

Bilingual ESL Network (The BEN)

The Front Range BOCES for Teacher Leadership was established as a BOCES (Board of Cooperative Services) by DASSC (the Denver Areas School Superintendents' Council) and the School of Education at UCD (University of Colorado at Denver). The basic purpose of the BOCES is to provide comprehensive and coherent professional development for practicing teachers in the school districts of the Denver Metropolitan area. In order to minimize fragmented efforts and duplication of services, this objective will be pursued through substantive K-12 and higher education collaboration that will include participation by other agencies that have an interest in professional development for teachers. The BEN's work is focused in elementary education of linguistically diverse students and bilingual and ESL programs.

OUR COMMITMENT

We are committed to establish a structure, to plan and implement professional development for teachers that operates as a network of teachers involved in professional development under the leadership of a joint faculty.

OUR GOAL

To help practicing teachers implement effective bilingual and/or English as a Second Language programs that result in academic achievement for all linguistically diverse students.

BEN Strands and Descriptions:

1. **Second Language Acquisition** - This strand focuses on both first and second language acquisition, and on the acquisition of literacy in young children. This strand lays the foundation for an understanding of the nature of the relationship between cognition and language; language acquisition from the perspective of the individual within their respective linguistic communities, and how literacy is acquired within increasingly broader sociolinguistic contexts.

2. **Family Empowerment** - This strand is based on the Bueno Center (CU Boulder) Model of Family Empowerment. In this model, a paradigm shift is suggested to reconceptualize our ideas about families and to recognize them as partners in the process of educating children. We advocate a belief system that recognizes families as the key component to promoting educational equity and excellence for all children. With this paradigm shift in mind, the strand will use the Bueno Center Model to explore Family Empowerment at four levels: 1. Genuine sensitivity to today's changing families, 2. Real support from school personnel, 3. True collaboration between parents and educators and 4. Training for parents and educators.

3. **Multicultural Education** - This strand will investigate how social and political forces in schools and society affect students' choices and opportunities for educational achievement. We

will examine in depth the sociopolitical influence of languages in education. We will look at practical implications for creating equitable environments that foster high-quality education for all students as well as practical implications for enhancing our teaching in order to provide effective instruction for all students. In particular, we will research how issues of race, language and culture are portrayed in children's literature, and how to use literature to give diverse cultural groups a voice in the classroom.

4. **L2Techniques (ESL/SSL)** - This strand will allow participants to acquire techniques, materials and activities to use in their second language classrooms. It will help students to sharpen their theoretical and philosophical foundation for teaching second language learners. Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on ways that create an atmosphere for learning a second language including the classroom, school, and community/home contexts. Participants will gain insight into their own teaching by observing and participating in ESL/SSL teaching situations. Literacy instruction in students' second language that is developmentally appropriate will be discussed. Students will be able to create lessons and a repertoire of ESL/SSL resources geared to their grade level and teaching situations.

5. **Linking Assessment and Instruction for Language Minority Students** - This strand will

provide information in three areas: 1) first **and** second language proficiency assessment, 2) academic assessment, and 3) assessment for special needs. How to use the assessment data from each area for instruction will also be provided. The assessment processes detailed in this course for each area comply with Office for Civil Rights mandates.

6. Sheltered Instruction and Science & Environmental Education for L2 Learners -

This strand will provide the theoretical foundation and rationale behind sheltered language instruction using three international environmental education programs: Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and Monarch Butterfly.

7. Spanish Literacy/Adquisición del proceso de la lecto-escritura en español. - Esta rama se conforma de tres módulos. Módulo #1. Marco teórico del panorama global de los procesos de lecto-escritura en español: Conocimiento del desarrollo de diferentes métodos de lecto-escritura con sus respectivos sustentos teóricos. Módulo #2. Exámenes y evaluación de las etapas de desarrollo de la lecto-escritura en español en los niños: Investigarán y manejarán diversos exámenes que existen en sus ambientes profesionales para identificar los niveles de desarrollo de sus estudiantes en la lecto-escritura. Módulo #3. Aplicación de los diversos métodos de la lecto-escritura en español.

8. Linguistic Analysis of English & Spanish - All teachers teach language but rarely get a solid background on how any language works. The first part of this strand is an introduction to grammar with a focus on syntax and morphology. The perspective assumes no prior grammatical knowledge or experience teaching grammar. The strand also assumes that teachers will find the content to be useful, interesting and fun. This strand will eventually include a focus on a functional approach to grammar.

9. Bilingual Special Ed/GT - This strand is design to provide teachers a basic introduction to the disproportionate over and under representation of English language learners in special and gifted education programs. The content consists of introductory material

regarding legal precedents and values for special education services, overview of some exceptionalities, appropriate identification practices, informal assessment tools and discussion about language versus learning issues. The strand will provide strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

10. Culture of the Classroom - In this strand, one learns how a social group's values are constructed and mediated through the oral and written materials that are heard or read in homes, schools, and communities. Participants will examine educational and social practices in school and community in order to investigate how reading, writing, and speaking help constitute the events of community and classroom culture.

11. English Literacy in Bilingual Programs. - Module #1. Theory and research that informs literacy instruction in a second language: the theoretical foundation, underlying second language acquisition assumptions, and current research. Module #2. Making the transition into second language literacy successful: focus on instructional methodology and practices. Module #3. Academic content instruction in a second language: brings together experience and theory.

12. English Literacy for L2 Learners in a Non-Bilingual Program - This strand focuses on English literacy instruction for students whose first language is other than English. The goal of the course is to allow teachers to frame their understanding of literacy development with theory and corresponding practical applications that help students become proficient readers and writers of English and able communicators of their ideas. It provides guidance on how to develop initial oral English proficiency and an adequate vocabulary base as the foundation in which literacy is built. Teachers in this course will be able to create a repertoire of lessons based on literacy approaches that facilitate English literacy development. It provides opportunities for teachers to learn how to differentiate instruction for second language students in order to increase students' access to concepts and ideas throughout the school day.

The Network Faculty

The development of the network faculty has involved strong partnerships with school districts and a mentoring structure that allows for focused high quality professional development. Over the past three years the BEN has provided three BEN Institutes that are a cornerstone to the network faculty development. The institutes have three purposes: 1) to articulate and organize around a common philosophy and the adoption of underlying assumptions, 2) to make familiar to all network faculty and potential faculty core understandings around the usefulness of linguistic analysis, language acquisition and critical pedagogy, and 3) to provide sessions focused on particular strands to make faculty familiar with state of the art syllabi.

Other activities

ADOBE (Associated Directors of Bilingual Education)

ADOBE was founded about 25 years ago by advocates of bilingual education in Colorado. Among other issues, ADOBE has continued to forge positive and productive working relationships with the Colorado Department of Education, the state school board and the office of the commissioner of education, and the legislature. I am an active member and past president of ADOBE.

CABE (Colorado Association for Bilingual Education)

Yes, Virginia, there is another CABE that is not in California! I am currently on the executive board of CABE as a representative of ADOBE. CABE and ADOBE were deeply involved in an education campaign to prepare Colorado voters and educators in the event the Ron Unz initiative got on the November ballot. It did and we joined forces with political consultants Welchert & Britz and a broad-based coalition of advocates throughout the state.

Colorado Common Sense

Colorado Common Sense is a citizen group for the education of voters and legislators in Colorado that will continue the work of the campaign to inoculate Colorado against all anti-bilingual education activity.