



Equity, Access and Excellence in Education for Immigrant Students

Inside this Issue:

- ✦ Valuing bilingual children
- ✦ Serving immigrant students
- ✦ Tools for action

by Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., and Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D.

As keepers of the vision of multiculturalism and democracy, our public schools hold the responsibility of ensuring quality teaching for all students. Public schools are accountable for educating all learners to high academic standards and outcomes regardless of differing characteristics of these learners. This includes immigrant students, who are entitled to full access to excellence and equity in educational opportunities at all levels. To accomplish this, schools must be responsive to immigrant students' unique social, cognitive and linguistic needs and must plan to address them accordingly. They also must strengthen their capacity to implement creative approaches for serving immigrant students.

IDRA's South Central Collaborative for Equity has outlined five goals of educational equity. These are comparably high academic achievement and other student outcomes, equitable access and inclusion; equitable treatment,

equitable opportunity to learn, and equitable resources. Schools can apply these five goals to assure that quality teaching is in place for all students to achieve academic success, including immigrant students.

Recent literature has identified many factors associated with quality teaching. While certainly not exhaustive, this article looks at four dimensions of quality teaching and describes effective school approaches for educating recent immigrant students.

These four dimensions are instructional leadership, instructional focus, safe and orderly school climate, and high student expectations. Following are examples that would indicate each dimension is being practiced effectively.

Instructional Leadership

- The principal orchestrates necessary resources to serve immigrant students.
- A high priority is assigned to efforts that will provide recent immigrants with quality educational programs.
- Curriculum options are explored, implementing those with highest success for the students being

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served.

- The principal creates an environment that values and promotes integration of immigrant students into the mainstream as soon as possible.
- Progress of students is periodically evaluated for success with adjustments made as needed.
- The rights of immigrant students are respected and communicated to staff, parents and community.

Instructional Focus

- The school mission statement acknowledges and values a diverse student population and the role that the school plays in maintaining educational equity and excellence.
- No group of students or parents is isolated from the mainstream other than for specific instructional purposes for a period of time not to exceed two hours per day.
- Teachers are encouraged to adapt instruction to the needs of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Educational materials reflect the

For quality teaching to occur, administrators and teachers need to create a vision of success for immigrant students that incorporates a mental image of them as strategic and independent learners of English and core content.

diversity of the student body, and staff receive training on their appropriate use.

- Professional development opportunities are encouraged focusing on effective practices for educating immigrant students.

Safe and Orderly School Climate

- Immigrant students and their families feel safe and secure in the educational environment.
- Peers, teachers, administrators and other personnel treat immigrant students and their families with respect.
- Immigrant students and their families are provided orientation in their home language to clearly understand procedures, requirements and opportunities of the school.
- School administration and teachers

promote relationships based on mutual respect among all students.

- Immigrant students and their families are afforded opportunities to assume leadership roles.

High Student Expectations

- Immigrant students feel that teachers and administrators value them and hold high expectations for their educational success.
- Teachers communicate high expectations and provide support by challenging immigrant students intellectually.
- Immigrant students are fully integrated into the mainstream curriculum within specified times that vary with grade levels and the students' previous educational background.

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The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) is a non-profit organization with a 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. The purpose of the organization is to disseminate information concerning equality of educational opportunity.

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Publication offices:

5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, Texas 78228
210/444-1710; Fax 210/444-1714
www.idra.org contact@idra.org

María Robledo Montecel, Ph.D.
IDRA Executive Director
Newsletter Executive Editor

Christie L. Goodman, APR
IDRA Communications Manager
Newsletter Production Editor

Sarah H. Aleman
Secretary
Newsletter Typesetter



Many Languages, One Nation Valuing Bilingual Children

by Rosana G. Rodríguez,
Ph.D., and José L. Rodríguez,
M.A.

We are at an important juncture in our history as a nation. As our global society continues to expand, we have the choice to co-create a better future for our children by ensuring equity, access and excellence in education as core values that will help transform our world. That choice allows us to become all that we can be as a people, through the celebration of our diversity of language, history and culture.

It also means that we fully embrace our multicultural and multilingual society and that we provide full support for *all* learners which, by definition, includes excellent bilingual education for English language learners.

The alternative reality requires us to abandon the truth and gifts of our diversity. That choice would insulate ourselves and perpetuate gaps that continue to hurt our children by limiting their potential for the future. It would continue an intolerable reality that race, language, cultural heritage and zip code are determining factors for the kind of education each child receives.

Choosing to live to our fullest potential as educators means recognizing the value of bilingual education and celebrating language and culture as

“Thirty years of research have proven that bilingual education, when implemented well, is the best way to learn English. Children in such programs achieve high academic standards.”

– María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel,
IDRA Executive Director

the highest expressions of the human spirit.

Seen in this light, bilingual education is recognized as a prized commodity, a means of ensuring democracy. Rather than seeing English language learners as problems to be solved, this view recognizes the treasure represented in the diversity of *all* children and embraces the benefits of diversity in the teaching and learning experience.

As we teach tolerance and the valuing of different opinions and expressions, language preservation is paramount. Diversity is a value that is expressed through language acquisition. Language is not an expression of culture, it *is* culture. IDRA founder and director emeritus, Dr. José A. Cárdenas, explains that “multicultural instruction is neither a subsidy for *affirmative ethnicity* nor an attempt to emphasize cultural differences, but an overdue recognition

of the role of minorities in American culture” (Crawford, 2004).

Bilingual education, thus, is an investment in preserving the human and intellectual capital for this nation’s future.

Most nations value multiple languages for their inherent value. In fact, it is the norm in many so-called “underdeveloped” nations for children to speak more than one, and often several, languages.

Most nations also recognize what research shows that when it comes to second language learning, earlier is better, since younger children are born with the innate ability and ease to learn multiple languages. Introduction of second language at the preschool level is the prime teachable phase. Many children enter school knowledgeable of a home or heritage language other than English. Instead of further developing that language, schools often devalue and subsequently erase that language at a tender and impressionable age. As a result, through our history, we have systematically lost several languages. And we continue to lose students in this way, by devaluing their home language, their parents and their culture in the process.

There are many misconceptions about bilingual education, and the debate about which program is best continues to rage on. In the meantime,

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many bilingual teachers receive misinformation about what to do and in what language to teach. Ultimately, children are the ones who suffer the consequences.

One misconception is that bilingual education means teaching in two languages simultaneously. The truth is that bilingual education teaches primarily in the native or home language to develop language concepts and literacy first and then transfers to the second language (English).

While many schools are offering foreign language instruction to children in elementary school so that they will be prepared for a global society, others are moving back to a subtractive model of bilingual education in which children who speak a language other than English are immersed in English instruction and the native language is eradicated and learning of core subjects is

hindered.

In Texas, the state education agency describes bilingual education as follows: “The goal of bilingual education programs shall be to enable limited-English-proficient students to become competent in the comprehension, speaking, reading and composition of the English language through the development of literacy and academic skills in the primary language and English. Such programs shall emphasize the mastery of English language skills, as well as mathematics, science and social studies, as integral parts of the academic goals for all students to enable limited-English-proficient students to participate equitably in school.” (TEA, 1996)

When properly applied, bilingual education fosters English language acquisition and values the child’s first language so that the child does not lose the first language, but rather, gains a second language and becomes

proficient in both.

Nancy Zelasko and Beth Antunez write, “When children who are not yet fluent in English switch to using only English, they are forced to function at an intellectual level below their age” (2000).

It is best for children to develop their native language first and then transfer their skills to the second language (English) to ensure academic success and intellectual development. Zelasko and Antunez point out that children who learn English and who continue to develop their native language perform much better than those students who learn English at the expense of their first language (2000).

IDRA executive director, Dr. María “Cuca” Robledo Montecel states: “Thirty years of research have proven that bilingual education, when implemented well, is the best way to learn English. Children in such

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Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English

❖ A Guide ❖

Thirty years of research have proven that, when implemented well, bilingual education is the best way to learn English. New research by IDRA has identified the **25 common characteristics** of successful schools that contribute to high academic performance of students learning English. This guide is a rubric, designed for **people in schools and communities to evaluate five dimensions** that are necessary for success:

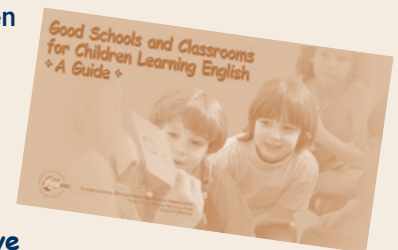
- ❖ school indicators
- ❖ student outcomes
- ❖ leadership
- ❖ support
- ❖ programmatic and instructional practices

(I SBN 1-878550-69-1; 2002; 64 pages; paperback; \$15)

Developed and distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association

Contact IDRA to place an order. All orders of \$30 or less must be prepaid.

5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101 San Antonio, Texas 78228; Phone 210-444-1710; Fax 210-444-1714; e-mail: contact@idra.org.



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programs achieve high academic standards.” (2003)

Socially, the benefits also are significant. When two or more languages are valued, teachers note that “Hispanic and White children are more likely to play together and that parents from different cultures are more willing to approach one another” (Berger, 2007).

Dr. Abelardo Villarreal explains that the struggle to achieve equity-based excellence in education points to a need for rethinking the educational goals, strategies and processes that presently shape educational programs serving English language learners. He identifies two contextual dimensions that are primarily responsible for the success or demise of the transitional bilingual education program. These dimensions are: (1) support of the

students served by bilingual education programs. IDRA conducted this research in 2000 and 2001 through funding by the then U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA). IDRA rigorously and methodically studied exemplary bilingual education programs in schools across the nation as determined by limited-English-proficient students’ academic achievement. To help others identify successful programs or raise the bar with their own bilingual education programs, IDRA has produced *Good Schools and Classrooms for Children Learning English* resulting from the study. This guide is a rubric, designed for people in schools and communities to evaluate five dimensions that are necessary for success: school indicators, student outcomes, leadership, support, and programmatic and instructional

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- Podcasts
- Tools and resources
- Resources for families

See Page 10 for details

Resources

- Berger, J. “Building a Nation of Polyglots, Starting with the Very Young,” *The New York Times* (November 14, 2007).
- Crawford, J. *Educating English Learners*, Fifth Edition (Los Angeles, Calif.: Bilingual Educational Services, Inc., 2004).
- Lindholm-Leary, K. *Biliteracy for a Global Society, An Idea Book on Dual Language Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse on English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, George Washington University, 2000).
- Robledo Montecel, M. “Successful Bilingual Education Programs,” *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, January 2003).
- Texas Education Agency. Chapter 89. Adaptations for Special Populations. Subchapter BB. Commissioner’s Rules Concerning State Plan for Educating Limited English Proficient Students (Austin, Texas: Texas Education Agency, September 1, 1996).
- Villarreal, A. “Rethinking the Education of English Language Learners: Transitional Bilingual Education Program,” *Bilingual Research Journal* (Winter 1999) 23:1.
- Zelasko, N., and B. Antunez. *If Your Child Learns in Two Languages* (Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse on English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, The George Washington University, 2000).

Teachers, parents and administrators working in collaboration should be fully knowledgeable and supportive of best practices in bilingual education to ensure that every student is valued and supported for high academic achievement at the same academic requirements and opportunities as native English-speaking students.

program at all levels of the school hierarchy, and (2) level of knowledge of bilingual education as evidenced through curriculum and instructional activities implemented in the program. Teachers, parents and administrators working in collaboration should be fully knowledgeable and supportive of best practices in bilingual education to ensure that every student is valued and supported for high academic achievement at the same academic requirements and opportunities as native English-speaking students.

IDRA has identified the 25 common characteristics that contribute to high academic performance of

practices.

As we sort through sound educational choices for the future, the question to consider becomes what kind of world do we want our children to inherit? Hopefully, it is a world where diversity of languages unites rather than divides us and where English language learners succeed in school and graduate prepared for college.

Sound bilingual education practices and the full engagement of English language learners in education will ensure equity, access and excellence in education for *all* children, a wise investment in our collective future.

Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D. is director of development in IDRA Field Services. José L. Rodríguez, M.A., is an education associate in IDRA Field Services. Comments and question may be directed to them via e-mail at comment@

- Progress is monitored on a regular basis and communicated effectively with parents as partners in the learning process.

Creating a Vision of Success

For quality teaching to occur, administrators and teachers need to create a vision of success for immigrant students that incorporates a mental image of them as strategic and independent learners of English and core content. This vision of success must be translated into statements and actions to support their full integration as contributing members of society.

Below are six steps for principals and teachers to help fulfill this vision of success and to craft educational responses to serve immigrant students.

Establish a vision for all students' graduation – specifically for immigrant students. This vision should consist of delineating the philosophical principles upon which practices and policies will ensure access, equity and educational success for all students.

Identify assessment procedures to use for instructional placement. The identification and placement process provides data on immigrant students that can help schools answer the crucial question: Does the student need a special program before full mainstreaming into the regular program, and if so what program is best suited for his or her individual needs?

Select instructional options that best meet the linguistic and academic needs of the immigrant student population. Instructional approaches differ in the amount of native language instruction, English language instruction, academic content and orientation materials for the new culture. Each option must have strong orientation and

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Tools for

Quality Teaching

A large percentage of U.S. students do not have a problem accessing good teaching. They are always taught by a fully certified teacher, teaching in their specialty area, with a manageable number of students, and enough materials. But a significant number of students do not have comparable access. They get more than their fair share of inadequately prepared or inappropriately placed teachers. They are students who live in school districts that are forced to hire less-than-fully-prepared teachers or to ask teachers to teach subjects in which they did not specialize. Recognizing these gaps, IDRA has taken an unwavering stand for quality teaching for all students – teaching that is characterized by strong content knowledge and effective pedagogy, quality decision-making in the classroom, self-efficacy, innovation, capacity to teach diverse students, and is grounded in community and institutional support. IDRA's work is guided by the conviction that all students deserve success.

A Snapshot of What IDRA is Doing

Developing leaders – IDRA has established effective alternative certification programs through three transitions to teaching projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Using three key components (early identification and recruitment, pre-service training for certification and placement, and sustained in-service training/professional development and support) Transitions, for example, is impacting several colleges and universities and high-need school districts by increasing the number of fully-qualified and credentialed ESL/bilingual teachers working with English language learners in high-need schools.

Conducting research – IDRA recently presented results from its early childhood education research at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) conference in Chicago. The research was done through IDRA's Reading Early for Academic Development (READ) project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. This project established in participating preschools "centers of excellence" that ensured reading, cognitive and emotional success for all children. It emphasized working personally with the teachers in their classrooms through demonstrations and mentorship to create dynamic environments where children were creative, engaged, discovering and communicating with each other. The result was that teachers and children gained significantly from this experience, as the centers built capacity in applying early childhood education best practices.

Informing policy – In a school district in Arkansas, the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity is implementing IDRA's Engagement-Based Sheltered

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Action

Instruction model to prepare and assist secondary teachers to properly and appropriately serve limited-English-proficient students, a population of students that is fairly new to the community. The center has assisted the district to set into place policy and transformed educational practice to support the cadre of teachers who are a part of the focused education assistance.

Engaging communities – IDRA’s newest project, Capacity Building Evaluation for Rio Grande Valley (RGV) grantees, involves IDRA working with 13 organizations in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas that receive grants from the Marguerite Casey Foundation. IDRA is providing guidance and technical assistance to the grantees so that each organization develops a plan for an integrated progress monitoring system that is informed by an in-depth assessment of their current capacity and context, and develops and uses an integrated system of data collection and analysis that informs and guides their work, reaching the capacity needed for sustaining impact.

What You Can Do

Get informed. In a recent Harvard Education Letter interview, Dr. Robert Pianta, dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, discussed the Classroom Assessing Scoring System (CLASS), which measures the quality of instruction in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. CLASS is able to provide a familiar framework for recording classroom events and focuses on three broad domains of supportive teacher-pupil interactions: emotional, organizational and instructional. It provides educators with a tool for describing and discussing what good teachers do. This in turn can be applied year to year, allowing for a consistent experience for students. A consistent approach is invariably valuable because research has shown that for struggling students, having an effective teacher several years in a row plays a key role in stabilizing achievement gains. See <http://www.edletter.org/insights/pianta.shtml>.

Get involved. Parents can establish parent study groups to reflect on educational issues that affect the quality of education that English language learners and recent immigrant students receive. They also can meet with other parents to discuss ways of working with teachers and administrators to ensure that a quality education is being provided to their children.

Get results. Visit your state education agency’s web site for more information of how your state is doing in addressing the needs of different student populations.

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multicultural components that stress the respect and valuing of other cultures and languages. Good instructional approaches use student-centered and student-initiated learning experiences, such as cooperative learning, literature-based instruction and a combination of experiences that use the arts, music or imagery.

Develop support services that are appropriate and supportive of immigrant students and families. A full range of support services should be in place that include parent involvement programs, specialized counseling services for newcomers and their families, extracurricular activities, support groups, mentoring programs, peer coaching and other programs that encourage and support newcomers.

Establish a system for fully engaging and transitioning immigrant students into the regular curriculum. Exiting criteria should be based on three conditions: (1) students’ proficiency in the English language has reached the advanced level; (2) students have shown successful participation in the regular classroom; and (3) students have successfully adjusted to their new environment.

Implement a monitoring and evaluation component that tracks success and provides the necessary data for decision-makers at key transitional points. A critical factor of any program is a process for monitoring service delivery and evaluating the short- and long-term effects of various educational services. This component should be designed in a manner that does not hurt children, but rather analyzes performance outcomes (e.g., test scores, promotion and graduation rates, participation in extracurricular activities) and the extent of participation and access to appropriate educational services. Feedback mechanisms also should be integrated into the evaluation system to provide information to the

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school that might be useful for program revisions or refinements.

Friedlander describes key features of newcomer programs that have been successful with recent immigrant students (1991). These include:

- Orientation to society and school;
- Specialized curriculum that emphasizes the rapid development of the English language and academic content instruction;
- Low student-teacher ratio that results in more individualized attention;
- Wide range of support services that comprehensively address other student needs that can affect achievement;
- Comprehensive staff development programs that prepare teachers to better educate recent immigrant students;
- Multicultural education planning that places a high priority on valuing and respecting cultural and linguistic diversity;
- Equitable access to resources for serving immigrant students (e.g., bilingual teachers and counselors);
- Supportive environments that shelter and support students to cope with an environment that may seem hostile and entirely foreign to newcomers;
- Family atmosphere at the school that makes recent immigrant families a part of the students' support system; and
- Continuity during the adjustment period that allows students the time to adjust to the new environment with the least number of interruptions.

The power of instructional technology cannot be underestimated in effective instructional programs for recent immigrants. Technology can support teaching and learning in unique ways that should be geared to the individual learning styles of each student and help broaden skills and horizons for graduation and beyond.

Top 10 Publications for Parents



The following list is provided by the National Institute for Literacy. These publications can be purchased or viewed free online. <http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/k-3.html>

A Child Becomes A Reader: Kindergarten Through Grade 3
(Publication ID: ED001959P)

A Child Becomes A Reader: Proven Ideas from Research for Parents: Birth Through Preschool
Third Edition, Revised 2006. (Publication ID: ED002710P)

Dad's Playbook: Coaching Kids to Read
(Publication ID: ED002542P)

Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs: 2007
(Publication ID: ED003816P)

Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read: Kindergarten Through Grade 3
Second Edition, June 2003. (Publication ID: ED001950B ERIC Num: ED458536)

Shining Stars: First Graders Learn to Read: How Parents Can Help Their First Graders Learn to Read
(Publication ID: ED002551P)

Shining Stars: Kindergartners Learn to Read: How Parents Can Help Their Kindergartners Learn to Read
(Publication ID: ED002550P)

Shining Stars: Preschoolers Get Ready to Read: How Parents Can Help Their Preschoolers Get Ready to Read
(Publication ID: ED002622P)

Shining Stars: Second and Third Graders Learn to Read: How Parents Can Help Their Second and Third Graders Learn to Read
(Publication ID: ED002552P)

Shining Stars: Toddlers Get Ready to Read: How Parents Can Help Their Toddlers Get Ready to Read
(Publication ID: ED002621P)

For more information on parent engagement in education and meeting parent involvement requirements of NCLB contact Aurelio M. Montemayor, M.Ed., (210-444-1710; aurelio.montemayor@idra.org) at the Texas IDRA PIRC.

As educators, we are compelled to be leaders in nurturing a more compassionate and responsive educational system that ensures equity, access and excellence for *all* students and “sound educational programs that are responsive to the needs and characteristics of immigrant children” (Cárdenas, 1995).

The exclusion of immigrant children from fully participating in our educational system is contrary to the U.N. Resolution on the Rights of Children that was ratified by the United States. The lack of public understanding and appreciation for the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution is incomprehensible and totally unacceptable. For the future of our nation, this protection must be enforced and continue to all persons in the country, regardless of citizenship, residence or documented status.

IDRA’s executive director, Dr. María Robledo Montecel has issued a call to our nation to adopt uncompromising expectations for graduating *all* students based on 18 principles. To ensure that all students, including immigrant students, are valued, supported and encouraged, “When we make good on the promise to children, we make good on the promise of America – one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all” (2004).

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- Resources for families

See Page 10 for details

Online Resources for Parents and Families as the First Teachers of their Children



Following are web resources for parents. Some sites have Spanish and other language sections.

About.com: Parenting of K-6 Children

<http://childparenting.about.com/od/elementaryschool/>

Go.edu: Parents Online

<http://www.parentson-line.com/>

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY): Parents Page

http://www.hippyusa.org/Parents/parents_page.html

Internet4Classrooms: Sites to Help Parents Help Their Children

<http://www.internet4classrooms.com/parents.htm>

The Kaboose Family Network: Parenting and School

<http://resources.kaboose.com/>

Kidsource Calendar/Homework Helper: Activities and Resources for Parents of School-Age Children

<http://www.kidsource.com/education/homework.calendar.html>

MVParents.com

<http://www.mvparents.com/>

National Child Care Information Center: Child Care/Child Development/Early Learning

<http://www.nccic.org/poptopics/childdev-res.html#child>

National Education Association: Parent Resources Online

<http://www.nea.org/parents/resources-parents.html>

National PTA: Parent Resources

http://www.pta.org/parent_resources.html

Parenthood.com

<http://parenting.parenthood.com/schoolage.html>

Penn State: Better Kids Care

<http://betterkidcare.psu.edu/page09.html>

U.S. Department of State: Choosing a Safehaven: Considerations for Parents of School-Age Children

<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c23181.htm>

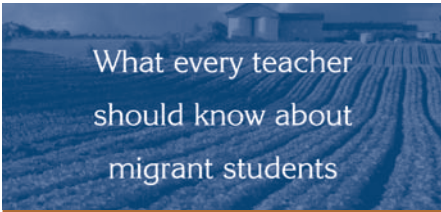
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What every teacher
should know about
migrant students

CD & Resource Guide for Teachers of Migrant Students

To order or get more
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This interactive CD and guide for teachers of migrant students provides insights about migrant students in your classroom and best practices within migrant education programs. Whether you are an experienced teacher or new to teaching migrant students, you will benefit from this resource. This is also a useful tool for administrators and counselors.

Informative and brimming with evocative photographs, poetry, heartfelt narration and resources, this CD features the insights of a migrant student, a teacher and an administrator about effective teaching and learning.

It shares how to build on existing student successes and how to use best practices to provide a rigorous curriculum and meaningful support. Stay up to date with links to web and other resources on migrant program requirements, state standards, and key migrant student initiatives and strategies.

Features: CD has options to either listen to the audio or turn it off for read-only. This CD and accompanying guide may be incorporated into professional development sessions or can be for individual teacher use. The CD and guide are sold together for \$10 plus 10 percent for shipping and handling. Orders must be prepaid. Purchase orders for orders totaling more than \$30 are accepted.

Developed and distributed by the Intercultural Development Research Association.

Resources

- Cárdenas, J.A. *Multicultural Education: A Generation of Advocacy* (Needham Heights, Mass.: Simon and Schuster Custom Publishing, 1995).
- Friedlander, M. "The Newcomer Program: Helping Immigrant Students Succeed In U.S. Schools," NCBE Program Information Guide Series (Number 8, Fall 1991). <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/pigs/pig8.htm>
- Robledo Montecel, M. Making Good on the Promise: Graduation for All, speech at Expectation Graduation Citywide Summit, Houston (May 11, 2004).



Jesse and Mary Lou Treviño (left) were honored by the University of Texas – Pan American Foundation's International Women's Board recently in Edinburg, Texas. The board presented the Treviños with the IWB Excellence in Leadership Award during an evening reception hosted by President Dr. Blandina "Bambi" Cárdenas on November 15, 2007. Mr. Treviño is a former teacher and is chair of the board of the Intercultural Development Research Association, directed by Dr. María "Cuca" Robledo Montecel (right). Both Jesse and Mary Lou have served on numerous education, health, cultural, civic, social and economic development boards.

Abelardo Villarreal, Ph.D., is the director of IDRA Field Services. Rosana G. Rodríguez, Ph.D. is director of development at IDRA. Comments and questions may be directed to them via e-mail at comment@idra.org.

Highlights of Recent IDRA Activities

In November and December IDRA worked with **4,799** teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education personnel through **19** training and technical assistance activities and **71** program sites in **12** states plus Brazil. Topics included:

- ◆ English as a Second Language Demonstration Lessons and Observations
- ◆ Dynamic Sheltered Instruction for the Content Area Teacher
- ◆ Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program
- ◆ College Awareness Day

Participating agencies and school districts included:

- ◆ Detroit Public Schools, Michigan
- ◆ Kingsville Independent School District (ISD), Texas
- ◆ Philadelphia School District, Pennsylvania
- ◆ Medina Valley ISD, Texas

Activity Snapshot

Federal law requires school districts to provide gender equitable instruction to students. Recognizing its need to ensure that materials are free of gender-bias, one district in south Texas called upon the IDRA South Central Collaborative for Equity. The South Central Collaborative for Equity is the equity assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education to serve Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The center provided training to personnel in the school district to ensure that all children have more complete access to curriculum without the burden of cultural, linguistic and social bias that may occur in instructional materials. As a result, teachers in the district are better equipped to identify and respond to such bias.

Regularly, IDRA staff provides services to:

- ◆ public school teachers
- ◆ parents
- ◆ administrators
- ◆ other decision makers in public education

Services include:

- ◆ training and technical assistance
- ◆ evaluation
- ◆ serving as expert witnesses in policy settings and court cases
- ◆ publishing research and professional papers, books, videos and curricula

For information on IDRA services for your school district or other group, contact IDRA at 210-444-1710.

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Episode 27: “Leading a Diverse Campus to Success” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Elementary principal, Sandy Dolan, shares how she has transformed her campus to succeed during a time of dramatic population changes.



Episode 26: “Dropout Prevention for Students with Special Needs” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Lee Ramos talk about the impact of a pilot project that adapted the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program to serve students with special needs.



Episode 25: “Professional Learning Communities in Schools” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Josie Danini Cortez, M.A., and Dr. Juanita García join Aurelio Montemayor, M.Ed., to describe a successful professional learning community in a middle school in south Texas.



Episode 24: “Coaching and Mentoring New Teachers” IDRA Classnotes Podcast – Dr. Linda Cantu and Dr. Adela Solís, developers of IDRA’s coaching and mentoring model, discuss how coaching and mentoring programs can give new teachers the peer support and trusted advice they need to succeed from day one.



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5815 Callaghan Road, Suite 101
San Antonio, TX 78228

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