

2011-01-01

# Dual Language Programs And Reforming Education In The El Paso Independent School District

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DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND REFORMING EDUCATION IN THE EI PASO  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this piece of work to my Wife, Tracy Varela who stood by my beliefs and my convictions.

DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS AND REFORMING EDUCATION IN THE EL PASO  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

by

RICHARD VARELA, Master of Arts in Teaching

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING

Department of English  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
May 2011

## **Acknowledgements**

As an educator, I tell my students that everything has a reason for being what it is or what it was. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. did not wake up one day and decide to put his life in danger in hopes to achieve equality for everyone in this country. Through personal experiences and through diligent guidance by amazing professors like Dr. Mangelsdorf, Dr. Meyers and Dr. Rossatto, I have been able to express many of my concerns through this work. I thank you so much for your inspiration and the guidance you all provided me with.

Dr. Mangelsdorf, it was in your classroom that I realized the inequalities within our educational systems. I felt supported in your classroom and you truly know and understand the plight of English Language Learners. Thank you for undertaking this year-long endeavor along side with me. It has been fun, but I am glad it is over for now. To Dr. Meyers who has never doubted my abilities as a student. Thank you Dr. Meyers; I am so thankful for your unwavering support. You were the inspiration and motivation when doubt wanted to creep in. You believed in me and you understood the passion behind this thesis. Thank you. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Rossatto who has influenced me since being a graduate student. You served as a great guidance and you undoubtedly understood the importance of this paper. You are cognizant of the struggles minorities are confronted with in this country and you have been a great source of information. Thank you for your unwavering support and for your friendship.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues and friends, Gloria Arias, Betina Valdez, and Ray Munoz for providing their support and information. Muchas Gracias Amigos!

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Dual Language Education: A Rare Commodity in the El Paso Independent School District**

“Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?” – Ray Gwyn Smith

Dual language programs in the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) have been exclusively available to one campus for over 10 years. That particular campus is Mesita Elementary School. Mesita began dual language education in 1996 and was the only campus out of 94 schools to do so. The program has experienced fourteen years of success and has continued to achieve and progress to the middle school level at Wiggs Middle School. According to an interview I conducted with Sandra Spivey (Dual Language Coordinator and Assistant Principal at Mesita Elementary), the program was started by Leila Ferris (current head administrator at Mesita). Mrs. Ferris believed in the positive results dual language education could have on students and community. Tony Prata, a former teacher at Wiggs Middle School, also stated that Anglo parents pushed for the implementation of dual language and were very supportive and proactive in their children acquiring a solid foundation in Spanish.

Mesita and their community understood the importance of acquiring the second most utilized language in the country and chose to implement a program that directly serves the needs of every student. Parents were very cognizant of the significance the Spanish language would have on the lives of their children. They understood the importance of preparing their children for becoming productive citizens of a diverse nation. Adding a dual language program is a progressive step in the right direction in large part because the demographics within American schools are drastically changing.

The English Language Learners (ELLs) population has dramatically increased. The 2000 Census reported that approximately 4.5 million children who attend Texas public schools come from families in which English is not the home language. The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 2002, that 9.64 percent of public elementary and secondary schools nationwide were made up of ELLs. Seventy-nine percent of those ELLs were Spanish speakers (4, 2005). Addressing the demographic makeup of our schools is necessary. The needs of every child should be the top priority of every district and campus. Unfortunately, the fastest growing population of students amongst our schools is being ignored with the implementation of antiquated program such as the bilingual education model. Partial steps have been taken by EPISD and the Connecting Worlds Mundos Unidos Project at Mesita, but more can be done.

The Connecting Worlds Mundos Unidos program employs a system where half of the instructional time is in Spanish and the other half is in English. The 50:50 English and Spanish system is geared to develop a high level of academic proficiency in both languages. The CAL Two-Way Immersion website describes the positive qualities of a 50:50 dual language program by stating that students who begin the program and start at the elementary level have a high level of academic success. As a result, students become bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural, gaining as the website states, “an enhanced awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, and high levels of academic achievement through instruction in two languages” (2010).

Virginia P. Collier and Wayne P. Thomas are two strong proponents of dual language education. Over 18 years of research, data analysis, program evaluation research, that covered 23 large and small school districts from 15 different states, has proven for them that bilingual education needs reform, and the answer is dual language education. As both Collier and Thomas mentioned, “This is not just a research report, this is a wakeup call to the field of bilingual

education, written for both researchers and practitioners” (Collier, Thomas, 2004, p. 1). This is a wakeup call to the El Paso Independent School District, whose student population throughout the entire district is comprised of Spanish speaking students. The district needs to focus on closing the academic achievement gap in L2 and first language L1 students, and enrichment dual language programs, when properly implemented, are designed to close the academic gap.

In one study, Collier noted the following: “Every year, more than half of all African American, Hispanics and Native Americans, three ethnic groups considered to be American societies minority populations, fail to graduate from high school” (Collier 2). El Paso’s Representative, Eliot Shapley, was quoted as saying the following, “When 42 percent of Hispanic freshmen fail to reach their senior year of high school, the situation has become an absolute crisis” (Shapleigh, 2010). Victoria Advocate mentioned in her report that students at Victoria High School are at a dropout rate of 45 percent, but Hispanics are at a higher rate, topping off at 59 percent dropout rate. These are appalling numbers, especially when you compare the percentage of Anglo students, who are at a mere 22 percent dropout rate. High school completion rates for Latinos have lagged behind the national standards for decades, and some of the same struggles Latinos faced in the 1960s are still lingering today.

### **1.1 Yesterday’s Plight Continues to Plague American Schools Today**

In the latter part of the 1960s Chicano students staged walkouts, also known as “blowouts,” across the Southwest. Their reason for walking out of classrooms was to protest inequalities in the educational system, corporal punishment for speaking Spanish, janitorial duties, and an overwhelming dropout rate. Dropout rates for Chicano and Chicana students were at 50 percent, and in some cases the percentage was higher. Many of the walkouts were taking

place in the Los Angeles area where school populations were predominantly Mexican-American. One campus that partook in the walkout protests was Garfield High School in East Los Angeles.

During the walkouts, Garfield High School was experiencing a high rate of dropouts as mentioned, “Chicanos in Los Angeles had the highest ‘dropout rate’ of all racial groups. At Garfield High School where student population was predominantly comprised of Chicanos, half of the students failed to finish the 12<sup>th</sup> grade”. (R. Tijerina, L. Rivera). One of the major factors influencing these astounding dropout rates is attributed to the degradation of the Spanish language and corporal punishment employed against students who spoke it. Remnants of the 60s still resonate today. Students in the 60s understood how imperative it was to push for educational reform that included respect and the implementation of the Spanish language. Tijerina and Rivera stated the following:

In the spring of 1968, the students began pressing the Board of Education for *bilingual* education, the firing of racist teachers, more emphasis on the Mexican cultural heritage, better school buildings, and many other reforms. The board refused ALL changes.  
(Tijerina and Rivera)

Nearly 50 years later, school curriculum still lacks in representing Latinos existence and contributions to this country. Spanish is still treated as inferior to the English language and considered a second- class language across much of the United States. Furthermore, this language sentiment has also become pervasive in many school districts across the nation including EPISD. Spanish is perceived as an impediment to students in school districts predominantly attended by Latinos. Ostracizing a people’s language not only destroys the confidence of students, it kills their will to succeed and to learn. More so, the expulsion of one’s

native language tends to alienate parents from schools as well. The lack of parent involvement in a child's education has proven to be detrimental to a child's success. If parents feel left out because Spanish is not spoken in school, then how are they supposed to become involved in the learning process and success of their children? Language barriers have been major contributors to Latinos lack of educational success. Dual language education "can transform the experience of teachers, administrators, and parents into an inclusive and supportive school community for all" (Collier, Thomas, 1). If parent's primary language becomes a part of the curriculum and becomes validated equally to English, parents will have a sense of belonging on campus and in their child's education.

In order for EPISD to better serve their student population, it must implement dual language education across the district. We need to heed the cries of the 1968 walkouts and understand that our educational institutions have failed to meet the needs of our student population which has a large percentage of ELLs. In 1968, equity for all students was at the forefront, as stated, "One of the most important targets of the youth groups has been the school system, which has never served the needs of our people" (Tijerina, Rivera). EPISD needs to better serve its student population and the city of El Paso by implementing Spanish/English dual language programs. Fourteen years of success with the 50:50 dual language models at Mesita Elementary and Wiggs Middle has proven that EPISD needs to speed up the process in implementing the program throughout the entire district in order to give every students the tools and skills needed to succeed in our diverse world.

This dual language model at Mesita and Wiggs is geared to provide instruction for Math, Science, Social Studies, and Literature in both languages. Lessons do not repeat, and instruction is formatted to build and progress on previous lessons. This type of enrichment program allows

students to learn in two or more languages, and it has proven to accelerate and enhance cognitive acquisition. The opposite is true of remedial programs that have been implemented by EPISD such “English Only, English as a Second Language (ESL) pullout, ESL content/sheltered instruction (usually taught as a program with no primary language support), structured English immersion, and transitional bilingual education” (Collier and Thomas 2). Usually these remedial programs provide English Language Learners (ELL) with two or four years of bilingual education, but research has proven the following:

Four years is not enough time to fully close the gap. Furthermore, if students are isolated from the curricular mainstream for many years, they are likely to lose ground to those in the instructional mainstream, who are constantly pushing ahead. To catch up to their peers, students below grade level must make more than one year’s progress every year to eventually close the gap. In contrast to remedial programs that offer “watered down” instruction in a “special” curriculum focused on one small step at a time, dual language enrichment models are the curricular mainstream taught through two languages. Teachers in these bilingual classes create the cognitive challenge through thematic units of the core academic curriculum, focused on real world problem solving that stimulate students to make more than one year’s progress every year, in both languages. (Collier, Thomas)

The norm at most EPISD schools, including Guillen Middle School is to exit students after two or three years of ESL instruction. The problem with this system is that students are not completely ready to make the full transition to a fully immersed English class. Very few students adapt to such demands. Students who are forced to make haste transitions to English Only classes do make slight gains in acquiring English skills, but overall, the progress plateaus and

stifles. In addition, students lose self-esteem when unable to participate for lack of fluency, when they fail to understand a lesson, or speak with a heavy accent.

With a dual language program, students will not only hone their primary language skills but they will learn another language as fluently as well. Collier and Thomas have also stressed that in order for students to close the academic gap the following is needed:

A minimum of six year of bilingual instruction (with eight years preferable for full gap closure in L2 when there are no English-speaking peers enrolled in the bilingual classes), separation of the two languages of instruction, focus on the core academic curriculum rather than a watered-down version, high cognitive demand of grade-level lessons, and collaborative learning in engaging and challenging academic content across the curriculum. (Collier and Thomas 2)

Language development in both primary and secondary languages along with the implementation of dual language programs that include student effective collaboration is needed for student academic gap closure. Students in EPISD are not being provided with ample time to make a successful transition to English-only classes. Therefore, many students are struggling inside the classroom and falling behind the rest of their peers, and dropout rates tend to climb as a result of it.

EPISD must look at implementing a one or two-way dual language program across the entire district. With the student population that EPISD is attempting to service and the fact that the city of El Paso is a border town, such changes must be a top priority for the district. According to Thomas and Collier, a one-way dual language program is defined as follows:

We define one-way programs as demographic context where only one language group is being schooled through two languages. For example, along the U.S.-Mexican border, many school districts enroll students mainly of Hispanic-American heritage. Some students are proficient in English, having lost their heritage language. Others are very proficient in Spanish and just beginning to learn English. Whatever mix of English and Spanish proficiency is present among the student population; an enrichment dual language program brings these students together to teach each other the curriculum through their two heritage languages. (Collier, Thomas 2)

Latinos or Hispanics represent 82% of the population in El Paso, and 79% of student enrollment in EPISD. These percentages are predicted to grow in the next few years. With a large Latino population in El Paso, dual language programs are of great need throughout the entire district. EPISD's mission statement states that their goal is to "meet the diverse needs of all students and empower them to become successful members of a global community." The needs of EPISD's student are not being met when only a handful of campuses get to reap from the benefits of dual language programs and the rest suffer with transitional bilingual programs.

Mesita Elementary, along with Wiggs Middle, and El Paso High school are the only schools that allow for a continuation of dual language education to be sustained. All three campuses utilized a 50:50 dual language immersion model throughout the entire language acquisition process. At the high school level, students will have the opportunity to begin studies in a third language, and two of the languages provided at El Paso High School besides Spanish are French and German.

I have been interested in this field of study for the past two years. As a native of El Paso, former EPISD student, and as an educator at Guillen Middle School, I have noticed the biggest issues concerning ELL's and minority students. Language and culture are the forefront of these issues and the lack of importance stressed on Spanish has been more detrimental than many will ever admit. Spanish has always been put on the back burner, and it has always been seen as an inferior language in comparison to English. It is important to look at the superior/inferior dilemma that has caused an avalanche of problems for Spanish speakers.

## **1.2 History of Discrimination**

Since the mid 1800, when Stephen Austin and other Americans immigrated from the East and settled in parts of northern Mexico, inside the Texas border, the issue of language became a concern. Mexico would only allow Americans to settle the land if they agreed to bring people of good morals, if they converted to Catholicism, and if they learned Spanish. Americans did not like taking orders from Mexican officials and were upset about having to learn Spanish. They did not heed the rules applied by Mexico, which became a foreshadowing of the attitudes Americans fostered and maintained pre and post the annexation of Texas to the U.S. Once the United States was able to strip away Mexico from its land, Spanish speakers began to experience discrimination against their language and culture.

Even in the year 2010, native Spanish speakers attempting to acquire English as a second language have at times been subjected to belittlement, and many times have been classified as second class citizens by English only supporters. Those who have colonized and conquered others have utilized language as a means to control those who have been vanquished. Since the English language has been imposed on those colonized it is important that Spanish speaking

students gain ground in America's society by maintaining their language and by demanding programs like dual language that allow a mutual respect for both languages. In EPISD, Mesita Elementary has begun taking steps in fostering equity in language through the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Dual Language Program.

According to a student application for El Paso High School, Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos, one of the main goals of their dual language magnet program, is to “develop positive cross-cultural attitudes and behaviors” (1). It is imperative for students to feel a part of the educational journey, and not as outsiders. It is no coincidence dropout rates among Latinos ranges between 40 - 63%. During the 1960s, many Mexican Americans protested against inequalities in schools that were highly contributing to high dropout rates amongst Chicano students. During the Chicano walkouts, dropout rates were hovering at 50 percent or higher, and fifty years later, we are still having the same issue. Dropout rate are not going to decrease if students feel like second class citizens, and their native language is deemed inferior. Unfortunately, our school systems have drilled it in many students that English is the only language spoken and revered in this country and that has proven to be detrimental for many.

Our district needs to realize that with 82% of the city being Latino, successful dual language programs must be considered. Every student, Latino or non-Latino, needs to feel as part of the learning community and educational system. We live in a world that most likely require individuals to be bilingual and bi-literate. Furthermore, students also benefit from multicultural education which allows them to be more productive and receptive to the world around them.

The El Paso Independent School District needs to own up to their mission statement which declares they are “meeting the diverse needs of all students and empowering them”

(EPISD.org, 2010). One way to live up to their mission statement is by providing dual language programs, gifted and talented strategies, legitimate multicultural education, and best practice strategies for every student district wide. To this point, EPISD has only provided successful and proven dual language education and programs to a few schools, and they have put too much stock on traditional bilingual education programs that have failed our ELLs. Fourteen years is long enough to prove the success of dual language programs. Therefore it is time for EPISD to provide equal and successful programs for every student in the district.

### **1.3 My Goals**

My goal is to inspire the El Paso Independent School District to adopt dual language programs throughout the entire district. EPISD needs to implement these programs in every campus in order to achieve a sense of stability, equality, and successful graduation rates among students across the El Paso region. I believe that our dropout rates will diminish significantly once these programs are employed throughout the entire district. We have to reach out to the entire city and educated them on the importance of learning more than one language, including Spanish. We have to admit the blunders committed in decades past when students were punished, ridiculed and deemed ignorant simply for speaking Spanish. This is very important because many Latino families, who grew up when corporal punishment for speaking Spanish was allowed, have made it a point to rid themselves from using Spanish to communicate. These parents, grandparents and great grandparents need to understand that it is okay to teach our future generations Spanish. Only then will barriers of inequity and exclusion come crumbling down and will allow our future posterity to seek an education with a sense of equality.

## **1.4 Background and Goals of Dual Language**

The goal of dual programs is to create educational equity for all students, English and non-English speakers. As mentioned in the Texas Two-Way Dual Language Education website, “the program facilitates the process that validates and fully develops both languages and instills a mutual respect for both language learners.” Validation of one’s native language is very important when attempting to teach a student a second language, and in order to create such acceptance, both languages will have to be addressed evenly. The lack of equity between both the English and Spanish language continue to be a hindrance for bilingual programs such as English as a Second Language (ESL). By implementing and validating both the English and Spanish languages, the outcome can only be a positive one, as mentioned, “Two-way/Dual Language models serve as vehicles for positively impacting educational and social change and eliminating the academic achievement gap that currently exists between our English and Spanish speaking children”(texastwoway.org). The educational and social constructs that have diminished educational opportunities for Spanish speaking students now have a valid solution to their language issues.

We have to keep in mind that it was parents of non-Spanish speaking students who pushed for dual language programs at Mesita. They understood the importance, and they obviously did not want their children growing up in a border city, without any Spanish speaking skills. Fourteen years at Mesita not only serves as testimony of a successful program, but it also validates the importance of creating more programs in other campuses.

Teachers under such programs serve as models for both English and Spanish and in EPISD. The Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos website describes their dual language program

by stating the follows, “the 50/50 design in which all students, kindergarten through middle school, receive approximately 50 percent of their instruction in Spanish and 50 percent of in English, in all subject areas.” This program can, and will be successful, but there are guidelines that need to be followed and it also needs strong support in what the program has to offer.

My research is shaped by my personal experiences as a teacher at Guillen Middle School and by interviewing teachers and administrator who have participated in dual language programs. I will inquire about challenges that teachers have encountered within the program. I will inquire about the relationships students were able to foster with other students while collaborating in learning a new language.

Several criterion imperative while conducting research are learning the challenges campus encounter when implementing these programs. Schools will face shortages of highly qualified teachers, teachers willing to teach subjects utilizing the 50/50 method, and attaining books compatible with such programs. Money is always an issue, and the lack of such a commodity is one of the stumbling blocks across the board. Training is also a crucial element. Learning about courses and strategies teachers must hone in preparation for dual language programs will be vital to my message’s success.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- What is dual language and what are the positive results?
- Why is bilingual education detrimental to our students, and how can dual language serve as a tool to illuminate failure, injustice and a lack of self-esteem in Second Language Learners (ELLs)?
- Why I believe programs like Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos has fostered characteristic of elitism over its students and community?
- How has the El Paso Independent School District failed to serve our ELLs?

- What does it take to implement a successful dual language program?
- What are some characteristics of a successful dual language program, campus, administrator, and teachers?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Why Dual Language Works, and the Incompetence of Bilingual Education**

“We strongly recommend that parents who refuse bilingual/ESL services for their children should be informed that their children’s long-term academic achievement will probably be much lower as a result. While the curricular mainstream may appear to speed their children’s acquisition of basic English, it does not lead to long-term academic success in English” – Wayne Thomas & Virginia Collier.

#### **2.1 A Brief History on Dual Language Education (DLE)**

Dual language education has always existed, and it is as old as language itself. Many elements such as politics, national power, and immigration, funding, education, poverty, money, and testing have all influenced and transformed the way dual language programs operate and how and why they are implemented. In the United States, dual language began with English colonization and its attempt to extend their empire. From the origins of our country to our present day, dual language has fluctuated in its perception, usage and implementation. Contemporary issues stifling dual language stem from politics, levels of education, lack of funding, poverty and high stakes testing like the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). As a result, districts across the state of Texas have implemented watered down, remedial bilingual education programs. Nonetheless, dual language education models exist, and they may vary slightly like the 90/10 and 50/50 models but, overall, they have successfully accomplished their goal of producing bilingual, biliterate and multicultural education for students.

Dual language research is at a very critical point in history. With funding, socioeconomic status, poverty, and the high stakes testing allowing remedial and watered down bilingual education to dominate instruction in schools, many campuses are producing lackluster results.

The lack of success has prompted educators and practitioners to look at the dual language system. If this program is utilized correctly, it can have astounding effects.

Presently, and for the past 40 plus years, our bilingual educational system has been less than productive in meeting the needs of second language learners. Such programs as English as a Second Language (ESL), where students are segregated from monolingual English speaking students, and taught separately, have failed to meet state requirements. Other bilingual programs such as transitional bilingual education and full English immersion have also proven to be detrimental to many students who are attempting to acquire English. With contemporary bilingual education needing reform, implementation of dual language programs has been on the rise across the entire country.

## **2.2 History of Bilingual and Dual Language Programs**

Since the inception of bilingual education in 1968 via the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, many experts view these bilingual programs as subtractive rather than additive. Since bilingual education's main objective has been to utilize a student's native language simply to guide the process to create monolingual English speakers, it has been met with controversy. This has led educators to focus on a multilingual education paradigm shift that debunks flawed traditional bilingual education strategies. This new way of rethinking bilingual education has led to a focus on another strategy that has a track record as long as traditional bilingual programs, dual language education.

Dual language has existed simultaneously alongside traditional bilingual education for a few decades now. Elena Izquierdo notes, "Dual language education has been in existence for more than forty years in the U.S." (Izquierdo, 2007). The revival of dual language education can

be dated to the early 1990s, but as Hurley (2000) describes “people are often surprised to discover that dual language instruction has been widely available in the United States since the beginning of its history as a nation.” Colonization is very crucial when looking at the whole spectrum of dual language and the controversy it comes with. When the brutal legacy of colonization is left un-scrutinized, the selection of a system that has denied and stripped students of their liberties to study and learn their own language and culture becomes a “choiceless choice” Beykont states. (24). A very important element in understanding the existence of both bilingual and dual language education is Britain’s colonization of North American continent. James Crawford, author of *Bilingual Education, History, Politics, Theory and Practice*, mentions that there were roughly 18 different dialects being spoken on Manhattan Island in 1664, not counting languages spoken by Indigenous tribes when New Netherland was surrendered to the British crown (19). With so many Brits and other Europeans seeking refuge in North America from persecution back home, people would have to seek a way to work and communicate with the diversity congregating in a new home. Undoubtedly, the English’s arrival to the Americas would bring drastic changes to everyone’s means of communication.

Whether fleeing persecution, or fleeing to colonize, immigration has been a constant occurrence in the history of the Americas. Colonization not only threatens the political, social, economical, and cultural traditions of a people, but it also encroaches on one’s native form of communication. Crawford goes on to state, that the English were unwilling to compromise their culture or language regardless if they were seeking refuge or claiming land for their country. The English decided their language would be the dominant language throughout the entire thirteen colonies by the latter part of the 1600s. Although languages from German, Dutch, French, Swedish and Polish were very commonly used and heard during the American Revolution,

English was the language imposed on the thirteen colonies. Spanish was also dominating in other areas of North America, but eventually those lands would also be taken over by soon-to-be Americans (19). With a diversity of people colonizing what became known as the thirteen colonies, it became important to implement and sustain effective bilingual or dual language programs.

Crawford states that regardless of where Europeans established their schools, a people's everyday language, whether English or another language was utilized in a student's education and it was a policy they all strictly followed. As early as 1694, in the city of Philadelphia, German-speaking Americans were establishing schools that were being instructed in their native language (19). Maintaining one's heritage and language was crucial in the survival and education of everyone who left their mother land. Keller and Van Hooft (1982) also state that the Continental Congress, for example, published a number of documents in German to assure accessibility for the large German-speaking minority. Excluding our indigenous tribes, everyone in this country can trace their existence to this country to ongoing phenomenon of immigration. Since migration has been a crucial aspect of our country's make-up, diversity has always been a staple of this country, and dual language instruction has always existed.

### **2.3 Dual Language and America**

While dual language has existed since colonial times it has not been a constant form of instruction. Political turmoil has caused it to fluctuate, and at times disappear completely in the name of nationalism. Ovando and Collier (1985) mention:

In the nineteenth century, non English or dual language instruction was offered in more than a dozen states in a variety of languages including German, Swedish, Norwegian,

Danish, Dutch, Polish, Italian, Czech, French, and Spanish. Both immigrants and Native Americans made instruction in two languages available for their children.

With a great influx of immigrants coming from Europe and the dominance of America and colonialism Indigenous tribes like the Cherokee attempted to sustain their existence by becoming highly literate in English. Before becoming literate in English, the Cherokee made sure they were literate and effective in their own language as Castellanos mentions:

The Cherokee established and operated an educational system of 21 schools and two academies, which enrolled eleven hundred pupils, and produced a population ninety percent literate in its native language. They used bilingual materials to such an extent that by 1852 Oklahoma Cherokees had a higher English literacy level than the White populations of either Texas or Arkansas (17).

The fact that the Cherokees were able to surpass whites in English literacy competency demonstrates that becoming literate in one's primary language has positive effects in the mastery of a second language. Maintaining a student's first language in the process of learning a second language is one of many goals dual language education has been successful at accomplishing. Maintaining one's native language was important in the success of acquiring English as a second language for the Cherokee. This formula continued to flourish with the flow of immigrants from Europe as well.

As mentioned earlier, Germans who migrated to the United States were allowed to keep their language and culture alive during colonization and after the American Civil War. Their ability to sustain their language was a success throughout the decades and in large part because they continued to use it to educate their children. Castellanos noted that, German immigrants

were crucial in the origins and integrations of dual language during the mid-nineteenth century when they opted to build bilingual school systems in the Midwest. German communities across the Midwest responded to politician's demands to employ German-English dual language education. By 1839, and the latter part of the century, Ohio reported 17,584 pupils that were studying and acquiring the German language by employing dual language programs and the majority of the students were learning German in the elementary level (18-19). Both the Cherokee and the Germans were able to learn English, but not before implementing and learning their native language first. Although Germans were very successful in maintaining their language alive while also learning English, political and economic foreign agendas would later alter this bilingual education philosophy.

The twentieth century brought about drastic changes in the way dual language was being perceived, especially for German communities. With the United State choosing to enter World War I in support of Britain against Germany in 1917, Germany's privileges of sustaining their culture and language was in peril. Terrence Wiley added that, even though many Germans had hoped America would side with Germany in the conflict, they were quick to proclaim their loyalty to the United States when the U.S. declared war on Germany. Their loyalty and support was published in German-American newspapers, but nonetheless, an anti-German sentiment spread like wild fire during 1917 and 1918. Paranoia in the U.S. caused mass propaganda against German-Americans. Germans were being blamed of conspiring with Native Americans and influencing them to reject the armed services, regardless if Native Americas rejected the war on grounds stemming from deep hate of the U.S. government for usurping their lands with broken treaties, lies and deceit (221).

Anxiety along with paranoia forced the Council of Defense to investigate loyalty and patriotism in the state of Nebraska where a very dense German population resided. The Council argued that they were above the Constitution when dealing with cases of “hesitating patriots.” Therefore, many of the German suspects were revoked from judicial review, the right to a lawyer, and the right to know the charges imposed on them. Locations such as schools, universities, churches, and unions, where the use of the German language was common, became prime targets for the Council. Eventually the use of the German language was labeled as evidence of disloyalty to the United States, and by December 1917, all foreign languages were banned from the state of Nebraska, including German (228). With the country entangled in a global conflict, foreign language education was put on the backburner, not only in Nebraska but across the entire nation. With World War I raging, and eventually WWII adding fear to foreign languages, bilingual education continued to suffer. Political and economic pressure always contributes to the rise and fall of immigrant tolerance and dual language education. As WWI and II infused fear and suspicion on foreign language, the Cold War forced the U.S. to rethink the importance in investing in more than one language.

The Cold War was no different from the previous two wars in altering perspectives in dual language education. What WWI and II dissolved in our foreign language instruction, the Soviet Union and the Cold War positively altered the United States’ views on dual language integration. Hurley states that after World War II, two super powers came out of the destructive war, the United States and the Soviet Union. In 1957, the Soviets declared to the world their superiority by launching Sputnik. This caused the United States to react and reconsider their educational policies that eventually led to the National Defense Education Act of 1958. The Soviet’s successful launch of Sputnik prompted the United States to acknowledge the study of

foreign languages as vital to the defense of the country, and influenced the act to assist in providing monies to teach foreign languages (Hurley, 7). A scientific, political and technological achievement by our major foe during the Cold War forced the country to invest its time and monies to dual language education once again, and these intangible forces such as politics, wars, technology and immigration continue to influence implementation of dual language instruction.

Political influence on dual language and other bilingual programs is crucial to their success or lack of it. Yet, another element that is crucial when looking at dual language education is immigration. As Hurley notes:

During that same period that the National Defense Education Act of 1958 was signed, the Cuban revolution (1958) brought a flood of educated Cuban refugees to Florida. In 1963, in response to the needs of the Cuban community, the Coral Way Elementary School in Dade County, Florida, was established. Coral Way offered dual language instruction for both Cuban and non-Hispanic children (7).

Political unrest always causes people to immigrate to other countries, and for many, the one country they relocate to is the United States. In this case, it was the educated Cubans who sought refuge in the U.S., and not the poor; as a result Hurley states that the program was very well supported financially by public and private sources because they were servicing people who were of a middle class status. These dual language programs were also regarded as high level instructional courses unlike previous programs, and they were not considered low quality or corrective education (7). Issues such as policies, socioeconomic and levels of education have determined the access and availability of dual language programs for students. Yet, another deterrent of dual language accessibility lies in state accountability high stakes testing.

## **2.4 TAKS TEST, Transitional Bilingual Education and Early Exit Strategies**

With state accountability being at the forefront of how bilingual education is being employed, Texas along with the entire nation has strictly followed transitional bilingual programs. The primary objective of these transitional bilingual programs is to serve limited English proficient (LEP) in acquiring English. As stated by Hurley:

Transitional programs serve students who are limited English proficient. The goal of transitional programs is to develop a student's proficiency in English by using the primary language for instructional support until students have reached satisfactory levels of English proficiency (14).

Transitional bilingual programs are not meant to hone a student's primary language; they are primarily used as a stepping stone to fully immerse a student in English-only classrooms.

Transitional programs are supposed to help students for a maximum of three to four years before a student is expected to enroll in English only courses. Hurley states that students are expected to be ready to function in English-only classrooms within three years in these transitional programs (12). These bilingual programs have one primary goal in mind and that is to make students proficient in one language, English. A student's primary or native language is not fostered long enough to make them proficient and effective speakers, writers, and readers in their native language. Their native language is utilized as a transitional conduit to a full monolingual English speaker. Thomas and Collier emphasize that transitional bilingual programs operate in a subtractive way by removing the importance of a student's primary language in order to learn English. The goal is to create monolingual students by enforcing English as the only and elite language of instruction and communication (62). These programs eventually strip

more than just a student's language and create a sense of inferiority. This hinders an entire school from meeting the needs of their students. Yet, these programs are widely used.

Transitional bilingual programs have been commonly used across the national educational system because of government policies that favor English. Such actions are taken because there is a lack of knowledge and a misconception regarding what is considered a minority language. Unfortunately results from these programs have not been up to par, and the consequences resulting from bilingual education continue to be an ongoing investigation in determining the pros and cons of it. Cummins adds that, in years past both parents and policy makers had dampened several bilingual programs because they were uneasy with their children receiving an education utilizing a language other than the dominant language, English. These misunderstandings regarding bilingual education, have been resolved with consistent success resulting from such programs as dual language.

There are a number of problems inherent in transitional programs. One problem is that transitional programs are diminishing models that basically produce monolingual students who do not benefit from enrichment learning provided by dual language education. The focus is on ESL students and how they can be "fixed" to speak English only. This process does not allow cooperative learning and excludes monolingual English speaking students. Furthermore, assessment tests that determine whether a student makes the transition to all English classes are not accurate. The majority of these tests only measure a student's basic day to day language skills and fall short of measuring a student's proficiency in their academic language growth. When this happens, students are placed in English only classrooms, and they end up falling short of academic expectations. Howard Smith, author of "Dual-Language Programs, Lessons from Two Schools," stated in one of his reports that a principal from one of the two schools being

studied was horrified when she reviewed data showing students who were subjected to early exits from bilingual education performed very low once they reached the upper level elementary grades. Ultimately, she realized the importance of building a strong Spanish foundation for her English-language learners. She chose to implement dual language education to build on her ELL Spanish literacy skills prior to instructing them in English (9). Dual language allows students to firmly grasp their native Spanish literacy skills before allowing them to attempt English. Students are also provided with ample time, usually exceeding seven years to fully grasp, understand, and learn how to effectively communicate in their primary language. Once students have attained their native language, they will be able to apply those universal skills to learning the formalities and the intricacies that come with learning a second language.

Not only are transitional programs stripping away the most important cultural asset students bring to the classroom, but as the Texas Two-Way website mentions, transitional programs marginalize students because they foster and promote “deficit theories, segregation and remediation. These programs are geared strictly toward assimilating students both culturally and linguistically, which ultimately continues inequalities between LEP and non-LEP students.” With transitional models focusing on student’s transition to English while slowly diminishing the use of their native language, researchers have begun to stress the importance of becoming bilingual and biliterate. Thomas and Collier stress that “Two-way programs do more than effectively educate limited English proficient students. These programs take us on a long awaited path toward educational and social justice.” (1) These models are not new to the realm of bilingual education, and the implementation of two-way dual language programs have proven to be effective in developing bilingual, biliterate, and bringing about hope for social equity and narrowing the achievement gap.

## 2.5 Models of Dual Language Programs

When implemented correctly and effectively, dual language programs successfully allow students to acquire two languages equally. Kathryn Leary, author of *Dual Language Education*, describes dual language education (DLE) by stating “DLE has a variety of names in addition to dual language. These include, bilingual immersion, two-way bilingual immersion, two-way immersion, two-way bilingual, Spanish immersion (or whatever the target language is, combined with the word immersion), and developmental bilingual education (DBE – because of the name of the funding provided by the US Department of Education for this type of program)” (30). Although dual language education is known by a variety of names, one crucial element that is universal with all of these descriptive names is maintenance of the primary language.

Dual language education has existed in one way, shape, or form since antiquity. As far back as communication has existed, so has dual language education. In the United States, acquiring of two or more languages has been in existence since colonial times. Hurley explains that people are often surprised to discover that dual language instruction has been widely available in the United States since the beginning of its history as a nation (5). Although this type of language education has fluctuated in its use, and at times disappeared from several teaching institutions, it has always existed. In the United States, dual language programs have begun to gain more recognition; especially since traditional bilingual education has not produced as expected.

## **2.6 Dual Language and Maintaining a Student's Primary Language**

The language maintenance program operates just like the title conveys. It is meant to be “pluralistic and promote bilingual and biliteracy for language minority students.” (Hurley13) This program is also known for being very effective because its primary goal is to maintain a student's native language and to encourage students to speak, write, read and analyze in their native language. Research has proven that when students acquire a solid foundation in their native languages, those universal skills automatically transfer to the second language with greater efficiency and ease. It is like constructing a home or a building; when students have a solid foundation in their native language, it assists them in acquiring a second language that much faster.

What is crucial to note in regards to maintenance of one's native language is how well it promotes and fosters a student's self-esteem. It is very important to provide students with positive learning environments especially when learning new concepts and a new language. Leary states that an entire school program must adopt an integrate bilingual and immersion instruction in order to produce effective results. Successful bilingual programs have shown to be byproducts of school systems that strongly advocate and support bilingual immersion and dual language. This support must come from the superintendent of the district, local board of education, and the principal.

Along with a principal's unwavering support, he must also be very knowledgeable about the program (42). When students become aware that their campus and their entire district is supportive of their language, culture and authentic learning it gives them confidence and enhances their educational journey. One complaint that has been synonymous with student

failure is parent participation in a student's education. Ensuring parents that their child's native language is to be fostered, respected, and utilized in their child's learning can only bring about support from parents and family.

## **2.7 Dual Language Education (DLE) and Immersion Programs**

Dual language education and immersion programs are similar in the way they are structured, but as Leary mentions, they do differ in one important aspect regarding the makeup of classrooms and students who partake in both programs (30). One very distinct difference is that dual language education operates by combining native and non-native speakers of the language being acquired or targeted. According to Leary, immersion programs steer away from such combination by excluding language minority students. Therefore, immersion programs tend to operate more like an elitist educational system, rather than an inclusive one, because the program aims to add another language to monolingual English students, yet, rejects the idea of honing a student's native language when it is another language other than English.

In DLE classroom settings, the objective is to integrate native English speakers along with target-language-dominant students in order to promote strong bilingual skills, foster scholarly results, and encourage healthy and positive cultural attitudes amongst students. In the United States, it is common for DLE programs to integrate students who utilize the two most commonly mediums of communication, Spanish and English. In classrooms settings, both native Spanish and native English speaking students are combined to promote, equity in acquiring both languages. As stated by Cummins:

In dual language classrooms, Spanish first (L1) and English L1 students that follow the same curriculum with instruction through Spanish usually for at least 50 percent of the time from

Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The goal of the program is to develop strong bilingual and biliteracy skills among both groups of students. Each group acts as linguistic models for the other. (1)

Since both languages are used 50 percent of the time to teach every student, equality is established immediately. Furthermore, Leary mentions that it is imperative to understand that DLE clearly values and respects the language and culture of the language minority students, and on top of that, each student is treated authentically equal regardless of their national background (32). The goal and focus of dual language, two-way programs are to create a modeling system where students participate in the language acquisition of each student. This type of cooperative learning enhances the language acquisition process in its entirety and it also teaches students the importance of valuing each other as individuals.

Administrators, educators, and parents may have their doubts about welcoming and implementing dual language programs, but these models have a very successful track record stemming from the 1960s. Dual language immersion programs have their origins in Canada dating back to 1965. The immersion program was employed by the well known Saint-Lambert experiment with a focus on French. As stated on their website:

The French immersion is a proven program to second language developed in Canada. The success of the program and the supporting research quickly spread across Canada and the first French immersion school in Manitoba opened its doors at École Sacré Coeur in 1973. By 2004-2005, 300,628 children or 7.18% of total school enrolments in public schools were registered in French immersion programs in Canada (Canadian Parents for French, 2006).

One of the main reasons this immersion program has been so successful in Canada is because they make certain that students are fully competent and skilled in their native language while attaining mastery in English. Their goals are to “develop linguistic competency in the French language as well as mastery of the English language. Linguistic competency in French is defined as the ability to communicate for both personal and professional needs” (1). If there is one misconception about being bilingual along the U.S./Mexican border, it is that one is bilingual if they can sustain a personal Spanish conversation in one setting and a personal English conversation in another setting. Immersion programs educate students to have both a personal conversation and professional one in two languages.

In DLE programs, the main focus is on the curriculum and how all the areas pertaining to the curriculum are “taught in a second language – this language being the medium, rather than the object, of instruction.” A DLE program not only groups second language learners with native speakers, but its goal is to eliminate competition between native and non-native speakers. This eliminates a lot of pressure from second language learners in their learning process to master a second language.

With the dual language instruction, second language learners are not pressured or expected to effectively speak, read, and write in their second language immediately, and they are allowed to express themselves and communicate in their native language. It is imperative that students feel comfortable in expressing themselves in their native language because that allows them to foster a sense of security in learning a new language and maintaining theirs. Student’s input in second language acquisition is crucial, but a well qualified teacher is also needed to facilitate the entire process.

Teachers are expected to be well qualified, speak the student's native language, and to fully meet the needs of second language learners throughout the entire process. Teachers are to foster student's first language by providing instruction in both core and language arts classes using a child's native language. Furthermore, in order to maximize a student's comprehension in their second language, teachers must conduct their classes in the language being studied. While instructing students in their second language, teachers organize instruction in a manner that will guarantee full comprehension as well.

## **2.8 Results of Dual Language Two-Way Immersion Programs**

It is no mystery that students will broaden their opportunities if they learn more than one language. Research has proven that students make equal or accelerated progress in learning a second language as those students who are being taught in English classes. Crawford notes that students who partake in well-structured bilingual programs for an average of four to five years are surpassing other students in non-bilingual programs and sometimes outperform students whose native language is English. Unfortunately these success stories never get publicized or receive the recognition they deserve to promote the benefits of learning one's native language while acquiring a second one (19). A student's primary language is very important to learn and hone if schools are going to require students to attain a second language like English. Research has proven that a student is more inclined to learn a second language once they have fully become competent in their native language. Therefore, students should be immersed in classrooms that teach them in their native language too.

Research has also proven that second language learners do not squander their time or fall behind when learning their native language and learning English. Contrary, learning important

native language skills promotes and adds to the process of acquiring English faster and more proficient. (Crawford 19) Dual language two-way immersion classrooms have been highly effective that not only are students making gains in their language acquisitions skills, but they are also having great success in other subjects such as math, science, social studies and liberal arts. Another important aspect about immersion classes is that they become cognizant of social issues that pertain to both languages and cultures. Hurley states, when students have the ability to speak, write, read and analyze in both their native and second language, they also create awareness of the social and cultural elements of the new language they acquired (15). This particular element that dual language education adds to students becomes a very important component when the process of acquiring mutual respect amongst all students in a classroom. The connections between language and culture will be further explored in the dual language/multicultural education section.

## **2.9 Two-Way Dual Language Immersion Programs in the United States**

Two-way dual language immersion programs are considered to be a combination of maintenance bilingual instruction and immersion instruction. These programs have been successfully implemented in Southern California starting in the mid 1970s and 1980s. San Diego, California schools were experiencing a high influx of students who spoke a smattering of English or none at all. Leary mentions, that there was great interest at both the state and national level in integrating programs that would best serve the new language minority students. Therefore, the United States Department of Education, and the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) decided to investigate DLE models. Schools who were interested in

implementing a 90:10 dual language model formed a group, and their decision to do so would eventually become very influential amongst other cities and states (33).

At River Glen Elementary School, in northern California, a group of kindergarten children starts school each year in a classroom where Spanish is used 90 percent of the time and English 10 percent of the time (Hurley 17). Leary elaborates on the 90:10 models by stating, that kindergarten and first grade students are instructed in the target language for 90 percent of the instructional time. The other 10 percent is devoted to English. This 90:10 set up, allows students to sharpen their language skills in their native language in the early school years while increasing their English usage. One-way model advocates for a strong emphasis on a student's native language in the primary years, and then it eventually progresses to a 50:50 model. One-way dual language models usually start with a 90:10 format, 90 percent primary language, and a 10 percent focus on a second language. What makes this model unique is that it elevates the status of the target language. Leary mentions since the target language is being utilized for a large portion of instructional time at the kindergarten and first grade levels, the target language status is more important, and in return, English speakers rely on the target language speakers in acquiring of the second language. Eventually the roles will change when instructional time moves to all English. When this happens, students assume different roles in the classroom. Now students who are polishing their target language skills, need to expand their learning to a new language (32).

By second grade, students progress to an 80:20, and by third grade, students are introduced to English literature, and begin to read in English too. Once students enter fourth, fifth and sixth grade, their core classes are provided 50 percent in English and the other 50 percent in Spanish or the target language. One-way dual language set-ups are generally geared

for schools with students who predominantly speak one language, but they are typically implemented with the intentions of working themselves up to a two-way 50:50 model.

Two-way dual language programs are feasible when there is a strong core of both English speakers and students with a solid foundation in the target language, for instance, English and Spanish. In this setting, students are mixed together, and class instruction is divided equally with both languages. Regardless of which model is employed, dual language differs from traditional bilingual classes, largely because it serves as an additive program that educates students in two languages. More so, dual language legitimately fosters both languages, unlike traditional bilingual classes whose ultimate goal is to transition students to all English classes once they attain a smattering of English.

Two-way immersion programs are successful because they effectively combine monolingual English speaking children in classrooms where they are learning a second language alongside students who are native to the second language, and who are considered English proficient students. In the United States, English is the de facto language, used in every aspect of our daily lives, but the second most utilized language in the country is Spanish. According to the History Mania website, in the year 2000, it was reported that 27.8 million people, approximately 10.5 percent of the population spoke Spanish, and surprisingly, the United States came in as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest speaking country behind countries like Mexico, Spain, Colombia, and Argentina. Another interesting fact pointed out by Phillip M. Carter from North Carolina State University is that Spanish was established and being used way before English landed on Plymouth Rock. He also states that both English and Spanish have coexisted in this country for nearly 400 years.

Since English and Spanish are the two most common languages utilized throughout the country, they are widely implemented in two-way dual language models. Two-way immersions programs are set up so Spanish and English speaking students are integrated in a classroom setting. These programs allow for students to work in a buddy-like system while attaining both languages. Izquierdo goes on to say that two-way programs also strive to achieve their goals of producing students who are able to use both languages at very high skilled levels, and at the same time, achieving academically at or above their grade level. Students also learn to respect and appreciate every culture, and language they are learning through the implementation and support of multicultural classroom environment (6). When students become competent in both targeted languages, they enrich their educational experience by adding twice the educational value. Carrillo and Smith reinforce this fact by stating that not only has dual language education proven to make students proficient in two languages, but it also expands their knowledge and appreciation of both language and culture. To expand on the benefits of DLE, Carrillo and Smith add that students begin to display very high success in all core academic subjects (xiv). DLE not only allows students to make great strides in language acquisition, but it also provides analytical skills that are universal in expanding a student's understanding of every subject. Hurley reinforces this phenomenon by stating that students have an edge on other students because they are bilingual, and biliterate (16).

## **2.10 Effectively Implementing a Dual Language Program**

Many advocates of dual language programs also stress several non-negotiable structures that need to be strictly followed when implementing these programs. Both Thomas and Collier highly recommend for students to participate for no less than six years in these programs to

achieve high proficiency. In regards to classrooms, and their organization and set up, they recommend that classes be well balanced with the number of students speaking English and Spanish. It is imperative that both teachers and administrators make sure both languages are separated carefully to achieve effectiveness (Hurley 18). Cummins reiterates this point by stating, when instruction is taking place, the ultimate rule in dual language programs is to keep both languages separate. The reason behind this important guideline is due to the fact that both languages have to establish themselves as separate systems in the minds of students. In order for this to be accomplished students need to have consistent instruction in both languages (3). Carrillo and Smith both state that both languages are to be kept apart from each other and never mixed while providing with instruction (5). This non-negotiable factor is imperative to achieve what dual language programs are set to accomplish. Separating both languages, instills a deep respect for both languages and provides ample time for students to build strong foundations in their respected native tongues.

Although there are two very effective models, the 90/10 and 50/50 programs both have demonstrated and achieved great success in schools across the country. Both Thomas and Collier recommend minority language receive greater emphasis in the early grades. Therefore they are both very supportive of the 90:10 models (16). When the minority language is emphasized and receives an equitable amount of respect as the language being learned, it helps with parent involvement at school, and in the child's education. On top of that, parents create a strong inclusive relationship with school and its staff.

## **2.11 Dual Language Instruction and Equality**

The Texas Two-Way Dual Language Education website notes that dual language instruction emphasizes equality of educational opportunity for both English and non-English-speaking children through an educational process that validates and fully develops both languages and instills a mutual respect for both language learners. Izquierdo goes on to add that dual language programs may vary slightly in how they are implemented, but the non-negotiable guidelines that come with dual language preserve integrity and productivity in reforming education by providing high levels of proficiency in L1 and L2; academic achievement at or above grade level in L1 and L2, and a respect for and an appreciation of all languages, all cultures (5). It is very important for both languages and cultures to share an equal amount of respect and attention. Fostering an environment of reverence for every language and culture a school serves will only enhance the chances of every child receiving a positive and productive education experience. With dual language education, equity is feasible because students collaborate and rely on each other for instruction. As Jim Cummins explains, “The goal of the program is to develop strong bilingual and biliterate skills among both groups of students. Each group acts as linguistic models for the other.” (1) Allowing each student to showcase their native language skills, and assist their peers in acquiring a different language is very empowering for each individual and dual language education is a living and breathing proof of such quality language education.

Elena Izquierdo argues that two-way dual language does not cap off its success when a second language has been acquired. It does more than simply educating a student to function in more than one language; it provides an equal status for both languages, and because every student in the classroom is a second language learner, it addresses the issue of equality by giving every student and equal opportunity (7). It is important to give each student a sense of belonging

in every classroom environment. When students are accepted because of whom they are, their confidence will allow them to make the learning process much more enjoyable.

Self-esteem is crucial in a student's success, and if schools do not foster a safe, environment that promotes respect for student's ethnicity and language, then our schools are doing a disservice to our students. Crawford mentions that a student's primary language needs to be preserved. This statement needs to be highly regarded when structuring educational philosophies and reforming antiquated curriculums that adhere predominantly to European based culture, politics, philosophies, literature and language.

## **2.2 The Benefits of Bilingualism**

What American schools need to understand and hastily digest is what Tomlinson and Eastwick stress about bilingualism. Being bilingual has always been perceived as the mark of an educated person and learning more than one language has always been respected in every society on this earth. Tomlinson and Eastwick both mention that being bilingual "has been considered the staple of an educated person" (1980). If being bilingual or trilingual is an important, fundamental element of what it means to be an educated and sophisticated human being, then why is the greatest country in the world not urgently acting to implement programs to facilitate such programs? Private institutions across the United States have always been strong proponents of dual language education, therefore; these quality language education programs have always been accepted and heavily recommended for students from affluent backgrounds.

Research reveals that dual language instruction has always been in high demand amongst people of middle and the upper class, and provided for. These language programs have been available, but unfortunately the availability has been for those who can afford it. The majority of

people have to settle for deductive programs like bilingual education. DLE has always been available in the United States, but it has been the people with wealth and power who have been the benefactors of such privileged programs. “For example, Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore, Maryland, established in 1885, offers French, Latin, Greek, German, and Spanish as enrichment for students in kindergarten through fifth grade” (Tomlinson & Eastwick, 1980). It is imperative to know that private institutions such as Bryn Mawr was educating their students in more than one language in 1885. This stinging fact needs to allow district leaders to reflect on the type of education we are providing our communities and students. District leaders should ask the crucial questions to see if they are truly doing the optimal to serve our students and their needs. It is clearly documented that private schools are doing what is best for their children, and it is coming in the form of multiple language education.

Hurley reported in 2000 that there were roughly 6,500 private educational institutions across the entire United States that were assisting their students with a variety of languages other than English (19). Private institutions know the importance of a dual language education has on a student’s future. They know the importance and the ramifications if they do not address an education enhanced by multiple language acquisitions. Amy Lutz (2004), states that research indicates that a student who become biliterate and bilingual have a higher probability of receiving a high school diploma than those students who opted to study under one language only (19). Researchers have demonstrated that a student who learns to speak and write academically in more than one language, ultimately becomes more analytical in all of their school subjects.

Dual language has produced very positive results and the socioeconomic elite in our country’s society have always aspired to provide dual language education to their children, unlike minority language groups who shun at the idea of implementing it (Hurley 19). Language

minority groups seem not to have an interest in learning their own language, yet they are very inclined at the idea of assimilating, and becoming monolingual English speakers. Unfortunately, our country deprives minority language groups of their native language, and this educational philosophy causes some to question the motive. Crawford attempts to shine a light on this elitist and ignorant phenomenon plaguing the United States. He asks, why should any country choose to become exclusive with one single language when the global economy covets and rewards those who can adapt to diversity (21)? Monolingual students will not have the skills needed to survive in a global economy that continues to require the use of more than one language. This statement has become a reality, especially with technology making such great advances and managing to shrink the world we live in.

### **2.13 Realistic Obstacles in the Implementation of Dual Language Education**

Dual language has proven to be a very successful program in servicing students in acquiring more than one language; however there is no such thing as a simple and easy solution or cure all remedy to the bilingual issues our schools face. Regardless of how beneficial and rewarding dual language education is, there are some issues that need to be addressed. Teachers have expressed they need complete support and empathy from their co-workers and campus administrators. Support is very crucial, more than people realize. The entire district has to be 100 percent supportive of these programs in order for them to have a legitimate chance of succeeding at all levels. Dual language education needs to be embedded in the district's curriculum, and administrators need to fully commit to the goals and demands of the curriculum. An entire paradigm shift has to occur within the entire system, because if a district or administration is not fully committed, then this message will indirectly affect the productivity and success of dual

language programs. Leary mentions the following, “In addition, the program must be viewed as a long-term enrichment program, comparable to specialized math or technology programs, as opposed to a temporary compensatory program, as is typical of most bilingual programs.” (43) Administrators need to put DLE of the same level of science, math and all other core subjects if they want to see legitimate results and full commitment for the program. The dual language program and its staff need this level of support, and it must come from the top.

In 1997, W.E. Lemberger, author of *Bilingual Education, Teacher’s Narratives*, reported from a study he conducted in regards to the importance of reliable management from administration that included feedback from a total of eight educators. The results of the study concluded that administrative support is imperative to the success of dual language education (18). When support is scarce or non-existent at the district and administrative level, it trickles down to faculty and staff. Negative attitudes will not only pave the way to the program’s failure, but they will ultimately isolate and shun students and their families from the entire educational process. When students feel excluded they fail, when parents feel unimportant, they fail to participate.

Since parent involvement is crucial to a student’s success, school districts need to provide a variety of services that serve parents who do not speak English. The majority of the time, parents are uneducated too, and they can easily feel inadequate when providing for their child’s education. If parents feel they cannot effectively communicate with their children’s teachers and administrators, many will not attempt to be engaged in their child’s education. A parent’s feeling of inadequacy is one major element for lack of involvement in a child’s education. It is imperative that schools take parents into consideration. If schools and their staff are unwilling to adopt and embrace their community’s culture and language, it may be detrimental to a student’s

learning. Furthermore, parent involvement will also be affected. If parents feel that a barrier exist because of language differences with their child's teacher and administrators, chances are parent involvement will diminish. The needs of parents have to be highly considered and addressed immediately and consistently.

## **2.14 Dual Language Teachers and Implementation**

Another problem that dual language education may face is dealing with implementing and sustaining it as students progress to the next grade level. Lemberger (1997) states the following, "A teacher could never be sure that what she taught in one grade would be followed up by another colleague. Native language development might not be supported and built upon from year to year depending on whether the receiving teacher understood the value of maintaining and using the native language." (18) Sustaining a high level of academic instruction across every subject is also an issue that can make or break dual language programs as well. Many teachers are known for providing watered-down instruction because of their misconception of the students they are servicing. Teachers may dumb-down their curriculum instruction if a child is a second language learner, a minority, a student coming from a low socioeconomic background, minority or coming from a single parent household. Leary states that one commonality found across every study that separates successful from unsuccessful schools is the attitude on the part of educators in that every student can and will learn and ultimately it is a school's responsibility for a child's learning (39). So, in order for DLE to succeed, teachers have to uphold their commitment to having high standards for every student regardless of the child's background. Teachers must truly believe in every student's ability to succeed. Teachers cannot fabricate these feelings either,

and that is why they need to be individuals who love the community and culture. They must also have full competency of both languages to ensure a solid chance of success.

### **2.15 Teachers, Competencies and Dual Language**

Although dual language education has proven to be a very successful program in acquiring more than one language, it does require well trained and competent teachers to ensure success. Carrillo and Smith both stress that teachers should be required to have the proper academic credentials, be knowledgeable in teaching integrated content and have great classroom managing skills. More so they should be well educated in dual language immersion programs. Teachers should also be required to be native or as proficient as a native in the languages they will be instructing in (69). As with any program, teachers should be held accountable in meeting the requirements and credentials necessary to properly facilitate a dual language program. Leary also argues that a teacher's racial and ethnic background can also divert the way a classroom operates. For instance, if teachers are not familiar with the cultural and language background of the community and students, miscommunication both verbal and non-verbal may come about (98). It is crucial for teachers to understand the cultural and language environment they will teach in. When teachers are unfamiliar with such elements of the culture and language within a school, prejudicial attitudes and resentment can be fostered against students and their community. Hurley also argues the following, "What defines a really effective and superior bilingual teacher, just like all good teachers, are attitude, familiarity, and expertise in the needs of their students and the topic being taught" (19). It is imperative for teachers to understand the community, and population they are servicing and the specific needs of the students they are

working with. Teachers must have an unwavering attitude of success as well, and they must have a very solid background in the languages they are teaching students to learn.

Teachers should be required to be bilingual and biliterate in both English and the target language. They also need to understand the importance of maintaining a student's primary language while students learn a new one. This is crucial because it is the teacher's responsibility to foster an environment suitable for students who are learning a second language. Moreover teachers are required to understand and appreciate student's ethnic backgrounds in a very sincere and authentic manner, unlike the superficial methods utilized by many districts across the United States. Hurley stresses the fact that teachers should also be required to be cognizant of the ethics and viewpoints that explain why students act the way they do inside the classroom. Understanding a student's culture along with having a keen understanding of the social context surrounding them, allows for a healthier and more efficient way to have consistent dialogue with parents, families and the communities their students come from (19).

Successful schools have a blueprint of hiring teachers who sincerely love the community, culture, language, and the students they are servicing. It is also a fact that success and high expectations are common in teachers that fully understand the social, political, and economical issues affecting their students and the communities they come from, as explained, "Understanding the historical and political contexts of bilingual education and of their students supports teachers' abilities to advocate for their students' needs in a climate increasingly characterized by hostility towards newcomers and diversity" (Hurley 20). Students need more than an effective dual language instructor; they need someone who will vigorously campaign for quality education, equality in program availability, and they need to feel a sense of security regardless of their background. Finally, teachers must be cognizant and fully aware of culture

and the essence of it. They have to be aware of the impact culture plays in a student's ability to adapt, learn, and succeed. Educators also need to be aware of social, political, and economical conflicts afflicting each specific culture (Hurley 20). If teachers and administrators strive to learn about their student's background, a more profound respect and relationship will be fostered amongst students and the entire staff members.

Collier and Thomas mention the importance of cultivating, nurturing and respecting of the multiple cultural heritages and the two most common languages present in the school. This will lead to friendships that are sure to cross social class and language barriers (11). Culture and language are crucial in the lives of our students. If educators are not sensitive and accepting of those two crucial elements, success in the classroom will be minimal.

Choosing teachers who are well qualified and strong proponents of dual language is crucial in fostering a successful program on every campus, and administrators need to be the ones advocating the entire process. Leary mentions that effective dual language schools have proven to have excellent leadership. Principals need to have very high expectations from teachers in effective schools. Administrators are also consistent in offering a great deal of support in both curriculum and instruction, where obviously solid leadership is needed in order to ensure sustainability and improvement during the entire process (98). The program has to be supported from the top in order for it to be effective and efficient in accomplishing its goals. If leadership fails to support and buy into the idea of dual language education, it is a matter of time before those below the administration follow as well.

Unfortunately, many programs are implemented in schools where district superintendents, administrators and teachers do not believe in the positive results dual language has to offer.

When dual language programs are not supported 100 percent from district leaders to faculty and staff, then the program becomes a drudge and unsuccessful.

## **2.16 The Goal of Multicultural Education in Dual Language**

“Multicultural education has an opportunity and a challenge to be counter-hegemonic. When such issues as racism, class privilege, and sexism are left silent in the classroom, the implicit message for students of color appears to be that the teacher and the school do not acknowledge that experiences of oppression exist.” – Fredrick Erickson 45

The primary objective of dual language education is to produce students who are bilingual, biliterate and multicultural. Educators often make the crucial mistake of lumping binlingual and multicultural education together. Hurley notes that they are both distinct and separate entities existing in the world of bilingual education and each with their own importance in their own rights (21). Administrators and curriculum writers are under the impression they are providing multicultural education to students by superficially adding a holiday, a historical event or a respected person from that culture into curriculums. Curriculums need to be inclusive, just like dual language education is. An entire educational paradigm shift has to occur at the district, administrative, teaching staff and curriculum writing areas in order to claim multicultural education.

Administrators and teachers need to understand the legitimacy and sincerity in teaching a student’s culture, and historical events that have shaped their culture politically, socially, and economically. For instance, Sonia Nieto mentions the shortcomings of our curriculums and pedagogy by stating that student’s life experiences are ignored rather than using them as a foundation to enhance their learning. The rich experiences that our students bring to schools, that include the lives of their parents, grandparents, and neighbors have been kept mute by our educational systems (XXV). Curriculum writers unsuccessfully attempt to make up for these

devastating educational multicultural voids by superficially adding historical morsels pertaining to their ELL students. Hurley goes on to state, that the mere sprinkling of information regarding a student's history and culture to the present curriculum does not change and reform the schools philosophy on education (21). The curriculum must be changed in order to meet the needs of every child. The country's demographics have always been diverse, and our population continues to move in that direction, yet our curriculums remain the same.

Curriculum are not being compatible and sincere in meeting the needs of student populations. C.E. Cortez, author of *Multicultural Education, A Curricular Basic for our Multiethnic Future*, points out that, multicultural education is the beginning process of reforming education institutions or reconstructing them in order to maximize every student's ability, and to allow students to have an equitable opportunity to learn in a comfortable and democratic environment (Cortes, 1990). Multicultural education is important to the implementation and success of dual language education. In order to validate a student's culture and language, curriculum need to provide literature related to their students. This is one way students will be able to tap into their prior knowledge, and life experiences to enhance their learning. An educator's duty is to empower students, and one way to accomplish this goal is by allowing students to utilize life experiences and their cultural background to enhance their learning. Hurley goes on to mention the following:

Cortez sums up his definition of multicultural education as 'a continuous, integrated, multiethnic, multidisciplinary process for educating all American students about diversity, a curricular basic oriented toward preparing young people to live with pride and understanding in our multiethnic present and increasingly multiethnic future.(22)

It is imperative for the entire country to adopt multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual educational strategies and curriculums. American students need the exposure of other cultures, language, and perspective in order to accomplish a democratic society for all, and an appreciation for everyone who resides in this country and educates themselves in our schools. Hurley mentions that curriculum should be obligated in providing genuine diversity throughout a student's education (22). He goes on to cite the following, "Multicultural education is not a program that is implemented on Monday or in January, but a total rethinking of the way we do schooling in a diverse society with a democratic civic framework." (Hurley 22) Dual language instruction and multicultural education are essential in meeting the needs of every American student. James A. Banks reiterates this stating the following, "Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students regardless of their gender and social class and ethnic, racial, cultural characteristics should have an equal opportunity to learn in school" (3). Curriculum need to be completely revamped with intentions of providing a democratic and comprehensive culturally diverse education for every child in schools. These two components go hand in hand in providing a quality and equitable education.

When a student's primary language is revered, utilized, and held equally as English, "it enhances their preparation to function in an increasingly pluralist environment. In other words, bilingual education that values and promotes bilingualism and biliteracy is multicultural as well" (Hurley 23). To sum up Hurley mentions, "bilingualism is an asset in an increasingly multicultural society and a global economy. When we provide a bilingual education to all students we meet many of the goals embodied in broad definitions of multicultural education (23).

## **2.17 Connections between Dual Language and Multicultural Education**

An important aspect of learning and making connections with new information requires utilizing prior knowledge. Prior knowledge is imperative when attempting to assimilate, synthesize, and analyze new information. So the connection between these two is as Hurley states, that an education must tap into a student's understanding of the world around them, as foundation process and an asset for learning and dual language and multicultural education advocate such process (23). Utilizing a student's knowledge of the world as a source for learning, analyzing and synthesizing ideas is imperative to higher learning and high levels of cognition. Both cultural experiences and their ability to use primary language skills allow for students to enjoy a richer education.

Language has always played an important role in the lives and success of people. Language is the one tool that allows us to survive and make sense of the world around us as mentioned, "For all students, language is perhaps the single most important aspect of culture, since language is the primary means by which each of us is enculturated, i.e., brought into our particular communities of behavior and belief"(Hurley 23).

## **2.18 The Costs of Dual Language Implementation**

The success of dual language across the entire country and in the state of Texas, which include high academic effectiveness and the promotion of linguistic inclusiveness has prompted many districts and schools to adopt one of two models provided by the program. Surprisingly, such success was never studied, nationally or statewide. There are no records to account for the cost a dual language program incurred while implemented. Information regarding educational

programs on ELLs is very important for all stakeholders, and this includes policy makers and current administrators who are thinking of utilizing dual language education at their campuses. With so much success, Senator Florence Shapiro (Chair, Texas Committee on Education) requested several Texas universities to conduct a cost analysis on dual language education (5, 2005).

Sam Houston State University, Texas A&M University and the University of Texas at Pan American were chosen to conduct the cost analysis for the Texas Education Agency. The 2005 report stated that an online survey was distributed to every existing dual language (DL) program and to every district within the state of Texas. The survey included 83 out of a total of 166 DL programs established in Texas. 48 districts were represented in the survey and the percentage of surveys returned was 50 percent.

Two research questions that guided part of the analysis included the following:

How much does a DL program cost per pupil above and beyond the typical transitional bilingual program? Assuming the dual language class is not appreciably smaller than the typical bilingual classroom, what would be the additional management costs, staff costs, instructional costs, curriculum costs, equipment costs, material costs, assessment costs, staff development costs, and parent involvement costs? (Texas Dual Language Program Cost Analysis, 5-6, 2005)

According to the results, the bigger the dual language program, the cheaper the cost. A large program projected a cost of \$290 per student; \$406 per student in a medium sized program; and \$879 per student in a small program. Regarding the cost of implementing a 50:50 or 90:10 models showed that both programs are roughly the same in cost. The largest expense overall was in the managerial category for all three dual language sizes; but as stated earlier, the larger

the program, the more the cost diminishes. Furthermore, the two-teacher set up turned out to be the least expensive model to implement and the most commonly used teacher model.

It was concluded that as the size of program increases, so will the funding from the federal government. Out of 25 large dual language programs, 22 of them reported receiving federal funds.

Aside from the financial aspect of dual language education, it is important to note what successful schools are doing. The report stated that the following components were crucial in the success of any DL program, “Increased staff development, parental involvement programs, extended hours, strong educational leadership, quality curriculum, and early and sustained interventions as elements of strong, research-based programs. All of these components may incur costs above any basic program implementation.” (7, 2005)

Any proven program known to produce great results will have its cost. Regardless, the cost should be insignificant when putting the costs of ineffective transitional bilingual education, high number of dropouts, an uneducated work force and a large incarcerated population. Thomas and Collier state that the cost of a well polished dual language program is very comparable with the cost of any bilingual program (3-4, 2003). They also add, “The instructional infrastructure of dual language programs provide greatly increased educational productivity because it offers full rather than partial achievement gap closure at annual costs comparable with existing programs” (4, 2003).

## **2.19 Dual Language Education in Houston, Texas**

Houston, TX has a Latino population of 50 percent, an African American population of 33 percent and a Euro American population of 10 percent. Research regarding the implementation of dual language was conducted in Houston's largest school district. In The Houston Independent School District (HISD) which serves over 210,000, the Houston ISD Multilingual Program opted to employ a 90:10 dual language program. (Colier, Thomas 5). Every district and community is different, so it is imperative for administrators to consider the needs of that specific location and student population. The 90:10 dual language model is geared to building a solid foundation in a student's native language, in this case, Spanish. The reasoning behind this particular concept originates from research that has proven that a child will adapt and learn a second language more efficiently when they have learned their primary language first. Such proven research needs to be heeded by districts, administrators and educators. Houston Independent School District has affirmed their decision to support dual language education by making it a requirement to implement it.

The state of Texas has passed legislation making it mandatory for every elementary school in the city of Houston to provide English language learners with bilingual programs. Collier and Thomas say, the law states that if there are more than 20 students speaking a common native language in a particular grade, transitional classes would be provided. These classes would provide services with certified bilingual instructors ready to serve Spanish speaking students across the district (6). Since it is a federal law to provide students with quality primary language education, district superintendments, administrators, and teachers need to realize the importance of servicing our English language learners. Furthermore, the 90:10 model

proved to be so successful in HISD campuses, that both one-way and two-way dual language instruction was expanded throughout the entire district.

It did not take long for two-way bilingual education to show promise and success. Two elementary campuses had very positive results with two-way bilingual classes that it prompted “Superintendent Rod Paige and the Houston school board to approve the expansion of one-way and two-way dual language schools throughout the school district” (Collier, Thomas 6). One-way and two-way bilingual immersion programs have been so successful that Houston ISD has expanded their availability. Thomas and Collier state the following, “as of 2002, 56 one-way (labeled developmental bilingual in Houston) and two-way (labeled bilingual immersion) dual language programs have been implemented, for grades K-8<sup>th</sup> (6). As in many cases, Houston ISD had campuses that were not ready to employ a 50/50 dual language program, so they opted to go with the 90:10 models. Thomas and Collier state that the 90/10 served as the “model for transitional classes as well as dual language classes for consistency as students move from school to school (6). The goal of 90/10 programs is utilized to build a strong and solid foundation in a student’s primary language. Each year, the percentage of English being provided as instruction for students increases 10 percent. By the time students reach the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they are immersed in a two-way, 50/50 dual language program.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **El Paso Independent School District: The Scarcity and Necessity of Dual Language Education**

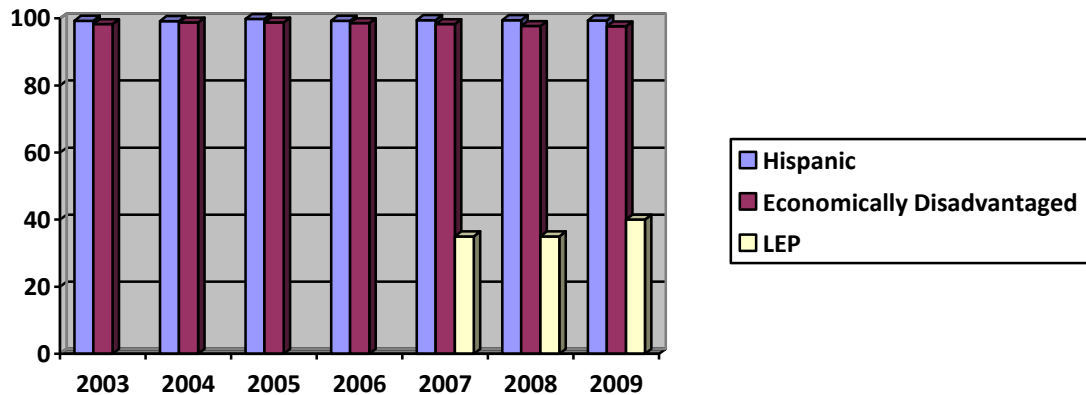
In this chapter, I will provide information regarding Guillen's student demographics, economic status and Language English Proficiency (LEP) population. I will present information from my personal experiences at Guillen Middle School, and I will also include an interview I conducted with a colleague of mine, Gloria Arias, who works with ESL students. I will also include information from an interview I conducted with a former Hart Elementary and Guillen Middle School teacher currently working as a risk-coordinator at Wiggs Middle School. I will also include interviews I conducted with Sandra Spivey (Dual Language Coordinator and Assistant Principal) from Mesita Elementary, and Cecilia Phillips (Dual Language Coordinator) from El Paso High School. I was also fortunate to find a Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Project End of Year Report PY 2007-2008, that helped me with some of the facts I needed to prove the success of dual language education. The report shines light on inequalities and inconsistencies in lesson plans and curriculum objectives, adding to the arguments of this thesis.

Overall, the report exposes some of the shortcomings related to the district's mission statement. It also serves as an indicator of how curriculums are not meeting the needs of many students. Most importantly, it demonstrates the potential dual language education (DLE) can have in a child's education. Furthermore it strongly asserts that DLE must be implemented at every campus across EPISD in order to service the needs of student who wish to acquire both languages. When the district accomplishes this much needed goal, then it can claim to be meeting the needs of every child and it can declare they are working toward stopping all forms of elitism by providing a more democratic educational opportunity.

### 3.1 Guillen Middle School

The following chart is provided to highlight facts on Guillen and the community. The information was obtained from the TEA website.

2003-2009 Demographics for Guillen Middle School



At Guillen Middle School, the student population is 99 percent Latino and the economically disadvantaged level for families and students does not dip below the 97.0 percentile. More so, El Paso is considered to be one of the top five poorest cities in the country and the majority of the city's poverty is centered along the southern section of the city. Many schools across the city are labeled as economically disadvantaged as well, but not many can compare to Guillen's student demographics and level of income for residents residing in the Guillen area. Mesita, Wiggs and El Paso High, the three schools I make reference to, may have high percentages of economically disadvantaged students, but nothing compared to levels at Guillen.

The improvement of a community starts with a solid education. In order to positively change the socioeconomic levels of this community, Guillen and its students need proven

educational programs that will positively change student perspectives on education, equity, and perception of being legitimately accepted. Although there is no panacea for the issues confronting Guillen, one way to positively move toward success and equity begins with implementing dual language education.

For years, every elementary school that feeds into Guillen Middle has relied on subtractive, bilingual programs. Albertina Valdez, a former Hart bilingual teacher, stated that the goal of the bilingual programs was to foster the Spanish language while acquiring English. The program started with 90 percent instruction in Spanish and worked itself up to 50 percent English and 50 percent Spanish. She also mentioned that the goal of bilingual education was to transition students to English only classes by the third or fourth grade. By fifth or sixth grade, students would cease taking Spanish classes, and all of their educational instruction would be conducted in English. The irony here is that they call this program “bilingual,” when in reality, the goal is to create monolingual English students.

These bilingual programs foster philosophies that go against successful ones like dual language education. According to the Connecting Worlds Mundos Unidos EPISD website, their goals at both Mesita and Wiggs are, “to integrate second language acquisition and GT strategies with the goals of achieving high academic excellence and dual language proficiency in Spanish and English for all students.” Dual language education offers students high levels of academic instruction and rigor across the entire curriculum, yet campuses like Guillen are not utilizing these programs. So how is the district legitimately attempting to empower our students at Guillen by not providing dual language education? How is the district advocating equal opportunity and access to every child in the district, when not every student benefits from proven strategies such as those implemented in GT? There is no equity when students at one campus are enjoying

proven and successful dual language programs and another campus continues to struggle with antiquated, dead end programs.

Guillen implements bilingual education with English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. The program exits ESL students who are “ready” in as early as two years after beginning school in the United States. After four years of ESL instruction students must enter monolingual English classes, despite their efficiency level of the English language. Just this year, Guillen has placed students who have been in the United States for merely two years in all English courses. Not only is the campus violating the ruling in *Lau v. Nichols*, but it is also out of compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI. The landmark Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols* states that a student’s rights are violated when they are being taught in a language students do not fully comprehend. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI, states that it is illegal to discriminate against a person’s race, sex or national origin. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VI website states the following: “Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students.” Not only are students rights being violated in such cases, but the district and the campus is failing to heed the research that boldly states that it takes a minimum of 6-8 years for anyone to acquire a new language. Unfortunately, English as Second Language (ESL) students at Guillen are being exited from language programs hastily.

Mrs. Arias, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Acquisition Middle School Program (LAMP) teacher at Guillen with over 25 years of teaching experience, mentioned that students are supposed to exit ESL courses as soon as possible. The reason behind such quick exits is because students are

required to take the math and science TAKS test within their first year. Students are also required to take the LAT reading, math and science exams with accommodations. Mrs. Arias also revealed that students who are recent arrivals from Cd. Juarez are required to learn English in a year. Students are expected to take the TAKS test within two years of being enrolled in EPISD. By the second year, these students are taking the TAKS test with accommodations.

The TAKS test has become an oppressive system for second language learners. Teachers are also under tremendous pressure to teach students to learn English well in a short period of time because of the test. Students are being rushed to learn a foreign language, when in reality they have not learned their native language effectively. This is a very toxic and detrimental bilingual and educational process. Studies have shown that it takes a student a minimum of seven to eight years for them to acquire a language fluently. Yet in many cases, they are being exited after two years. Research has also proven students acquire a second language much easier and effectively only when they have acquired their native language completely. Teachers, on the other hand, cannot be effective when their goal is to give students a crash course in English because of mandatory high stakes testing imposed by the state.

Another interesting piece of information Mrs. Arias shared with me is in regards to bilingual education at the elementary level. She stated that there are a few teachers in elementary who refuse to teach their students in English. They rely too much on Spanish to educate their students. This causes problems because when the students get to junior high, they have had very little English exposure and very limited understanding of the language itself. If we continue to exclude students from dual language education and gifted and talented programs because they failed an assessment test, then we as a district and educators are doing a disservice to the entire community we are supposed to serve.

Mesita, the first campus to implement dual language education, has had the program for fourteen years now. Their program operates under the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Project which implements dual language education combined with Gifted and Talented strategies. The El Paso Independent School District and Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Project End-of-Year Report PY 2007-2008 report stated on September 30, 2008 that EPISD had implemented the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Project for twelve years. The program was operating through the Jacob K. Javits grant for five years, but the funding ended in 2009. The report also states that these three campuses, Mesita, Wiggs and El Paso High have had the luxury of being the only campuses across the United States to employ dual language projects for gifted students. Dual language education is designed to begin at Mesita for all “Project students;” they continue with the program at Wiggs Middle, and finally complete their dual language acquisition at El Paso High.

Mesita Elementary is located in a well to do neighborhood on the Westside of town. 2006 demographics reported that 82.4 percent of the student population was Hispanic, 57.8 percent economically disadvantaged, 36.3 percent were labeled limited English, 51.1 percent were considered at-risk, and 29 percent gifted. Mesita Elementary has utilized a dual language program fostered and driven by the gifted and talented program. It currently serves students who meet GT requirements up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. After the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the majority of Wiggs students attend El Paso High (EPH), which opted to provide dual language education as well. But just recently the dual language coordinator at EPH has requested the GT requirement be removed because the GT requirement was hurting enrolment. As mentioned before, the program only allows students who have been tested, and coded as gifted students.

Mesita Elementary School

Demographics 2006

Hispanic	82.4
Economically Disadvantaged	57.8
English Limited	36.3
At- Risk	51.1
Gifted and Talented	29

Mesita has employed a 50:50 two-way dual language program for over fourteen years now through the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Project. This particular dual language project is provided to coded gifted and talented students only. The project assures that Spanish and English are delivered by teachers based on the curriculum that requires both languages to be used according to the 50/50 model instructions, where 50 percent of the instruction will be in Spanish and the other 50 percent in English.

This project has produced positive results in acquiring both languages. Students benefit from a positive learning environment, productive interactions in both languages, and being active participants while working in classroom activities. Students are often challenged by teachers to elaborate and justify their thinking or opinions when responding to an inquiry. With such student/teacher interaction, there is evidence proving high-level thinking is involved throughout the program. According to Sandra Spivey, assistant principal at Mesita, they have had very positive results. Mrs. Spivey also mentioned that English Language Learners (ELL) are able to

take the English TAKS test by the time they reach the third grade with very comparable results to those of students whose primary language is English.

### **3.2 Measuring Success at Mesita Elementary, Wiggs Middle School and El Paso High**

According to the EPISD and Connecting Worlds 2007-2008 report, project students were required to take three tests administered at different times during the school year. Those three tests include the Stanford Achievement Test - 10 (SAT-10), the APRENDA, and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test. Another test that project students also take is the Scholastic Achievement Test, better known as the SAT. These tests have served as a measuring stick for the Connecting Worlds, dual language programs at all three campuses.

The SAT-10 results proved that students who were participating in the three project schools on average scored higher in all grade levels of the test than students at other similar schools. Project student were scoring higher in most of the major subjects tested. Another important achievement was that a large number of students had scores at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in the five areas the tests measures.

The APRENDA test is another measuring stick for students. For project students in these three schools, the APRENDA test results demonstrated that students in grade one through high school, in most instances, exceeding national expectations in all subject areas measured. The Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test results have also indicated that two-way dual language education along with gifted and talented strategies have proven to be successful. They conclude by stating that the APRENDA test results proves that program teachers are utilizing instructional strategies successfully developing the intellectual skills of traditionally *disenfranchised* students, including those who have are considered at-risk, disadvantaged and

English Learning students. Furthermore, the program is successful in accomplishing its goal by offering the academic support and environment for their students.

According to their 2008 report, project students had no problem passing and mastering the TAKS test. In fact the majority of students passed the test with “Commended” performance in all areas. The report also mentioned comparisons with the result of other student in the district who were also taking GT classes, but not dual language education. Project students outdid other GT students within the district with higher percentages in both the reading and math portions of the TAKS test. They also reported that such results were very strong indicators of the quality of teaching and learning taking place in the Connecting Worlds/GT, two-way dual language program. These three exams, the SAT, APRENDA, and the TAKS, and the mastery of them by project students have proven the success of the project implemented at all three campuses.

#### A. Evaluation of Classrooms and Projects

All three schools were evaluated for progress and success through a series of evaluation questions and observations. Project administrators along with associated district staff members worked together to develop questions to measure each campus and their instructional results. Two of the questions used to measure progress are as follow, 1) “To what extent has the programs been effective in providing program students with a gifted and talented curriculum with depth and complexity in a dual language setting?” 2) “To what degree has the program been effective in ensuring that all programs students develop high levels of bilingualism and biliteracy in English and Spanish?”

#### B. Observation of Project Implementation in Classrooms

All three campuses were observed by a group of project administrators and district members to ensure program strategies and dual language non-negotiable guidelines were being implemented consistently and effectively. Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Two-Way Dual Language integrated with a Gifted and Talented curriculum is supposed to provide a safe environment for learning, where students are working in a democratic setting by engaging in their learning.

2008's report was very similar to the previous year. EPISD's End-of-Year Report mentioned that observers who visited classrooms noticed very high levels of student involvement in learning and project assignments. Students were on task, and they were very much engaged in writing, hands on projects, group discussions, and classroom presentations. Observers also noted the quality of high-order thinking inquiries provided by teachers, and more impressed with most students' sophisticated and intellectual responses. More importantly, the report stated, students felt very comfortable to express their point of views and ideas without fear of being judged or mocked by their peers. Students also exercised their freedom to partake in open discussion with their teacher and other peers, creating a very welcoming and "tolerant atmosphere" facilitated by both teachers and students.

The main objective of these friendly and tolerant classroom environments is to create respect for every student in the classroom, and encourage a very positive learning experience. By achieving high levels of respect between teachers and students, it promotes students' development both socially and emotionally. With respect being the guiding principles, each classroom becomes a supportive learning environment. Teachers were also proactive and great role models according to the report. They were consistent in giving praise for students' efforts

and for their diligent work. Students were also encouraged when exemplifying their higher-order thinking skills.

### C. Teachers' Approach in Dual Language Instruction

The 2008 End-of-Year report mentions that teachers usually operated in a very organized manner when demanding students to pay attention, understand information, speak, and write in English and Spanish at appropriate and particular times. Observers documented that teachers were effective in sustaining student's interest and attention while teachers instructed the classroom. Moreover, students were also respectful in listening to their peers. Each student was clear on what was being said, they followed instructions well, they properly responded to questions, they posed inquiries when required, their writing materials were legible, and they exemplified grammatically correct essays and summaries. Observers reported reviewing several student writing samples in worksheets and student reports. Their goal was to assess content and grammatical structure quality, and overall, they concluded by stating that every worksheet and report was highly acceptable by their standards.

In one classroom at Mesita Elementary, teachers and students were observed utilizing English and Spanish to instruct and give a classroom assignment. Students were asked to make predictions regarding an experiment where two magnets were placed against each other. Teachers wanted to know what would happen in the case of two magnets coming together. Students were quick in their response. They responded with words such as "repel" or "attract" to describe the outcome. This particular warm up was conducted in English, and it served as a prompt for the next assignment which would be conducted in Spanish.

Students were required to conduct research regarding elements pertaining to temperature. Once the research was finalized, students were instructed to present their results in Spanish. The assignment was a success. Correct terminology such as degrees, Fahrenheit, and humidity were used by presenters. Overall, the report stated that observers did not notice any major flaws when students communicated in both English and Spanish.

#### D. High School Students in a Dual Language Classroom

In one particular high school classroom at El Paso High, students were divided into three groups, and their teacher gave them instructions in Spanish pertaining to the task. Eventually students made their way to the front of the classroom and began using a smart board to present essays they had worked on. Observers reported that several students experienced small problems conjugating verbs, but their overall use of Spanish was good. They also reported interacting with students and one particular group that presented and discussed one of Pablo Neruda's writings. Observers were amazed at the students' rich and fluent use of Spanish.

#### E. Assessment of Teachers and Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos Programs

In every classroom that was observed during the 2007-08 school years, teachers were noted as being active guides and supporters of quality learning. They all worked as agents who provided knowledge in a very tactful and skillful way. Teachers showcased their skills by being effective at promoting student individual work and also encouraging the use of small groups depending on assignment and students' discretion.

Class management was apparent in every observation. It was uncommon for teachers to reprimand a student or even lose control of classroom etiquette. The report stated that one of the

most accurate and consistent observations was student interaction with both peers and teachers. Students were also free to navigate the classroom and talk with other students in order to complete any task assigned to them. Conversations were always focused on the assignments and they were never the disruptive type. Students did not divert from their assignments, and their conversations were always related to their task. In addition, students exemplified great collaboration skills throughout every observation. These are the types of environments that have proven to foster quality learning.

Observers also noted that teachers always displayed professional attitudes and unwavering respect for every student in the classroom. Classrooms operated efficiently and activities were well-structured, exhibiting every teacher's devotion to being well prepared and organized. Such high levels of preparedness and structure set the tone for success, and students were fortunate to learn in an environment where they clearly understood everything expected of them, and all of these positive qualities were apparent all three schools.

All three campuses allotted students plenty of space and opportunities to work independently, or in a small group, which is a strategy utilized for gifted students and is highly recommended. Students were always encouraged to participate in class discussions. Teachers would encourage students to express their points of view, and they always felt at ease when expressing their opinions openly.

#### F Technology and Resources

It was noted that every classroom that was observed, students were provided with computers in good working condition with an average of seven modern computers in each room. The majority of classrooms had access to smart boards and ample resource materials, which

included books written in English and Spanish, as well as dictionaries and thesauruses. In addition, the report stated, the overall physical environment for all three campuses was very beneficial to students' learning. They add that Mesita and the community were the beneficiaries of a new campus, "Mesita Elementary, one of the oldest schools in the El Paso area, was replaced this year by a brand new two-story facility, a gift that was warmly welcomed by the Mesita community" (7).

#### G. Further Findings

It was also reported that previous reports had noted that teachers were very successful in engaging students in a variety of activities, a very common trait within the program. Apparently, this trend continued during the 2007-08 years as well, but they did note one inconsistency in implementing equal instruction for both languages. They did document in their previous report that English was the language being used more frequently to provide students with classroom instruction, but it was not the case last year and the current one. This year, observers reported that both languages were being used *almost* equally.

#### H. Students, Projects, Presentations and Success

Student projects were very common in all three schools. Every project assigned to students was based on different themes related to topics students are learning about. As always, students were given the choice of working individually or in a small group. Observers did not have the luxury to witness a full presentation, but they did observe students practicing their presentations with other peers. It was very apparent to observers that students were skilled in planning their projects and that they had conducted solid research in their respected topics. They

ended this particular section by quoting Gardner, “Student projects of this sort have been highly touted as an excellent avenue for gifted students (indeed for all students, we would like to add) to practice and exhibit their various educational skills” (8).

## I Multicultural Education

The 2005-06 and 2006-07 reports verified that multicultural activities were being utilized in several of the observed classrooms. They continued to report that they witnessed this practice during their 2008 evaluation, and they wrote the following, “teachers duly weaved cultural tidbits and at times complete themes in their lessons” (8). They go on to mention that these cultural class discussions allow students to develop an understanding, and “hopefully tolerance and acceptance of the multicultural makeup of our society at large” (8). Furthermore, observers believe that these projects assigned by both teachers and staff have “really met the goals of exposing students to multicultural scenarios and real experiences” (p.8). Their justification comes in the form of Mesita’s Annual Bilingual Program titled “Que Siga La Fiesta/And The Beat Goes On,” which is considered an energetic festivity where parents, students, teachers, and staff participate by dancing and singing skits.

## J. Spanish Spelling Bee

Another way that teachers and staff promote community involvement and participation is by hosting a Spelling Bee once a year. This is one way that the campus and its staff get to showcase student knowledge in one of the targeted languages. Mesita is honored to be the judge in the Spelling Bee competition, and they are glad to also mention that project students all came out as top finalists, thus proving the success involved with the Connecting Worlds Project.

## K. Depriving Students through Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos

The only drawback to the program at Mesita and Wiggs Middle School is that it only serves students who qualify for the Gifted and Talented (GT) program. Their website states

Mesita Elementary has a school strand of *gifted and talented* which is a two-way dual language program, the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos. This program is designed to draw from the wealth of its multicultural, multilingual community in implementing a *gifted and talented* dual language immersion educational environment. Based on a thorough research evaluation design, the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos program utilizes a dual language immersion model in which two groups of *identified GT students*, both native English-speaking and Spanish-speaking children, share the same rich learning environment.

According to the Muni Net Guide website, the campus services over 778 students, yet the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos is currently providing this program to 375. Nearly 200 students are not receiving a quality education simply on the basis that they do not qualify for the GT program. On top of that, many parents have applied to have their children enrolled at Mesita for the dual language program, and many have been denied. Mrs. Spivey did mention some parents were disgruntled with the program's GT policies which have filtered students from a quality education, and this was a major concern for Cecilia Phillips, Dual Language Coordinator at El Paso High.

In my interview with Mrs. Phillips, she mentioned it was somewhat difficult to sustain dual language education at the high school level because of the low number of student enrollment in the program, but she was elated to mention that the GT requirement was removed for the high school level, meaning any student can apply to the program regardless if the district deems them gifted and talented or insufficient. Furthermore, she mentioned that there seems to be a trend at the high school level where students are choosing to resign from the program before

they graduate. Yet, another concern at the high school level for Mrs. Phillips was the lack of native Spanish speakers to match native English speakers.

During my interview with Mrs. Phillips did seem a bit reluctant to be misquoted or say anything negative toward the dual language program and how it is being implemented, but she felt comfortable saying that El Paso High and its dual language program do need more support. The Javits Grant did not fund the program at the high school level, and the district has not provided the school with any funds to maintain it either.

In comparison to Ysleta Independent School District, EPISD is very behind. She estimated that our district could possibly be about ten years behind in dual language innovation thinking and in supporting such programs for success. She did mention that Ysleta does have a district department that promotes and supports its dual language programs. Ysleta also has a curriculum specifically geared towards dual language, therefore their programs do run more like a true dual language program, unlike EPISD's.

On the bright side, EPISD is implementing a dual language 50:50 model and the district will expand these services to 18 other schools across the district. So, those students who unfortunately did not meet the gifted requirements may be able to attend one of these schools if transportation is available.

Wiggs Middle School is located in a very different demographic area from Mesita. The 2006 Demographics chart for EPISD states that Wiggs has a 94.7 percent Hispanic population, 83 percent of them were considered economically disadvantaged, 30.2 percent labeled limited English proficient, 68.7 at risk and 14 percent coded as gifted. Their website states, that Wiggs also employs the Connecting Worlds Two-Way Dual Language/Gifted and Talented program

“that combines second language acquisition and GT strategies with the goals of achieving high academic excellence and dual language proficiency in Spanish and English for all students.”

What is also a bit disturbing about the Connecting Worlds program at Mesita is the length of time that it has been successfully operating for, and the span of time it took for EPISD to implemented elsewhere. Does it really take 14 years for a program to prove its worth and success? Why is there no strong advocacy for the implementation of these programs? Why are teachers at Mesita and Wiggs not advocating these programs? These are but a few questions that we need to look at when we are looking at student success, and equality throughout the district.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Importance of Maintaining One's Primary Language and History**

In Chapter 4, I will provide information that will clarify the hegemony of the English language, and how European colonizers have utilized many forms of power to systematically keep people of Mexican heritage at the bottom of the social ladder. It is imperative for people of Mexican heritage to understand how discrimination against Mexican/Mexican Americans originates and how abuses of power perpetuate such actions. Propaganda, systematic discrimination, and unequal opportunities have sustained a hierarchy for white European colonizers in this country. Propagandized American patriotism has also allowed white European hegemony to be accepted by those marginalized and branded inferior to America. Such American patriotic sentiments have been imbedded in Mexican and Mexican Americans that many feel a need to hate everything about their own heritage and culture, including their language.

Giving in to the dominant colonizer has proven detrimental to Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Latinos are so willing to do away with their entire culture and language only to prove that they can fit the Europeans version of an American. The sad part about it is they do not realize that Europeans have simply monopolized the American title, when in reality, every soul born in the most northern section of Alaska and the most southern tip of South America are Americans. More so, Spanish speakers need to know that the British colonizers refused to relinquish their language when they left their mother land. They refused to relinquish their culture to the indigenous tribes. Yet everything that the British fought to maintain, including their mother tongue, they force others to discard.

This chapter focuses on the effects of losing one's language and culture. It may be difficult for many to understand the importance of maintain one's language, but one just needs to look at this country's history to understand the importance of maintaining it. The history of losing one's language has proven to keep the masses uneducated, illiterate, unsuccessful, inferior, incarcerated and powerless in the American societal system.

#### **4.1 A Brief History of Discrimination Against Spanish Speakers**

In order to understand the inequalities in our schools and elitism exercised by those in power, we need to understand where discrimination against Mexican Americans begins. As we already know, colonization was a very devastating chain of events that brought the hegemony of the English culture and English language to the Northeast section of the country. In the Southwest, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which signified the end of the Mexican American War (1846-1848), was the prelude to America's colonization of Mexican people. The end of the war and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo were two major events that opened the doors to discrimination against Mexican Americans.

Richard Valencia, author of *Chicano Students and the Courts, The Mexican American Legal Struggle for Educational Equality*, mentions that public schools across the entire country began to systematically segregate Mexican American students from their white peers after 1848. The separation of students continued for decades after the Treaty and the annexation of Mexican lands by the United States. This very controversial contract along with Mexico's forceful relinquishing of their land was a precursor to decades of what Valencia described as a "persistent, pervasive prejudice and discrimination against people of Mexican origin who lived in the United States (7). Valencia adds that even though states had no legal jurisdiction to

separate Mexican American students from whites, it was a common practice for schools to racially isolate them throughout the entire Southwest. The practice of systematic discrimination and segregation proved to be very detrimental on the academic success of Mexican students (7).

As conquered people, Mexican Americans were exposed to systematic segregation from movie theaters, restaurants, and public facilities such as swimming pools etc. (Valencia 7) Valencia goes on to state that Mexican Americans “initiated desegregation lawsuits far exceeding the number of cases in the other categories (e.g., school finance, bilingual education and high stakes testing).” (7) Looking at the past is crucial in understanding the plight that still stifles schools whose population is predominantly of Mexican origin. Discrimination was pervasive then and some of those remnants still linger today. If there is one thing to learn from history it is that democracy and equality are scarce for minorities and second language learners. The educational system across the United States is no stranger to systematic racism, discrimination, segregation, and impartial educational opportunities for minority students. Their imposition of English only ideology and philosophies has proven to be damaging to both native and non-native English speakers. We live in a nation that is unwilling to heed proven research that has documented successful results from learning two or more languages. New research and data have proven to have positive effects on both minorities and second language learners (SLL), yet districts across the entire nation fail to implement such programs.

Learning two languages simultaneously will allow students to stretch their cognitive muscles and enhance their creative thinking. As a guest columnist for the *El Paso Times* stated, “The old saying about cooperative and problem-solving – two heads are better than one – continues to withstand the test of time. The same idea is quickly becoming the foundation of another common wisdom, two languages are better than one.” (Uresti, 7B) In the world of

education and acquired knowledge, two or more is always better than one. With advancements in technology, and the rate people are communicating via the World Wide Web, people will need more ways to communicate. Dual language offers students the opportunity to expand their communicating skills by adding two or more languages for students to operate in a global environment.

While dual language will benefit a Spanish speaker, it will also highly affect native English speakers as well. “Native English speakers who are already on grade level can exceed the achievement of their monolingual educated peers. And through cognitive stimulus of schooling in two languages, which leads to enhanced creativity and analytical thinking, native English speakers who are lagging behind academically receive the accelerated instruction necessary to close the achievement gap”(Collier, Thomas). Dual language challenges the mind to interpret the world in two ways, which causes students to become more analytical in their thinking process. Dual language allows students to interpret their world more accurately. It adds to their cognitive analysis by enhancing their oral, literal, cultural, and philosophical understanding of their surroundings by utilizing two languages.

#### **4.2 *Lau v. Nichols*, Civil Rights and Student’s Rights**

The year 1974 was very significant for language learners across the entire country, as it became the prelude for bilingual education. The landmark Supreme Court case *Lau V. Nichols* ruled in accordance with the plaintiff who argued for the rights of Chinese students and acquisition of English and gave the order to implement bilingual educations for every student whose second language was English.

In 1969, the San Francisco school system was taken to court in a class action lawsuit that involved 1,800 Chinese-American students who were being forced by the district to enroll in schools where every subject was being instructed primarily in English. Unfortunately, these students did not understand English whatsoever. The district and school authorities were being accused of denying equal educational opportunities on the grounds breaching of the equal protection clause.

In a previous Supreme Court Case, involving a Latino plaintiff, the court ruled that education was not a constitutional right. In 1973, the Northern District of California terminated the case by concluding that everyone's rights to an equal educational opportunity had been fulfilled. The court's decision was as follows, "The same education made available on the same terms and conditions to the other tens of thousands of students in the San Francisco Unified School District...253" (Castellano 115 ) It did not take long for the court's decision to be appealed.

During the appeal, the plaintiffs referred to the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown V. The Board of Education* of 1954 to contest the court's ruling. The court was being accused of misinterpreting the order stated in the *Brown* decision that stated the following; "education is the right which must be made available to all on equal terms." According to the plaintiff, the phrase "equal terms," in the *Brown* case "meant *without segregation*." Furthermore, the plaintiff argued that regardless if segregated schools claimed to offer surface equality, it still caused "a sense of inferiority in minority children which affected their ability and motivation to learn and tended to retard their educational and mental growth" (Castellanos 115). Castellanos states that the lawyers defending the Chinese families stressed that *Brown* established two very important doctrines pertaining to equal education, and those were "access and outcome."

The appellants pointed out a very crucial point regarding the defendant's stands on providing equal education for every student. Chinese students were being taught in a language that they did not completely understand while their white peers understood and were solidly efficient in utilizing it. Not only was comprehension difficult, but these students also lacked efficiency in using the English language to communicate. Therefore a solid and equitable education was indirectly being denied to these Chinese students. Regardless if they were provided with the same course of instruction, Chinese students were being denied a comprehensive quality education simply because they did not understand what was being instructed.

Eventually, the Supreme Court steered away from the entire constitutional issue and in January 1974, it found the school district of violating Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the similar guidelines protected by the Office of Civil Rights of 1970 (Catellanos 117). This very important landmark Supreme Court case was significant in eradicating discrimination aimed at language minority students. It also encouraged minorities to seek the courts in attempts to fight discrimination and help future generations from having to face the same issues their predecessor had.

This law proved that it is unconstitutional to educate a child in a language that she or he does not fully understand. Unfortunately, school and school districts have found ways to circumvent such laws by duping parents into believing that bilingual education will hinder their child's learning. As a result, some parents of non-native English speakers are uninformed about the benefits of bilingual education and they ignorantly sign waivers that allow schools to register and enroll students in all English classes.

With a lack of information, parents make misinformed decisions regarding bilingual opportunities for their children. In most instances, low-income and less educated parents rely too much on the child's school to have their best interest at heart, and unfortunately schools have different agendas. With a lack of bilingual education support, many students experience frustration in attempting to learn the subject material while struggling to learn a new language. These negative educational experiences have resulted in the failure and high dropout rates of students. Unfortunately, many of these dropouts have a higher propensity of being incarcerated.

#### **4.3 U.S. Incarceration Facts**

It is reported that people of color are disproportionately more inclined to be arrested and incarcerated in the United States than people in white communities. Banks affirms that factors that contribute to these alarming statistics include several "assaults on legal protections" such as Proposition 187 which is geared toward reducing immigration, Proposition 209, which is employed to stop the assistance of affirmative action and Proposition 227 which originated in California, with its goal to eradicate bilingual education (63). Furthermore, it was reported that the state of California constructed more jails than hospitals in the early 1990s. Between the years of 1977 and 1985, Banks mentions prison populations skyrocketed, and 70 percent of the inmates filling these cells were African American, Latino and other non-white minorities (63). These somber facts need to be taken seriously and with alarm if we want to alter the course of a failed schooling system on ELL, and other minority students. Since Proposition 227 has festered into a big political pull for many right-wing conservative voters, it is imperative that teachers, administrator and districts begin to advocate for student's rights immediately. We need to listen

to what consistent research is stating about the facts of dual language and multicultural education.

EPISD needs to seriously consider and adopt the advice of experts who vehemently suggest a minimum of six to seven years for a student to gain an academic use of a language. Researchers and practitioners stress that it takes more than seven to eight years for a student to achieve native like skills in two or more languages, yet our district is not influenced by what the experts say or what is best for our students. Every district in the state of Texas, including EPISD, would rather please multi-millionaire companies like Pearson who politically push high stakes testing. Teachers are not able to utilize their full potentials within the classroom because they are forced to conduct high stake test preparations, and too much time is squandered when educators are called on to administer too many tests (Banks 4). Banks adds the following, “Research by Amrein and Berliner (2002) indicates that the emphasis on testing and accountability is having detrimental effects on student learning. Because of the ways in which accountability is being conceptualized and implemented, the professional role of teachers is being fractionalized and minimized” (Banks 4-5). These are staggering facts that should cause serious alarm to EPISD, and to the rest of the country. High stakes testing is stifling our educational system and harming students. Forcing students to learn a new language in a very short period of time and ceasing instruction in their native language strips away their identity and harms their ability to learn.

Furthermore, the country has never been homogeneously Anglo as some media would like people to think. The United States has always been diverse and our country continues to change in population. Hurley states “Population changes in the United States are resulting in a virtual flood of public school children whose needs *cannot* be met without dual language instruction. In addition, our national economic welfare and political security require that we

prepare all children with more than one language so they can cope with a shrinking world and independent global economy” (XV). The EPISD needs to implement every program that has consistently demonstrated successful results, especially those implemented and proven at campus like Mesita and Wiggs. These programs are needed throughout the entire district, not just for affluent communities.

Dual language education, gifted and talented strategies and best practices strategies should be mandatory on every campus in order to have a democratic and equitable education. EPISD mission statement is “The mission of the El Paso Independent School District is to meet the diverse needs of all students and empower them to become successful members of a global community.” If they want to live up to their mission statement they need to implement dual language programs and make them accessible throughout the entire district. They need to put an end to subtractive bilingual programs and serve their students and communities by producing bilingual, biliterate and bicultural students. Thus far, EPISD is not meeting the “diverse needs” of our students, and the district is not “empowering them to become successful members of a global community.” Our students will not be ready for a global world if they manage to graduate as monolingual English speakers. Therefore, EPISD needs to legitimately meet the needs of our students and truly empower them by providing quality and proven programs like dual language, and they need to implement GT strategies across the board.

#### **4.4 A History of Discrimination in EPISD: *Alvarado V. EPISD***

The El Paso Independent School District is no stranger to controversy and discrimination toward Mexican American students and the economically deprived. In 1970, fourteen El Paso parents filed a class action suit against the district in what became known as *Alvarado et al. v. El*

*Paso Independent School District* (Dissertation). The district was being accused of promoting and implanting a racist system which systematically segregated Mexican Americans and Americans of Mexican heritage from Anglo students.

The Alvarados and other families asserted that EPISD was guilty of structuring school boundary lines to exclude Latinos from a quality education and from integrating with Anglo students. Parents argued the district was discriminating against their children and others by routing students to schools that lacked accommodations such as air conditioners. More importantly, they lacked in providing students with equal educational opportunities.

Latino students were matriculated into certain schools, including Alamo, Aoy, Beall, Burleson, Franklin, Lincoln, San Jacinto and Zavala. All these schools were feeder campuses to Bowie High School, a predominantly Mexican American school that opened in 1922. Bowie eventually was relocated to its current location in 1973, and the old campus became Guillen Middle School.

The district was systematically isolating Anglos and Mexican Americans by bussing Anglos to predominantly white schools. Several examples include bus route number 8, which included trips one and two, in the school years 1969-1970. The court report states that the 101 students who were bused to Burges High School were overwhelmingly Anglo Americans. These students were being bused out of the way rather than attend Austin High School, a predominantly Mexican American school that was 3.4 miles closer to their community. Yet, in another example of this discriminatory act by the district, 121 Mexican Americans were bused from the Sunland Park area using two trips to El Paso High School. The one way distance was estimated at 13

miles, when student could have easily attended their area high school Coronado just 3.84 miles away.

The court was presented with numerous discriminatory acts committed by EPISD that provided ample and incriminating evidence that segregation was taking place. Furthermore, the court concluded that the district was also guilty of assigning well trained teachers to predominantly Anglo schools while distributing poorly qualified ones to the Mexican-American schools. By 1976, in a court's ruling, EPISD was handed down a guilty verdict "on grounds of deliberative intent to segregate" (Rippbeger and Staudt 40). The district was required by the courts ruling to employ a solution to mend the situation. This included fixing the method in which students were bused, redrawing boundaries that direct students to certain schools, advocating and hiring Latino educators and principals, and employing programs to assist second language learners, such as bilingual education.

#### **4.5 EPISD, Bilingual, DLE and Reform**

The El Paso Independent School District has relied on subtractive, transitional bilingual programs that have proven to be inept and destructive for students. These ineffective programs have been in use across the entire district for a few decades without any disregard to the failure it has produced. These invidious forms of education have been used in the most impoverished ZIP codes in El Paso, and unfortunately, no one has had the courage to call them out on it. One such area is the 79901 region, home to Guillen Middle School. This campus has suffered for many decades from a lack of programs like dual language education. It is no mystery that Guillen always ends up receiving the short end of a quality education, but I strongly believe the school's shortcomings do not fall on the quality of student, but on the corrupt district decision making.

They are systematically leading second language learners to imminent failure by not providing adequate language programs and by providing Guillen with administrators who only stick around for the honeymoon.

At Guillen Middle School, ESL instruction strictly requires students to exit to English only classes within two to four years. More appalling, the district utilizes a scheme that claims a child who enters EPISD from Mexico and for some reason has to return back to their mother country after just being in the U.S. for a few week or months; the child is considered to have resided in the states for a year. So according to the district, those few weeks or months is equivalent to an entire year. They are considered level one students. This broken system is employed to expedite the monolingual agenda fostered through bilingual education. According to a 2005, dual language program cost analysis, Lara-Alecio, Galloway, Irby, Rodriguez, and Gomez all agreed that ESL programs are considered “pullout” model that strictly focus on pulling out students in order to receive more English instruction. Such ESL pullout models cause students to lose important curriculum instruction. They also deny any access to native language support in content areas (9-10). ESL programs not only convey the message of Spanish being inferior to English but they also assist in the high stakes testing teaching philosophy.

EPISD’s formula for success in bilingual education is a farce. The district is setting up our students for failure by implementing a system geared to English only standards, subtractive models that create monolingual results, and hasty transitions from primary language to English. I was appalled when conducting my interview with Mrs. Arias who informed me that newly arrived students from Mexico, primarily from the city of Juarez, were expected to learn English within a year. To add to this injustice, they were also required to take the TAKS tests during their

second year in the States, but with accommodations, which include using an English/Spanish dictionary.

District policies have proven to be harmful to ELL students. Their motives appear political and geared toward appeasing political agendas that do nothing to guarantee a quality education for our students. Therefore, our district is committing a grave injustice by implementing malign bilingual programs to our students, especially when their welfare is entrusted to the district. Collier and Thomas both state that current federal legislation is under a false assumption (not based on research, but on political expediency) that ELLs should take no longer than three years to be on grade level in English skills. This poses a serious problem for districts, and the education of many students (p. 5). Collier and Thomas also state the following, “In every study conducted, we have consistently found that it takes six to eight years, for ELLs to reach grade level in L2, and only one-way and two-way enrichment dual language programs have closed the gap in this length of time” (p. 5). Nieto reaffirms this point by stating that American schools have failed our students by consistently refusing to provide an equitable education for every student. This statement falls right in with EPISD schools that foster bilingual programs that attempt to produce monolingual English speakers. Such programs have failed to provide every child with a quality education, such as dual language programs. The district’s policies along with transitional bilingual programs have also violated many of our ELL students’ civil rights.

Forcing second language learners to make quick transitions without completely learning to read, write, and speak academic English is a violation of a student’s civil rights and a violation of the Supreme Court decision, *Lau v. Nichols*. Zeynep firmly states, “the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Bilingual Law of 1965, and the landmark Supreme Court case of *Lau vs. Nichols* in

1974 set into law that educating language minority-students through a language that they do not comprehend is a *violation* of their civil rights. Due to their low proficiency in English, when educated in mainstream classrooms, language-minority students are denied access to a meaningful education” (XII). EPISD needs to be cognizant of the fact that they are in violation of every student’s civil rights when they implementing bilingual programs that force them to a quick transition to English only classes. By doing so, EPISD is setting up our students for failure and they have done it for many years by implanting transitional/ESL bilingual programs. In one of his speeches during the Lau v. Nichols Supreme Court case, Justice Williams O. Douglas was quoted as saying the following,

“Basic skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. Imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experience wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.”<sup>256</sup>

Many of our students are having their rights violated by our district by forcing them to partake in English only classes when they have not acquired basic English. How can our district expect students to excel in English only classrooms and high stakes testing like the TAKS when they have not been given a legitimate chance to polish their English skills academically? Students will continue to suffer in this district because standards are set up for mediocrity where students are forced to learn English and ultimately lose their native language in the process.

By immersing our students in English only classrooms with a smattering of English skills, students are headed for an imminent train wreck. EPISD has succeeded in segregating students, creating a hostile environment that views Spanish as an inferior language to English, and has shunned every important aspect that a student brings culturally and linguistically to their campus.

In my six years of teaching, I have witnessed administrators and teachers demean students because they express themselves in their native Spanish language, and these policies seem to be coming from a top the chain of command. To further exacerbate the situation some teachers working with Spanish speaking students, including some teachers at Guillen Middle School, express strong reluctance in accepting students' culture, language, and individuality. Teachers have vehemently scolded children for speaking Spanish in hallways, with friends before and after school and in the classroom. Ovando & McLaren both stated that one of the biggest reasons for underachieving Latino students is the high ratio of White, middle class females working with them. These White teachers usually have limited multicultural and multilingual experiences and skills (2000). It is already a difficult feat attempting to learn a new language, while learning all the content material Furthermore, EPISD will continue to see low English academic skills acquired by students, disciplinary problems, lack of interest in education, high dropout rates at the high school level, minimal interest in pursuing a college track and ultimately a high number of district dropout who will ultimately be at a higher risk of being incarcerated.

#### **4.6 Multicultural Education: We want Equality and Respect, not to be "Tolerated!"**

"It has often been said that people without knowledge of their roots are usually people without a sense of direction. People who do not know where they come from often do not know where they are going. Without a sound basis of their origins, rootless people find it harder to incorporate into their society. Therefore, an understanding of the history and heritage of the Chicano is a prerequisite for learning about the contemporary dimensions of the group and its future in American society." (Gutierrez 1)

Within the realm of dual language education, we need to also include the importance of implementing authentic multicultural education. Nieto defines multicultural education as a system that promotes a complete and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects

racism and other facets of discrimination in schools and in society. Multicultural education respects every aspect of their students, including their ethnicity, religion, economic status and gender (307). Furthermore, Beykont strongly advocates the use of multicultural education by stating that multicultural education means “humanizing” pedagogy that addresses the importance of every student’s culture and background knowledge (228). EPISD and the Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos need to be proactive in providing an education that validates, utilizes, and appreciates every student’s culture and experiences. More Latino authors need to be included in the literature and history being taught in our schools. With approximately 82 percent of El Paso’s population being of Mexican heritage, curriculums and lesson planning should be inclined to servicing their student population.

Connecting Worlds Mundos /Unidos Project claims to accommodate students with multicultural education by “weaving cultural *tidbits*” to their lessons. Carlos Cortez, a strong advocate for multicultural education, would reject what Connecting Worlds and EPISD view as multicultural education by stating the following, “Multicultural education is not the celebration of holidays or the inclusion of special history days or weeks in the curriculum, an approach that James Banks, another important multicultural theorist, refers to as “tepees and chitlins” and “heroes and holidays” (Hurley 21). Adding “tidbits” to a curriculum or a lesson is not multicultural education, and it is a contradiction to what the program is attempting to accomplish; equality and respect for every student. In addition, Rasool and Curtis are strong believers that the basic curriculum foundation is not altered when teachers resort to using an “additive” approach to lessons and curriculums. Such minor “additives” or “tidbits” are not going to cause students to acquire new information, and the slight changes will stifle students from engaging in any form of transformative construction of knowledge (141). Beykont would

argue against what Connecting Worlds is doing as well, by stating, “Multicultural education is not the pseudomulticulturalism that encourages students to dance a few *token dances* and urges parents to bring a few ‘ethnic’ dishes to school, giving the administration the feeling it has fulfilled its obligation to be “tolerant” of cultural differences (228).

The Connecting Worlds Mundos Unidos is under the false impression they are providing multicultural education and meeting their goal of exposing students to multicultural experiences by hosting the annual Mesita Bilingual Program; “Que Siga La Fiesta/And the Beat Goes On.” A festivity provided once a year, is highly unlikely to meet the requirements necessary that multicultural education should provide. In addition, their report stated the following, “Class discussions of this nature enable students to develop an understanding, and hopefully “tolerance” and acceptance of the multicultural makeup of our society at large” (8). Sadly, this program believes that certain cultures need to “hopefully be tolerated” by the rest. Webster’s Dictionary defines a version of the word tolerance as “to bear, or put up with (someone or something not especially liked)” (1495). Hopefully, tolerance is not the project’s goal as they attempt to implement a multicultural education program district wide.

To be “tolerated” is a very negative concept. It usually means you are doing something wrong or that you are not accepted and you need to be “*tolerated*” for one reason or other. Beykont stresses on this point by stating, “Multicultural education for me is antiracist education. Its purpose certainly does not include “tolerating” other people, but rather helping others “deal equitably without the cultural and racial differences that you find in the human family” (228). If the Connecting Worlds Project really wants to accomplish its goals, the program cannot rely on “*annual fiestas*,” adding “*tidbits*” of multicultural elements to lessons, or “*hope*” that students

“*tolerate*” others. These should not be the goals and cannot be the goals in approaching multicultural education.

Our curriculums must be altered in a manner that truly allows students to understand the cultural makeup that our communities and city is comprised of. In addition, Banks elaborates on multicultural education approaches by stating that the objectives should aim at reducing prejudice and discrimination against people who have historically been oppressed. Multicultural education should work toward providing equal opportunity and social justice for everyone, and to achieve an impartial distribution of power to people of culturally diverse groups (70). Moreso, Banks states the following:

Curriculum should be organized around concepts drawn from the experiences and perspectives of several different U.S. groups. If you are teaching literature, you select literature written by members of different groups. This not only teaches students that groups other than Whites have produced literature; it also enriches the concept of literature because it enables students to experience different literature forms that are common to all writings (70).

As a GT/Humanities teacher, I have not encountered a significant amount of literature written by Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans or women, to say the least. This lack of representation within our curriculums and textbooks need to be altered for the betterment of our education and preparation of our students.

Richard Valencia states that a curriculum shift will be difficult for curriculum writers who do not want to steer away from the Western Canon that was at the height of The Enlightenment. An example of the hegemony of the Western Canon is what Banks stresses about

teaching students about famous Native Americans, teachers should consult and ask several different Native American members whom they would like to see honored instead of the stereotypical Pocahontas, Kateri, Tekakwitha, or Sacajawea. These tribal people are commonly associated with Native Americans who served the welfare of whites more than the wellbeing of Native American. (70)

Reformers, though, continue to push for multicultural education in effort to foster equality and access to all students. Although schools did begin to tweak their curriculums to accommodate their student population, it was not without strong resistance, and “much foot-dragging” before they could decide to serve the diversity of every school population (Valencia 137). Reform will be difficult because people fear change, but according to court decisions like in *Lau v. Nichols* and *Brown v. Board of Education*, students do have rights against any form of discrimination. Educating a child in a language that is unfamiliar to a child is a violation of the child’s civil rights. Forcing a child to assimilate to a new language and culture can and will be detrimental in the long run. As Lutz states, multicultural education goes against the idea of assimilating to a Eurocentric monoculture. It also stresses the idea of retaining of one’s mother tongue because when a child does so, it allows them to receive a full education and increases the chances to achieve (Lutz 204).

#### **4.7 Advocacy for Dual Language is a Must**

In the six years I have been an educator for EPISD, I have never seen anyone advocating for dual language education. I first heard about the dual language programs two years ago and it was through a colleague of mine. Once I heard about it, I became interested and began inquiring about the program. This past year Cecilia Phillips visited Guillen to recruit students for her

program at El Paso High School. Surprisingly, this was the first time anyone had come to our campus to advocate and support dual language education. Mrs. Phillips was recruiting at Guillen because she was in need of more native Spanish speakers to balance the number of English dominant speakers at the high school level. Advocacy for dual language is highly needed and every coordinator needs to visit campuses and educate administrators, teachers and staff about the benefits of such programs.

In my interview with Mrs. Spivey, Assistant Principal and Dual Language Coordinator at Mesita, I learned three campuses rejected the idea of implementing dual language education. One of the elementary schools was Burleson School, which can feed into Guillen or Henderson Middle. This was appalling to hear because these students would highly benefit from these programs if implemented correctly and if supported. The culprit seems to be ignorance about dual language and a lack of advocacy from the district, and dual language coordinators across the district.

This summer, the *El Paso Times* featured an article entitled “Dual Language programs benefit Texas.” Unfortunately, it seems that guest columnist like Carlos I. Uresti have to be the ones conveying the messages regarding the importance of dual language education. In his article, Uresti expresses the necessity of learning English and Spanish fluently, and how vital a bilingual education is for students living between Mexico and the United States. Communication between both nations is crucial because so much of our economy and cultural entities are intertwined with Mexico. Uresti mentions the following: “Because of Texas economic and cultural ties to Mexico and our rapidly changing demographics, the linguistic diversity that has always existed in the Lone Star State is becoming more common and more important – both socially and economically (Uresti 7B). The United States must accept that Mexico and its people are going to be a crucial

part in the economic, cultural, social, and political entities of this country. With this reality in mind, Uresti advises us that Mexico and Spanish influence in this country must be welcomed; “It must be embraced and encouraged, and a great way to do that is through dual-language education. The ability to communicate in two languages gives students the opportunity to explore both their native and adoptive cultures and the skills they need to be successful” (Uresti 7B).

#### **4.8 My Experience at Guillen Middle School**

As a Gifted and Talented teacher at Guillen Middle School, I have taught both sixth and eighth grade. I have taught for six years-four in the sixth grade and two at the eighth grade. The Gifted and Talented program provides every elementary and middle school campus with Humanities. The Humanities program along with the curriculum offer teachers great strategies to implement. These strategies are geared for students to learn and build on their social, reading, writing and analytical skills. The EPISD GT website elaborates more on the makeup of the curriculum by stating the following, “The curriculum is aligned to the state standards and delivered using Dr. Sandra Kaplan’s Model of Depth and Complexity through the National Association for Gifted Children’s Parallel Curriculum.” The Depth and Complexity strategies have proven their worth by allowing students to build on their critical thinking skills, and in shaping and reshaping points of views regarding new information.

Since I am currently teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I would like to elaborate on the lack of multicultural education taking place in reference to curriculum and novels required to read. The list of novels students are required to read are the following, *A Break with Charity* by Anne Rinaldi (Anglo American), *April Morning* by Howard Fast (Anglo American), *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White (English Author), *Murder on the Orient Express*, and *Death on the*

*Nile* by Agatha Christie (English author), *The Beekeeper's Apprentice* by Laurie R. King (Anglo American), *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett (Anglo American), *Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Mark Twain (Anglo American), certain selections of O'Henry's (Anglo American) short stories, like *A Lickpenny Lover*, and "The Defeat of the City," *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell (Anglo American), *Portrait of Jennie* by Robert Nathan (Anglo American), and finally, *Hiroshima* by John Hersey (the son of U.S. missionary parents, born in China).

All of these authors, not to be redundant, but I have to state the obvious here, are white. It is clear that there is no diversity in novel selection. The curriculum is definitely not meeting multicultural criteria by conveying the message that white Americans are the only ones who partook in the making of this country and the only people literate to write about it. The curriculum pays homage to a couple of English authors, and one Chinese born to U.S. parents. Clearly this is not a multicultural selection of authors and novels. The message that only whites are literate is the antithesis of what multicultural attempts to accomplish. Therefore, without culturally diversity representation in novel selection, our district is doing a great disservice to our students and communities.

The perspectives of our true Americans, the Indigenous Tribes, and other people's cultures like African Americans, Chinese Americans and, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans are missing in our curriculums. One example that our curriculum can include are the 10,000 Mexican American Tejanos who fought in the American Civil War. In the EPISD 8<sup>th</sup> grade Humanities curriculum objective 3 (D, E) states that "students are to understand the relationships between and among people from various groups, including racial, ethnic, and religious groups, during the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries." Yet, the only people that we learn about are the Pilgrims (white), Puritans (white), Quakers (white), the European colonizers that include the English,

French, Spanish, Dutch, Irish/Scots and one “racial group,” Africans. These are all “cultural” perspectives from the colonizer’s point of view, and none from the people who endured a physical, linguistical, and cultural genocide. Much of the atrocities committed on indigenous tribes are justified through the perceived idea of manifest destiny.

The six grade curriculum offers students a bit more of a variety, and rightfully so. The overall theme for six grade is world history. Student group work and research projects meet the needs of a comprehensive education on history, but the novels are still dominated by Anglo writers. The GT curriculum program requires students to read the following novels, *The Trojan War*, by Olivia E. Coolidge (British author), *The Bronze Bow*, by Elizabeth George Speare (Anglo), *I, Juan de Pareja*, by Elizabeth Borton de Trevino (American of Latin heritage), *Shadow Spinner*, by Susan Fletcher, (Anglo), *Catherine, Called Birdy* by Karen Cushman (Anglo), *Anna of Byzantium*, by Tracy Barrett (Anglo), *I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade*, by Diane Lee Wilson (Anglo), *The Wild Children* by Felice Holman (Anglo), and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (African), just recently adopted about three years ago. Two out of nine children’s novels represent other cultures. Overall, the selection is overwhelmed by Anglo authors, and the only form of diversity regarding the selection is the dominating presence of women writers. This is a step in breaking away from traditional Eurocentric and white male dominant influence that has shaped our curriculums for centuries. The integration of women authors is a good start, but we need more women minority writers such as Asian, African American, Native American and most definitely, more Chicana or Latina writers.

#### 4.9 Controversy Still Plagues EPISD in 2010

With so much political strife afflicting EPISD right now, it is time for reform. Our state representative, Eliot Shapleigh has gone on a two year spree accusing the entire district of cheating TAKS regulations. Shapleigh claims that EPISD's superintendent Lorenzo Garcia and administrators working under him have circumvented certain TAKS testing regulations to meet Texas standards. One of the accusations is that "Garcia's administration altered the test-taking pool to avoid low scores and costly sanctions under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Bulloch said he saw students who were *weak in English* excluded from standardized tests in April 2009"(Licon 1B). Garcia's and EPISD's accusers are claiming that weak English speakers are being excluded from testing, therefore TAKS test scores have improved. Regardless if these accusations are true or not, there is an overwhelming belief that students whose primary language is Spanish are not up to par with monolingual English speaking students.

To some extent, the idea that Spanish speaking students are not pulling their weight, simply on the fact that a language barrier is hampering the learning process, does hold some truth to it. Traditional bilingual classes have not seen success and progress since their inception. Dropout rates are still high and college attendance is not compatible with that of Anglo students. The definition of insanity is doing something over and over, and expecting different results, and that is exactly what EPISD has been doing with bilingual education since the 1970s. Therefore, it should be no surprise that our state and district's fixation with high stakes testing is forcing our schools to provide a subtractive and mediocre education for ESL student.

Undoubtedly, dual language education has to be available for every student in the El Paso Independent School District. Dr. Lorenzo Garcia and those under his leadership know the

positive results of the dual language program at Connecting Worlds/Mundos Unidos at both Mesita and Wiggs. 14 years of implementing dual language education (DLE) with success is sufficient time to realize that this program is desperately needed in assisting every English Language Learner. Dual language can serve as the prelude to reforming our educational philosophy throughout the entire district. Reform is well needed and a complete paradigm shift needs to take place in order for this district to better serve its student population. Curriculums need to be written with authentic diversity and with the culture and students they are servicing in mind. Teaching philosophies need to positively change where both English and Spanish are highly respected and promoted. The time is now, and EPISD cannot afford another 14 years to realize that two languages are better than one, and that our students need authentic representation in both curriculums and literature materials.

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## **Curriculum Vita**

Richard Varela was born in El Paso, Texas. He was raised by his Grandmother Martha Varela and he is a graduate of Jefferson High School, El Paso, Texas in the Summer of 1996 and entered Community College in the fall of 1996. He transferred to The University of Texas at El Paso in the fall of 1999. While pursuing a bachelor's degree in English and American Literature he worked at Village Inn and Barnes and Noble from 1998 to 2003. He received his bachelor's degree in English and American Literature from The University of Texas at El Paso in the fall of 2002. He worked for AmeriCorps in both El Paso and Boston, Massachusetts. Soon after he fulfilled his contract with AmeriCorps, he started working for the largest employer and school district in El Paso, The El Paso Independent School District (EPISD). In the fall of 2003, he entered the Graduate School at The University of Texas at El Paso.

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