

Advancing Biliteracy:

Learning from the Past to Invent Our Future

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Americans All!



I speak English and Spanish.



I speak English and Greek.





Día de los Broncos

¡Gracias Colorado!



What Colorado and the U.S. Won

- After his defeat in Colorado, Unz **disappeared** from the national spot-light.
- We **stopped** a national movement in its tracks.
- There were **NO** other anti-bilingual initiatives started in other states.
- We gave our teachers, parents and children **pride** in their accomplishment and hope for the future.
- **Never** apologize for **advocacy**.
- Bilingual education has to be about **social justice!**

¡CUIDADO!



The Need for Biliteracy: The Real Achievement Gap

● World

- **50%** of all people in the world are bilingual.
- Worldwide more people speak English as a second language than speak English as a native language.
- Worldwide quest to learn English is a quest for **bilingualism.**

● United States

- Only **10 %** of educated people in the U.S. are bilingual.
- Only **20%** of U.S. citizens have passports and have traveled outside of the U.S.
- **NO policy for the development of biliteracy in most state and federal policies including the new ESSA.**

Good News for Biliteracy 2016

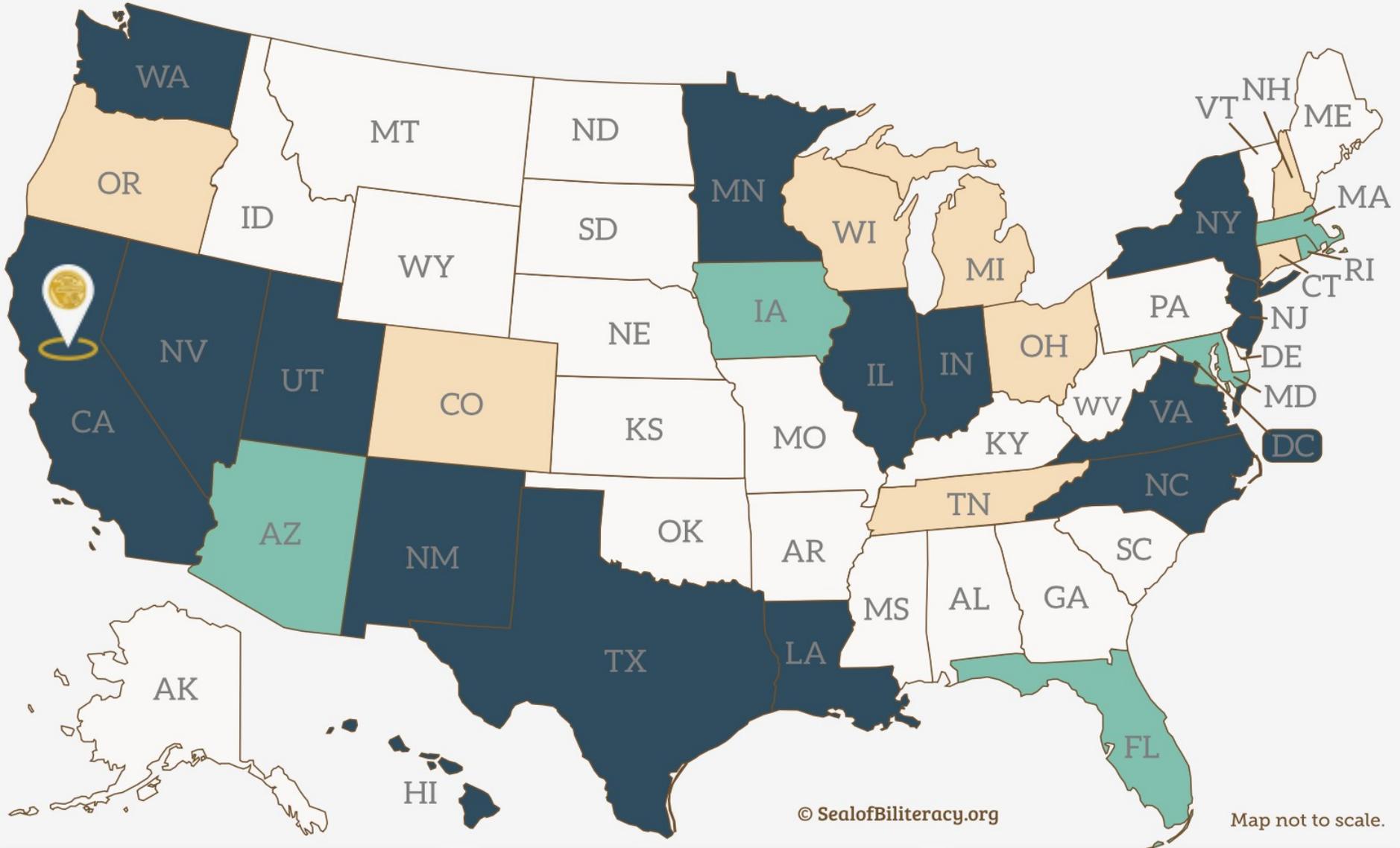
- Dual language programs are so popular nearly every major urban school district has them (in **Texas** this is over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the schools).
- In **California** there are over 300 dual language schools and a move to overturn the 1998 Unz mandate!
- In **Arizona**, there are two active legislative bills – one that would support the Seal of Biliteracy and one that would repeal the English only bill.
- If you can speak Spanish and English you can communicate with **80%** of the people on the planet.

The Seal of Biliteracy



STATE LAWS REGARDING THE SEAL OF BILITERACY

● Approved State Seal ● Under Consideration ● Early Stages ○ No Seal of Biliteracy, Yet!



Biliteracy: Still a Double Standard

“Many Americans have long been of the opinion that bilingualism is a ‘good thing’ if it was acquired via travel (preferably to Europe) or via formal education (preferably at Harvard), but that it is a ‘bad thing’ if it was acquired from one’s immigrant parents or grandparents.” (Fishman, 1972)

Musings about the Double Standard...

- Reclassification to English – why not biliteracy?
- Long-term ELL? – why not long-term SSL?
- Why are Worcester children petitioning the white house to change the term ELL to **multilingual learner** in 2016 – why haven't we done this long ago?
- Why were we spending less money on bilingual programs in 2015 than 2001 when we have 300,000 more eligible for services?
- Why do we still have the Office of English Language Acquisition instead of the Office for Multilingual Learners?

Biliteracy: The Double Standard

- **Language loss** (Portes & Hao, 1998).
 - Surveyed 5,000 2nd generation students in 8th and 9th grade in Florida and California
 - Only 16% reported being able to speak their home language “well” or “very well.”
- **Language loss - suppression mechanism** (Gibson et. al., 2012)
 - N=124 kdg emerging bilingual Spanish/English children in Memphis
 - Abrupt and sudden language loss over the kindergarten year.
- **We have work to do!**

Biliteracy: The Long and Winding Road



Getting to Biliteracy on our own Terms!

- Need well prepared teachers and administrators.
- Need to keep up with the research and produce more – cool things are happening!
- Need to totally revamp assessment with a lens on developing trajectories toward biliteracy- **tweaking** will not do!
- Need to focus on the quality of instruction as well as the language of instruction and work toward cultural competency!
- **Need to work for social justice!**

Administrator Preparation: It Matters

- Lopez, Gundrum & Scanlan (2013)
- Compared reading outcomes of 4th grade Hispanic EBs against state certification requirements in the following categories:
- Training in bilingual and/or ESL education methods
- Knowledge of bilingual curriculum and/or how to adapt curriculum materials for ELs
- Assessment (language assessment and content); and
- Whether states require training or certification for all teachers or for teachers of EBs only.

Findings

Hispanic EBs perform better when:

- States require **specialist** teachers to have knowledge of native language literacy.
- States require specialist teachers to have **training in English as a second language**.
- States with more **stringent** requirements had even stronger gains.
- **However**, states that require **all** teachers to have some training rather than training specialists had lower EB reading outcomes.

Implications

- We need to prepare **all** teachers to teach **all** children **but** that alone is insufficient.
- We need to prepare **specialists** in language and culture.
- Many states do not have **specialist** credentials – we need to advocate for these preparation programs!
- We need to advocate once again for the PhD fellowships – we need professors too!

Keeping up with the Research

- “We bring up children to be bilingual, **not** for the sake of the language but for the sake of the children.”

(Fishman, 1972)

A Brief Look at the Research

- Bilingually educated students have greater cognitive flexibility, working memory, and executive functioning (Bialystok, 2001, 2012, 2014).
- Bilingually raised students have more cohesive family relations and fewer behavior problems in school (Portes & Hao, 2002).
- Students who maintain their bilingualism into high school are more likely to go to 4-year colleges (Santibañez & Zárata, 2014).
- Students who maintain bilingualism into high school are less likely to drop-out (Rumbaut, 2014).
- Young students who maintain bilingualism will earn more in the labor force than their monolingual peers (Agirdag, 2014).

THE NEED TO REVAMP ASSESSMENTS - ON OUR TERMS!

- The current monolingual assessment systems are **NOT** effective in demonstrating what children acquiring biliteracy are learning and often underestimate progress.
- Simply assessing children in two languages (both developed for monolinguals) will also likely not be effective.
- We need to develop, understand and build **Trajectories toward Biliteracy.**

A Research Example

Escamilla & Hopewell (2013)

- Colorado Basic Literacy Act (now READ Act) – designed to help all students be at grade level in reading by 3rd grade.
- If you are not at grade level you have to have an ILP.
- You have to have an intervention (these are expensive).
- Your parents are told you are below grade level (parents worry, teachers stress).

Research Methods

- 268 – 3rd grade emerging bilingual Spanish/English students in the study in 2007-2008
- All took **both** EDL2/DRA2 in Spring 2008
- Using benchmark criteria for 3rd grade we calculated the numbers and % of students needing ILPs in three ways:
 - Using English only criteria
 - Using Spanish only criteria
 - Using Trajectory toward Biliteracy criteria



Findings

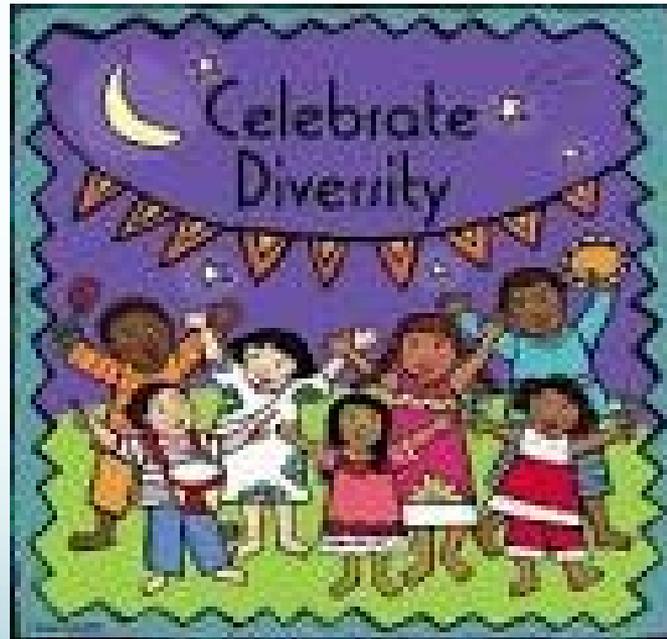
- N= 268
- English only assessment
 - **86%** (224) need ILP
- Spanish only assessment
 - **55%** (148) need ILP
- Trajectory toward biliteracy assessment
 - **39%** (106) need ILP
- **Need to be redesignating children to biliteracy and not English.**

Consequences of Invalid Assessment

- Students get labeled as underperforming.
- Parent get told their child is failing and maybe biliteracy isn't a good thing after all.
- Teachers get labeled as underperforming and do not get raises or worse get fired.
- Schools get labeled as failing and get turned around and around and around.
- We validate **monolingualism** as **normal**.

Biliteracy: Quality of Instruction

- Authentic instructional strategies in Spanish (or whatever the non-English language)
- Accelerating English Language Development



Spanish Literacy Instruction

Research Questions:

- How to best teach beginning reading in languages that share an alphabetic principle?
- Is it the same in Spanish and English?
- **Purpose:** Examine relationship between phonemic awareness and Spanish reading skill acquisition
- **Study Subjects:**
 - Children in Mexico learning to read in Spanish (n=189)
 - Emerging bilingual children in U.S. learning to read in Spanish and English (n = 280; CA & TX)
 - Emerging bilingual children in U.S. learning to read in English only (n = 102 CA & TX)

Secretaría de educación pública - Mexico (2008)

- *“La enseñanza inicial de la lecto-escritura no se reduce al establecimiento de relaciones entre signos y sonidos, sino que se insista desde el principio en la comprensión del significado de los textos”* (the teaching of early literacy is not reduced to the establishment of relationships between symbols and sounds, but rather it emphasizes from the beginning the **comprehension** of the meaning of texts).

Research Design & Results

- Longitudinal study (1st grade – 2nd grade)
- First grade in Mexico, **29%** of instructional time was spent on comprehension activities – **8%** in U.S. classrooms.
- Time spent teaching phonemic awareness – **9%** in Mexican classrooms and **56%** in U.S. classrooms.
- Mexico – whole group instruction & large classes
- U.S. – small group instruction & smaller classes

Results

- At end of first grade **both groups of U.S. students** had higher phonemic awareness scores than their Mexican counterparts and **U.S. children** knew more letters.
- **By the end of 2nd grade Mexican students had higher PA, Letter ID and comprehension scores than both groups of U.S. students.**
- Phonemic awareness skills do not seem to be necessary for Spanish speaking children to learn to read in Mexico.
- A lot of time is spent teaching phonemic awareness in the US both in Spanish and English.
- **Lowest group were students instructed only in English**

Fernando, Daniel & La Pelota: First Grade

- **Fernando - US born**
- Knows most letter names and sounds (Spanish)
- Decodes –
- P-e-l-o-t-a
- Needs help putting letters together
- Does not know what the word means
- Is thought to be doing well
- **Daniel - Recent arrival**
- Can read the word ‘pelota’ and knows what it means
- Does not know the names of most of the letters or the sounds they make
- Gets labeled at ‘risk’ for failure in first grade
- Gets an intervention

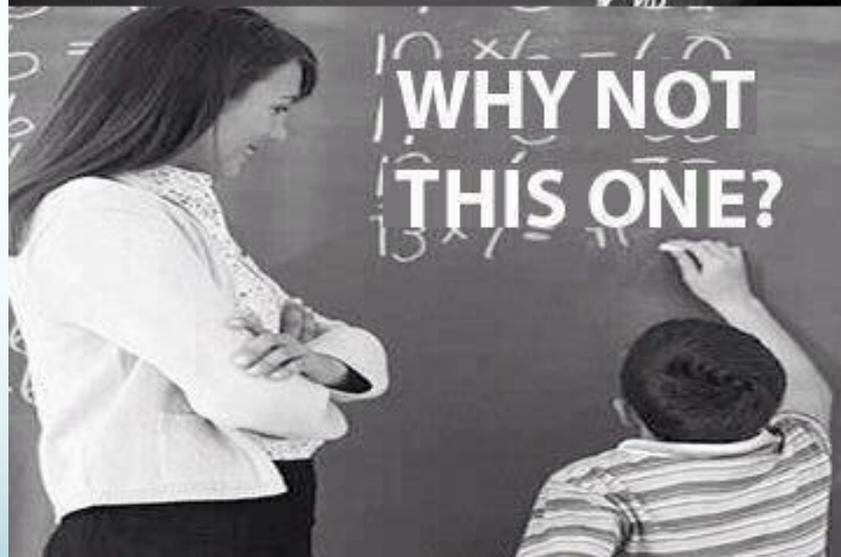
Accelerating English Language Development



**YOU
SUPPORT
THIS
UNION
WORKER**



**WHY NOT
THIS ONE?**





MEXICANS BE LIKE
"Gracias a Dios! They're on sale!"

no se puso vicks



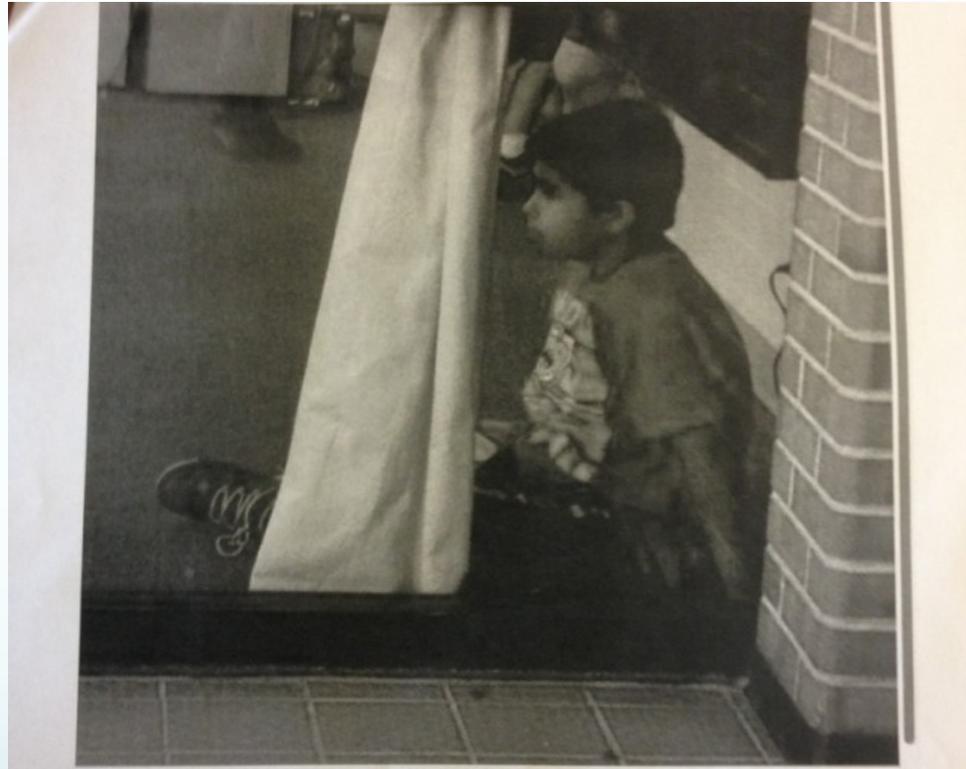
Justice



[\(/portlet/article/html/imageDisplay.jsp?contentItemRelationshipId=7025069\)](http://portlet/article/html/imageDisplay.jsp?contentItemRelationshipId=7025069)

Parents and students protest against the principal of Cheltenham Elementary outside the school on Aug. 21, 2015
(Elizabeth Hernandez, *The Denver Post*)

Social Justice



Social Justice in a “Bilingual/Biliterate School”

The school has the typical demographics of a “struggling” school:

- 90% Latino
- 85% EBs
- 99% FRL
- The school is “struggling academically” and is on turn-around status (it is red)
- A new principal arrived two years ago with a no nonsense discipline policy and since her arrival at the school, achievement has actually gone down.
- The principal has been given license to treat children and their teachers poorly.
- The principal is **highly proficient** in Spanish and English
- **The parents believe in their children and know racism when they see it.**

The District Response

- District knew about the issues for **two years** and decided to replace the principal **two days** before school started. In May 2015, 300 parents signed a petition asking for a new principal.
- Superintendent **did not** thank the parents for their involvement with their children, instead he thanked the principal for her service and her “**deep commitment to social justice.**”
- Principal is still employed in the district.

The Larger Community Response

- Letters to the Editor – Denver Post:
- “Let them go back to Mexico and eat on dirt floors.”
- “Let me get this right – 99% of the kids qualify for free lunch at taxpayers expense and the parents are complaining, through the use of a translator, of course, they are too lazy to work or learn English – no sympathy here.”
- “It would be nice if the Denver Post reported the whole story. How many of these kids are anchor babies? How many of these parents are illegal aliens?”

Biliteracy: Beyond Language

- **Biliteracy without social justice is “just” literacy.**

Whose National Anthem?

