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The New York State Association for Bilingual Education

NYSABE News

Winter Issue

January-March 2011



A Message from the President, María de los Angeles Barreto

Dear Members and Friends,

It is indeed with great honor that I address you in the second issue of the 2010-2011 NYSABE Newsletter to inform you about the gradual accomplishment of the goals established for the present term. The activities, included in NYSABE's 2010-2011 Strategic Action Plan, are framed within the following objectives: advocacy, professional development, dissemination of information and communication, leadership, and networking.

We have continued to strengthen our spirit of collaboration and mutual support by maintaining communication and joining forces with professional organizations and educational entities that promote the academic achievement of ELLs/bilingual learners:

- New York State Teachers of English to Speakers of Other languages (NYS TESOL)
- New York State United Teachers (NYSUT)
- New York State Council of Education Associations

(NYSCEA)

- Association of Dominican -American Supervisors and Administrators (ADASA)
- NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies
- Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers (BETAC)
- Bilingual/ESL Teachers Leadership Academy (BETLA)
- NYSED's Office of Special Education Bilingual and Technical Assistance Centers
- NY City Department of Education Division of Students with Disabilities and ELLs
- NYS school districts
- Higher Education Consortium (HEC).

We have also continued our ongoing work with elected officials whose support is essential in safeguarding the educational rights of NYS ELLs/bilingual learners. In this regard, NYSABE is pleased to announce the upcoming Spring Legislative Day where NYSABE's representatives will meet with elected officials in Albany to discuss the education of bilingual students.

In the areas of professional development, networking, and leadership, NYSABE delegates have conducted regional professional development activities and social events which have enhanced

our lines of communication and addressed the specific needs of members within educational and community-based organizations in each region. Parallel to these activities, NYSABE has continued to disseminate current information via electronic mail, E-blasts, the NYSABE Newsletters, the Journal of Multilingual Education Research (JMER), presentations, and participation at conferences and meetings.

One of the main activities of this term has been the coordination of our 34th Annual Conference, *Fostering Cognition through Bilingual Education in the 21st Century*. This year's theme emphasizes a renewed, broader vision for Bilingual Education. At the conference, current research on cognition as the foundation for effective educational practices and academic achievement among emergent bilingual learners will be highlighted. Enrichment opportunities for all students in New York State to become proficient, literate, and academically successful in more

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than one language will also be presented. In addition, the conference will encourage all members of the educational community to broaden their knowledge and skills in order to prepare bilingual learners to become global, lifelong learners, capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st century. I would like to thank María Angélica Meyer, First Vice President and Region I Delegate, who graciously agreed to be the chairperson

of this conference. Special thanks and congratulations to all chairpersons and members of the conference planning subcommittees who have joined hands to make our conference one that is sure to be a memorable professional experience.

I express my gratitude to the executive board, delegate assembly, and executive director for their dedication, excellent work, and commitment to the accomplishment

of NYSABE's goals. I also thank NYSABE's members and friends for embracing NYSABE's mission, offering their unfailing support, and assuming a key role in the implementation of activities and the accomplishment of objectives. Together we can ensure that NYSABE continues its work on behalf of all bilingual learners, their families, and communities.

Maria de los Angeles Barreto
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**From the Desk
of the Executive
Director,
Nancy Villarreal
de Adler**

In these times of educational reform, national core standards, curricula and assessments, and the development of a pathway to college and career, conversations among bilingual practitioners will inevitably turn to one key concept: Equitable ACCESS to education for all.

Important and often neglected federal, state, and local policies have been in effect to protect the educational rights of ELLs/bilingual learners. Their goal has been to ensure that these students have authentic ACCESS to a meaningful, quality, equitable education that will lead them

toward academic advancement, life-long learning, and success.

The key questions nowadays seem to focus on the "how": How will the educational community make sure that ELLs/bilingual learners have opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for academic achievement?

NYSABE, as an organization that advocates for the advancement of all students through multilingual education, urges educators, parents, legislators, members of community and professional organizations, to revisit the laws and regulations that have

sought to eliminate the barriers that prevent our students from real access to meaningful education. It is imperative that we engage in collegial discussions centering on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964, Lau vs. Nichols, 1974, the Aspira Consent Decree, and the Jose P. Stipulations, among other educational landmarks.

We believe that a review of historical documents, in light of the present educational climate, will be a beneficial starting point to answer the question of how we can promote our students' effective participation in the educational system.



**From the Desk of
the Editor,
Tamara Alsace, PhD
Director of Multilingual
Education,
Buffalo Public Schools**

The articles presented in this issue of the NYSABE newsletter are a perfect segue into the theme of this year's upcoming annual NYSABE Conference "Fostering Cognition through Bilingual Education in the 21st Century". With the conference almost upon us, it is essential that we be reminded of the diversity among the group of students we call "ELL" or "emergent bilingual." Dr. Tatyana Klein challenges us to think "beyond the borders" of the traditional conceptualization of bilingualism and second language learning.

Dr. Bernice Moro focuses on a Response to Intervention, or RTI, a model for determining the supports needed for ELLs/emergent bilinguals and all student who are struggling in school. It emphasizes a tiered approach to intervention and support with the goal of improving achievement and avoiding unnecessary referrals to special education. While our students are often overrepresented in special education, they tend to be underrepresented in programs for the gifted and talented. My own commentary calls for

greater recognition of the gifts and talents our students have to offer.

Also highlighted in this issue are NYSABE events celebrating Hindi, Indian, and Bengali cultures.

In summary, our ELL/emergent bilinguals are unique in their languages, cultures, cognitive abilities, interests— and in just about every way possible. When confronted with generalizations that lump our students into one homogeneous group, we should remember to ask, "Which ELLs?"

Who is responsible for the education of emergent bilingual students? In the past, the answer would have been that this is the work of bilingual and ESL teachers. However, this outdated traditional approach is no longer sufficient. Educators must start thinking and acting outside of these labels, which result in the creation of artificial borders among students, teachers and programs alike. In this article I argue that every educator must take on the challenge of supporting and developing the academic and linguistic proficiencies of their diverse students. This will not be an easy task, but it is nevertheless an important and worthy goal as we move into the 21st century.

Naming the Borders

There are numerous borders within educational spheres that have dictated which students, teachers and programs include or withhold additional languages in instruction. One such border is that of the "English Language Learner." The ELL label has been paramount in determining if students will have the opportunity to receive instruction in their home language. However, the spectrum of students who are emergent bilinguals is much broader than those whom schools label as ELLs. There are students who grow up in homes where a language other than English is spoken, but their level of English does not warrant classes with language learning support. There are those who have tested out of bilingual or ESL services via the NYSESLAT and are then placed in general education settings. There are also students who are labeled as ELLs, but speak an indigenous lan-

guage such as Mixtec, Zapotec or Garífuna, yet are only viewed as Spanish speaking emergent bilinguals. When taking a broad approach to identifying (emergent) bilingual students in NYC schools, the percentage soars from the 14% who are designated as ELLs to well over 40% who are emergent bilinguals due to the circumstances that go beyond labels imposed by tests (NYC DOE, 2009).

Another border that stands in the way of bilingualism in education is the label placed on educators, and subsequently the programs in which they teach. It is primarily bilingual and ESL teachers who are prepared with in-depth understandings about theories of language acquisition, the inclusion of multiple languages in instruction and the specific academic and social needs of emergent bilingual students. As a result, the responsibility for the education of these students has been placed squarely on their shoulders, in spite of the reality that emergent bilinguals regularly come into contact with a range of teachers who specialize in age ranges and content areas. This is especially true when we consider students in ESL programs, who spend the majority of their school day with general educators who have not been adequately prepared to work with them. The labels imposed on educators create divisions between bilingual/ESL teachers and general education teachers and their programs, who are either viewed, often incorrectly, as bilingual or "monolingual." The reality is that emergent bilinguals are in every type of classroom with all teachers, including many who have not been la-

beled as ELLs. As such, the students regularly cross the borders, yet the instructional systems we have in place do not.

A New Approach

The bilingual versus monolingual dichotomy, which demarcates a clear border within many U.S. schools, hurts the education of all our students. In order to move towards bilingualism in education for all, we must look beyond the bilingual models of the past, to reconceptualize bilingualism across the borders. The intent here is not necessarily to discard labels, which can be useful, but rather, to push on their rigidity and the creation of false borders and divisions that create "either/or" frameworks of education. Ofelia García has offered a new framework from which to envision a way for all educators to create spaces for bilingualism in their classroom, within or outside of the "bilingual" designation. Dynamic bilingual education "considers all students as a whole, acknowledges their bilingual continuum, sees their bilingualism as a resource, and promotes transcultural identities" (García, 2009, p. 119). The goal may not necessarily be to develop high levels of literacy in the language other than English, but to allow students to bring all aspects of their backgrounds to the classroom and to develop their bilingual practices in different ways and to different degrees. Dynamic models of bilingualism take a bottom-up approach that responds directly to the students' backgrounds, as opposed to a top-down focus based on the label of the class or the language of the teacher (García, Flores & Chu,

Bilingualism Beyond Borders: A Challenge to All Educators

by Dr. Tatyana
Kleyn

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"If bilingualism were to become a part of all students' education, then the acknowledgement, inclusion and development of multiple languages could become the norm in U.S. schools, as opposed to the exception."

forthcoming). Taking on this framework across different classrooms would help to turn around the language shift to English-only that generally occurs within three generations (if not sooner) of a family's arrival to the U.S. (Fishman, 1991) and help prepare our students for the realities and needs of a globalizing world.

Rationale for Inclusion

Currently, it is mainly students in bilingual programs, and sometimes those in ESL classes, who see the inclusion of their home language in the classroom. The remainder of emergent bilinguals find their home languages disregarded or worse yet, degraded, in schools and society. If bilingualism were to become a part of all students' education, then the acknowledgement, inclusion and development of multiple languages could become the norm in U.S. schools, as opposed to the exception.

The reasons for crossing borders and labels are multiple and grounded in research, and are not based on politics. First and foremost, bilingualism in education builds on the strengths and backgrounds of students, a foundation needed for all aspects of learning. For students still learning English, the inclusion of their home language supports content learning. For those who have begun to lose their home language, this type of education will allow them to develop their academic language. For all emergent bilinguals, the development of self-concept and a transcultural identity is connected to the education they receive, and specifically the way their backgrounds are a part of their schooling experi-

ences (Gay, 2010). These are just some of the benefits to students, in addition to the positive cognitive, cross-cultural, social, and economic outcomes of bilingualism (García, 2009, chapter 5). Beyond supporting students, this type of education will provide our nation and the world with individuals who can communicate across cultures, languages and borders.

Bringing Bilingualism into All Classrooms

There are numerous ways to include multiple languages in any classroom. First, it's important to explicitly show students the value of knowing two or more languages. Since students (like all of us) are bombarded with tacit messages that English, or more specifically, English-only is the way to be "American," they have to first understand that other languages and their cultures are beneficial to their development. One secondary emergent bilingual student said the following about the importance of Spanish, "I don't really know if [Spanish] is important because, like, nobody has told me. Like, I live in the United States and for me it's just that the important language over here is English" (Menken et al, 2010, p. 46).

The following strategies for the elementary and secondary levels respectively provide avenues for asking students to explore the benefits of being bilingual:

At the elementary level, have students interview bilingual individuals in the school and community. Ask them how

being bilingual is helpful for them. Categorize the reasons and then have students create bilingual brochures that list and describe the various advantages of being a bilingual individual. These can be circulated throughout the school, families and even the community! This project will allow students to become researchers and advocates for multilingualism.

Have students at the secondary level investigate job ads. Analyze the types of jobs that require bilingualism and cross-cultural knowledge as well as why these linguistic and cultural skills are in demand. Discuss the connection to bilingual programs and future success. (Reyes & Kleyn, 2010, p. 150)

When students come to see bilingualism as a strength rather than a deficit, there will be greater opportunities to make classrooms multilingual. Teachers can have students create identity texts where they work in partnerships to write bilingually about their experiences coming to a new land (Cummins, 2006). The pairing of students does not necessitate that all students be biliterate, but allows them to use their linguistic strengths to co-create a text that positions them as experts. With many classrooms encompassing languages and cultures that span the globe, teachers can invite families to share their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, thereby exposing students to different aspects of a language such as its alphabet, history, intonation patterns and directionality of reading and writing. "Language awareness does not mean learning a multiplicity of languages, but coming into contact with the way language works and the function

of languages in society" (Hélot & Young, 2006, p. 79).

Teachers can also create assignments in which students' home languages and cultures are central to the content and to the development of their bilingual practices. The following is one such example from a small high school in NYC:

In science class, students produced profiles of biomes and food webs in their native countries and then translated these profiles into their home languages. Students then took an oral exam on this translation where the instructor points at a part of their home language profile and the students explain, in English, the content of that section. In this case, students needed to learn the specialized technical vocabulary in their own home languages, while engaging in a genre of academic writing. (García et al, 2011, p. 14)

In addition to specific lessons, there are everyday elements that can be incorporated into all classrooms. To support content learning and academic language, a "cognate word wall" could be developed for students to be on the lookout for regular and false cognates. Spanish and English lend easily to cross-linguistic comparisons. For instance, in math, students could identify perpendicular/perpendicular and equation/ecuación as cognates and *restar* vs. *restart* and *resto* vs. *rest* as false cognates (Calderón, 2007). Making resources in students' home languages available in the classroom is a way to validate their languages and to support biliteracy and content learning. Students could occasionally be paired by common languages and given opportunities to discuss direc-

tions and/or concepts in their language and then produce the required work in English, as one way of moving easily among their languages, or translanguaging in the classroom (García, 2009).

Breaking Down Borders

Moving beyond these borders is not just about the inclusion of different strategies and resources in our classrooms. It is a far more challenging task before us, which is to change our monolingual mindsets. This requires discussions about what we want for our students, often in spite of the direction in which our society pushes us. Building bilingualism into teaching and learning is about looking critically at how we as a society view diversity, race, ethnicity and languages. It is about moving past the fear of difference and towards the affirmation of diversity (Nieto & Bode, 2008). To shift our frameworks will require change on a variety of levels. Schools of education that prepare teachers must go beyond their departments and divisions to ensure that prospective teachers understand how to bring bilingualism into their classrooms, whether they speak the languages of their children or not (García & Kleyn, forthcoming). K-12 schools must create spaces for general education teachers to collaborate with bilingual and ESL teachers, who must become leaders in working with other teachers, and even administrators, to think through ways to bring bilingualism into all classrooms. Although there are borders that occur naturally, many are erected by people and

often lead to conflict and divisions. We are in a position to start chipping away at the borders of bilingualism in schools and working towards an inclusive and equitable education for our students. This is a call to teachers, administrators, and teacher educators to think beyond borders and bring out the bilingualism in our students. Ofelia García reminds us that, "Bilingualism in education must be at the center of all

education programs for language minority students (and language majority students).

We cannot lose sight of the benefits of using the home language in any child's education, and we cannot ignore the benefits that will accrue to anyone in the 21st century who has bilingual and plurilingual abilities" (García, 2010, p. 4). Time and effort will tell if we can make bilingualism borderless in U.S. schools

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RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI): Is Response to Intervention the Great Promise that Struggling ELL Students Need?

by Dr. Bernice Moro

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The NYC ELL Demographic Landscape

Changes in the demography of the United States have made diverse learners a significant part of our schools today. English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing population, and responding to their educational needs has become one of the greatest challenges faced by educators today. Currently, it is estimated that ELLs comprise 5.5 million of the national student population or 10% of the total public school enrollment in the nation, and are projected to grow to one in four K-12 students by 2025. In New York City, with a public school student population of over 1 million students, this challenge is significant. Over 14% of the public school population has been identified as English language learners. Over 56% were born in the United States, and over 13% are long term ELLs, and 10% have interrupted formal education (SIFE). Twenty two percent (22%) of ELLs in NYC public schools have been identified as having a disability and have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) (NYC Department of Education, 2009).

ELLs Overrepresentation in Special Education

The issue of the overrepresentation of minority students and students from diverse linguistic backgrounds in special education programs has been cited in the literature for over 30 years. The literature has identified four challenges facing educators that contribute to the

disproportionate identification of learning disabilities (predominantly among ELLs) as follows: (a) professionals' knowledge of second language development or disabilities, (b) instructional practices, (c) intervention strategies, and (d) assessment tools (Sanchez, Parker, Akbayin, and McTigue., 2010). A promising initiative with the potential to transform the way instructional services are provided to ELLs with academic and/or behavior concerns is an approach called Response to Intervention (RTI).

Response to Intervention (RTI) Process

Response to Intervention (RTI), although derived from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, is a general education rather than a special education initiative. It is an approach that builds on best practices and provides a framework for improving student academic and social achievement (National Education Association, 2010). Although the use of RTI with ELLs has not been examined widely, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that it can lead to improved academic outcomes for this population of students (Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins, and Scarcella, 2007). The RTI process uses a multi-tiered approach that addresses the academic needs of all students by using evidence-based instructional practice, progress monitoring, and data-informed in-

structional problem solving (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). A tiered model provides three or more levels of instructional interventions based on gaps found in student skills. Each tier is a level in the RTI process that includes interventions and supports for a specified group of students who are struggling academically. As a tiered process it ensures that all students receive high-quality instruction, universal screening, and targeted interventions at increasing levels of intensity, significantly decreasing the number of inappropriate referrals to special education (Stuart & Rinaldi, 2009; Vaughn & Ortiz, 2009). For ELLs the first tier is the essential step in this process as they receive core instruction in their general education classroom. Providing high-quality instruction and embedding the development of language in the curriculum during this initial stage can promote greater academic success for ELLs. A crucial component of the RTI process is ensuring that 80% of students achieve academic performance benchmarks within the core instructional program. If less than 80% of students are achieving in the core program, the effectiveness of the program needs to be evaluated. For students whose English proficiency is limited, this requirement is critical in ensuring that they first receive high-quality, research-based curricula and instructional strategies

that support their academic achievement, which should include, when possible, instruction and/or support in their native language.

Access to Quality Core Instruction

The first consideration in the RTI process for a struggling ELL student who is not progressing academically is to examine the quality of the core instruction the student is getting in the general education classroom. ELLs should receive "sufficient exposure to high-quality, appropriate teaching that includes academic English instruction in an environment that is supportive of their language development" (Echevarria Hasbrouck, and Hasbrouck, 2009) including native language support whenever possible; thereby, narrowing the achievement gap as greater academic success is attained.

When the core program is successfully implemented and is working for 80% of the students, teachers and support staff are able to provide a range of targeted, evidence-based interventions with increasing intensity, in addition to the core instruction, for those 20% who lag behind. Generally, Tier 2 supplemental interventions are provided either in a small-group, with a push-in model in the general classroom, or as a pull-out model of supplemental services. In Tier 3 more intensive interventions are delivered one-to-one, inside or outside of the general education classroom,

including in some cases the provision of special education services, as well as core instruction.

An early screening process that uses the native language and/or English and demonstrates high validity and reliability with ELLs can be used to identify those students who are not progressing during core instruction. Providing support through research-based interventions, conducting diagnostic assessments that target specific skills, and frequently monitoring of students' progress can benefit students and yield greater academic success. These targeted services are usually provided using a problem-solving approach where decisions about instructional approaches and programs are made individually for a student by an RTI school-based multidisciplinary team that represents all stakeholders and includes specialists such as a bilingual teacher or speech pathologist.

As previously noted, one of the major challenges for educators is their knowledge of second language development and disabilities, making the professional development of all school staff a fundamental component in the successful implementation of RTI. This is essential in the areas of oral language development, early literacy, students' home language, contextual considerations, and the cultural background of the students. According to Vaughn and Ortiz (2009), the better informed school

personnel are about the knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality instruction for ELLs, the better prepared they will be to make and design instructional supports that can target the specific needs of those ELLs who are struggling academically.

NYSED Requirement: Implementation of RTI Process

Effective July 1, 2012, all school districts in the State of New York will need to use the RTI process to determine if a student in grades K-4 has a learning disability in the area of reading. No longer will a discrepancy formula to determine eligibility, commonly known as a "wait to fail model", be used. (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, and Young. 2003; Mellard, 2004). Currently, through the use of the discrepancy formula students generally go through a pre-referral, formal referral and assessment process prior to obtaining assistance in special education programs. Frequently, these students fall so far behind that they are unable to "catch-up" even with individualized support (Esparza Brown & Doolittle, 2008).

Conclusion: Is RTI the Great Promise that Struggling ELL Students Need?

Educators who have successfully implemented RTI find that through early screening and targeted interventions the needs of all students can be successfully addressed. "The focus changes from defining student deficiencies to determining how to make the

"For ELLs, the RTI process holds great promise if implemented with fidelity...potentially reducing their disproportionate representation in special education programs "

whole system as effective as possible." (National Education Association, 2010) For ELLs, the RTI process holds great promise if implemented with fidelity. By shifting the focus from the language deficiencies of the student in English to supporting their instructional needs, RTI will assist edu-

cators in making decisions and providing early intervention strategies and programs that can address the unique linguistic and cultural needs of this population, potentially reducing their disproportionate representation in special education programs.

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The ELL Bonanza

by Dr. Tamara O. Alsace
Director of Multilingual Education
Buffalo Public Schools

A recent article in Education Week bemoans the fact that U.S. students lag far behind their counterparts in other countries in their knowledge of geography, current affairs and languages other than English (Levine & Wojcicki). The authors voice their concern that, "America's leadership position in the world depends on preparing students to be savvy citizens with the specific competencies needed to compete and cooperate in a global age (p. 25)." They propose that we "propel U.S. schools out of their time warp while taking advantage of young people's natural interests in other nations' people, culture, music, and technology", and suggest that at least 100,000 teachers be trained in international subjects and foreign languages. The teachers would then be able to teach native-born U.S. students about other languages and cultures. While what these authors propose makes a great deal of sense, I suggest that in addition, we take advantage of the resources we have sitting right in our classrooms – our English language learners.

Too often, when we hear a reference to ELLs in the media and in education literature, there is an emphasis on what the students are lacking rather than on the treasures

that they hold; their native language and culture. For many students, English is actually their third or fourth language and the term for the special class they attend, "English as a second language", is actually a misnomer. Instead of referring to the ELLs as "at risk", or "limited in English", and to their education as a "challenge", "issue", or "dilemma", why not emphasize what they know? Whether they have had an equivalent formal education or not, ELLs have at least one language upon which another language, in this case English, can be built. Many bring a wealth of knowledge about the history, culture, and current affairs of their own and other countries. These "natural resources" can contribute to the global consciousness of their schools and communities in ways that are yet untapped.

Interestingly, the topic of "RTI (Response to Intervention) for ELLs has taken off in recent years, with a growing body of research and interventions emerging to reduce the historical overrepresentation of ELLs in special education. In fact, New York State has been cited as leading the way in RTI for ELLs, but the same cannot be said for the subject of ELLs and giftedness. Although recently we have seen more frequent references in the literature to ELLs as "emergent bilinguals," possibly indicating the beginning of a shift, as educators of and advocates for emergent bilinguals, we

must do more to ensure that a paradigm shift occurs. What if instead of emphasizing deficits we were to refer to the influx of language learners as the **"ELL bonanza" – a source of great riches and success?**

At a time when U.S. influence, wealth, and power have diminished and we are competing with nations like India and China for our place in the global market, might we not recognize and value a growing national treasure – the potential our newest citizens bring?

Giftedness Defined

We know that in addition to a widening achievement gap between underrepresented groups (Black, Latino, poor, ELL) and their majority peers, a gap also exists in access to gifted and advanced level courses and curricula. Typically, a lack of alternative identification procedures and linguistically and culturally relevant curricula has been blamed for this gap. Like other gifted learners, emergent bilinguals may manifest some of the following characteristics:

- Highly curious
- Unusual ways to solve problems
- Independent and self-sufficient
- Highly verbal
- Understanding the importance of family/culture
- Preference for older playmates
- Engaging in abstract reasoning

- Absorbed in self-selected tasks
- Demonstrating social maturity at home and community

(Pereira, 2008)

Or qualities more specific to ELLs:

- Eagerly shares his/her culture
- Has a strong sense of pride in his/her cultural and ethnic background
- Shows strong desire to teach peers words from his/her native language
- Eagerly translates for peers and adults
- Balances appropriate behaviors expected of the native culture and new culture
- Possess advanced knowledge of idioms and native dialects with ability to translate and explain meanings in English
- Understands jokes and puns related to cultural differences
- Reads in native language two grades or more above his/her grade level
- Functions at language proficiency levels above that of non-gifted peers who are LEP
- Able to code-switch
- Possesses cross-cultural flexibility
- Have a sense of global community and an awareness of other cultures and languages
- Learns a second or third language at an accelerated pace
- Excels in math achievement

(Aguirre & Hernandez, 1999)

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"The University of South Florida recently received a Javits Fellowship for a four-year project, 'Recognizing Extraordinary Accomplishments of Children (REACH)', targeted towards identifying gifted ELLs and providing them with appropriate programs that will enhance their natural talents."

Gifted students are defined by the USDOE as those who, "have high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity or excel in specific academic skills" (U.S. Department of Education, 1993, p. 26). The University of South Florida recently received a Javits Fellowship for a four-year project, **"Recognizing Extraordinary Accomplishments of Children (REACH)"**, targeted towards identifying gifted ELLs and providing them with appropriate programs that will enhance their natural talents.

Cashing in on the Bonanza

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, in March of 2002, published a monograph entitled, "Developing the talents and abilities of linguistically gifted bilingual students: Guidelines for Developing Curriculum at the High School Level" (Angelelli, Enright, and Valdés). The authors remind us that the special linguistic talents of bilingual and emergent bilingual students too often go unrecognized, undeveloped, and unutilized. They cite the research of Treffinger and Renzulli (1986) on what are termed "gifted behaviors", such as metalinguistic awareness, paraphrasing, decision making, and good judgment.

Angelelli, et al., point out the complex nature of the skills required to act as an

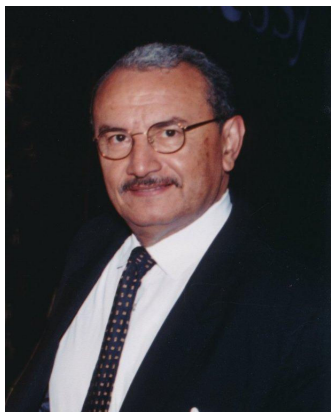
interpreter – something even our younger bilingual and emergent bilingual students are called upon to do regularly by family, friends, and even school personnel. Until now, these complex skills and abilities have not been recognized as indicators of giftedness. In fact, their home language is too often viewed as a deficit to be remedied. The monograph these authors present includes a detailed course of study in which we might engage our aspiring translators and interpreters. The state of Washington recently piloted such a program with great success.

Individual schools and school districts routinely struggle with how to provide cost-effective translating and interpreting services for their increasingly multilingual populace. Could they tap into a resource already within their own walls? Knowledge of more than one language and cross-cultural understanding have been identified as essential skills for the global economy. A translating and interpreting curriculum would be just one way of acknowledging and valuing the natural gifts our students hold, while better preparing them to meet the increasingly rigorous demands that the new common core standards and assessments will bring. It would make sense to foster what our emergent bilinguals already have – something that we would want all our students to have if they are to be well-

prepared for the global economy – a language other than English. States such as Iowa have given increased attention to recognizing and nurturing giftedness in not-yet-proficient English learners (witness its 2008 65-page manual for identifying gifted and talented English language learners). Other states have recognized the source of riches and success inherent in the language and culture the students bring. It's time for New York State to follow suit and to begin cashing in on the bonanza.

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In Memoriam
Ceferino
Narváez-Ortiz
1942-2011
NYSABE President
1982-1983

R é q u i e m æ t é r n a m :
 Réquiemæternam dona ei
 Dómine; et lux perpétua
 lúceat ei Requiéscat in pace.
 Amen.

"... until I met Cef, I never stopped to smell the roses... he forced me to slow down. Then, he improved my golf swing and my dancing, more with his enthusiasm than with anything specific. All who had any personal time with Cef are blessed."

Bern Cohen, NYSABE
 Past President
 1984-85

"We all lost a great warrior and friend."

Aurea Rodríguez, Ph.D.,
 NYSABE Past President
 1986-87

"I will always remember his smile, his energy, and his helpful presence."

Florence Pu-Folkes, Ph.D.,
 NYSABE Past President,
 2000-01

"Ceferino was a great leader and educator... an advocate of Bilingual Education, second to none. He was a mentor to me during my first years on the NYSABE Board... and we shared many laughs, as well."

David Báez, NYSABE
 Past President
 1991-92

"I will always remember that Ceferino was president when I attended one of my first NYSABE Conferences while in college. I was mesmerized by his intelligence, knowledge, style, and presence. It was folks like Ceferino and Sandra that hooked me into NYSABE, and I've been here ever since!"
 Tamara Alsace, Ph.D.,
 NYSABE Newsletter Editor

Ceferino Narváez-Ortiz was born in Salinas, Puerto Rico on the 29th of June, 1942 and, as a young child, he migrated with his parents to New York City where he completed his elementary and secondary education. He joined the armed forces and returned to his beloved city after honorably completing his tour of duty. Upon his return to civilian life, Ceferino became a member of the New York City Transit Police and after 15 years of service, he retired. Yearning for new challenges, he changed his professional path by combining his interest in pursuing a career in higher education with his passion for the education of Latino children. To achieve his goal, Ceferino enrolled in Suffolk County Community College where he completed an Associate Degree, followed by a Bachelor's degree from Dowling College, and a Master's degree in Education from Adel-

phi University. At Adelphi, he was a key player in the development of the bilingual and multicultural education programs. After establishing his reputation as a bilingual educator for social and educational change, he was elected President of NYSABE for the 1982-83 term. He worked in Albany with the Department of Correctional Services until he joined the Division of Academic Affairs of the Eugenio María de Hostos Community College. At Hostos, he was responsible for the use of satellite for teleconferencing and the early prototypes of distance learning. Later on, he became the Director of the Hostos Conference Center until his retirement.

Everyone who knew him knows that Ceferino projected a larger and more influential image than his curriculum vitae depiction. The scope of his life was much broader, as exemplified by the number of people he touched, the graciousness of who he was, and his gift for finding silver linings and overcoming challenges. Ceferino's life was the life of a great teacher, one who taught kindness, generosity, willingness to help, good humor, zest for life, friendship, and optimism. If we agree that the caliber of a man is determined by the extent to which he loved and was loved, we will then concur that he has modeled for all of us what a great man is. What a wonderful life he lived, and what a great legacy he has left us.

Ceferino is survived by his wife Sandra Ruiz (NYSABE President, 1983-84), five siblings, three children, and

"As long as we remember you as an outstanding leader in education and social reform, as well as an advocate for the rights of all students in your charge, gentle friend and life loving individual, the memory of you will always live in our hearts."

Maria Eugenia
 Valverde, Ph.D.,
 NYSABE
 Past President
 1990-91



Sushma Malhotra, program director, NYC DOE Startalk Hindi Program (left) honored Pat Lo, Director, Asian Languages BETAC (center) at Startalk event. Maria Barreto of NYS Association for Bilingual Education (right) joined them. (Photo by: Ashok Ojha)

Celebrating Hindi and Indian Culture

By Ashok Ojha

Dozens of young boys and girls, born and raised in the USA, enthusiastically demonstrated their knowledge of Hindi as they recited poems, sang songs and performed to the strains of popular music. The audience of mostly elderly Indian American professionals and educators looked reassured that their children were showing a deep interest in learning their language and practicing the Indian culture.

The function was organized at the Hindu Center in Flushing, Queens, to encourage Hindi learners to continue practicing what they learned at the Startalk Summer Hindi Program in July 2010. Startalk took place at Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical High School in Jamaica, New York. More than 50 high school students attended this intensive program conducted under pre-

scribed guidelines of both the NYC Department of Education and Startalk, a federally funded program aimed at improving the proficiency level of American students in a foreign language. Hindi is one of the seven languages covered under the program.

"Hindi is the lingua franca of the Indian community in the borough of Queens", said Sushma Malhotra, an assistant principal at the New York City Department of Education, who directed the program at Thomas Edison school. "We successfully organized Startalk programs twice in a row and achieved good results in terms of motivating the younger generation to learn and practice our language. We organized this event to create a positive environment for encouraging these young learners to continue practicing Hindi", she commented.

More than one hundred students have benefited from the Startalk Hindi programs held in 2009 and 2010 at Jamaica. The program ran for three weeks and included field trips to ethnic places of worship, markets and museums. Students learned about the geography, history and culture of their native country. They learned basic conversational skills and improved their reading and writing skills. They were paid a stipend of \$100 in the form of a gift card for attending the program.

"It was a great opportunity for them to remain connected with their native culture and traditions", said Pat Lo, Director of the Asian Languages BETAC. Lo extended administrative support to the Startalk program and served as a liaison between the department of education and the program.

María Barreto, of the NY State Association for Bilingual Education, was visibly impressed by the students' performance, and invited them to participate in activities organized by her association.

Dr. Vijay Mehta, a well known Hindi author and poet, complimented Startalk organizers for their hard work of teaching language. Dr. Rajni Goyal of the Goyal Family Foundation announced a modest scholarship for Hindi learners willing to pursue their studies. Satish Prakash, a principal in the

NYC Department of Education said that Startalk programs will help more students learn their language and practice their culture.

"The students learned about the Golden period of Indian history while exploring the culture and society of the Maurya and Gupta dynasties. The content based language learning program provided opportunities for students to be proud of India's history while maintaining their heritage language and learning Hindi as a second language", said Sarita Mehta, one of the six instructors who taught at the program.

Bengali Students Celebrate Victory Day

By
Md. Abdul Kalam Azad
NYSABE
Delegate-at-Large

On March 26, 1971, the people of Bangladesh declared independence from Pakistan. A war ensued for the next nine months and ended in the defeat of the occupying Pakistani army by the Bengali liberation army on December 16, 1971. The anniversary of the victory, called the Mukh Bahini, is celebrated each year by Bengali people worldwide.

Mukh Bahini, or Victory Day, is celebrated with a great deal of pride and fanfare. In Bangladesh, schools and government offices throughout the country remain closed and many cultural shows,

among other activities, are organized to celebrate the day. At Long Island City High School in western Queens, NYC, students celebrated by singing the national anthem of Bangladesh to celebrate Victory Day on December 16, 2010. The singing of the anthem was part of a cultural show that took place that day. It is noteworthy that Long Island City High School has introduced the only Bengali language program in the country and is the New York City hub for a Bengali Regents-like exam that allows students to receive LOTE Regents credits in Bengali.



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CITY COLLEGE IS 

Save the Date:

Fordham University School of Education, Office of Multilingual Education will offer a summer six-day learning opportunity entitled

Institute on Multilingualism in Schooling and Learning: Contemporary Perspectives

School practitioners and administrators as well as graduate students are invited to participate. The Institute will be offered on July 5, 7, 8, 12, 14, and 15, 2011, 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm at Fordham University-Lincoln Center Campus, New York, New York

Participants may take the Institute for 3 graduate credits or for no credits to receive professional development hours.

Invited Scholars include: Maria Brisk (Boston College); Angela Carrasquillo (Professor Emeritus at Fordham University); Rebecca Field (University of Pennsylvania); Tatyana Kleyn (City University of New York); Stephen Krashen (Professor Emeritus at the University of Southern California); and Pedro Noguera (New York University) among others.

For more information, please contact Dr. Aida A. Nevárez-La Torre at ome@fordham.edu

NYSABE wishes to thank all of our contributors and supporters for lending their expertise to this publication.

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New York State Association for Bilingual Education

NYSABE
48 Luther Jacobs Way
Spencerport, NY 14559

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Please duplicate and disseminate this application to your colleagues and others.

Please make check payable to
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48 Luther Jacobs Way
Spencerport, NY 14559

THE ORGANIZATION

NYSABE is a multilingual, multicultural association founded in 1975, which represents all language groups and educational sectors throughout the State.

NYSABE unites educators, parents, community and business leaders, elected officials, the media and policy makers in a common interest — excellence and equity for language minority students.

NYSABE encourages the establishment, maintenance, and expansion of quality programs in bilingual education.

NYSABE promotes bilingual education as a process by which students achieve success through instruction in their native language while learning English.

NYSABE supports the belief that language pluralism and bilingual competence in English and other languages benefit the nation and all its citizens.

NYSABE believes that bilingual education is a critical component of contemporary education in the United States.

NYSABE is affiliated with NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education), SCOL (New York State Council of Languages) and NYSCEA (New York State Council of Educational Associations).

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Join the NYSABE team. Through your membership dues and involvement, you have the opportunity to make integral contributions towards positive educational change for limited English proficient students. Membership benefits include:

NYSABE Journal • The yearly issue of this journal is a must for every library and member of the association. It publishes articles of professional and academic significance to bilingual education. Scholarly research, instructional methodology, techniques, and second language learning are the topics of articles by respected educators in the field of bilingualism.

NYSABE Newsletter • A quarterly issue bringing you updates on the activities of the association and its members; local, regional and state calendar of events; information on current legislative and policy developments related to the field of bilingual education.

Professional Development • NYSABE offers local and regional educational activities and the opportunity to network with other professionals in your field of interest.

Activism • The opportunity to work in Committees, Special Interest Groups, Language groups, and much more.

And the pride in belonging to the only association that protects the rights of the limited English proficient students participating in bilingual education.