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# El Noticiero

Newsletter of the New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education

## NMABE to Host Reading First Institute

NMABE has organized a Language and Literacy Institute for English Language Learners (ELLs). It is designed for 90 participants in schools with high ELL student populations that implement Reading First grants. The Reading First Unit of the PED is sponsoring the institute which is scheduled for October 16 and 17 in Albuquerque.

Literacy and Language proficiency are key factors influencing every child's ability to learn. The ability to speak and read at grade level is the foundation for academic success not just in language arts, but in every subject or curricular area. With the number of ELLs growing in New Mexico and across the nation, many schools are ill-equipped to accommodate the unique needs that these students bring to the classroom as well as *No Child Left Behind's* high expectations for ELLs to meet content and performance standards.

This is the first institute of its kind for Reading First schools. English reading instruction must be modified in Reading First schools that serve ELL students in ways that recognize the unique linguistic strengths they bring to the learning environment as well as the contrasts that exist between English and the home language.

The Institute will offer schools/districts guidance in targeting the literacy

needs of English language learners and culturally and linguistically diverse students. In order for schools to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals and ensure that ELLs have the same access to highly qualified teachers as their peers, teachers and support staff must understand the cultural and linguistic background of students, scientifically research-based best practices, and building-wide implementation strategies so that ELL students are able to thrive at each grade level and in all curricular areas.

The Institute is designed to help educators and staff-development coordinators foster literacy success for ELL students in their schools and districts. During the course of this intensive institute, participants will:

- Develop both a theoretical and practical understanding of the dynamics at work in language acquisition and literacy development—including the role and importance of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies.

- Become grounded in the scientifically research-based instructional strategies and best practices that facilitate literacy development and reading comprehension.

- Develop a plan of action that tailors strategies for their particular local populations of students.

- Learn to appropriately coach and model effective reading instruction, based upon sound reading research, and develop mentoring skills that will facilitate the school-wide sharing and integration of these instructional strategies.

- Give teachers the understanding and competence to make appropriate curricular adaptations and to differentiate instruction for English Language Learners.

Presenters are Dr. Socorro Herrera and Dr. Della Pérez of Kansas State University. Dr. Herrera is currently an educational consultant, associate professor, and co-director of the CLASSICÓ ESL/Dual Language Distance Education Program at Kansas State University. She devotes her energies to leading one of the most highly respected ESL / Dual Language professional training programs in the country, as well as facilitating workshops, institutes, and on-site training programs at schools and districts across the U.S. Dr. Pérez is an educational consultant, assistant professor, and Title III coordinator with CLASSICÓ ESL/Dual Language Distance Education Program at Kansas State University and facilitates literacy workshops across multiple states.

For more information contact Liza Rael of the Reading First Unit at the PED at the following email address: [lrael@ped.state.nm.us](mailto:lrael@ped.state.nm.us).

## UNM Offers Language Teaching Workshop for Native Language Speakers

On July 29-30, 2005, UNM's Institute for American Indian Education (IAIE) and the Linguistic Institute for Native Americans (LINA) held a two-day workshop on Native language teaching practices and language planning issues in immersion settings.

"One reason that these workshops are increasingly important is that they are aimed to helping to prepare native speakers to teach tribal languages in public school settings." said Dr. Chris Sims, one of the organizers of the institute. "This has been especially critical since the passage of the NM state legislated certification in 2003 which requires New Mexico tribes to establish their own language certification procedures. While this new certification requirement does not require formal college background, many tribes initiating native language programs in school settings are increasingly in search of appropriate training that will enable their tribal members to effectively teach their languages. The Institute for American Indian Education at UNM is poised to deliver this important service

### Continued from page 3

causes the teacher to feel out of control and helpless. At this point, she lashed out at Juan for lack of a more convenient target. She made it a language issue rather than a behavior issue, and that was her mistake.

I learned that I have been socialized to assume prejudice and hatred when a White American is responding negatively to a minority of any other race. While it often may be the case, it is unproductive to make such accusations when trying to resolve a problem.

### Applications:

Through this experience, I relearned that empathy and diplomacy solve problems far better than anger and retaliation. I was able to speak to the principal and the teacher from an empathetic point of view, discussing how difficult it is when the class talks at inappropriate times. I could then talk about how we may target the language as the problem rather than the behavior because we feel intimidated when we don't understand what is being said. Now that they felt I understood, I could talk about how the reaction to Juan's home language has hurt Juan personally. This can do

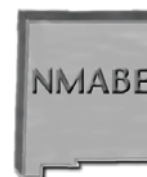
through continuing workshops and other sessions in the coming year." Dr. Sims cited two workshops thus far have been well received and attended by language teachers, program directors, principals and tribal members. One focused on strategies for Native language teaching and the other on Native language program planning.

The July workshop included strategies for effective language teaching; planning language lessons and interactive language experiences for learners, the stages of oral language development, developing appropriate language teaching resources, and other areas related to the development of native language speakers. Tribal members with experience in native language teaching led the sessions as well as individuals with a broad range of expertise in tribal language efforts and language program development.

"We hope to continue to serve additional tribes and other Native language teachers in the coming year." said Dr. Sims.

long-term damage to a student. I could also talk about how targeting the language of a student could get the school in trouble legally and with OCR. We can avoid all this by targeting the inappropriate talking (the behavior) with all the students in the class who were doing so, and not focus on students speaking a language other than English.

As a professional, I learned to control my anger when one of my students is inappropriately targeted by one of my colleagues. My goal is to help teachers see that they can discipline the behavior without targeting a language. I needed the principal to see this also so I could have his backing in such future situations. Had I acted on my initial feelings and thoughts, I would have isolated myself from the faculty and not helped Juan or my other ESL students in any way. I would have further instilled prejudice feelings and lost support for myself and my ESL program. By being diplomatic and empathetic, I was able to resolve the problem without hurt and, with the backing of the principal, set a policy whereby this could not and did not take place again in our school while I was there.



## El Noticiero

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### PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

**No. 29:1, Fall, 2004: Oct.**

(Pre-conference issue)

**No. 29:2, Winter, 2005: January**

(Board News, Bilingual Education Day,  
Call to Action)

**No. 29:3 Spring, 2005: April**

(Conference Edition)

**No. 29:4 Summer, 2005: August**

(Summer Activities, Institutes)

Inserts provided for monthly news

# A Bilingual Education Teacher's Reflection

Geni Flores of Eastern New Mexico University's Bilingual Education department shared the following true story with NMABE. As we begin the school year, it reminds us of the enormous problems our ELL students face and what some bilingual education professionals may confront in the schools. This was a reflection wheel journal entry she submitted for one of her classes in preparation for the bilingual education endorsement.

## The Event:

I was standing before my Beginning Spanish Class at Lovington High School one morning, actively engaged in a lesson I was presenting. The door to my classroom was always open, and I saw from the corner of my eye a figure arriving and pacing just outside of the classroom in the hall. I turned to look, and saw Juan, one of my ESL students. He turned to face the wall across the hall from me, and lowered his head. His body slumped against the wall, and he began to weep.

I turned to my class and suggested they continue the activity on their own for a moment. I went to the hallway and shut the door behind me. Juan was truly crying as he stood against the wall. He turned his face to hide it from sight. I asked him what was wrong.

*"La maestra me dice que no puedo hablar español en la clase. Yo sólo quería saber cómo hacer el problema, y todos estaban hablando. Yo le pregunté a Daniel cómo se hace el problema y ella se enojó."* ("The teacher says that I cannot speak Spanish in class. I only wanted to know how to do the problem and everyone was talking. I asked Daniel how to solve the problem and she got mad at me.")

I asked who the teacher was and a little more about the setting. Through the sobs of a broken young man, I learned it was a math class (algebra) and he was seeking help from a fellow student as to how to approach a word problem. Juan then told me the following:

*"Yo no sé por qué me quedo aquí en la escuela. Trato y trato de entender pero el inglés no me entra y los maestros no me entienden. Nunca me van a aceptar en este país."* ("I don't know why I stay here in school. I try and try to understand but I just can't learn English and the teachers don't understand me. They will never accept me in this country.")

## Feelings:

My initial feeling was that of compassion as I witnessed a 5'9", 160 lb. young man, broken into tears. As he related the story of what had happened, my feelings changed to anger and rage against the teacher and the system which produces such thinking. When he made his final statement about never being accepted here, my feelings turned to deep sorrow in combination with the persistent anger.

## Thoughts:

Upon my realization that the figure I was seeing through the corner of my eye was Juan, and that something was wrong, my first thought was, "he's looking for me." Even when he hid his face from view as I approached from my classroom, I know he was looking for me. He would not have chosen that area of the hallway as a stopping place otherwise. He hid his face in embarrassment because crying was not typical of such a "macho" young man.

When he related what had happened, my thoughts were of flying into that teacher's classroom and slapping her around for a while. Then I would suggest she go to Iran and try to figure out word problems in Farsi without speaking English to anyone. Then I thought of what appropriate things I could say to Juan that would calm him, reassure him, and keep him in school. I began in my mind to criticize this society which breaks its promises to our immigrants so regularly and in such an insensitive way, consistently. . . Finally my thoughts turned to logic and how to best resolve this problem without violence or threats.

## Learnings:

Much of what I learned from this experience was a reminder or a relearning of things I already knew. I had to rediscover diplomacy and understanding for both sides

for there to be a satisfactory ending to the story.

My initial assumptions were that the teacher was wrong, stupid, and purposefully cruel and hateful. I assumed prejudice was the catalyst driving this attitude on her part, and the solution was to become angry . . . with the school. These were biases on my part because I am conditioned to see prejudice and blame it for all malice and injustice committed against minorities.

Is it valid to assume that the teacher is prejudiced? . . . Having worked with this teacher for a few years by this time, I had observed that her world consists of others like herself. Her friends are White English speakers like she who enjoy rodeo and ranching and small-town living. I had never seen her engage in conversation with minorities on a social level. Stereotypically, she could be viewed as prejudiced. That she chose to try and forbid a student from speaking Spanish in her classroom clearly rang a prejudice bell in my mind. However, in all the time I had known this teacher in a professional sense, I had never heard minority students complain about her as they sometimes do about others. I had never seen her mistreat a student or make negative racial comments in my presence as some other teachers had done. I had no concrete evidence to assume prejudice.

Is it valid to assume that she was being purposefully cruel and hateful? . . . That would indicate that she enjoyed singling out and embarrassing students in front of the class, and that she specifically disliked Juan and wanted to hurt him personally. Neither Juan nor I had reason to believe this was the case.

I had to consider at this point how I as a teacher feel when my class is over-talkative and I cannot seem to get their attention or gain control. It is a very frustrating situation which

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# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**NMABE'S  
ANNUAL STATE BILINGUAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE**

**April 6-8, 2006  
Embassy Suites Hotel  
Albuquerque, NM**

Look for more information in future issues of *El Noticiero* and at  
[www.nmabe.net](http://www.nmabe.net)

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