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Early Biliteracy

- Young migrant children, aged two to six years old – like almost all the children in this age range – have parents and relatives as the primary references when constructing linguistic skills.

- Kozol, Osborne & García (2003) in their analysis of research on migrant students, indicate that these students’ academic success is facilitated when “teachers accept students as they are, with the language they speak at home and the value systems they live within” (p. 579).
Schools and Teachers need to

• Understand as well as to embrace the reality students and parents experience in their communities.

• Design programs that promote biliteracy as the nexus between languages

• Create educational initiatives that promote the coexistence of languages.

Reading Cooperatives

• After school Program

• 100 first-grade students and their parents

• Bilingual books help teachers to develop cultural biliteracy in the classroom that values and embraces the bilingualism experienced by students in their daily life experiences (Medina, 2010)

• Parent Involvement: “Now people realize that schools will not work well without community involvement and support” (Dutcher, 2004, p. 31)

• Mini grant awarded by the NEA Foundation

Creating Biliteracy by Reading

• Picture-walk (4 pages)- 20 minutes

• Dialogic Reading (4 pages)- 20 minutes

• Sharing ideas with the whole group- 20 minutes

• Presenting homework- 10 minutes
Building Biliteracy from the I to the Community

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<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Book’s Theme</th>
<th>Emerging Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hairs/Pelitos</td>
<td>Who are we?</td>
<td>Parent’s reading skills helping students</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>reading in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Upside Down Boy</td>
<td>Spanish-speaking students struggling</td>
<td>Family support to be successful in school</td>
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<td>Loser Raymundo y los</td>
<td>Children showing feelings</td>
<td>Biliteracy across content areas</td>
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<td>cañados</td>
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<td>Grandma Finá and Her</td>
<td>We are a community</td>
<td>Respect inside and outside school</td>
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<td>wonderful umbrellas</td>
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<td>Little Gold Star/Estrella de</td>
<td>Universal Stories</td>
<td>Plots in similar stories are the same</td>
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<td>oro</td>
<td>regardless of the language</td>
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<td>Magic Dogs and the</td>
<td>Tales across the world</td>
<td>Science is bilingual</td>
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<td>Volcanoes/Los perros mágicos de los volcanes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Platero y Yo</td>
<td>Our challenges in life</td>
<td>Biliteracy and state exams</td>
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Biliterate Outcomes

- Leer en dos lenguas ha ayudado a mi hija y me ha ayudado a mí. Yo he aprendido a valorar mi lengua y mi hija ha visto que aunque mi inglés es muy poquito, mi español me puede servir para que ella aprenda (Reading in two languages has helped my daughter and it has helped me. I learned to value my language, and my daughter has learned that though my skills in English are not too strong, my Spanish could help her when she is learning).

- En este proyecto yo he podido ayudar a mi hijo a saber como encontrar el significado de palabras desconocidas, a encontrar sinónimos para la comprensión, a reflexionar para adquirir más comprensión. Mi español le ayuda a ella a aprender inglés (In this project I had the opportunity to help my son to find the meaning of unknown words, to find synonyms for comprehension purposes, and to reflect while reading, which helped him on his comprehension. My Spanish helped him to learn English)

Biliterate Outcomes

Students CELDT Scores First Grade and Second Grade

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>First Grade</th>
<th>Second Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early advanced</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Intermediate</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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Lessons Learned

• “When teachers do not permit or support diverse ways of communicating, the class can be a hostile place. Too many Latino college students have shared with me that in school, they were punished for speaking Spanish. . . . Over time, some stopped participating in class; they withheld their voices.” (Ochoa, 2007, p. 4).

• Reading cooperatives opened the doors for an environment where languages fully interact.

• Reading and analyzing bilingual books showed parents, teachers, and students that the skills they use when they speak, read, and/or write in their first language are useful when learning a second language.

• Parents become “more cross-culturally aware” and expand their abilities to “communicate with others” (Grabe, 2008, p. 6). Thus they constructed an educational environment where linguistic diversity is defined as the desire to learn with other languages and to learn from all the languages and cultures existent in the school and in the community.

Teachers

Education today needs, more than ever, biliteracy projects that will convert dreams into a story of success. Thus, teachers need the support and freedom to design projects that extend learning outside the school gates. Educating a bilingual, global student should be a communal effort of all the participants of the learning process.

Gracias

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Thank you
Suggested Readings


