



Multilingualism Matters: Bringing Foreign Language to Elementary Students.



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Background and Benefits

There is power in bilingualism. Barriers are broken down between people. Value, respect, and empathy is given to people when you have learned their language. There is common ground and a starting point from which to build upon.

Global Benefits/Needs for Second language Acquisition

*"In many communities around the world, competence in two, or more languages is an issue of considerable personal, socio-cultural, and political significance. For some, the issues surrounding bilingualism are viewed as "problems" to overcome. For others they are viewed as "challenges" that once mastered, benefit the individual, the community, and even the nation in which they live." (Genesee, 2004, ¶ 1)

*"It is high time we begin to treat language skills as the assets they are, particularly in this global economy. Anything that encourages a person to know more than one language is positive and should be treated as such... Unfortunately, some have viewed those who use a foreign language with suspicion and their language itself as a barrier to success. In some places, even the idea of 'bilingual education' is controversial. It shouldn't be..." (Cummins, 2000, p 25)

*"Leaders in business, industry, and government decry the lack of linguistic and cultural literacy among the U.S. workforce." (Senesac, 2002, p.2)
In addition to the national, industrial, economic need met by language competence, a higher level of cultural awareness and competence can be achieved.

*"Proficiency in multiple languages permits individuals to expand their world because it permits them to communicate with members of other cultural groups, be they members of cultural groups in one's own neighborhood or groups in other countries or regions of the world." (Cloud, et al. 2000, p.4)

Cognitive Benefits

*"The notion that bilinguals possess greater "cognitive flexibility" has had wide acceptance since Peal and Lambert." (Reynolds, 1991, p. 169)

*"Bilingual students have been found to perform better than monolingual students in problem solving, divergent thinking, and metalinguistic awareness." (Cloud et al, 2000) Metalinguistic awareness, is defined as, "the knowledge we have about the structural properties of language, including sounds words, grammar of language." (Cloud et al., 2000) The process of learning a second language develops "increased linguistic awareness, greater flexibility in thought, and more internal examination of language." (Lazaruk, 1991, p.614) "It is commonly believed that learning an additional language is easier for those who already know a second language than for monolinguals; in other words, there is a positive transfer from second language learning to learning other languages." (Genesee, 1998 p.19)

Options for Foreign Language Models in Elementary School

Dual Immersion School-

School within a school or magnet, 50% of students English speakers, 50% native speakers of the language of focus. At least 50% of their instruction in the target language up to 90%.

Immersion School-

School within a school or magnet, at least 50% of their instruction in the target language up to 90%.

FLES- (Foreign Language in Elementary School.)

A pull out program for students, 30min. Per day, or as a special. Focuses on language and cultural awareness.

FLEX- (Foreign Language Experience or Exposure)

Once a week, or in frequent program that focuses on language and cultural awareness.

See chart for more detail...

Table 1. Types of Foreign Language Programs in Elementary Schools

	Immersion or Dual-Language Programs	FLES Programs	FLEX Programs
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some or all of the subjects are taught in the second language. Students learn the second language by using it as a means of communication in the classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The foreign language is taught as a subject once or twice per week. Students learn to speak and use the second language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One or more foreign languages are explored on a regular basis. Students study about the language and culture.
Proficiency developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some students become bilingual, developing near-native pronunciation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near-native pronunciation is sometimes achieved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basis for further foreign language study and for developing good pronunciation is established.

Table 1 Met, 2008

Goal

Organize and Implement a Spanish FLEX program for early release Wednesdays.

Program and Pedagogy

Program-

- 26-30 Elementary School aged children. With the goal of dual language.
- One director with the responsibility of goals, curriculum, staffing, organization of volunteers/service teachers, budget, and liaison to district and parents.
- Two teachers with native-like Spanish speaking skills, training, and proven success with children. Ratio of at least 15:1
- To be held at an Elementary school site, preferably a site that is easily accessible to ELL students. (Juniper Elementary, Bear Creek Elementary)
- Busing from several central sites in the district, Jewel Elementary, High Lakes Elementary, Bear Creek Elementary, and then to Juniper Elementary.
- Hours 2:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.- instruction to beginning upon the arrival of the bused students, at about 3:00 p.m.

Pedagogy-

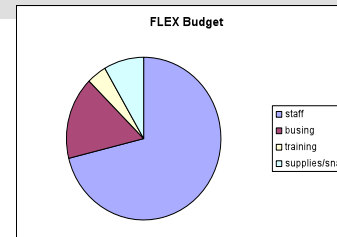
Instruction will focus on the goals of near native language pronunciation, cultural awareness, and fostering the excitement and desire to continue a study in foreign language.

•Instruction will be in the target language and Content based.

- Learning language through content provides students with opportunities to use language as it functions in the real world: to communicate authentic meanings, for authentic purposes, and to accomplish authentic tasks. (Cenoz, Genesee, 1998, p.36)

Budget

•The pie chart below depicts expenses for the FLEX program.



Staffing- \$8463

- Director-** \$25 hour, 3 hours a week, for 36 weeks. The duties will mainly be off site however there will be on site hours.
- Lead teacher-** \$22 hour, 4.25 hours, 34 weeks- to write lesson plans and prep for sessions.
- Teacher -** \$19 hour, 3 hours, 34 weeks, actively teaching with whole and leveled groups during sessions.
- **Possibly working in conjunction with College ELL or teacher preparatory training for additional staff.

Busing-\$1,959.76

- \$22.75 per hour X 1.5 hours
- 15.7 miles each week X \$1.5
- Parents to pick up students.

(Busing is vital to include the students of working parents.)

Staff development/ training-\$500

- SIOP training
- Staff meetings

Goal of GLAD training

Supplies- \$1000

- Art supplies
- Visuals
- Manipulatives
- Books
- Photo copies
- Snack

Funding

Cost is \$458.56 per student per year, or \$56 per month, \$14 per session.

This is reasonable fee for most families. However at the very least grants/private funding will be sought after to offer scholarships and or fund the program.

Foundations such as the Miller Foundation provide grants for Out-of-School programs. We are currently researching additional grants sources.

Expected Outcomes

- Exposure to another culture and broadening of a child's world view.
- Students with regular attendance and enrollment they learn to speak and attain near native pronunciation.
- Gain an appreciation for multilingualism and the power of relating to other people.
- "I love being bilingual. It's going to help me immensely because in the future I want to be able to travel and to get a job. It's something I accomplished in my life that I am very proud of. Not many people, unfortunately, speak two languages, and I'm proud that I can understand people from a different culture, understand their point of view, and where they are coming from. I wouldn't have gone to any other school if I had a choice." (Cazabon, 1998)

Contact Information

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