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**THE BILINGUAL SCHOOL  
SEQUENCE XIII--PRIMARY LEVEL**

During the past year national attention has been focused on the educational needs of the "culturally disadvantaged" pupil. Unfortunately, in their zeal to identify the students who come under this classification, some educators have included all those pupils whose native language is not English. Though fortunately the situation is changing, all too often the potential for bilingualism has been left unexploited as well meaning school personnel have taken the position that the child who comes to school as a speaker of a language other than English can not be helped to achieve by "stamping out" his mother tongue. Therefore, the child is permitted to communicate only in English. Paradoxically, after these pupils have completed seven, eight or nine years of school, having forgotten or never having been exposed to education in their native language, they are encouraged to study their vernacular as a foreign language.

Even the traditional foreign language programs which have been developed in most public elementary and secondary schools reflect a basic lack of interest in developing truly bilingual students. After twelve years of study of Spanish, French or German, the student is never really expected to be bilingual. Never is he expected to study other subjects in the foreign language. The United States, in contrast to most foreign nations, has not provided for an educated bilingual population.

The purpose of this paper is to examine a school in which bilingualism and multiculturalism are thought of as advantages and not disadvantages. The Coral Way Elementary School in Miami, Florida has as its goal the development of pupils who are literate, educated bilinguals. The advantages of bilingualism are offered to English-speaking pupils who would not normally have the opportunity to learn

two languages in childhood. In this school native English-speaking pupils study not only the traditional curriculum, but also study Spanish and learn to study the curriculum in Spanish. At the same time, Spanish-speaking pupils who must learn English in order to achieve in an American school receive this necessary instruction in English and in addition they are offered a program which will make them literate in their native Spanish. Coral Way is a school in which all pupils have the opportunity to become completely bilingual. It is <sup>to the best of my knowledge</sup> the first public elementary school in the United States to offer such a <sup>complete</sup> program.

The question may be posed as to why Miami needs a bilingual school. The answer can be found in an examination of the community. Miami is a bilingual area with over 200,000 native speakers of Spanish in its population. For many years Miami has looked to Latin America for commerce and tourism. Our community has a need for educated bilingual clerks in our stores, bilingual executives in our businesses, bilingual doctors, bilingual secretaries, bilingual lawyers, bilingual policemen, and even bilingual bell-hops. In short, the bilingual has an advantage in almost every category of employment. And as important as bilingualism is locally, there will be an increasingly greater demand for educated bilinguals nationally.

In the spring of 1963 it was, therefore, decided that one elementary school out of Dade County's more than 150, would offer a bilingual program. Before the school itself was chosen, certain educational objectives were established. They incorporated assumptions developed through <sup>an examination of</sup> research and through the experiences gained from examining our second language and vernacular programs for the Cuban refugee pupils who had entered the Dade County schools. The goals were these:

1. The participating pupil will have achieved as much in the way of skills, abilities, and understandings as he would have had he attended a monolingual school and in addition will have derived benefits which he could not have attained in a traditional school.

2. He will be approximately as proficient in his second language as he is in his first. If he is a skilled reader in his first language, he will be a skilled reader in his second language. If he has mastered the fundamental processes and concepts in arithmetic in one language, he will handle them equally well in the other language. If he can express himself clearly and adequately in his first language he will be able to do likewise in the other language.
3. He will be able to operate in either culture easily and comfortably.
4. He will have acquired consciously or unconsciously an understanding of the symbolic nature of language and as a result will be able to achieve greater objectivity in his thinking processes.
5. In general terms he will be more receptive of strange people and cultures and will thus increase the range of his job opportunities.
6. He will have skills, abilities and understanding which will greatly extend his vocational potential and thus increase his usefulness to himself and the world in which he lives.
7. He will broaden his understanding of people and the world and be able to live a richer fuller and more satisfying personal life.

Once the goals were established, the school was selected. Canal Way was chosen because of three factors. First, it was located in a neighborhood which was approximately 50% Spanish-speaking and 50% English-speaking. Second, the neighborhood was a reasonably stable middle-class community. The third factor was the interest of the staff, the administration of school and the parents in the idea of providing bilingual education for the children of the area.

In the late spring a series of meetings were held with the parents. The goals of the program were explained; questions regarding the organization and the curriculum were answered. After the last meeting, the parents of the pupils who were to be in grades one, two and three during the 1963-1964 school year were

given the option of enrolling their children in the bilingual instructional program or in a traditional program. There was no screening of pupils nor entrance requirements for enrollment. However, individual counselling was provided for those who desired it. It was carefully explained that the program was not only for the gifted or academically talented. The staff was equally careful to explain that it was expected that pupils' progress would be comparable to that of pupils in a traditional program. That is to say, there would be "A" students and "F" students. Any parent could withdraw his child at anytime it was felt that school progress was being hindered by the bilingual program. It was further explained that the first year only grades one through three would be involved, but that an additional grade level would be added each year until the full six-year program was developed.

As a result of these meetings, enough children were involved to permit the creation of four classes on each grade level. Two classes were formed of native speakers of English and two of Spanish. Registration for the traditional program was so limited that only two classes were formed, a first and second combination and a straight third grade. In general, the pupils involved in the bilingual program reflected the normal range of the school population.

Six teachers from the faculty were selected to work in the English program and six credentialed teachers who were native speakers of Spanish were hired to work in the Spanish program. All of the Spanish-speaking teachers were bilingual though none of the American teachers were. Three non-credentialed aides were added to the staff to help with clerical work and to assist in the instructional programs in art, music and physical education. The aides represented the only overstaffing of the school and their salaries were the only expenditure not provided for in all of the county's elementary schools.

During the summer of 1963 and again in 1964, the teachers, the aides, the principal and members of the County Bilingual Education Department were involved in a special full-day- six week workshop. Detailed plans and schedules for all phases of the curriculum and the school's operation were developed.

In seven curricular areas, special attention was given to problems resulting from the bilingual nature of the program. Detailed linguistic sequences for the English as a second language and Spanish as a second language were developed in order to incorporate the concepts of the several content areas in the curriculum. Science was given special attention because the availability of parallel texts in English and Spanish made it possible to sharpen the science concepts through their study in divergent cultural settings. Spanish as the vernacular was given special attention because no satisfactory program was available and one had to be created. Music, art, and physical education were given attention because in these areas intracultural relations would initially be the greatest. In all areas of the curriculum, the program in the bilingual school incorporated and was in harmony with the regular Dade County program as it appears in curriculum bulletins.

For the instruction in English, the State adopted texts were selected. Special English as a second language materials were provided. For instruction in Spanish, four series of texts were ordered; a Spanish basal reader series, a Spanish translation of the science series, a Spanish health series, and a Spanish modern math series. All of these materials were recently published in the United States, and reflected modern American pedagogy in their approach to content. Supplementary reading and reference materials in Spanish were ordered for the library.

The principal, working with his staff and with the director of elementary education, developed a complex and comprehensive schedule to insure the best possible staff utilization and to guarantee sufficient time blocks to carry out the curriculum.

The pupils participating in the bilingual program both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking receive approximately half of their instruction in each language. The time devoted in instruction in the second language for each group is staged so as to increase the proportion gradually. During the first year the staging affected all three grade levels. This year it affects the first grade only. The time allotted to the learning of the basic skills and concepts compares favorably with the time regularly allotted in DeDe County in monolingual schools, the only difference being that in the bilingual school the time is divided between the two languages. In the beginning stages the basic skills and concepts are always introduced in the first language of the child. These skills and concepts are then incorporated into the second language program as part of a language learning experience. In this way the child reinforces the concepts and skills and at the same time advances in his mastery of the second language.

In order to insure close correlation between the curriculum in classes in the native language and the second language curriculum, teachers were organized into teams. Each team has one English teacher and one Spanish teacher who work with the same group of approximately 60 pupils. In the team working with native English-speaking pupils, the English team member is responsible for developing the usual English curriculum during half the school day and the Spanish-speaking teacher develops the second language program for the same pupils during the other half of the day. In this way each teacher works with two groups of boys and girls. In the teams working with the Spanish-speaking pupils, the Spanish-speaking teacher develops the traditional curriculum and the English-speaking team member develops the second language program. The aides provide release time for the teachers so that they

have an extended planning period at the same time.

In Dade County first and second grade pupils normally attend school from 8:30 to 2:00 o'clock and in third through sixth grade they attend from 8:30 to 3:00 o'clock. However, the second grade pupils in Coral Way go to school from 8:30 to 3:00 and during the last twelve weeks of the school year the first graders stay an extra hour also. The lengthened school day in first and second grade provides for extra time devoted mainly to the teaching of reading in the second language which begins after a foundation of vernacular reading has been established. For many pupils this means that reading instruction in the second language begins as early as the thirteenth week of the first grade.

Now that the program is completing its second year, objective data is being gathered. Preliminary examination indicates that the pupils are making progress comparable to that made by previous classes which were involved in a monolingual program. Perhaps a better indication of the success of the program can be seen in the fact that after one year of offering the bilingual program, the parents of the pupils who were in traditional classes requested that their children be moved into the bilingual program, thereby making it unnecessary to provide regular classes in the primary grades. In the course of the past two years only three or four parents have requested that their children be withdrawn from the program. Parents have also reported that their third graders are helping their high school aged brothers and sisters with their Spanish lessons.

The evaluations <sup>from</sup> of the teachers has also been generally favorable. One first grade teacher who has taught in the school for years summed up the teachers' attitude when she was asked "How do you explain the pupils good progress when only half the day is spent studying English?" Her answer was, "I seem to be planning better and wasting less time. The pupils also seem to be more highly motivated to learn."

It should also be emphasized that the pupils actually spend as much time with educational experiences in each curricular area as they would in a traditional program. In fact, in reading they spend more time totally since they have at least an hour in vernacular reading and an extended period of second language reading. The total amount of time spent in science, social studies, arithmetic, health, art, music, and other aspects of the curriculum equals or exceeds the time spent in these areas in a monolingual school. Study in these areas, with concepts introduced in the native language then developed in the second language does not produce interference, but reinforcement.

In terms of curriculum, it is anticipated that next year the language of instruction for units developed in grades three through five will not depend on the first language of the pupils. Groups will be mixed and the units will often be developed in the language which best fits the content. For example, mixed groups of Spanish and English-speaking pupils may study a unit on Latin America developed in Spanish and taught by the Spanish-speaking teacher. At another time the same group may study colonization of the New England area in English with the native American teacher. The fourth grade may be studying the early history of Florida in Spanish and modern Florida history in English. Regardless of the medium of instruction the underlying concepts of man's adjustment to his environment, the development of democratic principles, the interdependence of man will be developed.

Plans are presently under way to start additional bilingual schools in Dade County. Their success will depend to a large extent on three factors. First, the programs must be designed and tailored to fit the school and the school community. Two, the teachers must be educated in their first language and trained in the use of modern pedagogical practices, and three, ample time must be provided for detailed planning and correlation of the instructional programs.



The pupils in Coral Bay are rapidly becoming bilinguals who are distinctly "culturally advantaged." They are learning to operate effectively in two languages and in two cultures. These boys and girls are broadening their understanding of other people. They are being prepared to live satisfying lives and to contribute to their community and their country.