

Making Connections

Language, Literacy, Learning

APS A publication of the Department of Language and Cultural Equity LCE

Taking Stock, Looking Ahead—a welcome back ...

... from Lynne Rosen, Director, Language and Cultural Equity

A new school year allows us to reflect upon our successes and continuing challenges. Last March, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) lifted monitoring of Albuquerque Public Schools in regards to providing equal educational opportunities for English language learners. Although OCR will no longer be monitoring the district's services for English language learners, APS has a continuing obligation to ensure equal educational opportunities for language minority students.



Vincent Werito talks with Lynne Rosen about LCE projects.

APS, through the Alternative Language Services (ALS) Quality Assurance Process, will continue to monitor ALS compliance at the school, cluster, and district level. Based on the 2004-180th day ALS Quality Assurance reports, APS has over 11,500 English language learners and 6,728 students who are former English

language learners in APS schools. District-wide, 92% of students requiring ESL services received them compared to just 82% the previous year. With the support of principals, teachers, and our tuition reimbursement program, we now have over 1,000 teachers who hold an ESL endorsement and 450 teachers who hold a bilingual endorsement. More than 600 teachers have benefitted from tuition reimbursement, helping schools to better meet the needs of minority and language minority students.

Continuing challenges still facing the district include the provision of Navajo language instruction and addressing issues of diversity. This year we were fortunate to add Vincent Werito to our Language and Cultural Equity team. He will work closely with the schools and Navajo language instructors to strengthen the quality of our Navajo language programs. I also want to welcome Jerry Gallegos, ALS Special Education and LAS Testing Coordinator, and Susan López, Resource Teacher, to our LCE team.

All schools in APS can expect technical assistance support in implementing quality Alternative Language Services, LAS testing, and multicultural education. Last year, our cadre of LAS Testing Specialists tested 15,823 students for English and / or Spanish proficiency. In an effort to communicate effectively with minority language

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speaking parents, our Translation & Interpretation Services Unit provided 2,636 interpretations and 822 translations of essential district documents. Last summer, 23 teachers provided ESL summer school to 225 students. Teachers and students appreciated the low PTR, focused instruction, and professional development to improve teaching and learning. As in the past, LCE and Data Services will generate and mail to each LEP student's family an individualized letter (in the appropriate language) describing the student's ALS placement, LAS scores, standardized testing information, and exit criteria.

LCE will continue to provide intensive customized support to eighteen partnership schools. Coordinators and resource teachers will team with school staffs to help improve student achievement, meet district standards, and enhance instruction and professional development to build school-wide capacity.

At the district level, LCE administrators and resource teachers will continue to work with district departments to better address the needs of minority and language minority students. Collaborative projects encompass district literacy initiatives, standards-based progress reports, differentiated instruction, Student Assistance Team support, appropriate referral of minority and language minority students for special education testing, appropriate services for bilingual or English Language learners in special education Programs, and district professional development for bilingual and ESL teachers.

LCE and Dual Language Education of New Mexico are teaming to support schools implementing dual language programs. Last year, LCE sponsored 14 schools at *La Siembra* and *El Enriquecer*, institutes which provide best practices in the design and implementation of dual language programs.

The start of a new year is energizing and exciting, with promises of success for all. Let's build on our accomplishments and continue to improve the quality of our ALS Models (English and Bilingual). Together we can make it happen!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES ENHANCING BILINGUAL/MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

These sessions, open to all teachers, are sponsored by Teaching and Learning Services in conjunction with Language and Cultural Equity. All offerings are at the Montgomery Complex, from 4:30 until 6:30. For more information, contact Amy Quintana, 880-8249, ext. 130.

RESEARCH-BASED BILINGUAL/MULTICULTURAL MODELS

October 21, Annex

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE ESL AND ELD CLASSROOM

Elementary: October 17 or 14 or
February 3 or 10, 2005
Secondary: October 21 or 28 or
February 17 or 24, 2005

UNDERSTANDING CLASSROOM ASSESSMENTS THAT SUPPORT ACADEMIC AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT FOR ESL AND ELD STUDENTS

September 23 or January 20, 2005, Annex

BILINGUAL EDUCATORS NETWORK

November 18, February 17, and
April 14, Annex

The Prueba Review and Preparation Sessions

Elia María Romero will conduct four sessions to review and prepare teachers who are taking the Prueba, Four skills Spanish Proficiency Test for Bilingual Certification. The following dates have been set for the sessions: Tuesday, September 28, 2004, Thursday, October 28, 2004, Tuesday, February 15, 2005, and Tuesday, April 26, 2005. All sessions will be held at the Montgomery Complex Annex from 8:00 AM until 3:30 PM. Please plan ahead for substitute coverage and call Frances Candelaria (881-9429 ext. 80075) to reserve a place for the session you wish to attend.

Promoviendo estrategias para la enseñanza de las ciencias en una clase bilingüe

por Elia María Romero

Ha comenzado un nuevo año escolar y a medida que transcurren los días vamos observando que en nuestra aula la mayoría de nuestros estudiantes habla el español como su primer idioma. Es probable que lo primero que se destaca son los bajos niveles de lectura y escritura en el primer idioma, los cuales traen como consecuencia bajos niveles de comprensión y aplicación de conceptos científicos, especialmente en las ciencias y las matemáticas.

Este escenario tan común en nuestras aulas bilingües del Kinder al 12º grado nos debe hacer reflexionar sobre cómo vamos a mejorar y activar el conocimiento científico en nuestros estudiantes.

Para esto es necesario:

- **Planear una serie de experimentos científicos para presentarse en secuencia lógica.** Estos deben ser estructurados claramente con actividades relevantes y significativas para aprender un concepto como parte integrante de un sistema de conceptos.
- **Organizar laboratorios o experimentos para descubrir conceptos activamente.** Los estudiantes deben ser activos participantes en cada práctica de laboratorio o experimento. Cada procedimiento debe estar orientado a descubrir un concepto y su aplicación a la vida real.
- **Promover interacciones entre los estudiantes para facilitar y apoyar la comprensión de conceptos.** En cada actividad científica o proyecto se debe asegurar que los estudiantes interactúen, discutan y dialoguen para comprender los conceptos y compartir el conocimiento científico adquirido.
- **Promover actividades instructivas que maximicen el uso y aplicación de vocabulario científico.** Es importante establecer un diálogo constante de carácter crítico para retar a los estudiantes a pensar y comunicar sus propias ideas, formular sus propias preguntas, utilizando cada palabra

aprendida en un contexto científico en cada experimento o proyecto.

- **Hacer preguntas que requieran una nueva aplicación de los conceptos aprendidos.** Las preguntas que se les hacen a los estudiantes deben promover nuevo conocimiento, nuevas respuestas, formular y generar nuevas preguntas y dar nuevas explicaciones a los fenómenos observados.
- **Realizar proyectos socio-ambientales para motivar a los estudiantes a dar solución a problemas de su entorno.** Muchas investigaciones demuestran que si los estudiantes se involucran en proyectos que resuelven problemas de su propia comunidad, el aprendizaje de los conceptos y vocabulario científico se eleva a un nivel mayor y por ende los niveles de lectoescritura.

Si nuestra clase bilingüe de ciencias promueve la participación y el aprendizaje activo, donde a cada estudiante se le escucha su voz, sus ideas, sus aportes para comprender los conceptos, evitaremos una clase donde el maestro es el sabelotodo y brindaremos una oportunidad para que los estudiantes contribuyan activamente a su propio aprendizaje. **Al final se puede lograr una satisfacción mutua para el estudiante que logra contribuir a su propio aprendizaje y el maestro que lo enseña a valorar el proceso educativo.**



Darla Apodaca, del primer grado de la Escuela Elementary Alamosa de la clase de la Sra. Sandoval descubriendo conceptos de una gráfica de la clase de ciencias.

Language Learning from Day One

by Kathy Waldman

Bich Lin holds tightly to her mother's hand as she enters her kindergarten classroom for the very first time. She has come for her school visit on the day before her first day of class. Neither Bich Lin nor her mother speak English, so a family friend has come along to interpret. The teacher has prepared a questionnaire to guide her interviews with new students and their families. She says "hello" in Vietnamese – she learned this one word to help the family feel welcome. Next, she asks the usual demographic questions (what languages are spoken at home, number of siblings, etc.) and then asks questions to elicit some cultural norms, including food likes and dislikes, how the child usually eats (fingers, chopsticks, spoon and fork etc.), how she asks to go to the bathroom, how she asks for help from an adult, and other questions which will help her respond to Bich Lin's needs in a way that is understandable and culturally appropriate. She also asks for an estimate of how many English words Bich Lin knows.

Bich Lin will be the only Vietnamese child in the classroom, but several children will be new to English. One bilingual Navajo child, three Spanish speakers, five bilingual Spanish-speaking children and a Farsi speaker will also be a part of this classroom. In addition, there are two African American students, five white students from various backgrounds, and two Hispanic students who speak only English. Since the school does not have a bilingual program, English will be the only language of instruction, but this teacher knows the value of representing each child's home language and culture in the classroom. Books in the class library reflect the diversity of the students, as well as kindergarten classics like "Brown Bear, Brown Bear."

During the first day of class, both Bich Lin and Noor, the Farsi speaker, turn to other children and speak in their home languages. At first they don't seem to notice that the other students don't understand them, but soon both girls look confused and stop talking. Jeremy, one of the African American students, tries to copy what Bich Lin is saying, and when she doesn't respond, he, too, looks confused. During play time, two of the Spanish speakers find each other and begin making up a puppet play. Several children sit down to play with Play-do, and

one of the bilingual Spanish speakers quickly begins to interpret for her new friends. In this rich, free-flowing language environment, the teacher hopes that all of her students can flourish.

How do children start to learn a second language? Researchers note a consistent developmental sequence for young children. In the book, "One Child, Two Languages," Patton O. Tabors identifies four stages of language acquisition in young children. First, there may be a period when children continue to use their home language in the second-language setting. When they discover that their home language doesn't work in this situation, they enter a nonverbal period, collecting information about the new language and perhaps experimenting with sounds. In the third stage, children begin to "go public," using words and phrases in the new language. Finally, they begin to develop productive use of the second language.

Even though Bich Lin stopped speaking Vietnamese in the classroom when she realized that she could not be understood, she did not stop communicating. She used her home language to sing to the "baby" in the housekeeping area, played by herself with a puppet, and talked happily with her family at home. At school, she would lead her teacher by the hand to what she needed and use facial expression to communicate, showing a growing comprehension of English well before she started to speak it. Bich Lin developed friendships with several of the children, who responded to her as they would to a younger child, playing hide and seek games, pretending to eat the plastic food she handed them, etc.

Before long, Bich Lin began to use short phrases in English, saying, "No, mine!" when someone tried to take a toy from her. She started playing with the sounds and short phrases of her new language. She liked to ask her friends, "What that?" and would make a game of naming objects in the classroom: "That book. That blocks. That pencil." Once she had developed a set of useful phrases, she began combining them to form connected thoughts: "I got baby." "I play blocks." "Help me tie shoe." Bich Lin was on her way to productive English.

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What are some of the things that Bich Lin's teacher did to make her classroom such a productive second language learning environment? First, she took time to gather information about the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all of her students so that she would be less likely to make incorrect assumptions about them and their families. She could guard against seeing them through her own cultural filter and help each child feel at home in her classroom.

This gave the teacher a good starting point to begin communicating verbally with her children. She tried to learn a few phrases in each student's first language, such as "sit down," "listen," and "good." Even these few phrases gave her students the message that she valued their languages and was open to trying to use new languages herself. She then started including Bich Lin and the other language learners in low demand situations, such as, "Let's show Bich Lin how to stack the blocks." She included her by using her name and directing speech to her that did not require a response. She would always respond to requesting expressions, saying things like, "Oh, Noor, you want to get a drink of water."

Frequently, the teacher would "double her messages" to the children, using pictures, gestures, actions, objects, or pointing to focus the students and clarify the message as she talked. For example, one morning Pilar came with a bag of vegetables to feed the class guinea pig. "What's in there?" she asked, pointing at the bag. When Pilar opened the bag for her to see, she exclaimed, "Oh, vegetables for the guinea pig!" and led her to the cage. The teacher named each vegetable as Pilar fed the guinea pig. She also used repetition to help her language learners get the message. "Oh, Noor, you traced your hand. Do you want to cut out your hand? It is your left hand. Do you want to put the hand on the board?" Talking about the here-and-now narrows the range of options for response while helping students expand their language.

As the children gain fluency, the teacher asks for more verbal communication. "You're trying to tell me something." (No response.) "Do you want me to do something." (No response, but sticking out a foot.) "Do you want me to do something with your shoe?" ("Tie shoe.") "Do you want me to tie your shoe?" ("Please tie shoe.") "All right. I can do that!"

Thus, she has nudged the student to use words to make a request instead of relying on gestures. How the classroom is set up can also have a major impact on how secure a second-language-learning child may feel. Children need areas where manipulative such as puzzles, Legos, and blocks are available. There, the children can feel successful without verbally asking for help or directions. Consistent classroom routines for arrival, free play, circle time, and snack allow children to act like members of the group. In small group activities, teachers can mix L1 and L2 children ("language buddies") so that language learners have an opportunity to hear a great deal of language related to the activity.

The curriculum choices a teacher makes also can help language learners. For reading time, choose books that are short, highly predictable, repetitive, and culturally sensitive. Do a picture walk before reading aloud to introduce vocabulary and help children make predictions. Read books aloud more than once and encourage children to "read" familiar books to each other. In preschool and kindergarten classrooms, circle time can be especially powerful for language learners, as children are allowed to volunteer answers and answer in unison. Routines for calendar work, roll, weather discussions, etc., help learners predict the sequence of events and required responses. By singing songs like "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" with gestures, movements, and illustrated song charts, the children catch on quickly to new material and may join in spoken English. The teacher uses objects, pictures, and key vocabulary to make the theme topics real for children and help them participate more fully. Snack and lunch time, outside play, and self-selected play offer children rich language interaction time that helps children become language models for each other and encourages conversation and negotiation of language.

This rich language learning environment and curriculum is helping Bich Lin and her classmates grow and gain confidence in their new language. They are secure in a setting that honors their home culture. Family members are encouraged to be a part of the classroom, helping with committees and snack times, reading to the class in their home languages, and sharing cultural activities with the children. The teacher provides parents with strategies to support, maintain and preserve home-language learning. For all of her children, she values who they are and the families and cultures they represent. Her curriculum and classroom environment reflect this value.

Transforming Self, School, and Communities through Multicultural Education—

The term Multicultural Education is a familiar one to all educators, yet its meaning differs from teacher to teacher and school to school. Sonia Nieto identifies seven basic characteristics of multicultural education:

- Multicultural education is antiracist education.
- Multicultural education is basic education.
- Multicultural education is important for all students.
- Multicultural education is pervasive.
- Multicultural education is education for social justice.
- Multicultural education is a process.
- Multicultural education is critical pedagogy.

Nieto, Sonia. Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education, 2nd ed. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers. pp. 307-308.

Here's a rubric designed to help assess one's own thinking about multicultural education and progress toward transformation and social change. It's important to keep in mind that multicultural education is for all children and helps everyone succeed in a diverse world. It's also helpful to remember that personal growth is continual and on-going. For teachers who are white, the most difficult part of the process may be coming to terms with the uncomfortable realization of having benefited from a system that is geared more toward them. Without this awareness, we are stuck in the old paradigm. To understand the advantages one receives in a system is to understand the advantages others do not receive. With this knowledge, it becomes possible to identify and interrupt barriers to education that exist at the institutional level and open the door to a positive, actively anti-racist self-identity.

Starting Out

Curriculum

This is the "heroes and holidays" approach where cultures are explored for specific lengths of time. Students learn discrete information about cultures, but the curriculum and texts remain largely Euro-centric. The experience of minorities and women are encapsulated into a lesson or unit dealing with one or two exceptional individuals. Learning typically revolves around cultural artifacts. Parents may be asked to come and help out for various celebrations. *Example: Native American culture is studied through a unit and students are asked to make a model of a Native American dwelling.*

Relating to Students and Parents

Instruction tends to be teacher led and students who answer quickly participate most often in conversation. The teacher appreciates the cultural diversity that exists in the classroom but may not be aware of disconnects that result from differences in cultural norms and discourse styles. This teacher may feel some classroom difficulties stem from shortcomings inherent in the student's home culture. *Example: The teacher asks rhetorical questions after a lesson and becomes upset when no one answers. This mismatch in learning style prompts the teacher to ask: "Why aren't the students more motivated?" Example: "I love the kids in my school community, but I wonder how much their parents value education."*

Personal/Professional

The teacher sees racism as a personal or individual issue. He or she sees problems of race as grounded in personal biases and manifested in isolated instances of discrimination. The tendency to shy away from these issues makes it difficult to open a constructive dialogue when problems do occur. *Example: "I've always worked in diverse schools, but to me, people are people and I don't even see color; I treat all kids the same." Example: A child is punished for fighting after a racial slur. Both students receive the same consequence and parents are not notified. The student accuses the teacher of discrimination, the teacher is deeply insulted, and communication breaks down.*

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–A Rubric for Work in Progress

by Greg Hansen and Joycelyn Jackson

People of color and women are more “present” in the curriculum, and themes of prejudice are explored. Chapters in American history that are shameful are faced honestly in a manner appropriate to the age of the child. Cultural and language bias in text is actively pointed out. Students are asked to express opinions, do research, and critique concepts of racial discrimination.

Example: The teacher addresses teasing behavior related to difference with a lesson from the “Teaching Tolerance” curriculum guide.

The teacher strives to learn the communication styles that are familiar to students and incorporates them into the classroom norms for discussion and discourse. Students have ample opportunity to work collaboratively. The teacher assures that conversations are not dominated by one group or individual and all children are listened to. Students see a classroom with posters and images of all people and know they are in an environment that appreciates difference.

Example: The teacher uses Instructional Conversation Groups to provide a fair venue for listening and discussion of a chapter or story reading.

The teacher reflects on how his or her background has influenced feelings and attitudes about race and equality. This teacher considers how school might look and feel from the perspective of the students and parents, and ponders what he or she might do differently in terms of classroom practice. The teacher expands his or her racial identity to include active anti-racism, but still may feel uncomfortable discussing issues around diversity with peers.

Example: A teacher asks a support teacher at her school who is trained in intercultural communication to observe her using an anti-bias checklist.

Example: A teacher overhears his colleagues talking about their students’ culture in a way he finds unsettling. He chooses not to address the offensive behavior rather than risk upsetting his coworkers.

People of all races, cultures, and genders are consistently present in every content area, and curriculum is designed and tailored to challenge harmful racial stereotypes. Children are regularly given tasks that require them to view events from the perspective of others. Studies of inequities center on domestic events, e.g., U.S. history explores colonization and slavery. Students learn safe guidelines for talking about cultural behaviors and ideas different from their own and are given the opportunity to provide community service geared toward change.

Example: Students learn about the Middle Passage and write a poem from the perspective of a slave or the ship’s captain.
Example: Students work with a local community advocacy group to raise awareness of local issues.

The teacher understands that students come to school with cultural values and knowledge that may not be reflected in the way the school operates. Students, not the teacher, occupy the center of instructional conversations. Home languages, including non-standard forms of English are viewed as educational capital. The teacher knows that language can contain subtle messages of cultural superiority. The teacher advocates for community ownership in all aspects of school decision making.

Example: The teacher asks students to “translate” formal text into language more familiar to them and vice versa.

Example: Interpreters are present at meetings when parents are not fluent in English.

The teacher looks deeper into the field of diversity education and his or her own racial identity development continues to evolve. The teacher looks at what happens at the institutional level to create and maintain inequities in educational opportunity. The teacher sees him or herself as an agent for social justice and change in the classroom and in the community at large and becomes willing to raise difficult issues with peers and with administration.

Example: During a team meeting to discuss a student, a colleague remarks, “That’s just the way they are.” The teacher asks the speaker to reflect on what was said and why they chose to say it.

Example: A teacher helps organize a series of diversity trainings and invites community members and school administrators to attend.

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Multicultural Education, cont. Resources

Web Sites

- <http://www.edchange.org>
- <http://www.nameorg.org/>
- <http://www.newhorizons.org/>
- <http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
- <http://iume.tc.columbia.edu/>

Print resources available at the
Cross Cultural Education Resource Library
(located at the Montgomery Complex):

Beyond Heroes and Holidays: a Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff Development

Enid Lee; Deborah Menkart; Margo
Okazawa-Rey
Washington, D.C. Network of Educators on
the Americas, 1998.

Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: a Developmental Approach

Louise Derman-Sparks; Carol Brunson Phillips
New York: Teachers College Press, 1997.

“Why Are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?” and Other Conversations About Race

Beverly Daniel Tatum
New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Everyone’s Kids’ Books: a Guide to Multicultural, Socially Conscious Books for Children

Nancy Braus; Molly Geidel
Brattleboro, VT: Everyone’s Books, 2000.

*Heartfelt thanks to Susana Ibarra Johnson,
Jesus Reveles, Vincent Werito, Tony Watkins,
and editors Nancy Lawrence and Dee
McMann for your wisdom and insights.*

Questioning: Working Toward Expanding Student Responses

Many teachers work hard to encourage their English language learners to participate more freely in discussion. One technique to accomplish this is to design truly genuine, open-ended questions which require students to use their own experiences and knowledge. David and Yvonne Freeman, in *Teaching Reading in the Multicultural Classroom*, describe four questions of this type (created by J. Hansen, 1989) to be used with students to build comprehension after reading. They can be used in student-led partner or small group conversations or in a whole group discussion led by the teacher or a student.

QUESTION

*What do you
remember?*



PURPOSE

Elicit a short or more
elaborate response, according
to language proficiency

What else
would you like
to know?



Allow students to extend
thinking; inform instruction
and curricular direction

What does it
remind you of?



Draw on prior knowledge and
and connect to students’ lives

What other things
have you read that
it reminds you of?



Make connections among
things read, seen, heard

In addition to reading comprehension in any content area, these same questions could be adapted and used for other learning experiences. Here are a few examples:

- checks for understanding or group discussion when learning a new concept in math, science, or social studies
- a guide for student writers to use in peer or teacher conferences when sharing a written piece
- a framework or type of self-evaluation following a field trip or educational film
- reviews of lectures, interviews, or presentations by guest speakers

Teachers can ask students to enhance their oral or written response to these with extensions such as art work and graphic organizers. Frequent use of these same questions will enable English language learners to feel secure in what is expected of them. And from there, they can build their proficiency.

Spanish Spelling Bee 2005

by Susan López

This is the beginning of a new school year and everyone is busy getting the year into full swing. It is not too early to think about the Spanish Spelling Bee, so please put this information on your calendar.

The NMABE Conference this year is going to be held April 13-16, 2005. This later date for the conference and State Spelling Bee will give us extra time to prepare our students. The District Spanish Spelling Bee will be February 23, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at a location to be announced later.

Here are some suggestions to make the school spelling bees run more smoothly and possibly eliminate unforeseen problems.

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SPELLING BEE

1. Make spelling an integral part of language instruction. Hold a weekly or monthly classroom bee for practice and informal assessment.
2. Establish a Spelling Bee Committee and select a coordinator to oversee planning and implementation of the spelling bee.
3. Contestants should be selected from a class or group contest. Each contestant should have a copy of the word list and rules at least two weeks prior to the bee.
4. Practices should be held to prepare contestants.
5. Check with your principal to determine the cluster bee host school. Cluster bees should be held in January or February. Winners' names are due to Language and Cultural Equity by February 11th.
6. Send the LCE notices to schools in your cluster if you are hosting the cluster bee, and include the time and date. Please let Susan López (881-9429) know the host schools, dates, and times for the cluster bees.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Prepare name tags for students, judges, and the pronouncer to wear.

B. Send out invitations to parents and community and arrange for judges and a pronouncer. Try to recruit these people from the community.

C. Develop a list of words to be used in the contest. The list should be at least 7 rounds with 20 words in each round. The rounds should progress from easier words to more difficult, with a very easy practice round at the start to help students feel more comfortable.

D. Provide judges and the pronouncer with the word list, scoring sheets with contestants' names in order of their participation, and a Larousse Dictionary for each. Additionally, judges should have pencils, erasers, and signs labeled with "Correcto" and "Incorrecto" in different colors.

E. Set up the room with two microphones (for the pronouncer and the contestants), a dry erase or portable chalkboard with eraser, a tape and tape recorder, and a podium for the pronouncer.

F. Prepare, in advance, certificates of participation for the contestants, certificates of appreciation for the judges and pronouncer, winners' trophies, refreshments for all, and bottled water for the judges and pronouncer.

G. The principal or committee member should welcome the guests and participants, introduce the pronouncer and judges, and read the rules from the state packet of spelling bee information.

H. A tape recorder is a must—the bee must be recorded and monitored by a staff member.

I. At the end of the contest, the principal or a committee member announces the winners, presents the trophies and certificates, and invites everyone to enjoy the refreshments provided by the host school.

It is important to remember that the Spanish Spelling Bee creates tremendous interest for students and their parents. If anyone has ideas that have enhanced their spelling bee activity, please e-mail suggestions to SusanAnneLopez@aol.com. You can also call me at 881-9429, ext. 80491, if you have any questions.

¡Buena Suerte!

Not just “Bodies in the Building” – Redefining Parent Involvement*

by Dr. Annette Maestas

Joel’s mother wanted to volunteer in her son’s kindergarten, but she had no way to get to the school. She didn’t have a buddy that could drive her or help watch her little one. She didn’t speak English and couldn’t communicate with neighbors who might have been able to help her out.

Sonia’s family doesn’t make it to many parent conferences or open house. Often, the appointments are made at inconvenient times. But more importantly, they will tell you that they don’t feel comfortable in the school. The school vocabulary is hard to understand, and they just don’t feel they belong there. Their own experiences with schools were not very positive.

Tanya’s parents believe that parent involvement is important, but they are not able to help out at the school. They spend an average of 15 minutes at home helping Tanya with her homework when they are asked to do so by the teacher. They say they would spend more time if they were told how to help.

Edgar’s parents didn’t finish high school, but they show a strong interest in their son’s learning. Although they don’t understand his homework, they make sure he always finishes it. They encourage Edgar’s learning through family discussions, by listening, praise, and guidance. The teacher wishes the family would stop taking Edgar out of school for religious festivals.

Parent involvement in almost any form can improve student achievement.

“The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children’s families. If educators view children simply as *students*, they are likely to see the family as separate from the school. That is, the family is



Parents discuss student activities at Longfellow Elementary.

expected to do its job and leave the education of children to the schools. If educators view students as *children*, they are likely to see both the family and the community as partners with the school in children’s education and development. Partners recognize their shared interests in and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better programs and opportunities for students.” (Epstein, 2002)

Decades of research show that children have an advantage in school when their parents and/or families encourage and support school activities. The extent to which the school staff and families work together to promote student learning has been shown to be related to school effectiveness. What does it mean for families to “be involved” with their children’s education? To say that a family is or is not involved is too simplistic.

Dr. Joyce Epstein has been actively studying for years how schools involve families that are traditionally hard to reach. With the help of many years of work by educators and families in elementary, middle, and high schools, Epstein has developed a framework of six major types of parent involvement that she considers the keys to successful school, family, and community partnerships.

Six types of parent involvement, six types of caring

The following framework helps educators develop more comprehensive programs of school and family partnerships. This framework can be used as a guide, but each school must “chart its own course” in choosing practices to meet the needs of its families and students.

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- ✓ **Parenting:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.
- ✓ **Communicating:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school events and channels.
- ✓ **Volunteering:** Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences to support students and school programs.
- ✓ **Learning at home:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.
- ✓ **Decision making:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.
- ✓ **Collaborating with the community:** Coordinate community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.

Redefinitions

Epstein redefines familiar terms, making it possible for programs to reach out in new ways to many more families. The new definitions redirect old notions so that involvement is not viewed solely as or measured only by “bodies in the building.” Examples include the following:

Redefine “workshop” to mean more than a meeting about a topic held at the school building at a particular time; “workshop” also may mean making information about a topic available in a variety of forms that can be viewed, heard, or read anywhere, anytime.

Change “Communications about school programs and student progress” to mean two-way, three-way, and many-way channels of communication that connect schools, families, students, and the community.

“Volunteering” should mean anyone who supports school goals and children’s learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time—not just during the school day and at the school building.

“Homework” can mean not only work done alone, but also interactive activities shared with others at home or in the community, linking schoolwork to real life. “Help” at home could mean encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing—not “teaching” school subjects.

“Decision making” indicates a process of partnership, of shared views and actions toward shared goals, not a power struggle between conflicting ideas.

Redefine “community” to mean not only the neighborhoods where students’ homes and schools are located but also neighborhoods that influence student learning and development.

Empowering parents and/or families

Some educators are fond of perpetuating the myth, “Let’s face it, some cultures value education more than others”. This kind of attitude is counterproductive and tends to sabotage family involvement efforts. Families provide the most important learning environment of all. Parents care deeply about their children and have a tremendous interest in their children’s future. It is up to us as educators to engage families that are hard to reach. How do we empower them? How do we build parents’ confidence in their own competence? There isn’t just one strategy that will make it happen. It can be a lot of work, it is ever evolving, and it takes time to build relationships. We need to respect the parents’ funds of knowledge, and build a place that families love to come to. This starts by how we receive them in the front office and in the classroom.

In the December edition of *Making Connections*, learn about how teachers and schools throughout APS have found innovative ways to include families and communities in the education of children.

*Parent involvement and family involvement are used somewhat interchangeably and are used in a general sense to mean anyone who is involved with raising children. This could be older siblings, grandparents, stepparents, caretakers, foster parents, etc.

**School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, written by Epstein, J. et al, 2002.

Making more connections!

Coming Events

❖ Camino Real Council of the IRA—14th Annual Mini-Conference, Go for the Gold with Literacy:

October 16, Albuquerque. For more information, contact June Gandert at 266.7244.

❖ National Association for Multicultural Education:

October 27-31, Kansas City. For more information, please visit the website at www.nameorg.org.

❖ La Cosecha 2004, 9th Annual Dual Language Conference—Tools for Cultivating the Dual Language Program:

November 19-20, Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort, New Mexico. Questions? Call 505.243.0648 or visit the website at www.duallanguagenm.org.

There will be a **Black Student Union**



Educational Summit, October 23, 1-4

p.m. at West Mesa H.S. Topics will be College Preparation and Election, 2004. For more information, contact

Joycelyn Jackson at 881-9429.

The **College of Santa Fe** is offering EDU 460/560 — Bilingual/Multicultural Education—on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:30-6:30 PM, in room F-5 at Sandia High School, from October 19 to Dec 16. This course satisfies the LEP Training requirement. For more information, contact Henry Shoner, College of Santa Fe, 855-7271 or hshoner@csf.edu.

Cross Cultural Resource Library



3315 Louisiana Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110

Monday through Friday:

8:00-4:30

Closed daily for lunch:

12:00-1:00

LIBRARY SPECIALIST: Jo Ann Gonzales

Please call 883-0440, ext. 147, before making the trip to make sure the library is open!

FYI...

Instructional Materials Adoption

It's instructional materials adoption time, and this year's content areas are Social Studies, Library, N.M. and Native American History, Art, and Culture. Below are the training dates for contact teachers. All sessions are at Montgomery Complex, Regional Instructional Materials Center (RIMC).

Oct. 22—Elementary, 8:00-11:00

Oct. 29—Elementary, 8:00-11:00

Oct. 30—Elementary "SINOI" schools, 9:00-12:00

Nov. 5—Middle/High School, 8:00-11:00

Nov. 6—Middle/High "SINOI" Schools, 9:00-12:00

Nov. 6—Middle/High School, plus make-up day for all levels, 8:00-11:00.

RIMC will pay for subs on the Friday training days and stipends on the Saturdays. Watch for more information and opportunities to sign up.

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