



NYU Steinhardt

Metropolitan Center for Urban Education

New York State Spanish BETAC



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Research and Practice

Effective Teaching for Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)

By Marguerite Lukes

Experienced ESL or bilingual teachers will tell you that every class is in some ways heterogeneous and includes students who are at a variety of levels of development in their receptive and productive skills in English. An added challenge for even seasoned practitioners is how to deliver effective instruction for students with gaps in their formal schooling, or those who have very limited literacy skills. This growing group of students is referred to in New York State as “students with interrupted formal education” (SIFE), and increasingly includes immigrant students from rural areas and countries where their schooling was interrupted by war and internal

conflict.

Students with limited interrupted formal education are a special concern because we know that students’ levels of academic preparation in the first language are directly tied to their achievement in the target language. Students with limited literacy skills or gaps in their schooling are charged not only with learning content area knowledge and developing proficiency in English, but need to learn classroom behaviors and expectations, study skills and work habits. SIFE students also have a very short time to develop grade level knowledge in literacy and numeracy. Whether the number of SIFE students in a middle school or high school setting is large or small, it is necessary to foster native language literacy and support, and to closely monitor student progress.

Key strategies when working with SIFE students:

- Develop a warm, welcoming environment, as students are unfamiliar with being in school and the array of expectations of a classroom environment
- Cooperative learning (grouping students heterogeneously across proficiency levels to foster communication and production of oral language)
- Drawing on students’ prior experiences
- Audio-visual aids such as pictures and graphic organizers
- Focus on functional literacy with authentic assessment, i.e. real world tasks, not simply academic literacy
- High-interest low level reading materials with appropriate content
- Combine skills-focused lessons with high interest content that incorporates students’ cultures and lives

Alcala, Angela (2000). “The Preliterate Student: A Framework for Developing an Effective Instructional Program”. ERIC Digest. September 2000.

Garcia, Eugene (1991). “The Education of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students: Effective Instructional Practices”. NCELA. Washington DC.

Voices from the Classroom



Pedro De Llano, Spanish GED teacher for “GED Plus” at Tenzer Learning Center (formerly ASHS) was interviewed by Marguerite Lukes about his students and about effective practices with ELLs who are overage and under-credited. In addition of teacher, Mr. De Llano is an accomplished writer, actor and director whose work may be seeing in Spanish language theaters in NYC.

We met Mr. De Llano, a native-born Venezuelan, working at the Tenzer Learning Center in Manhattan, formerly “ASHS” (Auxiliary Services for High Schools) which is now part of a city-wide network of programs called “GED Plus.” He teaches literature (reading and composition), science and social studies to Spanish-speaking immigrant students ages 18-21 who are preparing for the GED. The majority of his students are immigrants, about 75% from the Dominican Republic, about 20% Mexican and the rest from other areas of Latin America and the Caribbean. Some have had experience in regular schools, but do not have enough credits to graduate, while others have never been in the U.S. school system at all. Two other teachers prepare the students in math and ESL.

Mr. De Llano informs us that the majority of his students want to pass the GED exam to attend college, as well as to get a better job, as most students are employed already by necessity. “I want them to begin to believe in themselves, to feel capable of developing the skills to be successful in life, not just at passing the GED exam,” he says. “I teach them how to think critically, prioritize, make choices, and take risks. It’s fundamental that they can reflect on their actions without beating themselves up, to become more conscious. All this enables them to express themselves more clearly and to get better results.”

Particularly for students with interrupted formal education, Mr. De Llano uses strategies that help students learn while they are having fun. For example, as a way to prepare for the GED writing portion, students “pretend” to be on a talk show in the year 2017 where they are experts on a specific topic. They begin by saying their name, country of origin, and their profession, which gives them the confidence to feel like a valuable and successful individual. “At times I mention to them that many great people in history had failed at one point or another or were excluded or marginalized, Lincoln and Beethoven are just two examples,” says Mr. De Llano. “This gives students some perspective and helps motivate them to believe in themselves.

Mr. De Llano says that for his students to be successful, they require motivation, a systematic classroom structure and discipline. He concludes the interview saying,

“It’s clear that for my students, a large vocabulary in Spanish and solid knowledge of grammar and syntax leads to faster learning of English. In contrast, they are heavily impacted upon by the immigration experience and have serious culture shock, feel out of place, depressed, and their learning suffers. Economic circumstances forced many of my students and their parents to come here -- for those who grew up there, their families have remained on the margins of society and either did not learn English or don’t identify with US culture. Teaching them in Spanish re-activates the learning process and they are able to transfer their knowledge to English. The train of development is going at a good speed in adolescence and slowing it down does not bring good consequences. The experts say that it takes at least two years to adapt to a new culture – and five years to feel a sense of belonging. The reality is that in many regular high schools, there is not an appropriate place for these newly arrived adolescents with gaps in their education – in the best of cases we have three years to get them up to speed, get their skills and GED and complete their pre-university education. If we didn’t do it in Spanish, where would these students be? The answer is hard: on the street, marginalized, with a great deal of resentment toward society. We have a great opportunity here with these kids.”

We thank you Mr. De Llano for sharing with us your words of wisdom and for the good work with this very needy sector of our ELL student population.

New York City Department of Education News

Information for Parents of English Language Learners

"Ask Martine and Friends" is an information session for families who have questions about the Department of Education and the school year. This event brings together public school families and Department of Education personnel to listen to parent concerns and suggestions and to answer questions.

Chief Family Engagement Officer Martine Guerrier and DOE personnel will each give a three minute overview of their offices and share contact information with families. Following the remarks of DOE personnel there will be a Q&A session where question cards written by parents in the audience will be answered by the panel.

"Ask Martine and Friends" will take place on **Wednesday, November 28** at **PS 154** from **6:00pm - 8:30pm**. PS 154 is located at **250 West 127th Street New York, NY 10027**.

New York University Spanish BETAC Partners

The *Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (CLACS) at New York University was established in 1966 as an interdisciplinary teaching, research, and public information program. Originally called the Ibero-American Language and Area Studies Center, it was renamed CLACS in 1975. CLACS is a Title VI National Resource Center, offering fellowship support for graduate students and support for faculty and graduate student research in the areas of Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Its mission is to open channels of communication and encourage the sharing of ideas and observations across disciplinary boundaries.

Maritza Colon, the *Center's* Assistant Director, informs us that CLACS hosts colloquia, conferences, diplomatic talks, human rights delegations, foreign speakers, exhibits, student and faculty work-in-progress presentations, and academic conferences. In addition, along with their consortium partner, the *Institute for Latin American Studies* (ILAS), at Columbia University, CLACS also conduct outreach programs focusing on K-12 education, particularly of English Language Learners.

The NYS Spanish BETAC at NYU works closely with CLACS and ILAS to plan teacher professional development conferences, which this school year will focus on the literatures of the Caribbean, Central and South America, and one dedicated to the literature of Mexico.

The *Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies* at NYU is located in the King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center (KJCC) building located at 53 Washington Square South, New York NY 10012.

For more information: tel **212-998-8686**; fax **212-995-4163**; e-mail clacs.info@nyu.edu

Spanish Bilingual Teachers in Grades K-12 TEXTBOOK SURVEY

In order to better serve the professional development needs of Spanish bilingual classroom teachers, the NYS Spanish BETAC at NYU is compiling information and recommendations about textbooks in the content areas. Your experience in using Spanish language content area textbooks is essential and greatly appreciated!

Please click on the link below (or Ctrl+click), or copy and paste it into your web browser to complete this brief but important survey. It will only take a minute of your time. Thank you.

Nellie Mulkay, Director, NYS Spanish BETAC at NYU.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=whpwpwg_2bMsEYNY_2bbGwH50Cg_3d_3d

Home-School Connections

The Office of Adult and Continuing Education (OACE) of the New York City Department of Education offers free courses in adult basic education (literacy and pre-GED), career and technical education, English as a Second Language and GED. Lianne Friedman is the Director of Operations of OACE. NYS Spanish BETAC Resource Specialist, Marguerite Lukes, spoke with her regarding the work of her office.

According to Ms. Friedman, more than half of the 59,000 adults served in 2006-07 were in ESL. An OACE goal is to help people improve, meet their goals, sustain progress and then move out of adult education. Although 59,000 may seem like a large number, it represents only 3% of the need for adult education services in New York City. The OACE's challenge is that many adults, communities, schools and politicians are unaware of the services they offer.

Most adults come into an adult education program hoping to obtain their GED. As Ms. Friedman points out, this is not a realistic immediate goal for someone reading at a second grade level. OACE collaborates with community-based organizations to offer wrap-around services such as counseling, health services, legal services, domestic violence prevention, and other social services. With this additional help, OACE hopes to foster successful school experiences to a population that has often had unsuccessful school experiences in the past.

Regarding the home-school connection, Ms. Friedman spoke eloquently of the problems and possibilities. "In the end, adult literacy serves the whole family. Parents need to understand how to access the system, and often don't know where to go to get help. Immigrant parents have overcome so much to make it this far; we need to be supportive and understanding. Offer parent education and you get more involvement and you de-stigmatize going back to school because the kids' needs are at the center of it all."

Finally, Ms. Friedman had advice for school administrators. "The city has many adult education services – we want community-based programs to call on us so we can help them find ways to reduce their waiting lists and we want parents and adults to know that services are out there, regardless of their immigration status. OACE is large, but we are not looking to swallow any programs; we want to be able to maximize and leverage the resources that exist."

For more information, go to <http://schools.nyc.gov/Students/EPCI/AdultEducation.htm>.

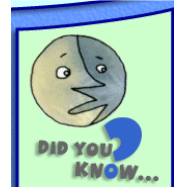
Ms. Friedman's email is: LFriedman@schools.nyc.gov

SAVE THE DATE! SPANISH SPELLING BEE

The Final State-Wide Competition of the NYS Spanish Spelling BEE *grades 4, 5, and 6* is scheduled for May 30, 2008 at the "Scholastic Auditorium" in Manhattan.

This year, the Spanish Spelling Bee committee will draw words from Language Arts vocabulary lists as well as the content area Spanish English glossaries. The content areas are math, science and social studies. The glossaries are available for grades 3-5 and 6-8 through the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and New York City Department of Education (NYC DOE) websites. Schools and districts are encouraged to create their own word lists for their local competitions based on all of the above materials. **Districts planning to participate are encouraged to run school- and district-wide Spanish Spelling Bees. On May 30th, winners of the district-wide bees will compete for first, second, and third place prizes in each grade.**

All districts sending winners to the final State-wide competition must register with Dr. Gail M. Slater at gail.slater@nyu.edu no later than December 14, 2007.



By
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Cultural Notes Colombia

La Bandera Colombiana



Población: 44, 379,598 **Moneda:** peso colombiano

Capital: Bogotá **Área total:** 1, 138, 910 km²; 439,733 mil²

En el año 2007, Bogotá fue nombrada por la UNESCO como “la nueva capital mundial del libro.” Bogotá, gracias a su completa infraestructura de bibliotecas, tiene 88 programas patrocinados por la alcaldía capitalina, contando con sistemas de información y organización. Entre sus bibliotecas se distingue la Biblioteca Luís Ángel Arango, ubicada en el centro de Bogotá, la cual comprende una amplia variedad de libros, y es una de las bibliotecas más grandes de Latinoamérica. Por tanto, Bogotá es considerada por la Unión de Ciudades Capitales de Ibero América (UCCI) como “la Capital Iberoamericana de la Cultura” ya que incorpora lo cultural como eje de sostenimiento al desarrollo humano.

La Oficina del Censo dice que hay unos 500,000 colombianos viviendo en los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, de acuerdo a los medios de comunicación de Colombia como *El tiempo* y *La Semana*, se cuentan unos 2 millones de colombianos en este país. Cabe resaltar que en los últimos 10 años la población colombiana ha crecido un 60%, estando formada por individuos con empuje quienes buscan fuerza política en los Estados Unidos, a la vez de obtener “Temporary Protected Status”, o TPSD para sus co-ciudadanos, y avocando por la paz para Colombia. Los inmigrantes colombianos poseen altos niveles de escolaridad y de recursos económicos.

Colombia es un país incomparable por estar bordeado por el Océano Atlántico y el Océano Pacífico, por cosechar y producir el café de mejor calidad del mundo; por sus riquezas minerales de oro, esmeraldas, carbón, flores, y demás recursos naturales, y por la calidez humana de sus habitantes los cuales la convierten en un paraíso tropical. La cumbia y el vallenato son dos de sus ritmos folclóricos más populares. Entre sus platos típicos está la bandeja paisa, el ajiaco con pollo santafereño, el sancocho, la natilla, el postre de las tres leches, y la cuajada con melao. Entre sus talentos tenemos artistas de fama mundial, como los cantantes Juanes, Carlos Vives, Shakira, el pintor Fernando Botero, el bien conocido escritor Nóbel de Literatura - Gabriel García Márquez, el deportista Juan Pablo Montoya, el ballet de Sonia Osorio, el actor John Leguizamo, y el nuevo talento de la modelo y actriz Zulay Henao. Colombia tiene amplia variedad de comercio, centros educativos y todo lo que se puede encontrar en cualquier élite mundial. Una de las ciudades colombianas turísticas por excelencia es Cartagena de Indias, la cual tiene una interesante confluencia de culturas desde hace más de 500 años, partiendo de los indios, españoles, africanos y árabes; convirtiéndola en una de las ciudades más bellas de la zona del Caribe, con su variedad de playas sin igual.

Podemos concluir diciendo que Colombia es un país supremamente rico en todo el sentido de la palabra, tanto en recursos naturales como en el tesoro innato de sus cultos y amables habitantes. Los colombianos en su territorio o en cualquier país del mundo son personas dispuestas a participar, colaborar y cambiar en el desarrollo de las culturas mundiales.

RESOURCES TO HELP SPANISH-SPEAKING PARENTS HELP THEIR CHILDREN!

The October 2007 edition of *Colorín Colorado's* Spanish-language parent newsletter, *Boletín*, is now available online. (...Read the newsletter in [English](#).) (...Read the newsletter in [Spanish](#).)

The electronic newsletter, which provides Spanish-speaking parents practical information on literacy designed to cultivate their children's academic success, includes the following articles: Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences With Your Child's Teacher, Book of the Month, How to Develop Good Reading Habits in Your Home, Word Play and Rhymes, Your Rights as the Parent of a Public School Student, Learning Disabilities, etc.

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Spanish BETAC Activities

November Professional Development Offerings

We still have space for:

1. **Developing Language and Literacy with Art,**
11/12/07, 2:30 – 5:30 pm at MOMA
2. **The Use of the Graphing Calculator in Chemistry Classes,**
11/28/07, 12:30-3:00 pm, at Fordham University

To register, contact poonam.basu@nyu.edu

Looking for English - Spanish Glossaries?

The latest to be made available on the NYSED website are the social studies grades 3-5, 6-8. Check the link:

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/BilingualSocialStudiesGlossaries.htm>

October BETAC Workshops

Assessment and Accountability at Long Island University

On October 12th, NYS Spanish BETAC staff Nellie Mulkay and Dr. Irene Pompetti-Szul gave a workshop on “Preparing ELLs for the English Regents.”



This workshop took place as part of three events on “Assessment and Accountability” held in collaboration with the NYS Bronx Regional BETAC of Fordham University, the NYS Haitian BETAC of Brooklyn College and the Brooklyn/Queens BETAC of Long Island University. The picture below shows the group assembled for the keynote, which was delivered by CUNY Assistant Professor, Dr. Jacqueline Darwin.

On October 26, NYS Spanish BETAC Resource Specialist, Dr. Irene Pompetti-Szul and Brooklyn-Queens Resource Specialist, Virginia Jama presented a workshop on preparing high school ELLs for the NYSESLAT and the English Regents. This was the third event in the NYC BETAC Network series on Assessment and Accountability for ELLs hosted by Long

Island University. More than a hundred teachers and administrators attended the conference.

Attanasio and Associates also presented new commercial materials for preparing high school students on the NYSESLAT and the English Regents. Carmen Perez Hogan, former Director of the NYSED Office of Bilingual Education, gave the keynote address, which highlighted both Title I and Title III assessment requirements. She also discussed AMAO’s (Annual Measurable Achievable Objectives).

Upcoming Conferences on the Education of ELLs

NABE	Feb. 5 – 8, 2008	Tampa, FL
NY SABE	Mar. 14 – 16, 2008	Melville, NY
TESOL	April 2 – 5, 2008	New York, NY