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ABSTRACT

At San Diego State University, the training program for bilingual education teachers was developed to systematically accommodate changing needs in education, particularly the needs to educate students with academic proficiency in both Spanish and English and to have a multicultural perspective. The emerging teacher education model empowers prospective teachers to effect positive change by helping them understand how meaning is established in human systems in the immediate context and over time. One strategy for driving systematic change involves peeling back successive layers of political and cultural factors surrounding the system's core value structure. For example, teachers must learn to give clear explanations in Spanish through understanding of the cultural and political context of the explanation and appropriate vocabulary. A central goal of the program is to develop self-directed learning, and prospective teachers are exposed to teaching strategies that give them flexibility in classroom practice. (MSE)

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A Transformational Bilingual Model for Teacher Education

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Meeting the needs of an increasingly multicultural student population in America requires that we train teachers with a well-developed multicultural consciousness who are able to educate effectively within educational organizations. Traditionally, teacher education programs strive to give prospective teachers fundamental understanding of both the principles of educational psychology and the principles which govern educational institutions. The transformation of our schools to meet the future challenges of a changing America requires that our professional educators understand the interplay between the educational requirements of the students and the social responding patterns of the institution. Training teachers for the challenges inherent in creating future-oriented schools serving multicultural student populations requires developing models of teacher education which prepare competent teaching professionals who are also able to effect positive transformations of our schools.

One such model is emerging from San Diego State's Bilingual Teacher Preparation Program. The program was initiated in response to the need to serve the growing bilingual student population in California. As such, an ongoing process of transforming the traditional teacher education curriculum to an appropriate bilingual teacher education curriculum was developed in order to advance the goal of educating students with academic level proficiency in both Spanish and English. The commitment of both the students and the instructing professors to this goal generates the momentum needed to meet the numerous curricular challenges.

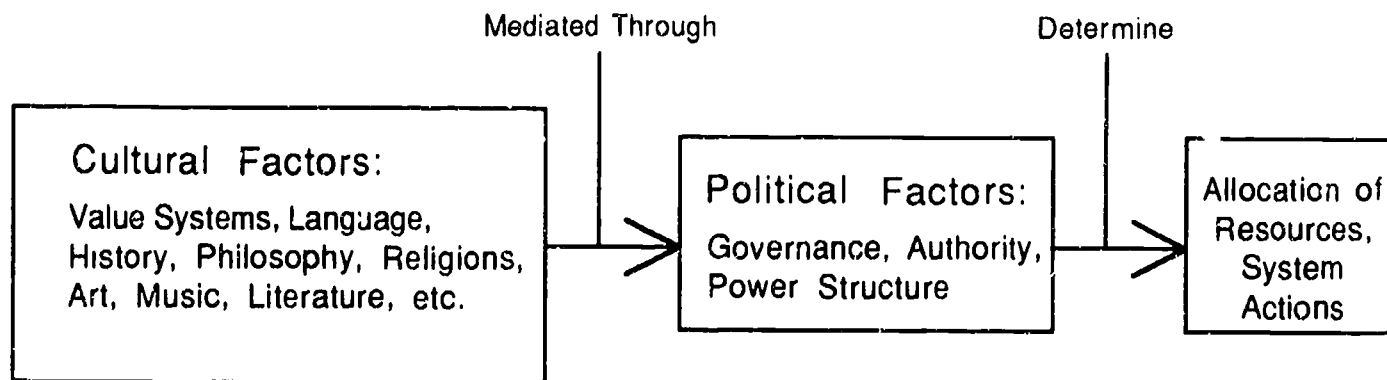
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The prospective bilingual teachers are acutely aware of the need to understand both the social context of their profession as well as the subject matter of their curriculum. As change agents with the mission of serving the bilingual and multicultural community, they scrutinize the culture and politics of the educational institutions, as well as the students they are working with. The emerging transformational model which empowers the prospective teachers to effect positive change can be viewed via the dynamics of how *semantic meaning* is developed within human systems. *Semantic meaning* has primarily two components¹. First, there is the present tense synchronic (*syncrónica*) meaning to any action. This meaning provides the sense of immediacy implicit within any action or task on behalf of the organization, class, or individual. The second component is the teleologic diachronic (*diacrónica*) meaning of any action or task. The diachronic meaning gives the implicit sense of purpose and dynamic momentum to a given task. The goal for the effective bilingual teacher is to develop an intuitive knowledge of the cultural and political forces which guide the two semantic meaning components of any given action. Furthermore, the integrity of the individual, class, or organization (i.e., human system) is dependent upon the logical and ethical coherence of the semantic meanings of the system's actions. Figure 1 is a schematic of the flow of cultural and political meaning through a human system.

One strategy for driving the process of systematic change involves the peeling back of successive layers of the political and cultural factors that surround the system's core value structure. In the case of an educational institution, class or individual, this push towards explicating the "Real Agenda" has powerfully transformative properties. This transformation increases the authenticity of both the learning tasks as well as the interpersonal relationships, and lays bare the ethical underpinnings which form the heart of the system's dynamics.

¹Real Academia Española. 1984, *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (vigésima edición) (Madrid). Bajo la palabra *semántica*.

FIGURE 1
The Flow of Semantic Meaning Through a of Human System


The Bilingual Teacher Preparation Program at San Diego State University is continually evolving its programmatic components through a transformational process designed to train thoughtful educational change agents. The prospective bilingual teachers are required to forge coherent social, cultural, and political perspectives, as well as to master effective teaching strategies and techniques for use with bilingual students in order to develop their students' academic level proficiency in two languages.

One example of a successful teaching strategy emerged from the requirement of prospective bilingual teachers to clearly explain, in Spanish, a number of academic concepts and algorithms, such as, "What are the steps one would take in multiplying one-fourth by seven-sixteenths?" or "What are the major parts of speech?" or "What is gravity?"² Those bilingual credential students educated primarily in English, when asked to give these kinds of clear explanations in Spanish, often had great difficulty. Their efforts at creating clear explanations required an understanding of the appropriate cultural and political contextualization of the explanation as well as access to the appropriate vocabulary. Those students with

²Pacheco, R. *Meeting the Needs of a Changing America: A Liberal Arts and Science Degree Program's Success Story*. Manuscript.

greater facility with academic level Spanish were able to assist by providing this kind of information.

A central goal of the bilingual program is to foster self-directed learning. The prospective teachers are exposed to teaching strategies which give them flexibility in their classroom practices, and guide them, as well as their students, to "learn how to learn". These teaching strategies include Whole-Language approaches³, Learning Cycle⁴, Prior Knowledge⁵, Confluent⁶, Concept Mapping⁷, Vee-Heuristics⁷, and others.

The programmatic *semantic meanings* (i.e., goals) sustain students within the academic level bilingual program which challenges them to continually surpass themselves to develop new learning strategies in dealing with emergent problematic situations (challenges). The implicit diachronic reward for the students is the maintenance of their idealism through commitment to the long-term multicultural goals of the program. Specifically, they feel that via bilingual education they are preparing to become teachers to the multicultural learners of the future. This kind of idealistic pay-off, coupled with the expectation of future financial security, sustains their commitment to the field.

The synchronic present tense challenges to tackle academic problems from bilingual, bicultural perspectives which draw upon fertile multicultural and multilingual perspectives, also has immediate rewards, both aesthetic and academic. Students are required to operate on the basis of new value structures of collegiality and openness in order to be successful, and to move away from conflictive approaches. As educational change agents they are also learning how they can move to also transform the basic value structures of the schools in which they will teach, to

³Details available from authors.

⁴Samples, B., Hammond, B., and McCarthy, B. 1985, *4Mat and Science: Toward Wholeness in Science Education* (Excel, Barrington, Ill).

⁵Techniques developed by R. Pacheco.

⁶Brown, G.I. 1971, *Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction to Confluent Education* (Viking Press, New York).

⁷Novak, J.D. and Gowin D.E. 1984, *Learning How to Learn* (Cambridge University Press, New York).

further the inculcation of multiculturalism and to promote the goal of responsible self-directed learning.

The credential students are becoming increasingly required to become keen observers of human behavior in order to act as effective change agents. Understanding the social circumstances of their future and present students will require the ability to glean a "snapshot" of the cultural and political dynamics of the human systems they encounter as illustrated in Figure 1. This understanding is helpful in determining the appropriate learning strategies necessary for each child. Interfacing this understanding with the moment-to-moment, incremental learning process allows the progression and the transformation of the student. This positive transformation is wholistic in nature and can have strong "ripple effects" which transform the larger environment. Once a prospective teacher fully experiences this transformative power, the teacher discovers a profound source of professional satisfaction.