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Eileen Nancy Whelan  
*SIT Graduate Institute*

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A Planning Paper

Monolingual To Bilingual:  
The Conceptualization And Transformation  
Of A Colombian School.

Eileen Nancy Whelan

B. S. Worcester State College 1985

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for  
International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

September 1987

This project by Eileen Nancy Whelan is accepted in its present form.

Date September 14, 1987

Project Advisor Carmel Farkas

Project Reader Luis Fuentes

This project is dedicated to my parents, Nancy and Charles, because without their love and constant belief in me, I would never have come so far.

I would also like to give special thanks to Chris Carlsmith. His computer, his advice and his friendship made this paper possible.

## ABSTRACT

This paper is the result of the researcher's recent engagement as the Program Coordinator for a monolingual elementary school in Floridablanca, Bucaramanga, Colombia, South America. As the coordinator must design and implement a bilingual program for successful transition, this paper addresses and discusses the conceptualization and preparation needed to make the task possible.

### ERIC Descriptors

BILINGUAL EDUCATION CIJE: 1178 RIE: 4083 GC: 330

SN Encouragement of bilingualism through the teaching of regular school courses in both the national language and a second language.

BT Education

RT Bilingual Education Programs  
Bilingual Schools  
Bilingualism  
Bilingual Students  
Bilingual Teachers  
Bilingual Teachers Aides  
English (Second Language)  
Immersion Programs

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## INTRODUCTION

The conception of this paper is a result of a recent contract employing the researcher as coordinator of a bilingual program for a monolingual school "La Quinta del Puente", a private elementary school in Floridablanca, Bucaramanga, Colombia, South America.

In preparation for this proposed transformation, the latest data and findings on bilingual education in the United States have been researched and adapted to the presumed needs of the Colombian school. In consideration of the various aspects illustrated in this investigation, many of the areas and concepts overlap and coordinate. However, only those that apply have been utilized in accordance with an assessment of the particular requirements.

### RATIONALE: WHY CHANGE?

Since its inception, bilingual education in the public schools of the United States has been a topic of major concern educationally, economically, culturally and politically. However, this debate is not usually the case in schools abroad. Students fortunate enough to attend "American" or bilingual schools are usually the socially elite and economically advantaged. Bilingual education is in no way mandatory nor considered a sign of lower class, as in the United States. It is deemed a culturally enriching experience and a powerful demonstration of the attitudes of respect and of potential opportunity concerning the knowledge of English.

In Colombia, Spanish is the uncontested lingua franca. There is no question of its status as the national language. These Colombian parents are electing to send their children to school to learn English as a second language. This indicates that the children will be educated through two

languages as media of instruction for all of the curricula, which will result in their becoming fully coordinate bilinguals.

The parents of the students enrolling in the school are acknowledging the need for change and in this case, unlike in the United States, there will be no identity problems because the students are certain of who they are ethnically. Students are supported and encouraged by their families to become bilingual. There is no question or doubt about maintenance of pride in their heritage nor is there a loss of national sense of dignity.

The motives for acquiring fluency are many. The parents and directors of the school are aware of the benefits and advantages involved, even if only for utilitarian purposes. To quote Larsen-Freeman,

"To obtain, maintain or advance in a career is increasingly dependent upon one's command of English. Because of the technological leadership of English-speaking countries, English is exclusively the language of international shipping and air travel and is also the language of science and technology. Two-thirds of all scientific papers are published in English and English is the medium for 80% of the information stored in the world's computers. It is also frequently the language of civil/diplomatic service, tourism, business/commerce, international aid, and popular music/mass entertainment.

For those who pursue careers in other areas, there is still incentive to learn English. This is true, for example, for those who enroll in an educational institution in which English is the medium of instruction. Even for those with no career ambition that necessitates English, it is a language which suggests certain qualities which people of the world wish to emulate: modernity, prosperity, opportunity and individual freedom....In short, for real or only associate reasons, a knowledge of English can be empowering to those who have the opportunity to learn it.

When delivered by sensitive teachers who respect their students, appreciate linguistic/cultural diversity, and do not



believe any language to be superior to another, English can offer people life options and feelings of success they would otherwise be denied. It seems to me that at the level of the individual, withholding the teaching of English is as insidious a welding of power as that of which the teaching of English is accused."<sup>1</sup>

The question of the desirability of fluency of English is almost rhetorical. English is the official and unofficial language in relations with almost every country in the world. Success in acquisition depends upon bilingual skills and cultural sensitivity. Knowledge of other languages is essential for participation in international affairs. A good example of the validity of this is the European Free Trade Association. English is the official language of communication yet none of the six countries participating has English as a mother tongue.

For those interested in pursuing bilingual careers or have a desire to participate in scientific, technological or international business/enterprises, the doors of the world can be unlocked with the advent of a bilingual approach to education. Some common examples of bilingual careers are: secretaries, airline personnel, telephone operators, teachers, translators, interpreters, foreign correspondents, diplomats, lawyers, clergy, doctors, nurses and other health care workers.

## **Planning A Bilingual Program**

### **General Overview**

There are several schools of thought regarding bilingual education and each has its own merit. Since the responsibility for all facets and areas of implementation will be mine, decisions regarding the general plans and operation of the school will be based upon the pros and cons derived from studies done in the United States. In choosing the strategy that will best suit the needs of the school, the four broad categories of bilingual education programs were examined. They are Transitional, Monolingual, Partial, and Full Bilingual programs.

**Type 1: Transitional Program**

In a program such as this, Spanish is used in the early grades to the extent necessary to allow students to adjust to the total use of English and/or to master the subject to the best of their ability until their English skills alone can be used as the medium of instruction. No thought is given to goals of literacy and fluency to maintain or improve their native language. The emphasis is on the usage of both Spanish and English in the primary grades but for the sole purpose of using their first language as a bridge to developing their English skills until transition can occur. Limited periods of time (i.e., 3 years) are often imposed within which students should be able to transfer to a totally monolingual status in a second language. Consequently, their native language is usually retarded or lost as there is no mandatory instruction in the mother tongue. Perhaps Spanish may be offered as an elective in the later years of schooling but by then it is too late to recapture the initial facility that accompanies early fluency.

**Type II: Monolingual Program**

This type of program indicates goals of development in both languages for oral/aural skills but is not concerned with literacy skills in L1 (the native language). Fluency in Spanish is encouraged as a link between home and school and as the school recognizes and supports the language in the domains of the home and neighborhood, there is no cultural stigma attached. But again, there is no concern with literacy skills nor are there opportunities for utilizing Spanish in conjunction with professions, literature, government, etc. It is a short-range language maintenance program which probably encounters a societal shift. (The child in Colombia will not face this type of problem but would still suffer as it is detrimental to his education as well.) This type of education would put the native Spanish speaker in a difficult

situation at best, as he would continue to be a fluent Spanish speaker but would possess poor literacy skills.

### **Type III: Partial Bilingualism**

This example maintains fluency and literacy in both languages but L1 literacy is limited to certain subject matter generally related to the ethnic group and its cultural heritage. Reading and writing skills in the L1 are commonly developed in the areas of social science, literature and the arts but exclude science and mathematics. Reasoning for this might suggest that scientific and mathematical terminology is basically international and that concrete concepts and formulas are linguistically transferable. It could also suggest, however, that although a serious vehicle for modern literate thought, Spanish is not related to control of the technological, scientific or mathematical spheres.

This model of bilingual program is aimed at language maintenance coupled with a distinct effort at culture maintenance and development. Formal instruction in reading and writing Spanish is given with a special emphasis on Spanish civilization and history. In addition, special instruction in English is provided for all skills when deemed necessary.

If one is pursuing the goals of coordinate bilingualism, a major flaw is evident within this model. The possibility exists that the student will possess ample knowledge in certain subject areas, but only in the languages of instruction. He will then lack the ability to translate that knowledge.

### **Type IV: Full Bilingualism**

According to the principles of this program, students will develop all skills in both languages and domains. Both English and Spanish languages are used as mediums of instruction for all subjects except in teaching the languages themselves. It is evident that

this program is aimed at L2 (second language) development as well as L1. This would appear to produce "balanced coordinate bilinguals" - children who are capable of thinking and feeling in either of two languages independently. Linguistically and psychologically, this appears to be the ideal. Balanced competency in all skills and domains is a theoretical and probable possibility.

In view of the above and considering the factors involved, the last program described would serve well in the Colombian school. Since English is not spoken in the surrounding society, English will only be available in the school while the child still has to function in a Spanish world the moment he exits the school door. While acquiring English fluency and literacy, he still needs the competency to function in his monolingual Spanish environment. He will need the appropriate skills for survival and the best measures to assist him are to facilitate his education in all spheres of English and Spanish. The responsibility for his capacity to function as a completely bilingual individual will rest upon the shoulders of his teachers. Therefore, amply qualified educators will be imperative to ensure that these needs are anticipated and met.

### School Committee Relations

In the typical North American public school, the school committee is all important and has much to say regarding the operation and government of the school. Since "La Quinta del Puente" is private, the needs and desires of the administration, the director, the parents and the school board must be considered. The director of the school is the person to whom I must report. As I already have been engaged as Program Coordinator, the appropriate committees for candidate selection obviously have been consulted. In the administrative hierarchy the director is the intermediary between staff and school board.

The schedule begins with my arrival on September 10, 1987. The Colombian school year starts in February. In the six months of preparation, there will be meetings with the school board, administrators and interested parents. Several issues have to be considered and mediated before the program can begin.

Assuming that the confidence of my colleagues is won, I first have to ascertain how much support can be expected, and if it will be from everyone. My job will entail discovering who is behind me, who the actual governing body is, and of whom it is comprised. Also, the purposes for initiating a bilingual school must be discovered.

Some questions to be considered are: Are the reasons for the change financial, political, or educationally oriented? What are the existing attitudes toward education? How is English viewed? If it can safely be assumed that English and bilingualism are desired by everyone, my position is relatively strong. Any negative attitudes can harm even the best motivational intentions. However, once aware of the existing attitudes, sufficient preparation can be made.

The next step will be to explain to the school committee the basic bilingually oriented educational issues while stressing the imperative need for objectives. In the process of this explanation, the people involved will be encouraged to express their opinion. The desired goals of the forthcoming bilingual program need to be examined and defined as well as the ways in which they can best serve the needs and aspirations of the school community and parents. It will also be necessary to periodically review and redefine these goals.

As coordinator, I will have to help interpret the proposed program model, thus helping to ensure the school administration of maximum parental support. Since they are paying for their children's education, they have the right to expect optimum results.

After becoming familiar with the coordinator position and discovering the weaknesses and strengths of the proposed

transformation, the economical considerations will then have to be investigated. Costs will need to be estimated and following questions will need to be answered:

Where and what are the sources for financial support? Is the school operated solely on tuition? What funding is available? Are these funds obtainable for adequate instructional materials?

What is the availability of textbooks? How difficult will it be to import books to South America? Will I have complete authority of book selection?

How will my choices be accepted? After giving me authority, will they back my decisions?

While it is hoped that teachers will desire to contribute input into the operation of the school, the aforementioned questions will only be answered in time. Our physical presence must be at the school to actually conduct the program although it is inevitable that additional issues will arise and will have to be addressed appropriately.

### **Program Coordinator**

The appointment of a bilingual educator as program coordinator is usually done after the advisory and study committee meet. In this case, the appointment was made first and it will be my responsibility to coordinate the advisory committee because the feasibility study was completed beforehand.

In relations with the school board et al, my position will encompass an array of domains. In some ways, my job will be similar to that of coordinator of a bilingual school in the United States. But, unlike the United States schools which have consultants for every component of the program, I will have to be the specialist and use my best judgement in all educational spheres.

Some of the essential attributes necessary toward successful coordination are:

- 1) A good command of Spanish;
- 2) Sensitivity to the host culture;
- 3) Public relations skills;
- 4) Acceptance of the demands of the work.

As the major liaison, I will have to constantly be aware of sentiments and relations among teachers, administration and parents. Major areas of responsibility will be:

- 1) Designing and implementing curriculum;
- 2) Creating, choosing, preparing and adapting materials;
- 3) Planning for testing and evaluation;
- 4) Choosing methodologies;
- 5) Conducting pre-and in-service teacher and aide training;
- 6) Placement of students;
- 7) Recommending principles, goals, objectives and program organization to the school board.

### **Personnel Recruitment**

A mandatory consideration will be the recruitment of bilingual and ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers, aides and personnel. It will be in the best interests of the school if the staff employed will be willing to share and work together as a team of complementary coordinates in the planning, preparation and implementation of the bilingual program. The survival and success of the school will be largely due to their contributions.

### **Monitoring Progress**

Constant evaluation and assessment of the program will be of prime importance. Suggestions and improvements should be on-going with feedback encouraged. It should be stated at the onset that

difficulties and snags should be expected but that the program should be flexible enough to change as it progresses to avoid major failure. The continual consideration of the goals and objectives will be of utmost concern while relations and communication will be kept open by keeping all parties well-informed.

### **Volunteers and Parents as Resources**

It is also important that parents are involved in the school. Volunteers and room mothers will be warmly received and can contribute by offering their services in the classroom. Some of these services can be the following:

- Making bulletin boards, class supplies, (according to teacher specifications) charts, simple educational toys, blocks, bean bags;
- Cooking for parties;
- Chaperoning;
- Helping with special class projects, etc.

With this involvement, two-way communication will be opened and maintained. Parents' presence will be a vital and motivating encouragement towards the attitudes of the children and building security will be an enhancement for their educations. With this obviously genial reception, the parents are more likely to attend PTA meetings and participate in private parent/teacher conferences.

Program improvements will continually be sought as maintenance of high quality is the result of on-going evaluation and assessment. And finally, to promote the necessary communication and better community relations, a bilingual school newsletter will be published for the enjoyment of students and their families. It should include notices, announcements, special achievements, articles of interest, lost and found, student activities, and any other tidbits that are of general interest. The children will be encouraged to submit their own materials.



With these attitudes and ideas being of principal concern, the program has a great chance of being ultimately successful. The first year will be undoubtedly experimental but over a long-range, there will be a favorable outcome.

### Program Concept

As it stands now, "La Quinta del Puente" is an elementary monolingual school with grades ranging from pre-school to eight. The student body consists of 460 students and with 26 Colombian teachers. Few teachers are bilingual. My proposal is a long-range plan whereby the school will become fully bilingual over a period of up to 6 years. The following guidelines will be observed:

In February, 1988, a pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class will be initiated.

Each class will have a native English-speaker as the principal teacher, preferably someone who is bilingual. If the teacher is not bilingual, there will be a bilingual native Spanish speaker as a second teacher or aide. The class will be total immersion whereby the native English-speaking teacher will speak only English. It would be hoped that he/she could at least understand Spanish, but it is not possible to recruit fully bilingual teachers, we will have to improvise or make alternative plans. However, the second teacher/aide should speak English as often as possible as it is vital that the children hear English constantly and be understood in their native language.

As the child speaks or makes a request, the teacher will parrot the question or statement in English.

Example:

Student - "Quiero auga."

Teacher - "You want water." (And the ensuing activity of getting the water to drink is concretely acted out, reinforcing the language.)

The aim is to have the classroom climate be a form of natural language acquisition through a semi-situational approach as the child would encounter if he were learning English in a home situation.

Briefly, the reasoning behind this approach is that children have the remarkable capacity for language learning and this phenomenon continues unabated until the onset of puberty. After that time, a sharp decline results, apparently as a result of complex physical and chemical changes in the brain. By beginning language training early, this natural capacity in the child can be exploited. Further elaboration and explanation will be continued in the section on pre-school development.

By the time the child starts school, the normal process of L1 acquisition has occurred in a daily process over the first four years of the child's life. In comparison, the school may have only a few hours each day to bring the child to the same level of competence in L2. For this reason, the presentation of sounds, structures, and vocabulary will be made in a way that short-cuts the time required for L2 learning as quickly as possible.

A child must be motivated to learn and in seeking the motivation, he must want to communicate. The children will be exposed to a process of structured play that will be entertaining yet instructional. The skills that need to be formed require practice. Many language teaching activities should be presented (i.e. natural activities, repetition, choral response, even rote memorization in the form of "fun-and-games") including puppets, physical games, etc. Under the guise of play, the child will be motivated to participate.

As the school stands now, all the classes are monolingual but the next step is to implement a 50-50 division of time for grades 1-6. The

first half of the day would be devoted to Spanish curriculum over all subject areas, and the second half would cover the same subject areas but through intensive ESL materials. Reading will be introduced in the native language. Only after reading skills are fairly well-established in the first language will the transfer be made to reading in English - approximately grade 2. Exceptions and individualizations will be made for those who require different rates/types of learning. The rationale behind this method is that the child does not have to learn to read twice and will be able to transfer his decoding skills with minor adaptations and adjustments.

Each grade will follow this proposed half-Spanish, half-ESL model from the inception of the bilingual program. As the classes graduate to the next level, subject matter will be taught through both media to ensure comprehension and competency in both languages while facilitating the ability to learn academic content in English and Spanish. The lower grades will have fewer problems because they will be orally/aurally fluent by the time they start serious academic classwork.

The work load will be divided and coordinated by the teachers. They will be team teaching in a sense, because they will be presenting the same subject and content matter. However, one will supplement the other even though each teacher will instruct in his/her own native language and act as if his own lesson were of individual importance. The beneficial effect of this method is that in terms of evaluation, it will be easier to see if the student is weak in a specific content matter or in the language area of the subject. And in accordance with the given rule, those children who need extra help will have remedial ESL available in all areas of content.

This method of education serves multiple purposes. Through the process of repetition, teachers will assured of student comprehension, while the students will experience more success in their grasp of the concepts presented. A positive notion is the constant support of double lessons. If the student does not comprehend the lesson the first time, he is more apt to understand it the second time it is taught. And he will

be more able to verbalize the concepts through both English and Spanish. This flexibility assures vocabulary building as well as more variation in the way the material is presented.

There are several reasons why it is desirable to utilize the dual bilingual program with separate languages in separate periods of time. The child will learn two distinct mediums of communication and will address each individual teacher accordingly. It will also avoid the boredom of translation and the inevitability of the child not reaching to grasp the meaning because he knows if he waits, the teacher will undoubtedly translate. Finally, if the same teacher constantly translates material, the perception of the teacher can not help but be unicultural in content and contrary to the preferred bicultural outlook.

It should be stated here that although specific portions of time will be set aside for each language rather than mixing them, there is never a time when the native language is scorned or considered morally wrong. It is only that the goal is to use each language within its own specific time period. By using this method, the focus will not be on the language itself but on what can be learned through that language.

### **Curriculum: Goals and Objectives**

The importance of a well-defined philosophy in respect to guiding curriculum development is stressed by Edmund C. Short who states that, "A decided-upon curriculum is the only way to guarantee that aimless, useless or undesirable learnings do not waste the time of the pupils and the teachers and the resources supporting the school"<sup>2</sup> Curriculum changes require a direction and the decisions need to be made within the confines of an existing philosophy. When the direction is established, bilingual curriculum can be established. According to Short, "when explicit choices have been made about philosophy, purposes and objectives, the remaining choices about what shall be taught and how to do it are more easily made within the established framework of ideas."<sup>3</sup>

Generally speaking, the categories of curriculum are cognitive domain, affective domain, process or skill development, generic concepts and problem-solving. In considering a bilingual school, one can also add cultural and linguistic domain.

At "La Quinta del Puente", there will have to be an initial meeting with the administration to ascertain their desired goals and objectives. They may have particular needs according to the principals of their existing framework. After discussing mutual considerations, a viable curriculum that will be satisfactory to them and to the teachers will have to be proposed.

Because this is not an American school, some general suggestions regarding the normal procedure will be an adaption of traditional axioms in bilingual education. The design will take into consideration the **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE** and **HOW** of Colombian students. From there, a sound pedagogy will be derived with the desired goal of enabling the students to attain functional competency.

Needs will have to be assessed and the curriculum designed with not only the usual development of materials, tasks, tests and activities, but also designed for the specific target language population with varying student entry and exit points and different grouping patterns.

Presently, the assumption is that none of the matriculating students speak English. This may be an incorrect assumption, however, and enough flexibility must exist to attend to individual needs as they arise.

An initial assessment will have to be made to see what materials are currently in use. The questions to be asked will depend upon an investigation of what materials are immediately available. Are the texts, materials, etc. usable? Can they be adapted? If not, what are the alternatives?

Whatever the case, a curriculum must be planned, developed, programmed, and readily implemented through concrete unit and lesson plans that reflect the complexities of monolingual Colombian students. These students will be exposed to a brand new way of learning that include linguistic learning (through two languages-one of which will be foreign) and cultural learning (suddenly they will be faced with having American teachers.) Much will depend on a delicate balance of cultural and linguistically sensitive understanding.

### Formula for Curriculum Design

A myriad of questions arise within the context of attaining a feasible formula. According to Martha Montero,<sup>4</sup> some of these questions are:

- a) How does a teacher begin to plan the curriculum?
- b) What are the major areas to be considered?
- c) What are some of the structural elements to be taken into account?
- d) What may be considered a "meaningful experience" for the bilingual student?
- e) What content information actually comes across to the student?
- f) How can the teacher measure and evaluate student progress when using such curriculum?
- g) What are some of the obstacles to be considered in designing the curriculum?
- h) What reading levels are to be included?
- i) How does a teacher work with students who are having difficulty in reading or writing in their natural language?
- j) Is parental input to be considered in the design of the curriculum?
- k) Will such curriculum significantly affect the student?
- l) Can the curriculum teach languages and culture?

In addition to the above questions, the following thoughts should be examined with respect to the Colombian school:

- a) How much emphasis should be placed on English-speaking cultures?
- b) How does a teacher work with students who are having difficulty reading and writing English?
- c) Since English will be, no doubt, spoken only in the school, how can enough exposure be provided to ensure acquisition and the resulting fluency?
- d) Will the curriculum selected actually transform the school from a distinctly Colombian flavor to an American or international climate? If so, is this desirable?

Many of these issues can be addressed only in the evolution of the school and from the consequences of trial and error, but the actual attempt to capture the learning experiences of the non-English or limited - English speaker, and then to organize these into comprehensive goals, are the grounds for the construction of a well-designed bilingual curriculum.

### **Primary Objectives**

The basic objectives of the curriculum will be:

- 1) A statement of what skills the students will acquire;
- 2) Test of students' knowledge in specific subject areas;
- 3) The student will be functionally competent in Spanish and English.

### **Curriculum Implementation**

The next area will focus on how the curriculum will be implemented. The teachers will play a major role in the process of

developing, implementing, and evaluating unit plans as part of the workload. They will work with the coordinator in the continuous redefinition of goals, objectives and material for self-evaluation and examination of progress. In this reflective manner, self-correction will help to avoid major failure and foresee potential difficulties. In summation, the structure of the unit plan will first be seen on paper but the real determination of success will be in the classroom.

As an approach to unit plan construction, the following Montero<sup>5</sup> structure will be studied:

- 1) A topic which may entail several subtopics or one major theme or organizing idea.
- 2) A specific rationale as to why such a unit is being developed.
- 3) The statement of the assumptions underlying the rationale: empirical, historical, values, ethical, moral, cultural, linguistic, etc.
- 4) Goals and objectives with the appropriate accompanying criteria.
- 5) Specific teacher strategies to be used in accordance with the specific objectives.
- 6) Activities that will lead to attaining the specified objectives.
- 7) The types of materials to be used (audio visual, texts, teacher-made, etc.)
- 8) The evaluation scheme that will be employed in order to assess whether or not the objectives have been attained.

The content taught will have its own dimensions (depending upon the subject area, theme or topic taught) of scope, sequence and continuity with bilingual/multicultural aspects permeating throughout the entire curriculum.

### Unit Plan



The unit plan can be visualized as a whole entity consisting of various components encompassing structure, content, language and cultural/social factors that apply to bilingual/multicultural experience.

Since meaningful experience is the foundation of motivation to learn, the student will begin to learn from a microcosmic, relative-to-self attitude, and transfer to a macrocosmic world view. Otherwise conceptualized as a concentric square, the student studies lessons planned in this sequence of order: self, immediate surroundings, family, barrio, community, city/pueblo, region, country, English-speaking countries and world, (see illustration.)

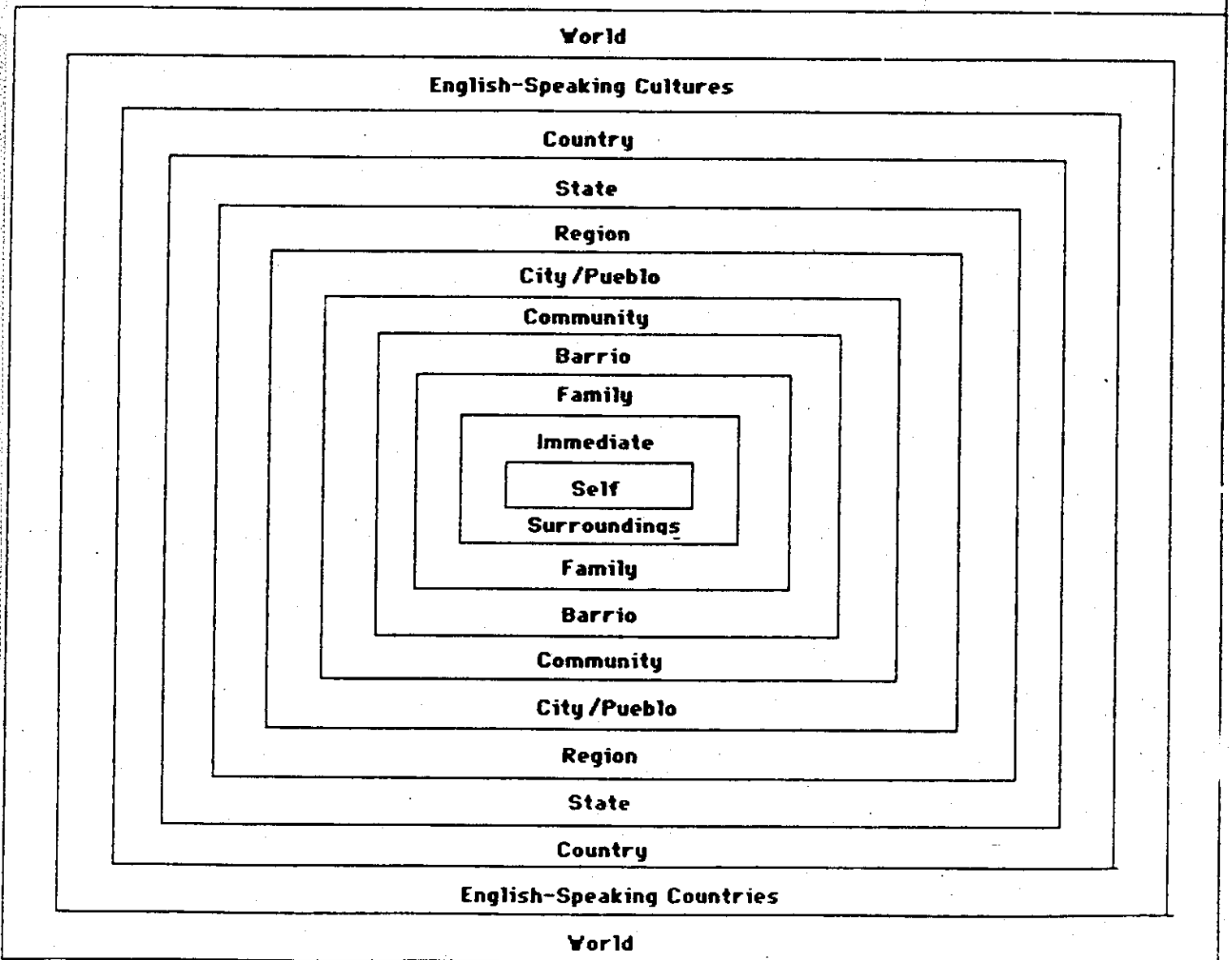
With this concentric square in mind, the evolution of learning will coordinate with the conceptual growth of the child and will be relatively proportional. The topics selected will be from the prevailing theme underlying the focus of the unit plan. The topic can then be covered by a series of lesson plans. Themes can also include a horizontal angle which cuts across different subject areas with generic concepts usable in language arts, math, art, science, music and social studies. Time, interest, appeal and student motivation will be the only limits in expansion.

### **Learning Approaches**

In presenting materials, a variety of learning approaches can be utilized. Such examples would be the following:

- 1) Programmed instruction;
- 2) The discovery method (question and answer);
- 3) Inquiry approach;
- 4) Didactic;
- 5) By doing (hands-on, concrete);
- 6) Dramatizations and role playing;
- 7) Representation;
- 8) Experimental;

**Illustration**  
**Concentric Squares of Sequential Learning**



### 9) Simulation.

If an eclectic manner is preferred, a combination of all of the above can be used to attain given goals. The teachers will be encouraged to utilize any and all of these methods and will be given the freedom to experiment. Since the aim is communicative competence, anything that will encourage learning will be acceptable, with the only limitation being common sense and personal preference and strategy.

The following illustrates the idea of the concentric square plan for the evolution of units. The immediate surroundings of the child are addressed, expanded, and cut across other subject areas.

- Unit 1.** School Orientation
  - Safety
  - Playground Equipment
  - Cafeteria Procedures
  
- Unit 2.** Body Parts
  - Clothes
  - Classroom Objects and Furniture
  
- Unit 3.** Signs: Big/Little
  - Geometric Shapes
  
- Unit 4.** Numbers 0-10
  - Colors
  
- Unit 5.** Family
  - Home
  - Rooms:
    - Kitchen
    - Bedroom
    - Bathroom, etc.
  
- Unit 6.** Bathroom
  - Hygiene: Body and Teeth

Self-Care and Grooming  
 Food: Breakfast and Lunch

**Unit 7.** Food Groups  
 City Transportation  
 Farm Products  
 Community: Post Office  
 Gas Station  
 Fire Station  
 Police  
 Church  
 Library

**Unit 8.** Animals: Pets  
 Farm  
 Zoo

**Unit 9.** Self: Physical Appearance  
 Academic and Physical Abilities  
 Feelings

**Unit 10.** Activities: School and Vacation  
 Beach  
 Park  
 Camping/Boating  
 Visiting Relatives

### **Beliefs and Assumptions for Providing a Healthy and Meaningful Learning Experience**

Fundamental to any bilingual program are certain assumptions for building a healthy and meaningful learning environment. The following are recapitulations and expansions of my own beliefs, assumptions and approaches:

- A) The child must be accepted where and as he is so that one can build upon his previously acquired capabilities. Each child brings his own concepts to school, along with his own language complete with sound system, grammar and vocabulary.
- B) Naturally there will still be aspects of L1 that the student must learn. But he is not just being taught more about his language. Rather, his dominant language is being used to teach him more.
- C) A second language will be better learned by effective and efficient L2 teaching by using a sequential and systematic presentation of structural elements for all students. In the lower grades, this is best done by organized, structured play.
- D) A child should never be stigmatized or traumatized because of either language forms. L2 techniques can be used to help the child develop fluent control of this linguistic surroundings.
- E) Constructive analysis of L1 and L2 should be utilized within the context of construction and selection of materials and evaluative measures.
- F) Language instruction should be in two different languages in direct instruction at different periods of the day to discourage translation-type learning and L1 interference.
- G) Different levels of experience, interest, attention span and rates of learning should be provided for.
- H) Language acquisition and communicative competency require much practice in understanding and speaking, in different types of meaningful situations. Every drill or exercise presented should have meaning for the student.
- I) Acquiring new habits and skills in language learning requires correction. This is better accomplished as teacher-modeling

when faced with incorrect responses and error correction. Reinforcement of new linguistic habits is necessary and positive responses will be continual correct modeling.

J) Success in learning a new language is largely dependent on the need to know it. Motivation is a crucial component and should never be neglected.

K) Children should be asked to produce only after comprehension and internalization of the second language. This will minimize mistakes and anxiety of production.

L) New content areas will be presented in patterns which are already familiar and will build on previous knowledge. Eventually, if the language systems are successful, speakers will be able to manipulate the language to create new forms.

M) Elements of language will best be taught in the order of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Children should first have sufficient time to internalize and comprehend the L2.

N) Reading and writing will be presented only after some fluency has been achieved in speech and even then the initial written material will not contain structures which have not been introduced and produced orally.

O) Similar lexical items will be presented through structures in both languages with approximate equivalence, with function and content words selected for their immediate need and usefulness in each language.

P) The emphasis placed on learning strategies in respect to their importance will enable the student to function competently within the system. Basic classroom instructions will be taught immediately in the second language so that the teacher can practice effective classroom control. Directly afterwards, certain fixed phrases such as greeting

forms, appropriate question forms, asking permission to do certain things, etc., will be presented. These structures will be fixed and invaluable so they will be independently taught and not part of the regular curriculum sequence of language structures.

At various intervals during the development of this proposed curriculum, that formation of the process will be evaluated to allow for revision, redefinition, and reconstruction whenever and wherever necessary. At the end, a summarative evaluation will allow for final product appraisal. With these many concepts in mind, the appropriate curriculum can be developed to suit this very special school in Colombia.

### **Staff Development and Resource Training**

In the quest for excellence in teachers, it is natural to want to employ superior staff members to ensure greater odds for success at "La Quinta del Puente." Educators with special qualifications and with whom we will have a mutually satisfying relationship will be sought.

In preferring teachers with masters' degrees in ESL and bilingual/multicultural education, the degree of scholarly competence can be ascertained fairly and quickly. It is presumed that there will be difficulty in finding the perfectly bilingual English-speaking teachers but since the intention is to have team teachers, the burden will be somewhat alleviated and concentration can be focused on finding the best qualified applicants.

An advantage of having native English and native Spanish team teachers is that the students will be assured authentic native accents in both languages as well as acquire a more authentic understanding of both cultures. This will promise a more varied and interesting program of learning activities while maintaining the format "de facto" cross-cultural education.

In addition to the previous qualifications and the appropriate degrees, the teacher must be culturally sensitive, have intercultural

experience and be mature enough to accept the differences and difficulties of living and teaching in a foreign country.

### Role of Teacher

The teacher plays a key role and has the major challenge of fostering positive attitudes. The content and method by which a student learns depends largely upon what the teacher decides the student should learn. Since the teacher has total control over so many educational domains, it is of extreme importance that the teacher realizes the responsibility and power potential he/she possesses. The learning experience of the children will be guided and molded by the teacher. This ensures that the student will be prepared for complex social realities.

At a conference sponsored by the Center for Applied Linguistics, August 5 - 6, 1974,<sup>6</sup> a set of guidelines was developed by specialists with considerable ranges of experience. many of my personal assumptions and beliefs are in accordance with these guidelines and have been adapted according to a Colombian context.

They are as follows:

- 1) Educators need opportunities that will expose them to cultural/ethnic diversity.
- 2) Educators need experiences that will encourage the development of positive attitudes about ethnic/cultural diversity thereby establishing a philosophy consistent with the objectives of bilingual/multicultural education.
- 3) All staff need to be involved in situation that will provide opportunities for them to have direct contact with differing individuals.



- 4) Educators must understand the importance of language in culture and the implications that bilingualism has on both learner and teacher.
- 5) Educators will be or will become familiar with L1 and L2 and the culture from which it emanates.
- 6) After the overall principles of multiculturalism/bilingualism have been grasped, teachers and aides should have the opportunity to select their particular areas of expertise or interest.
- 7) Teachers need to be instructed as to the mechanics of designing, implementing and evaluating instructional materials for appropriateness as bilingual/multicultural instruction.
- 8) The teacher must acquire the ability to analyze, evaluate and select for use the existing commercial instructional materials for relevancy to the stated Colombian bilingual/multicultural objectives.
- 9) Emphasis must be placed on guiding teachers to develop techniques allowing for culturally individualized teaching/learning environments.
- 10) Training of the teachers/educators is of priority. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher to facilitate the curriculum and the learning environment within the classroom.

As the school will expand and grow, further advanced teacher training will be a necessity. This will apply to American and Colombian teachers, aides and any teachers engaged in the future. There are specific intercultural experiences that teachers in training workshops will continually be offered to expose them to these encounters.

## **Educators as a Resource**

A valuable network of options in teacher recruitment will be available through the Master of Art in Teaching program at the school for International training. There could conceivably be a program whereby the MAT's can do their ESL internships at the Colombian school. This could also lead to the utilization of SIT faculty as bilingual/multicultural specialists and consultants in teacher training/coordinating.

Another essential resource is the teacher's aide. The prerequisites are simple yet all-important since in our dual program the teachers (especially ESL) will depend greatly on the assistance of a native Spanish-speaking aide. Advanced academic expertise is not necessary but the applicants must truly care for children, be willing to follow the instructions of the teacher, have a cheerful disposition, and find personal satisfaction in this type of work.

The teacher will decide how to best utilize the aide, but tasks might include performing certain administrative chores, helping with group reading, overseeing seatwork, providing more individualized attention, correcting papers, helping to decorate the room/bulletin boards, assisting in monitoring behavior, etc. There are a multitude of possibilities for utilizing the aide, as well as cultivating a potential teacher.

Further development and staff training will be decided only with time but as in every other area, the Colombian students will be the prime motivating factor for training revision, extension and adaption.

## **Materials and Resources**

One of the most important factors associated with curriculum is motivation. A child who is motivated is interested-therefore he learns. Successfully capturing the interest of a child depends upon the

meaningful relevance of the materials used, and on the value associated with education (from the point of view of his parents.) These are all related, almost inseparable ideas.

To identify, select and evaluate instructional materials, various considerations apply. The age and interest levels of the students, and difficulty range in each subject area for each culture and each linguistic group are some inclusive factors. It is an impressive demand to keep all these factors in focus while trying to catch and maintain the child's attention.

Knowing where to look for existing bilingual and ESL material offers a head start. ESL materials exist in abundance but mostly in language arts. Some of the materials are designed and written for a specific dominant language background in mind. The best sources for information on ESL materials (for titles and evaluations) are the center for Applied Linguistics and TESOL. But for ready-made Spanish language materials, the Materials Acquisition Project (MAP) of San Diego seems to be the best source to obtain classroom and library materials from Spain and Spanish America. These would have to be adapted for the Colombian culture to correspond with their context.

It is imperative that the ramifications of using adopted or adapted materials be continually monitored to see if they can be made to fit the objectives of a program without producing outcomes that will seriously alter the objectives.

Creating one's own materials is a possibility. If there are distinct differences in Colombia that will result in an adverse affect on the intended goals, the obvious recourse will be to create the school's own materials or redesign what already exists so that it will reflect their particular needs.

### Useful Resources and Materials

Telephone Book

Newspapers

Field Trips	Texts
Plays	Magazines
Games	Comic Books
Situational Sets	Television
Radio	Realia
Audio-Visual Equipment	Slides
Films	Language Labs
Demonstrations	Role Plays
Skits	Puppets
Dolls	Toys
Bibliographic Informations	Service Organizations
Professional Journals	Class Projects
Class Newsletters	School Newspapers

Further, bulletin boards and displays provide information for teachers and students while serving as instructional devices. Social activities, parties and holidays, dance and foods of various ethnic origin are also resources for learning and providing bilingual/bicultural opportunities.

Clubs and organizations may be able to provide alternative methods of materials and resources. And not to be forgotten as a resource are people who represent a particular profession or have a special knowledge about a subject. They can be invited into the classroom to talk with the students. Those people who serve in non-traditional roles would be especially interesting.

The children and parents can be viable sources of ideas as well. With student and parent generated interest, they can research and present their own materials as an additional resource for the school.

Finally, the list below will exemplify a sample exposition of structures that can evolve through the use of some of the mentioned resources:

### Vocabulary Exposition

Sequence of Tenses  
Verb Introduction and Review  
Pronunciation  
Noun-clause reduction  
Verbals  
Gender  
Modals  
Spelling

### Testing and Evaluation

Since it takes several years to develop language competency in children, constant observation, detailed measurement and ongoing assessment is mandatory for effective evaluation. Three distinct phases of evaluation are surveyed in the United States Commission on Civil Rights report, "A Better Chance to Learn: Bilingual/Bicultural Education."<sup>7</sup> They are:

- 1) Pre-program evaluations, or preliminary assessment of student needs essential to program planning;
- 2) Process evaluation or assessment of program implementation and interim student performance;
- 3) Outcome evaluation, or the assessment of the program's effect on student performance over a period of several years.

This coverage will ensure the school of a stronger, more adequate system with continual improvements being an ongoing process.

Evaluative instruments need to be developed for various domains, principally:

- 1) For selecting teacher candidates;

- 2) For periodic on-site teacher observations in the classroom to demonstrate relevant competence and the practical teaching realities in the direct context of the classroom setting;
- 3) For the child entering the school (and at various points throughout the program) his linguistic conceptual and attitudinal status must be evaluated;
- 4) In each content area in the appropriate language at each grade level, the achievement needs to be measured;
- 5) The effectiveness of the materials, teaching and program design (individually and combined) as well as the curriculum goals for the students.

As the child begins his school year, some sort of diagnostic test should be used to determine the relative strength, if any, of English and Spanish. This can be done informally by the teacher if norm reference tests are not feasible. It is mandatory that measurement be recorded for future comparison.

Toward the end of the first year of the bilingual program, tests for achievement will be administered and scores will be recorded and analyzed. Such tests will need to be developed and carefully adapted to standards depicted in respect to the relative factors affecting the students as Colombians.

The most beneficial and appropriate sort of evaluation would be best developed by the teachers working as a closely-knit team. Tests can be created in accordance with what content has been taught. It would be folly to administer standard achievement tests unless the students have been specifically prepared with that goal in mind. Obviously, these measures would be extremely impractical and the measurement would be invalid.

Up until now, cognitive measurement has been primarily discussed, but another important component would be to evaluate the affective domain as well, since successful cognition development largely depends on motivation and attitude. Satisfactory instruments will have to be created as a part of the total program appraisal. This also will have to be constructed from a Colombian context and point of view. Again, the teacher will be in the best position to recognize relative and meaningful criteria in judging children's attitudes and motivation. Records of attendance and participation in various activities will be included for partial consideration as well. Then, at each year's end, at each grade level and in all subjects taught, the achievements of the students will be compared with their competence at the beginning of the year.

The classroom teacher will be asked to deliver written reports of progress evaluations and to submit feedback of their interpretations of the success of the program design and materials. The position as classroom teacher makes him/her the best candidate for judging the results of the school year. Eventually, after several years of operation, there will be a need for a professional testing coordinator to administer and analyze tests for the students.

The program coordinator, the administrators and the teachers will have final meetings at the end of the school term to discuss and determine the ultimate performance of the bilingual program of "La Quinta del Puente." After this final review of the program's total effectiveness, the next school year can then be planned with the basis of what was learned as the criteria for further and better development of the bilingual school.

### **Pre-school Development**

In this final section, I will discuss the scientific, physiological and linguistic concepts that support the beliefs of advantages of early childhood language acquisition. It is a viable rationale for early language education.

Children are born with the compulsion to communicate. Language begins at birth- or before, and children have enormous learning potential until the age of 5. In early childhood, two languages may be learned as easily as one. Children begin acquiring languages immediately after birth by the process labeled "Language Acquisition Device (LAD)." They also can learn to read one or two languages by the age of 2, either with the aid of adults or by themselves. In respect to this early acquisition of bilingualism and biliteracy, it becomes a top priority to improve the education of children. In subjecting them to early bilingual education, this fascinating ability can be exploited by bombarding young children with intellectual stimulation through conversation, reading, music and educational games and toys. the effect of this sensory saturation will be children with early bilingual literacy and fluency.

In teaching the children from Colombia, the teachers should thoroughly know the backgrounds and framework of values from which the children come. This will ensure that the processes in the classroom will be working in accordance with their environmental principles and not against them.

### **Approaches in Pre-school Education**

There are several views of strategic approaches in pre-school learning. The one that will best accommodate the needs of "La Quinta del Puente" is acceptance and encouragement of the motivational validity of play, with a structional approach utilizing carefully planned teaching procedures and materials. In this manner, the constant concern of the child's total educational experience will be addressed as well as his language instruction. various methodologies can be experimented with, and through these vehicles, the child will learn two languages with little conscious interference.

### **Learning L2**



Although it seems easier for a young child to acquire L2, there still are major differences. L1 learning is closely related to his cognitive development and as he expands his conceptual powers, he is also acquiring his native language. L2 acquisition during the school years has a different relationship to conceptual maturation. The first language expresses the new meanings he perceives in his environment. In L2, he is learning to express concepts he has already assimilated. But one important feature is shared: the rate of learning both languages depends on the child's need and opportunity to use the language to communicate.

The differences between the ability of adults and children in language acquisition are extensive. Some of the major differences can be observed in the studies done by Ervin-Tripp (1968) : <sup>8</sup>

- 1) Children show a rater readiness to learn the language of their contemporaries in a new linguistic environment to join the group;
- 2) Children enjoy rote memorization, while adults prefer solving intellectual problems;
- 3) Adults emphasize the context of language, often neglecting its formal systems;
- 4) Children are more perceptive to the sounds of a language, adults to its meaning;
- 5) Children relate speech more to the immediate context, while adults may attach it to related thoughts that are not immediately relevant.
- 6) Children usually learn new works through sensory activities while adults learn in a purely verbal context.

- 7) Children can make linguistic abstractions-learn about structures never directly presented to them, but adults have a greater capacity to remember stated grammatical rules.
- 8) Children are less subject to interference from their native language systems than are adults.

As control over one's native language is developed, eventually the linguistic habits evolved with language perception and production become permanent. As a child gets older, he loses the flexibility of sound production. This loss occurs as he begins to hear all sounds in terms of the particular set of sound-categories in his first language. Initially, no sounds are foreign since at birth children have the capacity to form every existing sound corresponding with every existing language. Thus, any sound that a child hears is unconsciously categorized within a previously heard sound system. Older people commonly cannot differentiate vowel sounds as they appear identical. (i.e. Spanish speakers won't hear the distinction between 'chip' and 'cheap' and conversely, the English speaker will not hear the different 'r' sounds between 'pero' and 'perro'.) Conditioning by previous linguistic experience doesn't permit adults to hear this distinction, but as children, they possessed this inherent ability to perceive linguistic differences. This interference is a natural tendency that also occurs in grammar and vocabulary as habits are transferred from L1 to L2.

Through Constructive analysis, many interference problems can be predicted, explained, and avoided. With this awareness, it encourages the presentation of ordered elements of English in a graded sequence. This is a useful prerequisite for developing and presenting appropriate teaching methods and materials, especially since the new elements of English will be taught as an entire new language system. This will promote communicative linguistic competency.

Therefore, it seems an obvious conclusion that L2 learning should be presented as early as possible; ideally, in a pre-school situation,

before the child loses the ability to speak without a foreign accent (passing the crucial formative period.)

In defense of the Colombian child's self-concept while learning a second language, an important factor is the attitude of the family in the home. Since the families are from the upper socio-economic levels, one may assume that they are well-educated and will reinforce the presumed benefits of bilingual education for their children. They parents have elected this alternative manner of education and should obviously support it, thereby offering encouragement and motivation. Although English might not be spoken in the home, the child will not suffer from feeling less than whole because his life is being enriched by an elitist concept - learning through a prestigious language.

In conclusion, if a child has strong family support, a positive attitude and a healthy self-concept, he should have relatively few problems in the bilingual school. Taught with cultural and linguistic sensitivity, the child will have a strong desire to communicate bilingually and will readily learn to do so when presented with the need and opportunity.

### Conclusion

Writing this paper has been an exciting and rewarding experience for me. It allowed me the chance to examine my beliefs, concepts, assumptions and thoughts in conceptualizing the transformation of a monolingual school into a bilingual school.

I have been able to see the challenges of this task in a written form, while examining the best functioning models of existing bilingual school programs. As a result of seeking data, I can now visibly imagine possible difficulties during the transition.

During the writing process, I had to keep in mind the differences between Colombia and the United States. Undoubtedly, there will be dissimilar problems that are unforeseeable at this moment, but at least

I have a clear idea of what to expect and how to organize, design, implement and coordinate the project. I also feel better prepared to deal with problems as they arise, as a result of having prepared this paper.

The position of Bilingual Program Coordinator that I have been offered by the administration of "La Quinta del Puente" is an incredible opportunity. The future possibilities are endless - the outcome equally uncertain. I will be able to realize my greatest assumptions in second language learning while witnessing the natural capacity for unconscious language acquisition. I will see first-hand how language is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Much useful data will be available as a result of my experiences. I intend to record, analyze, and compare results from concrete evidence obtained from the realization of this bilingual program. It will be invaluable for future study as I am matriculated in a doctoral program of study in Multilingual/Multicultural Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Another area that intrigues me is the opportunity to watch growth and understanding within the cultural domain as the students develop respect for intercultural and interlinguistic differences and similarities. Their world views will expand as well as their career potential. They will become richer for their experiences and begin to explore new vistas as they transcend their current limitations. Perhaps a chain reaction will ensue as each person they touch will benefit vicariously.

But most of all, I am pleased to be a catalyst in this exciting proposition. I have the honor of bearing witness and being instrumental to the conception and birth of a new bilingual/bicultural school.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Diane Larsen-Freeman, "Is Teaching English Cultural Imperialism?", Odyssey Magazine, Spring/Sumer, Vo. 4, No. 2 (Brattleboro, VT: The Experiment in International Living Press, 1987): 7-9.

<sup>2</sup> George D. Marcommit and Edmund C. Short, Contemporary Thought on Public School Curriculum, (Debuque: Brown, 1968) 150.

<sup>3</sup> Marcommit and Short, 151.

<sup>4</sup> Martha Montero, "Structure and Content in the Design of Bilingual/Multicultural Curriculum," Bilingual Education Teacher Handbook, Language Issues in Multicultural Settings, National Assessment and Dissemination Center (Cambridge: Lesley College, 1979) 62.

<sup>5</sup> Montero, 62.

<sup>6</sup> Theodore Andersson and Mildred Boyer, "Bilingual Schooling in the U.S., Guidelines for the Preparation and Certification of Teachers of Bilingual/Bicultural Education", Developed at a Conference Sponsored by the Cetner for Applied Linguistics, Aug. 5-6, 1974 (Austin: National Educational Lab., 1978).

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, A Better Chance to Learn: Bilingual Bicultural Education, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> Susan Ervin-Tripp, Becoming a Bilingual: Language Acquisition and Communicative Choice, 1968 (Stanford Press: Stanford, CA 1973) (ERIC ED 018 786).

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