

Annals of the Bilingual School

CORAL WAY: A BILINGUAL SCHOOL

J. L. Logan, Principal

My speaking to you today, I might say, is a progress report on the bilingual school because most of you are somewhat familiar with what has been done during the past four school terms. Some of you have read reports; some have heard papers read at other conferences; and several of you have visited the school. Because some are not acquainted with our program I feel that I should, in addition to reporting progress, give you some background of what has been done. Therefore, I shall talk about:

1. Why the bilingual school
2. Organization
3. Community problems
4. Personnel
5. Materials
6. Pupil progress

The bilingual program which was organized at Coral Way Elementary School, Miami, Florida, during the spring of 1963 was part of a Ford Foundation project awarded to the Dade County Schools to develop materials to teach English as a second language to non-speakers of English. The need for these materials became acute in South Florida after the large number of Cuban refugees came to Miami. Of course, as you know, there has been a need for these materials in the southwestern states and in New York City for many years.

(I have recently learned they are also needed in Michigan.)

It is my opinion that the President's recent visit to South America and the signing of the western hemispheric common market agreement would indicate a greater need for these materials plus a great need for materials to teach both Spanish and Portuguese.

Our first problem, at Coral Way, was that of organizing a planning and steering committee. We needed brainpower and experience which, fortunately we had in our county . . .

Dr. Pauline Rojas, who was to direct the Ford Foundation project, had directed the

English as a Second Language program in Puerto Rico for twelve years. Ralph Robinett had worked as an assistant to Dr. Rojas in Puerto Rico. Paul Bell, who is the local chairman of this conference, and who is supervisor of Bilingual Education in this county had worked in the bilingual schools of Guatemala. (Incidentally, Paul has been the right arm to this program.) Others employed in the Ford Foundation Project had directed or worked in the bilingual schools of Cuba.

These people, plus the district director for Coral Way School, the assistant principal, and the principal, made up the planning committee.

This committee developed a philosophy and a set of guidelines, and from these recommended an overall organizational pattern. The committee worked with one thought in mind: Select that which had proved successful in bilingual schools of other parts of the world, Latin America, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Europe, and incorporate the best into a program that would be compatible with the basic Dade County Curriculum and the Coral Way School Plant. The committee at no time nor in any way, attempted to develop a program around the personnel in the building.

① The committee recommended:

That the Dade County Curriculum Scope and Sequence be followed and the time allocations for each skill area be observed.

That each child should receive his instruction for a part of the day in his vernacular with a native teacher of his language.

That each child receive his instruction for a part of the day in his second language with a native teacher of the second language.

That he spend a part of each day in a mixed group at which time both or either language might be used.

That the second language materials be purchased or developed to reinforce or supplement vernacular instruction.

That a summer workshop be planned to train personnel and that the school day be organized to effect daily in-service training and planning.

That non-instructional help be employed to assist instructional personnel.

With these guidelines clearly defined it was then the principal's responsibility to name committees and plan the summer workshop.

A personnel committee started interviewing applicants immediately.

The regular teachers in the building were offered an opportunity to teach in the program if they could attend the six-week summer workshop. Several could not because of previous plans. (The time was short since the School Board did not announce the program until late April 1963.) Those teachers who could not and those who did not wish to work in the program transferred to nearby schools.

The University of Miami was at this time (the 1962-1963 school year) training a class of thirty Cuban refugee teachers to teach Spanish in the Florida schools. The state certification department had agreed to give three-year provisional certificates to these teachers after the completion of one year of prescribed work. From this group of thirty, the committee selected six. Two for first, two for second, and two for third grades. The program during the first year included only the first three grades. A scheduling committee also started to work immediately, developing a workable schedule that would give the teachers one hour of planning time during the day and at the same time give the pupils the recommended time allotted for each subject area. This scheduling was accomplished by using aides to assist with music, art, physical education and supervised play. The bilingual aides were former Cuban teachers who were not certificated to teach in Florida.

Running concurrently with organization the principal and other members of the planning committee were meeting with groups of parents whose questions seemed to be repeated over and over again -

"If my child spends part or half of his day working in a second language what will he miss?"

"How can you crowd a full day's work into one-half day?"

"What kinds of Spanish printed materials will you use?"

"What about library books?"

"Will reading achievement be lower?"

"Will it be Cuban Spanish?"

These questions went on and on and the committee continued its program of public relations. Meetings were held with parents in all grade groups. Speakers explained the program to parents at PTA meetings. Teachers talked with parents who were undecided about enrolling their children in bilingual classes. About eighty percent of the parents wanted their children in the program (we had anticipated this) and for the children whose parents did not want them to participate, a regular self-contained class at each grade level was provided. The school year started with four bilingual classes and one regular class at each grade level grades one, two, and three, but by the end of the first year self-contained classes became smaller because the parents, as they saw the progress the children were making in the second language, requested that their children be transferred to the bilingual classes. At the end of the second year the number in the regular classes had dwindled to less than one-half of one class or about fifteen pupils. At the present time there are 941 pupils in the school and only eleven in the regular sixth grade class. After this school term all pupils will participate in the bilingual program.

2 The 1963 six-weeks summer workshop day was divided into two parts. During the forenoon the twelve teachers, six English speaking and six Spanish speaking, were enrolled in two, three-semester hour classes. One "Basic Linguistics" and the other "Structures of the English Language." Those who wanted University of Miami credit, paid the regular in-service reduced rate fee. The teachers, who were enrolled in these classes, feel that this training has been invaluable. In the afternoon from 12:30 to 3:30 the teachers worked in grade level groups developing the second language program and adjusting this program to the Dade County Curriculum Scope and Sequence for the elementary grades.

Textbooks were examined, and from the vocabulary in these books the basic language patterns were developed. From these language patterns the yearly, monthly, and weekly plans were developed.

Even though the language lessons were structured they were flexible, to the extent, that adjustment to the progress of the pupils could be easily made.

Hundreds of visual aids were prepared and they were "finger-tip" filed for instant use.

The scheduling was not easy. In addition to being guided by the guidelines of the steering committee, the group had to keep in mind that the program had to be compatible with:

Florida State Law
Florida Accreditation Standards
Dade County School Board Policy

and of course, good school administration. The schedule had to be flexible because of the plan for grouping. The pupils were grouped according to their knowledge of their second language. During the first year there was a great deal of shifting of pupils from one group to another.

③ The organization provides for first grade pupils to gradually move into the second language Beginning with fifteen minutes per day during the first four weeks to one hundred fifty minutes per day during the last twelve weeks of school. A typical day for a first grade child during the last two marking periods would be:

④ Vernacular - one hundred sixty-five minutes; second language one hundred fifty minutes - Mixed Groups - English and Spanish - seventy-five minutes.

③ As the pupils move through grades two to six, the time for mixed grouping increases and second language and vernacular time decreases. In the sixth grade two classes are mixed for the complete day.

⑥ It is the opinion of those who have worked in the school that the one hour of daily planning time has made the greatest contribution to the success of the bilingual program. This one hour of planning time is scheduled while the pupils go to musical and physical

education. At each grade level, music is scheduled to follow physical education or, vice versa, to provide the one hour time block.

Each day during this planning time the teachers of a grade level meet as a group to do team planning. A team consists of one English and one Spanish speaking teacher.

7 The three days each week the music teacher in not in Coral Way School the aides continue her program or do follow-up activities in what the music teacher has introduced.

In physical education a Spanish speaking aide assist the teacher during the entire day.

8 One bilingual aide works in the library part of each day helping pupils with their selection of Spanish books. In addition to helping with the pupils, the aides assume clerical responsibilities such as: pupil accounting; typing report cards; (Coral Way has a special report card) posting information in the pupils' cumulative folders; preparing visual materials, and helping with the ordering of Spanish books and other Spanish materials. We experienced some difficulty in finding suitable printed materials in Spanish.

At the present time the Miami Linguistic readers are being used to introduce reading to the Spanish speaking pupils. These materials have been developed for grades one and two. In addition to these, the regular state adopted textbooks are used for all English instruction. To teach Spanish we are using materials from the following publishers:

Laidlaw (Health and Readers)

D.C. Heath (Miami Linguistic Readers, Science, Fries American-English Series)

Silver-Burdett (Math)

Follett (Library Books)

9 One of the evaluations of the scholastic achievement of the pupils in the bilingual program at Coral Way is being done by Mabel Richardson who is studying at the University of Miami. Briefly this is what Mrs. Richardson is attempting to do:

One: To compare the academic progress of the English speaking pupils in the bilingual program, grades one through three, with the academic progress of pupils, grades one through three, who attend a regular Dade County School. The pupils in the bilingual program are taught one-half day in English and one-half day in Spanish. The control groups are taught the full day's activities in English.

Two: To compare the academic progress of the Spanish speaking pupils, grades one through three, who are in the bilingual program with the academic progress of Spanish speaking pupils, in grades one through three, who attend a regular school in Dade County. All instruction for this control group is in English.

The assumption is that there will be no significant differences in the academic progress of the pupils in the control groups and the progress of the pupils in the bilingual program at comparable grade levels. For these comparisons, data from the Dade County testing program has been used. In this county the Stanford Achievement tests are given to all elementary pupils at the beginning of October each year. Results were obtained for the first three years of this program.

10 The third purpose of this project: To determine if, and at what point, the students in the study become bilingual. Will the English speaking pupils in the study have learned Spanish? Will the Spanish speaking pupils have learned English?

At the end of the school year 1964, 1965, and 1966 the Cooperative Inter-American Tests were given to all students in the bilingual program in Coral Way School. These tests have equivalent forms in English and Spanish. Each pupil was given his second language test first, and a day or two later he was given the same test in his native language. These two tests give an idea of how much of the second language the pupil has learned. Mrs. Richardson is completing the first stage of this evaluation at the present time, and hopes to make the results of the study available to those interested. She hopes to carry this study through the next three years to gain a more comprehensive evaluation of this unique program.

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With one exception, the basic overall organization of the school today is the same as the original plan. However, because of an increased enrollment two rooms, one at first and one at second grade level, have been set up as self-contained classes. In these rooms the bilingual teacher directs all activities, one-half day in English and one-half day in Spanish. The first presentation of a new concept may be in either language; this same concept is then ^{revised} ~~received~~ and enlarged in the other - either that same afternoon or the next day.

One major problem, concerns the needs of pupils, transferring to Coral Way. Those pupils who came after the program was under way were assigned to a small group, for a part of each day, with a second language teacher, to learn the basic language patterns.

One partially unsolved problem in the school is that of communication.

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We feel that the success of this program is due largely to:

1. A flexible organizational plan.
2. Good consultant services available on call.
3. One hour of planning time each within the school day.
4. The use of Aides.
5. Democratic planning within the school.
6. Personnel enthusiasm.
7. Community enthusiasm.
8. Personnel with a bilingual point of view.
9. Cooperative and team teaching.
10. Additional funds for books and materials.
11. The second language taught by native speakers of the second language.