

## **Bilingual Education and Multicultural Education: An Inclusively Oriented Delivery System**

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Often in the literature, articles are found concerning bilingual education, multicultural education, or transformation of educational delivery systems. Rarely are those subjects combined in the literature where educators discuss

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provocative, critical pedagogical practice, theory, or research, particularly those with the possibility to transform educational delivery systems for language minority students.

To direct the deliberations of this paper two postulates must be established: (a) the fundamental relationship between bilingual and multicultural education, and (b) the primary meaning of transformation of the educational delivery system. First, bilingual and multicultural education are not the same educational issues. However, they do have a relationship in which the two may appear as distinct educational elements existing in a close association, especially when they are mutually advantageous to children's education. In this case these two educational components have a symbiotic relationship. Second, if this symbiotic relationship is to be effective, the traditional educational system must be reformed from one of exclusion to one of inclusion. Brown, Irby, and Smith (1992) make the differences clear:

An exclusively oriented system limits itself to special interest groups such as gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, language, intelligence type/style, religion, and/or political affiliation. An inclusively oriented system is one in which the knowledge and conditions conducive to quality and success are available to all individuals within the system. (p. 71)

The inclusively oriented system is the educational delivery system upon which this paper is based. We discuss the distinct aspects of and the relationship between bilingual education and multicultural education and conclude with some suggestions for establishing an inclusively oriented educational delivery system.

### **Conceptualization of Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education is generally defined as a particular school program in which students begin initial steps in bilingual development. More specifically, most bilingual education programs in our society are transitional in nature and support students in their acquisition of the English language (García, 1994). In transitional bilingual education programs, children are first taught in their native language and thus become more competent in four language modes: verbal expression, aural reception, reading comprehension, and written communication. As children gain more competence in the native language, the assumption is that the children's native language will facilitate the process of second language acquisition (Chomsky, 1988; Cummins, 1984; Krashen, 1985; Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994).

There are two types of transitional bilingual models: (a) the early-exit

bilingual program model where instruction in the native language rapidly diminishes. Students in early-exit programs move quickly into second language use and are exited from programs by the end of second grade, and (b) the late-exit bilingual program model where students are maintained in the program until the end of elementary school (fifth or sixth grade) and receive 40% or more of their instruction in the native language (Rennie, 1993).

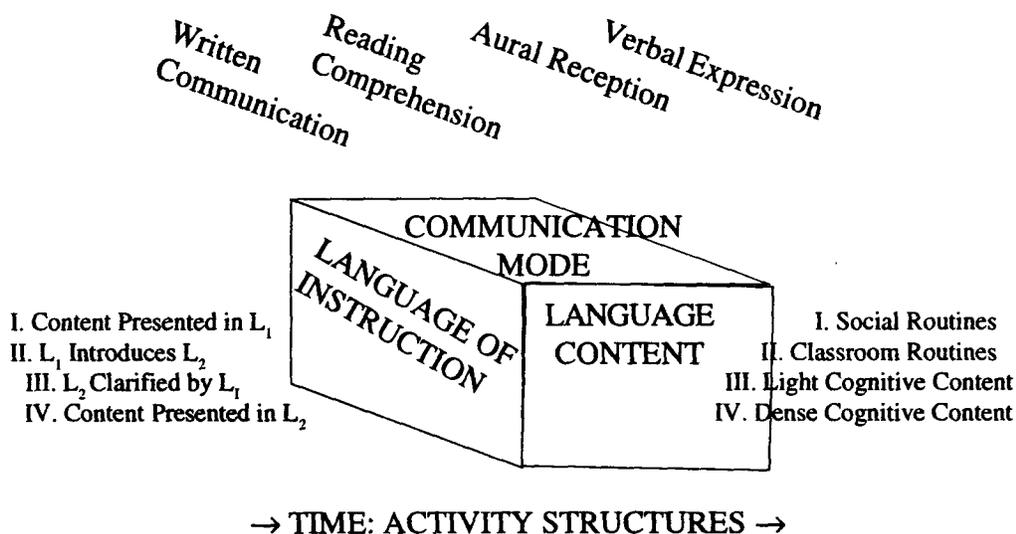
The transitional bilingual models have two fallacies. First, because most children are in early-exit bilingual programs and are exited by the third or fourth grade if they enter at the kindergarten level (Nieto, 1992), then most children do not receive advanced academic preparation in their native language ( $L_1$ ). Second, the transitional bilingual program is often an isolated program and one in which children are frequently perceived as deficient in the dominant language ( $L_2$ ) and in need of remediation.

True bilingual education programs must be bilingual. The program described above does not truly constitute bilingual education; rather, it sustains only a minimal native language competency while advancing minimal second language proficiency.

For bilingual education programs in schools to reflect true bilingualism, programs should begin with the native language and advance toward the use of the second language when the teacher thinks the students are ready. Lara-Alecio and Parker (1994) promote this concept through their bilingual pedagogical theory and four dimensional model depicted in Figure 1: (a) Activity Structures, (b) Language Content, (c) Language of Instruction, and (d) Communication Mode. The third dimension, Language of Instruction, is the specific dimension under discussion and simply represents the language chosen to present content material. The alternatives for the Language of Instruction are broken into four levels as it is used to teach the Dimension II, Language Content: Level One: Native language ( $L_1$ ), Level Two: Native language ( $L_1$ ) with dominant language ( $L_2$ ) vocabulary for presentation and discussion of key concepts, Level Three: Dominant language ( $L_2$ ) with clarification in the native language ( $L_1$ ), and Level Four: Dominant language ( $L_2$ ).

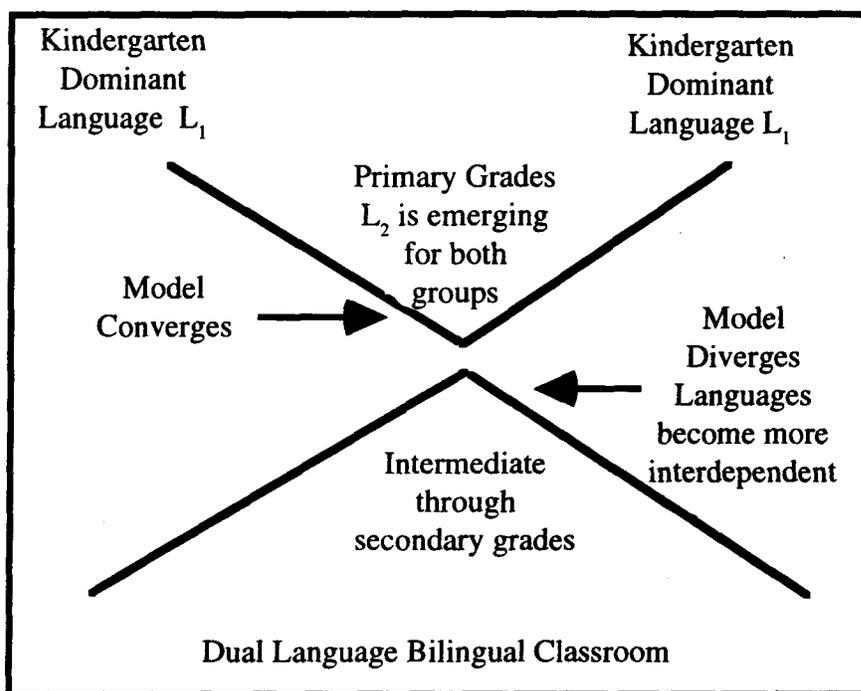
Thus, this approach is generalizable to any language. Teacher's decisions about which level of language of instruction would be appropriate for the learners as they are introduced to content should be a major component of a true bilingual program. Ultimately teachers would move all students to Level Four; at that point in the educational process, students would ideally operate equally effectively in  $L_1$  and  $L_2$ . This type of bilingual program would be one in which students would reach the optimum level of performance as they move up through the grade levels.

Figure 1. Pedagogical Theory/Four Dimensional Model (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994).



In initial stages of inclusive bilingualism, students may be segregated according to  $L_1$ , but as time passes and competencies improve in the native language, students from two differing languages should begin to merge into inclusive bilingual classrooms. The inclusively oriented educational delivery system, as indicated in Figure 2, begins with  $L_1$  in kindergarten and then converges to a pedagogical choice model including Levels II and III of the Language of Instruction (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994). In the inclusive bilingual program or dual language program, for students to become proficient in both languages, academic language must be taught and maintained after fourth or fifth grade. Ideally, the inclusive bilingual model becomes more and more interdependent in both languages as students become more academically proficient and comfortable in the use in two languages.

Figure 2. Multicultural Inclusive Bilingualism Model.



Thus, this type of bilingual educational structure is inclusive bilingualism and is a school program that provides instructional opportunities for *all students* to develop proficiency in at least two languages and, consequently, two cultures. Research indicates support for inclusive bilingualism in several ways:

1. Students benefit from learning in their native language as well as in English (Krashen, 1991).
2. English speakers achieve well in an immersion program (Genesse, 1987; Harley, Allen, Cummins, & Swain, 1990).
3. Students' self-esteem is enhanced (Christian, 1994).
4. Students' cross-cultural understanding improves (Christian, 1994).
5. Students' academic progress in math and language fluency is accelerated (Lindholm & Gavlek, 1994).
6. Language minority students experience more long-term educational gains than students in other bilingual programs or in an English as a second language program (Collier, 1994).

## **Conceptualization of Multicultural Education**

While bilingual education can be viewed in schools as a specific educational program, we contend that multicultural education is not a specific educational program. Rather, multicultural education permeates the environment of the entire school and classroom as indicated below. Multicultural education is an on-going process that is facilitated by the teacher in the classroom. It is an *environment* where there is sensitivity, awareness, respect, understanding, and acceptance of differing cultures and languages. It is one in which the varied cultures develop a rich source of learning as topics are covered in class through local, state, national, and international perspectives. It is sensitive to not only ethnic cultural differences, but reminiscent of other types of cultural diversity found among languages, genders, exceptionalities (special needs students), socioeconomic levels, religions, or localities (rural, urban). In the multicultural classroom environment there is worth and significance given to similarities and differences between and among individuals within the various cultural groups. (Lara-Alecio & Rendon, 1995, p. 53)

Further discussions of multicultural education (Nieto, 1992) also appear to describe multicultural education from a holistic societal or schoolwide point of view, rather than from a classroom perspective. Nieto (1992) contends that a school environment can be reformed through multicultural education. She defines multicultural education from a sociopolitical stance as follows:

Multicultural education... challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent. Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education furthers the democratic principles for social justice. (p. 208)

For multicultural education to be effective, the entire school culture must undergo change (National Coalition for Advocates for Students, 1988). For any lesson, program, curriculum, or instructional strategy to fit within a multicultural education context, inclusiveness is necessary, and education should not be

fragmented or placed in segmented compartments. Banks (1994) supports the concept of inclusivity with a paradigm of five dimensions: (a) content integration, (b) pedagogy of equity, (c) knowledge construction process, (d) prejudice reduction, and (e) an empowered school culture and social structure. Ada, Harris, and Hopkins (1993) acknowledge inclusive systems by stating "multiculturalism means using a more inclusive way of teaching" (p. 46).

### **The Symbiotic Relationship**

While bilingual education is a program, multicultural education is an ongoing process. Based upon those factors, the two appear to be different educational elements. How then do the two come together to form a mutually beneficial relationship?

First, bilingual education encourages inclusivity. Because language is so embedded in culture and vice versa, it becomes evident that multicultural benefits occur in an inclusive bilingual program. Becoming aware of and understanding another's language builds deep and abiding cultural understanding. Students need to have not only a basic literacy which enables them to read words; they also must obtain cultural and critical literacy to enable them to read the world in which they live (Freire, 1987). The ability to read different worlds facilitates communication and human relations skills to produce an educated, culturally sensitive, and economically viable population. Understanding other cultures through languages is a vital part of maintaining democratic integrity (Dill, 1994).

When viewing bilingual education and language as a cultural experience, a formation of a relationship between bilingual education and multicultural education begins to emerge. In this relationship, the *program* of bilingual education must undergo a *process* of change. The change that must occur is in the delivery of services to nondominant culture groups.

As indicated in the previous conceptualization of bilingual education, transitional bilingual programs tend to isolate students; therefore, the change that must occur is one in which bilingual programs move from segregated, deficit-ridden programs to those of inclusive, value-added, culturally enhanced programs. Through this process of reform, the bilingual education program has a symbiosis with multicultural education; first, through the process and second, through the inclusive and integrated nature of the program itself. Similarly,

when multicultural education is viewed as a process for affirming pluralism, then multicultural education forms a mutually beneficial relationship with bilingual education. However, if a society, including the school society, stifles the language and culture of an individual, then multiculturalism begins to deteriorate.

Bilingual education and multicultural education are related. Figure 3 shows where characteristics of multicultural education (Nieto, 1992; Banks, 1994) and observations of practices in inclusive bilingualism are associated.

Figure 3. A Comparison of the Inclusive Bilingual Program and Multicultural Education.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Inclusive Bilingualism</b>	<b>Multicultural Education</b>
Philosophy	Accepts, acknowledges, and respects all languages and cultures	Adheres to policies and curricular practices that affirm diversity and challenge racism and gender inequity
Culture	Demands bilingualism or multilingualism and illuminates its importance for all people	Views multicultural education as basic; all students learn a second language and develop a broad range of knowledge that is relevant to diverse cultural groups and both genders
Curriculum	Infuses cultural awareness and sensitivity throughout the dual language curriculum structure; views bilingual education as inclusive for all students, not simply the linguistically different	Promotes all courses to be multicultural and enriched for all students
Expectations	Expects all students and teachers to learn from each other; supports native language speaking and a target language expectation	Has high and realistic expectations by teachers for all students

Parent/ Community Involvement	Supports cultural relevance through parental and community involvement; promotes dual language training for parents	Pervades the curriculum and interactions among teachers, students, parents, and communities
Learning	Provides real-world, action-oriented, problem-solving situations with time for reflection	Provides education for social justice where action and reflection are important components of learning
Teaching	Offers a dynamic learning environment where students are enhanced in cognitive development, critical thinking, and academic achievement	Offers an equal mix of content and process where teachers are empowered as well as students

When mutual interdependence occurs between two entities, a symbiosis exists. Inclusive bilingual program characteristics, when empowering the language and culture and nurturing understanding of other languages and cultures, prompt a symbiotic relationship with multicultural education.

### **Strategies for an Inclusive Educational Delivery System**

The following effective strategies are aimed at bilingual education programs where multiculturalism is an active, interdependent part of improving the education of children. These process strategies, prompted by multicultural education, assert that a process of deliberate, planned change (David, 1989) must occur in two areas: (a) programmatic delivery of education for all students, and (b) the general culture of the school environment.

The first cultural change can occur only through a better understanding of bilingual and multicultural education from the school faculty, administrative, and community perspectives. This understanding and acceptance of the change of the delivery system and the school culture comes through intensive staff development. Educators generally work in isolation (Lortie, 1975), and faculties have little opportunity for planning collaboratively for school improvement (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Furthermore, there must be "cooperative relationships that break down the isolation and increase the collective strength of the

community of educators who staff the school" (Joyce & Showers, 1988, p. 4).

The initial steps in developing a strategic plan would be to thoroughly review the entire education program for (a) segregation of non-English speakers, and (b) the use of one language over another in the program. If these two elements exist, then a change in the delivery model should ensue. The program should be established so as to be inclusive of dominant and other cultural groups and should be supportive of dual language instruction. If this were actualized, it would be the ideal school setting where the entire school program would become bilingual. And, if this is ever to be, then a comprehensive staff development program must be developed to reform the way the school is organized and thus to change the delivery model of education.

Considerations for maintenance of the native language and culture should be included in any program change. This would require higher levels of proficiency from teachers of  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  language instruction and would also require more diversity among staff members. The maintenance program does not need to exist outside the dual language bilingual program; rather, it should be a part of it so that the dominant cultural group builds proficiency in a second language, while native language speakers also build literacy skills in their native language.

To achieve a schoolwide dual language program, staff development must occur, and administrators must support and practice multicultural reform through this basic component. Thus, staff development should come in the form of information-gathering, observation, discussion, strategic planning, and collaboration. Staff development for school cultural change in the symbiotic relationship between bilingual and multicultural education cannot be a one-time, day-long in-service; rather, it must be a planned and maintained dialogue over time among students, faculty, and administrators. For this change to occur, the parents and community members must also become actively involved because all stakeholders share responsibility for educating children.

Topics for working toward a true dual language bilingual program that is interdependent with multicultural education will come from a direct needs assessment of the students, faculty, administrators, and community. Although other topics may emerge from the needs assessment, the following should be included for staff and community development: dual language bilingual education premises, multicultural premises, the symbiotic relationship of the two, integrated real-world curriculum, cooperative learning, student expectations, learning styles, and parental involvement.

The only way to establish an inclusively oriented educational delivery system where a symbiotic relationship exists between bilingual and multicultural education, and where the environment is beneficial for all students, is to reform

the entire educational delivery system. This system would be one of inclusion, not segregation; antiracist, not racist; important for all students, not elitist or diminished; pervasive, not an isolated program; and democratic, not anarchic. This kind of reformation of the system is supported in a study by Jones (1991) in which implementation issues of bilingual education were addressed. In this approach, investment of time and belief in the value of the program by the participants were found to be critical components in the implementation of a new bilingual program.

### **Summary**

We have advanced an interdependent symbiotic relationship between bilingual and multicultural education. This symbiosis exists only if the bilingual education program is an inclusive one, a dual language system, and is seen and practiced as relevant, important, and necessary for *all* students. If schools are to become multicultural in thought and action regarding their bilingual programs, then fundamental changes are necessary to develop an inclusively oriented educational system where knowledge and conditions conducive to quality and success are available to all individuals within the system.

Bilingual education may be viewed as the vehicle for change and multicultural education viewed as the fuel for movement and advancement. Staff development may then be seen as the roadmap for achieving the symbiotic relationship between bilingual and multicultural education.

Finally, our society is primarily an immigrant society, where individuals have brought their native languages and native cultures and have engaged in the process of assimilation. Combining bilingual education and multicultural education to develop an inclusive educational delivery system is a practical approach for keeping native languages and native cultures alive. In this system *all* individuals are empowered and accept themselves and others—essential elements for maintaining a society that is democratic and preserves its integrity.

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