

Paola Gomez

## **Module 2 Assignment**

### **Class EDPN 671**

First, read through Chapter 1 in your textbook, *Affirming Diversity*.

Second, in your own words, provide a brief analysis of one of the major concepts presented in Chapter 1. You may select any concept within the chapter. Choose one that you find unique, interesting, and/or worthy of intellectual discussion.

The major concept that I would like to discuss is the concept of achievement gap. Achievement gap is the concept that describes the fact that those students who come from low-income families and/or different ethnic and racial backgrounds achieve less than others. There is an overwhelming amount of research that confirms that an achievement gap does exist in our public education system. According to Nieto and Bode, “41 percent of whites are reading at grade level, only 15 percent of Hispanics and 13 percent of African Americans are at grade level. The gap worsens through the years: Black and Hispanics twelfth graders perform at the same level in reading and math as white eighth graders” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.9). The reason why this is happening is because the achievement of this group of students is related directly to the conditions and contexts in which these students learn. For example, some schools with ample funding are able to allow for a more enriching learning environment by having access to more resources and materials. On the contrary, schools that service students living in low-income households tend to have less resources and often employ teachers without any experience, therefore providing less opportunities for meaningful and vigorous student learning. Educators need to focus their attention on school related factors, instead of focusing on socio-cultural problems and deficits.

There is very little that teachers can do to change the life circumstances of students, however educators can shift their focus and do a great deal to change the context of schools. For instance, some schools are successful with students of different backgrounds, students from low-income families and students who live in challenging circumstances. According to Nieto and Bode, “Karin Chenoweth’s book *How It’s Being Done: Urgent Lessons from Unexpected Schools* (2009) provides examples from eight schools throughout the nation that were selected for the Education Trust’s dispelling the Myth Award, which is given to high-achieving, high poverty, and high minority schools. Her research shines a light on successful school practices, such as teachers’ and administrators’ collaborative work to set standards and goals, as well as their notable, palpable belief in their students’ capacity to achieve” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.10). These teachers were very organized and had only one goal in their mind, and that was to help students learn. These teachers were provided with opportunities and time to learn through research-based discussions and to collaborate to create successful learning practices in their classrooms. This collaboration also fosters a culture of high achievement not only for the students, but for teachers alike. In conclusion, these are the kind of actions that teachers and administration need to take to spark change and close the achievement gap.

Provide a brief discussion/introduction/explanation of the sociopolitical context of your school environment. If you don't currently work in a school, you may choose to discuss your workplace or school that you attended. Provide some background information so that others can build an understanding of your specific environment.

I work in the Bronx in a district 75 school. I have worked for this school for the past 9 years. The first four and a half years were as a paraprofessional and then the other four and a half years as a Special Education teacher. Our organization is big, so we are split up at different sites across the Bronx. At my site, our ELL population is mainly students from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. We also have students of Indian descent. Our staff is also very diverse. We have staff that come from different countries and speak a variety of languages. We are a title one school. Our site has a total of 12 classes. We primarily have students on the autism spectrum at our site, but we also have students with other classifications. We have students who are standardized and alternately assessed at our site. There are seven 8:1+1 classes, two 6:1+1 classes and three 12:1+1 classes at our site. I teach one of the 8:1+1 classes and all my students are alternately assessed. We used to have one ENL teacher, but we recently welcomed another ENL provider. The ENL provider shared with me that it is very difficult to service all the children in her caseload. In addition to servicing our students at our site, she travels to other sites on select dates to service other students. In my classroom, I have 4 children that receive ENL services. The way in which my students get their ENL services is during Math and English Language Arts periods. The ENL teacher pushes into my classroom during either of these two periods. We collaborate and talk about what the students are learning during each period, and she brings materials that are supplemental or that support the students' needs. She also pulls out students to do progress monitoring and testing.

Within the above sociopolitical context you presented, provide details regarding the multicultural aspects of your school, including the students, faculty, and staff. You may include things such as the demographics of the people as well as any other cultural artifacts that would be important to note.

According to our school Comprehension Educational Plan (CEP) and EDAT "74% of our ELLs identify as Hispanic and 37% of Hispanic ELL families identify as blacks and 53% as whites. 70% of non-Hispanic ELLs are blacks, 18% of them are Asian and 9% are whites. My school has 220 Current ELLs which is 30.8% of the school population. 4 (0.5%) of or ELLs are Former or Ever ELLs" (CEP, 2021-2022). These percentages are for the entire organization, we unfortunately do not have data for my site. As mentioned in the above question, we currently have two ENL providers. One of them holds a TESOL certification and the other provider is working under an internship certification. There are 4 children in my class that receive ENL services. The services are part of their IEP (Individualized Education Plan). Students need to have ENL as a service in their IEP to receive it. The way in which my students get their ENL services is during Math and English Language Arts periods. The ENL teacher pushes into my classroom during either of these two periods. We collaborate and talk about what the students are learning during each period, and she brings materials that are supplemental or that support the students' needs. She also pulls out students to do progress monitoring and testing. We currently have an English Language Arts curriculum and culturally responsive literacy (CRL) texts are selected in alignment with each month's unit topic. According to my school, "by integrating

these texts into the instructional program, we hope to promote a welcoming classroom environment that honors students' diversity, values, and backgrounds. Additional texts are also included to provide opportunities for students to engage in literacy activities that reflect their own backgrounds, as well as those of their peers and their communities" (google drive, 2022).

Finally, comment on one of the videos presented in this week's readings. This is slightly flexible, but have fun with it. Choose something within the video to discuss here in this board. It could be something you enjoyed learning, something you disagree with, or something that sparked curiosity.

I watched both videos that were assigned in this module this week, but the one that sparked my interest was the video titled "Diverse Education for a Student in the Education System." In the video, Elijah Jones explains that the Education system in his home state of Wilmington Delaware is segregated and is hurting both private and public schools. He made a comparison between the high school that he now attends and the one he used to attend. He noticed that the private high school that he attends now has top of the line facilities and access to an abundant number of resources. On the other hand, the high school that he used to attend has less resources and expectations for students' learning are low. He also states that even though he is very fortunate to attend this private school, there is little diversity. According to Jones, "in my biology class, I'm the only African American. In my math class, I'm one of the two African American males. And so far in high school, I had no teachers of color" (Jones, 2017). In this quote, Elijah Jones is expressing the fact that the school, teachers, and classmates failed to recognize his background. The last thing that Elijah leaves us with is that for things to change, as a society, we need to emerge ourselves in diverse experiences and learn about race relations and how to overcome division. Schools need to diversify their curriculum, so that they do not ignore the impact of those of not of European descent (Jones, 2017).

### **References:**

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### **Module 3 Assignment**

## Class 671

Part 1: Watch the video posted in this week's module: Choose two points that the speaker makes to discuss. Of the points made, discuss how they would or wouldn't fit into your particular school given the population of students. Explain your rationale. Further, explain how the two points could be adapted to meet the needs of your particular students, if you haven't discussed that above.

One of the points that was made in the video by the students that attend a school in Chicago is that racial inequity exists in their school. One of the students mentioned that she had noticed the racial make-up of her advanced classes. She states that there are more white students in that class than students of color. Black and mixed raced students feel like they are outsiders. Another interesting point that the video brought up was interactions between students, with students at this school tending to segregate themselves.

The concept that would fit in given the school and population that I work with is racial inequity. Most of the students that I teach have Hispanic and African American backgrounds. The school is in a poor community. All these factors are a recipe for racial inequity. These kids do not have the same resources and opportunities that other children have in other schools. They do not get adequate books or working iPads to enhance their academic development. Even though, this is the reality of our school, as a teacher, I do everything I can to make sure I meet their needs in my classroom. I make sure I differentiate my instruction to meet their academic needs. For example, in math, all my students are currently working on different concepts, so they each get different materials and worksheets pertaining to the math concept they are working on. I make sure I provide one-to-one support to each student at least twice a week.

The concept that would not fit in my school is segregation. My students interact and socialize with each other. They do not segregate themselves. They enjoy saying hi, playing and sharing toys with each other. My students ages range between 7-8 years old. They are on the autism spectrum; they have different ways to socialize as some of them are non-verbal. If my students were segregating themselves, what I would do to make sure that they were socializing and interacting with each other, would be to designate at least 10-15 minutes of instruction to do a social table. In this social table, the children can pick any topic they want to talk about. For my non-verbal kids, I would make sure we have picture symbols with topics and pictures with responses as well. This way they can exchange pictures among each other. For my verbal kids, I would also have pictures of topics and then I would have them pick a topic. They would have to talk to each other about that topic. This is how I adapted to meet the needs of my students.

Part 2: Review Chapter 2 in our textbook. Within this chapter there is a discussion of preparing teachers for multicultural classrooms. I want you to imagine you are a school leader and are able to create a training program for teachers. How would you go about training teachers so that they are prepared for the multicultural classroom? What things would be vital for teachers to have or know in order to best serve their students? Be creative and provide your own insights and philosophies!

The first and most important thing that I would include in my training is the definition of multicultural education. I would then move on to explain that it is antiracist, basic education, important for all students, pervasive, education for social justice, a process and critical pedagogy. After giving them an overview and talking about important terms that they should know about Multicultural Education, I would then move on to talk about the different students that they can expect to be in their classroom. Teachers need to be inclusive of all students. They are going to have students of different countries and race, socio-economic statuses, religion, and sexual orientation in their classes.

Keeping these factors in mind, I would say to them that they need to be prepared to have discussions such as racism. They cannot be uncomfortable to talk about these topics. Having these discussions with students will make sure that they have constructive and meaningful dialogues with their students. I would also say to include the families of the students. Let them know what they are working on. This fosters collaboration between teachers and families, and this is always benefiting the students. The next thing I would talk about is the curriculum and the types of books and other materials that they will be using. Finally, I would tell them to continue to educate themselves about multicultural education and to think of innovative or creative ways to teach their students.

Part 3: Share a short (5 slides or less) Digital story with your peers based on the digital story asset mapping PPT.

### **References:**

Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2018). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Pearson.

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**Module 4**

## Class 671

First, watch the two videos in Module 4. Read also chapter 3 in our course textbook.

Part I: In your own words, detail the speaker's main argument in the video "Keeping Kids in Poverty." What are your thoughts regarding what she presents? Are there any holes in her argument?

The speaker's main argument in the video "Keeping Kids in Poverty" is that a good education should not only be exclusive to rich children. She states that schools with low-income communities across the United States, more specifically communities of color, lack resources and materials that are present in a lot of the wealthier schools. Materials such as musical instruments, new books, healthy school lunches and soccer fields are not offered to lower communities but are prevalent in wealthier ones. This inequality has an impact on the educational potential of the students. The speaker mentions that she sees this in her classroom in Boston.

The speaker moves on to make another compelling argument. She argues that the United States' education system has never been designed to offer or provide equal or quality opportunities to communities of color and other low-income families. She says that these opportunities occur through private philanthropy rather than the education system itself. She then offered us a thought that was very compelling and made us reflect on our education system. "If we really, as a country, believe that education is the "great equalizer", then it should be just that: equal and equitable. Until then, there's no democracy in our democratic education" (Summer, 2016).

I completely agree with Ms. Summer's argument that our education system should be equal and equitable. Children who live and attend schools in wealthy areas of the country should not be the only ones to benefit from receiving important academic resources. All children should be offered the same resources regardless of their social economic status. The education system itself should be the one providing these resources to these low-income communities and not philanthropists. The Education system needs to close the divide. They need to share their resources and not divide them, because when they do that, they are multiplied.

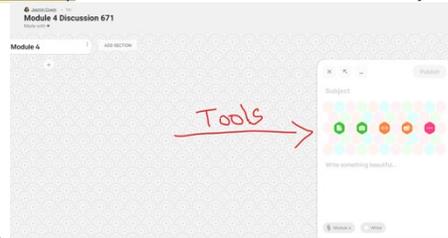
I think she made a compelling argument and that she covered every aspect of this argument. I do not believe that there were any holes in her argument.

Part II: What approaches can educators make in the classroom to assist students who are living in poverty? Consider pedagogical approaches, or teaching practices, or classroom elements specifically. What can you do to help? There may be resources that help explain how educators can help bring the socioeconomic gap within the classroom.

There is very little that teachers can do to change the life circumstances of students, however as educators we can shift our focus and do a great deal to change the context of schools. We can have high expectations for them, which allows them to work towards reachable goals that serve to empower and gives them motivation to overcome challenges in the classroom, but also in their lives outside of the classroom. We can also expose them to places outside of the classroom. Students' experiences can be very limited due to their socioeconomic backgrounds;

therefore, it is important to show them places and resources that the world has to offer. For example, taking students on a field trip to a local museum is a great way to do that. Another important approach is to build relationships with the students, an important aspect when creating a positive learning environment. It helps to foster mutual respect and trust with both families and students. Children living in poverty are usually faced with high mobility due to their unstable living situations. By having a relationship with them you are letting them know that you and the classroom are a source of consistency. These are some of the approaches that I believe we can take as educators to assist students who are living in poverty.

Part III: Chapter 3 in our textbook explores racism, discrimination, and ideas of student expectations. Choose one concept from the chapter to post on Padlet [Click here to access the Padlet \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Provide a brief summary of what was



presented through a using the tools in Padlet. Then, provide some insight into how that concept exists in your school. What are some things that you can do in the classroom as a teacher to help reduce some of the harmful effects of systemic bias and racism?

### **References:**

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# Activity - Module 6 Discussion

No unread replies. No replies.

## Discussion Board 6

After watching the two videos for this week, choose one in which to respond via a recording using the Canvas media.

### 1. What was the main argument put forth in the video?

John Oliver argues that encouraging songs and Pep Rallies about standardized test, make the test seem fun in the eyes of the students about to take them, but the reality is that these tests are very rigorous and not fun to pass. According to a newspaper story presented in the video, more than 25 percent of students in grades 3-8 in the lower Hudson Valley are opting out. This kept happening across other schools in the United States.

### 2. What are some of the reasons that contribute to the issue?

Students take between about 10 standardized tests depending on the subject that they are being tested on every year. By the end of their academic journey, they have taken on average about 113 tests. This amount of test taking can take a toll on these students. The video mentioned that teachers have reported students throwing up, and crying, especially younger children. The amount of pressure that these tests put on these students is a lot to take. The pressure of taking standardized test can be traced back to the 90's when a survey was conducted, and countries were ranked against each other to see how students were performing and the United States was towards the bottom of the survey.

### 3. What solutions, if any, were presented?

In response to this President Bush created no child left behind policy. "The program was designed to be data driven and involved children getting tested every single year in order to identify and fix failing schools" (John Oliver, 2015). It increased the number of federally mandated test a year from 6 to 17.

Then Barack Obama did not agree with the policy because he believed that there were other ways to measure children's learning skills, so he created the Common Core Standards.

Even though these programs had good intentions, the problem was the implementation. "For example, now many states now tie teacher to performance using one particular approach, which is called value added analysis rating teachers based on students' test scores" (John Oliver, 2015). If the students average scores around the 60% percentile the teacher gets rated effective and if the score falls below the 60% percentile the teacher gets a less effective rating. Standardized tests are not fair for the students that are taking them and for the teachers whose teaching practices are being based on students' scores. For example, A man from Florida who had two master's degree and was teaching college

courses could not pass the test. What does this tell us about these tests? That it is not fair and that it was invented by companies such as Pearson to get more profit. In conclusion, the system does not work. There have been studies that show that it does not work. The only thing it does is “enriched multiple companies and that pays and fires teachers with a cattle birthing formula and confuses children with stories of talking pineapples and has insane rules regarding transparency” (John Oliver, 2015).

**4. What is your personal take on the issue? Again, we want to start thinking about issues in schools and how we as educators can address those issues. We may not be able to eliminate standardized testing ourselves, but what we as individual educators, do to support our students in light of these issues?**

My personal issue on the matter is that standardized tests are not beneficial for both teachers and students. It creates a huge amount of stress for all students in the early grades and high school and it creates stress on teachers as well. It creates stress on teachers because in some states their salary and their effectiveness as teachers depends on whether students perform well on these tests. These tests were created so that companies such as Pearson can get profit. This is all part of corporate America. Some of the questions on these tests are outrageous. According to John Oliver, “In New York, almost 30 different test questions were declared invalid because they are confusing or have outright errors” (John Oliver, 2015). The other issue that I have with these tests is that even if a question is wrong, you cannot report it because they make teacher and students sign a statement that says that they will not use or discuss the contents of the test. They say that the reason for this is to prevent cheating.

I want to support my students in any way I can. My plan is to provide my students with test taking strategies so that they might be more successful at taking these required tests. I also make sure that my students engage in meaningful activities. When children are engaged in meaningful activities they enjoy coming to class and learning. They see school as something fun and a space in which they can unleash and explore their creativity. I will also include student-centered discussions. I believe that children should have a say in what they are learning, and they should be able to pick topics of discussions. This will help them develop their thinking skills. It will also help those children who do not like speaking. It will push them to open up and to get used to the idea of speaking in public. I cannot eliminate tests, but I can do these things to take some of the stress that is related to taking standardized tests.

**3. How does the NYS ELL policy guide in this weeks reading connect to the videos.**

As I was looking through the NYS ELL policy guide, I could not help but notice the standardized test that ELL must take. I believe that this is the connection to these week’s videos. According to Nieto and Bode, “Standardized test have frequently been used as a basis for segregating and sorting students, principally those whose cultures and languages differ from the mainstream” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.96). The majority of test that ELL must take are not fair. They are not design for them to succeed. They are designed to segregate them and create

inequality. Therefore, we see an achievement gap in so many of our schools today. For example, in my other class I learned about BICS and CALP checklists, some aspect of it I liked, but I felt that the reading and writing aspects of the checklist were not appropriate. It takes between 5-7 years for bilingual students to master the academic skills of reading and writing. I feel like that part of the checklist should be administered later to give the students the time to acquire these skills. Again, it brings me to the point that John Oliver made in the video, Data and research has shown that standardized tests are not the answer and if we know they are not the answer, what are we going to do to fix it?

Your recording should not be longer than 7 minutes. I do not accept uploaded mp 4 files. I only accept links or Canvas recordings.

#### References:

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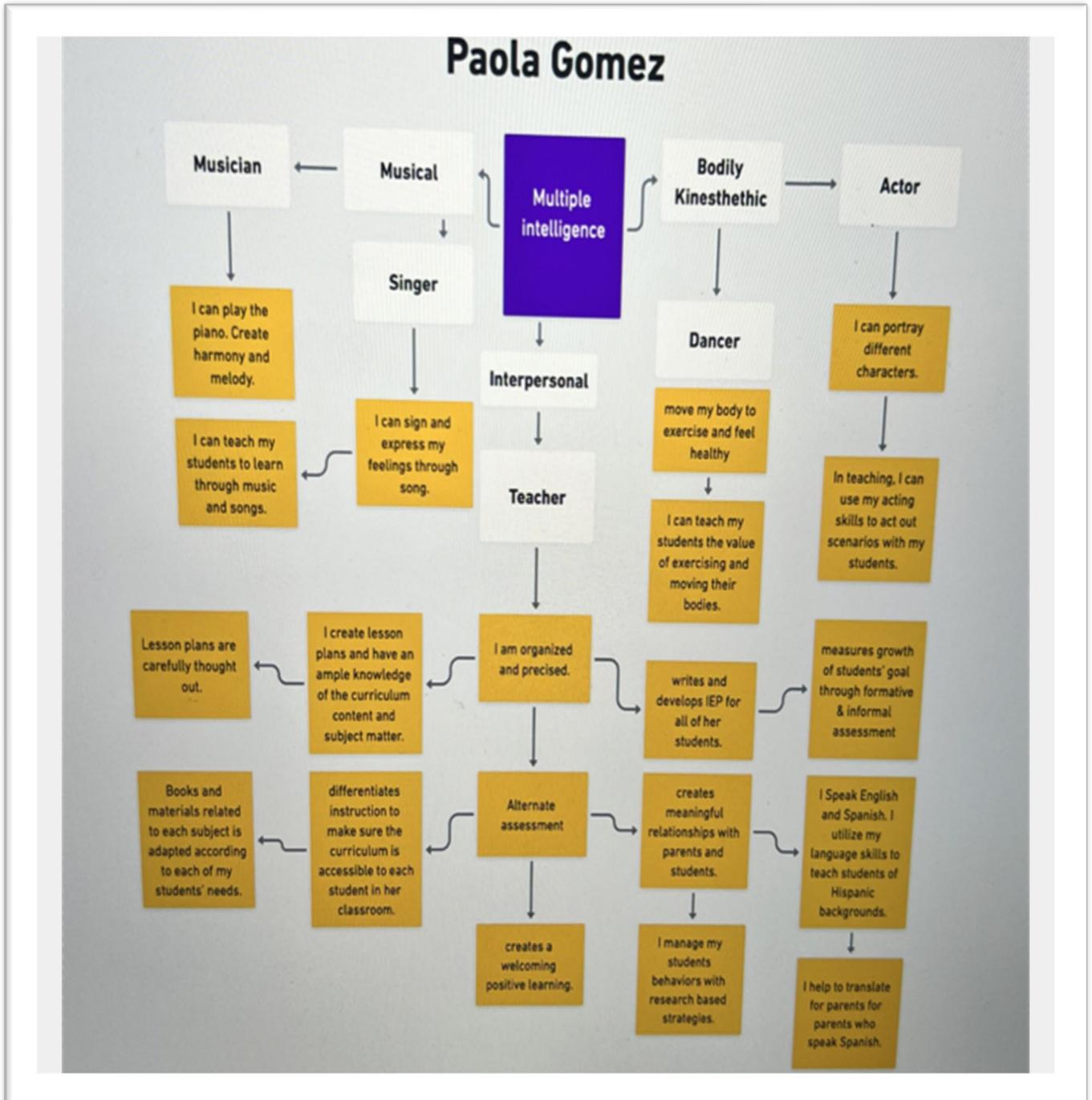
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## Module 7

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# Multiple intelligences



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**Module 8**

**Class 671**

This week we'll explore ELLs who have special needs. This can be a complex topic for many reasons. Sometimes ELLs don't have special needs, but are placed into special needs classes. Students with English language deficiencies are sometimes viewed as having other intellectual needs, which isn't always the case. In this particular discussion we'll talk about ELLs who do have special needs, and what we can do to assist them.

I want to make this particular discussion board more personalized. I want you to share the following points with the class (feel free to share more!):

-What is your experience with ELLs who have special needs?

I am a teacher in an 8:1+1 self-contained classroom in District 75 in the Bronx. I teach children on the Autism Spectrum. I have four students in my classroom who are classified as English Language Learners. They were born here, but parents speak Spanish at home. I have students that are non-verbal that need picture supports symbols in order to express their wants and needs. I have some that are verbal but need partial picture support symbols to get their needs met. We have an ENL teacher that pushes in and brings supplemental materials to support the students in the different content areas such as Math and ELA.

I can't imagine how hard it is to have a disability that impedes your ability to communicate with others and then being bilingual and not be able to communicate in either language.

-What challenges have you faced, or do you think you'll face, with this particular population?

The challenges that I faced with this population was getting them to produce language. Autism affects language and the ability to socialize and interact with others. When I first started working with this population, read alouds were challenging. Students stayed silent and did not respond to the questions that I was asking them. I did not know what to do to get the students to produce some type of speech or other forms of language. I was feeling overwhelmed and completely lost. I felt like I was failing the students.

-What can we do in our classrooms to support these students? Do you have any particular methods of approach? Each student is different, but choose a strategy or method that has helped in the past, or you think would be helpful in the future.

This support worked for my students, and it might be able to help other students as well. I created pictures with different “wh” question symbols. I created a book with five questions related to the story that we were reading. I created sentence strips with the questions and then under the questions, three different responses to pick from. I also laminated and velcroed everything to the book, so that students can take off and put back the questions and the answers. Using the book that I created, students discuss the story. Each student gets a turn at asking and answering a question. The way I do this is I pick on a student, and the student takes the who symbol, which means is a question related to the character in the story. The student then passes the who symbol to the student that they want to ask the question to. I have the student read the question aloud to their classmate and then the other student picks from an array of three, the answer to the question.

This strategy or modification has done a lot for my students. They can communicate with each other using language through picture symbols and through spoken word. In this activity, students are also able to socialize and create relationships with their peers and they are also showing their comprehension of the read aloud by answering “wh” questions.

-Explore and discuss the usability for special needs Multilingual Learners picking one of these global perspective and cross-cultural education tools to raise the stakes of learning, creating authentic learning opportunities that build empathy and broaden students' perspectives. [Free Cross-cultural websites and Apps \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

I really liked the description of the website Better World Ed. The website offers multilingual learners the opportunity to learn about empathy, global awareness, curiosity and belonging. It also offers real life lessons in content subjects such as Math and ELA. It confronts biases and challenges together. Lastly, it also incorporates SEL (Social Emotional Skills) which are very important not only for multilingual learners, but for students with disabilities.

-Add in anything else you'd like related to this topic. Let's have fun with it and share ideas and experiences!

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Module 9

Class 671

**As we come to the end of the course here in a few weeks, it is important to reflect on our progress through the course. Reflection can help us analyze our strengths and areas of improvement. Let's do a little self-reflection regarding our progress here in this discussion board.**

**How would you rate your progress this semester? Did you stay on schedule or on track with how you wanted to get things done? If yes or no, explain. What areas would you improve upon for next semester?**

I think I did well, considering that I had my job as a teacher and an early intervention part time job and two classes this semester. I managed to do my assignments ahead of time that way I would not fall behind. I tried my best to give meaningful responses to my fellow classmates' posts. I took professor's feedback and applied it to each of my assignments.

I honestly do not know if there is anything else I could improve upon next semester. I feel like applied myself and I tried to the best of my abilities to submit every assignment either ahead of time or on time. I think I would use the same dedication and commitment that I had this semester in the next semester.

I did enjoy all the reading that we did in this class. It opened my eyes to so many things about bilingual education. I am glad that I decided to come back to college and get a bilingual extension. My school and my students need a bilingual education program that challenges them not only in English but also in their native language. I want my students to preserve their native roots and to be proud of where they come from and to see those roots represented in their school community. I hope that with this extra knowledge and preparation, I am able to make a difference in my students' lives.

**As educators we know the value of reflection. We know that we can always improve upon ourselves. We also try to teach our students this. So add in any other details that you'd like to share. Just be open and share your experiences. Other students may see something you wrote and be inspired to make a similar change!**

**Paola Gomez**

**Module 10**

**Class 671**

**The last few weeks of the course should be dedicated to working on final projects and finalizing any outstanding work. I believe that quality time produces quality work. So, for this discussion board, let's have a brief talk about other resources or issues within our field.**

**What I'd like you to do is: Choose a web resource or choose an issue that you are passionate about. Share that resource or issue with us. Outline it, present perspectives, or why you enjoy it. We have gone through a great deal of information over the past 10 weeks, but now I'd like you all to share some of your interests and passions from the field.**

**Educate us on what you enjoy!**

An issue that I became passionate about was the achievement gap in education system. I wanted to share my opinion about it in this discussion board and see what my classmates of it. My first response to the achievement gap in the education system was sadness. The United States is one of the most powerful countries in the world. We have plenty of resources and yet, we are unable to offer every school and student with the same resources. It Saddens me to see how children are now falling behind in academic subjects such as Math, English Language Arts, and Science. This issue can be prevented, if policy makers made educational policies that benefit every child regardless of race, gender, or religious belief. According to Pedro R. Portes, "current policy disregards establishing greater social justice. The latter is regarded as incompatible with higher standards and accountability. Over one in five of America's children grow up in a culture of poverty under changing family forms; many families are headed by women in impoverished minority populations at two and three times that rate. Most of these children are inadvertently being prepared for limited socio-economic opportunities and failure upon entering school" (Portes, 2008, p.5).

Consequently, children living under these circumstances think very little of themselves and are not very motivated to excel in school. This issue can have an impact on their academic abilities. According to Portes, "massive inequality is reflected in NAEP scores (reading and comprehension) gaps that show that "majority-group 13-year-old students" perform at about the same level as 17-year-old black students (Condition of Education, 2006). A literacy gap ranging from 3-to-4 grade levels is thus constructed, resulting in the majority of students subject to group-based inequality seriously being handicapped in competing in today's economy, in higher education and accessing equity-inspired opportunity structures" (Portes, 2008, p.6).

I know there is not much I can do to change the achievement gap in other schools, but there are things I can do at my school to bring awareness of this issue. I can lead professional developments on achievement gap and have open discussions with my colleagues about projects

or ideas that can help bring a change to our school. We can look for resources and materials as a school community, that will help us enhance our students' learning experience. All I want to do is to be able to give each student the same opportunities. Education should be equal for all students. Every student should have access to the same books, technology, and materials. The achievement gap might not go away but talking about it and bringing awareness of it to my colleagues, is a start on my part that might help create change.

**References:**

Portes, P. (2008, April 8). *A cultural Approach to Establishing Equity and Closing the Educational Achievement Gap*. Retrieved July 6, 2022, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ835625.pdf>

**Paola Gomez**  
**Module 11**  
**Class 671**

**State 3 major take-aways.**

Take away 1- I did enjoy all the reading that we did in this class. It opened my eyes to so many things about bilingual education. I am glad that I decided to come back to college and get a bilingual extension. My school and my students need a bilingual education program that challenges them not only in English but also in their native language. I want my students to preserve their native roots and to be proud of where they come from and to see those roots represented in their school community. I hope that with this extra knowledge and preparation, I am able to make a difference in my students' lives.

Take away 2- I used to confuse the words equity and equality, being in this course taught me the difference between these two words. Equality means each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the exact resources and opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome.

Take away 3- it was important for me to make a schedule and try to stay ahead when it came to assignments. It took away some of the stress that I had because I was working two jobs and taking another class besides this one. It made me see that I can do many things as long as I try to stay ahead and complete assignments on time.

**State one reading or recording you found eye opening.**

I watched both videos that were assigned in this module this week, but the one that sparked my interest was the video titled "Diverse Education for a Student in the Education System." In the video, Elijah Jones explains that the Education system in his home state of Wilmington Delaware is segregated and is hurting both private and public schools. He made a comparison between the high school that he now attends and the one he used to attend. He noticed that the private high school that he attends now has top of the line facilities and access to an abundant number of resources. On the other hand, the high school that he used to attend has less resources and expectations for students' learning are low. He also states that even though he is very fortunate to attend this private school, there is little diversity. According to

Jones, “in my biology class, I’m the only African American. In my math class, I’m one of the two African American males. And so far in high school, I had no teachers of color” (Jones, 2017). In this quote, Elijah Jones is expressing the fact that the school, teachers, and classmates failed to recognize his background. The last thing that Elijah leaves us with is that for things to change, as a society, we need to emerge ourselves in diverse experiences and learn about race relations and how to overcome division. Schools need to diversify their curriculum, so that they do not ignore the impact of those of not of European descent (Jones, 2017).

**State one thing you would do different as the faculty in this course.**

I would have posted the last assignment earlier in the course. I thought that the class ended on August 16<sup>th</sup>, since that was the last date for all assignments to be submitted. If I did not receive notifications from Canvas, I would have missed the opportunity to submit this assignment and probably lose points for participation.

## Professional Reflective Journal Template

Course title: 671

Student Name: Paola Gomez

Date: 7/5/2022

NOTE: Your journal should be about 4 pages and you should incorporate at least 2 external sources.

**Description of Highlight(s)** – chapter, article or event that is relevant to the \_\_\_\_\_ course. (10 pts.)

The concept that I would like to discuss is from chapter 1 of our book, *Affirming Diversity: The Social Political Context of Multicultural Education*. The concept is the achievement gap. Achievement gap is the concept that describes the fact that those students who come from low-income families and/or different ethnic and racial backgrounds achieve less than others. There is an overwhelming amount of research that confirms that an achievement gap does exist in our public education system. According to Nieto and Bode, “41 percent of whites are reading at grade level, only 15 percent of Hispanics and 13 percent of African Americans are at grade level. The gap worsens through the years: Black and Hispanics twelfth graders perform at the same level in reading and math as white eighth graders” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.9). The reason why this issue is happening is because the achievement of this group of students is related directly to the conditions and contexts in which these students learn. For example, some schools with ample funding are able to allow for a more enriching learning environment by having access to more resources and materials. On the contrary, schools that service students living in low-income households tend to have fewer resources and often employ teachers without any experience, thus providing fewer opportunities for meaningful and vigorous student learning. Educators need to focus their attention on school related factors, instead of focusing on socio-cultural problems and deficits.

There is very little that teachers can do to change the life circumstances of students, however educators can shift their focus and do a great deal to change the context of schools. For instance, some schools are successful with students of different backgrounds, students from low-income families and students who live in challenging circumstances. According to Nieto and Bode, “Karin Chenoweth’s book *How It’s Being Done: Urgent Lessons from Unexpected Schools* (2009) provides examples from eight schools throughout the nation that were selected for the Education Trust’s dispelling the Myth Award, which is given to high-achieving, high poverty, and high minority schools. Her research shines a light on successful school practices, such as teachers’ and administrators’ collaborative work to set standards and goals, as well as their notable, palpable belief in their students’ capacity to achieve” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.10). These teachers were organized and had only one goal in their mind, and that was to help students learn. These teachers were provided with opportunities and time to learn through research-based discussions and to collaborate to create successful learning practices in their

classrooms. This collaboration also fosters a culture of high achievement not only for the students, but for teachers alike. In conclusion, these are the kind of actions that teachers and administration need to take to spark change and close the achievement gap.

**Initial Emotional Response** (surprised, embarrassed, sad, inspired, excited, puzzled, etc.) (10 pts.)

My first response to the achievement gap in the education system was sadness. The United States is one of the most powerful countries in the world. We have plenty of resources and yet, we are unable to offer every school and student with the same resources. It saddens me to see how children are now falling behind in academic subjects such as Math, English Language Arts, and Science. This issue can be prevented, if policy makers made educational policies that benefit every child regardless of race, gender, or religious belief. According to Pedro R. Portes, "current policy disregards establishing greater social justice. The latter is regarded as incompatible with higher standards and accountability. Over one in five of America's children grow up in a culture of poverty under changing family forms; many families are headed by women in impoverished minority populations at two and three times that rate. Most of these children are inadvertently being prepared for limited socio-economic opportunities and failure upon entering school" (Portes, 2008, p.5). Consequently, children living under these circumstances think very little of themselves and are not very motivated to excel in school. This issue can have an impact on their academic abilities. According to Portes, "massive inequality is reflected in NAEP scores (reading and comprehension) gaps that show that "majority-group 13-year-old students" perform at about the same level as 17-year-old black students (Condition of Education, 2006). A literacy gap ranging from 3-to-4 grade levels is thus constructed, resulting in the majority of students subject to group-based inequality seriously being handicapped in competing in today's economy, in higher education and accessing equity-inspired opportunity structures" (Portes, 2008, p.6).

### **Learning Process**

#### **1) Prior Assumptions or Opinions about the topic of the described highlight. (10 pts.)**

My prior assumption about the achievement gap is that children of European background/white also experienced an achievement gap as well. In high school, I had classmates in most of my classes that were white. We had the same teachers; same educational opportunities and we had the same access to resources and materials at school. We also attended a high school in low-income area of the Bronx. I used to think that if they had an advantage over me, they would be attending a private school in some wealthy area of the Bronx. I also used to keep up with them or used to do better than they did when it came to academics. I used to be in the honor roll many times when I was in high school. For these reasons, I thought that students of European background/white were also experiencing an achievement gap. Since I decided to return to college and enroll in courses to get a bilingual

extension, my eyes have been opened about my assumption. The More I continue to read and inform myself about it, the only races that are mentioned are Hispanics, brown and black people. The statistics and studies only mention these races. According to Reardon and Galindo, “recent cross-sectional national studies clearly indicate that the educational outcomes of Hispanic students in U.S schools lag, on average, well behind those of non-Hispanic Black students” (Reardon & Galindo, 2009, p.1). Furthermore, “compared to White and Black children, Hispanic children have lower levels of school readiness at the start of kindergarten” (Reardon & Galindo, 2009, p.1).

## **2) Source of Assumption or Opinion (10 pts.)**

My assumptions come from observation and life experience. When I went to school, me and my classmates that were white, attended school in a not very wealthy area of the Bronx. Naturally, I thought that we were all the same. I thought we had the same opportunities in terms of education and socio-economic status. I was wrong because I was at a disadvantage considering I was Hispanic and an English language learner. According to Lucia Buttarro, “Although national policy mandates emphasize English language learning and achievement, many English language learners do not perform at grade level standards (NCLB, 2001). The fact that the achievement gap still exists between minority and non-minority students is the most significant educational problem in the United States (Fusarelli, 2004; Olszewski-Kubilius, Lee, Ngoi, & Ngoi, 2004). This problem may be exacerbated, rather than ameliorated, by current classroom practices” (Buttarro, 2009).

## **3) Assumption/Opinion Check – Validation/Invalidation (20 pts.)**

My Assumption changed at the beginning of June, when I started this course and I read the first chapter of our assigned book. I thought that the achievement gap was happening at the time that I was attending School in early 2004-2008, when in fact it has been occurring for years in the United States Educational system particularly in communities that are considered minority or well below poverty level. According to Nieto and Bode, “the NAEP data show that from 1971 to 2012, the White-Black and White-Hispanic score gaps in reading and mathematics narrowed as a result of Black and Hispanic students making larger gains in achievement during that period than White students. However, in reading, White students had average scores at least 21 points higher than those of Black students and 25 points higher, on average, in math, on a 0 to 500 scale” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p. 9).

## **4) Realization/Aha Moment or Epiphany (20 pts.)**

As I was reading and doing research for this course, I came to the realization that there are many factors that influence students’ achievement gap. Student achievement has to do with the conditions or context in which students learn. According to Nieto and Bode, “school related factors include low-expectations, particularly in schools that serve students who are both

economically disadvantaged and from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds, as well as other practices and policies that jeopardize students learning” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p. 10). Holding students accountable and having high expectations when it comes to academics, can go a long way in developing students’ motivation to succeed. I am a product of high expectations. I could have let the circumstances around my everyday life, deterred me from going to college and getting a master’s degree, however, I did not. Thus, I worked hard and held myself to high expectations because I was determined to be the first person in my family to achieve a higher education. As teachers, we have the power to inspire and push our students to be the best version of themselves. If we encourage them to push themselves and to rise above any difficulty, they can accomplish anything they set their mind to.

**Implications for future teaching practice (20 pts.)**

What specific changes do you intend to make in your teaching or classroom environment?

As I briefly mentioned above, there is not very much I can do as an educator to change the circumstances in which my students live. However, there is a lot I can do in the classroom and in the learning community to make sure my students feel safe and supported in their academic journey. Parental involvement is something that can be fundamental in shaping a student’s view on education. According to Nieto and Bode, “significant people in students’ lives who communicate the value of academic success and effort made a difference in the successful programs cited in this study. For elementary students, this translates into committed parental involvement” (Nieto & Bode, 2018, p.10).

I want to incorporate and improve parental involvement in my classroom. My idea is to create a newsletter every month. This newsletter will have a description on what the class has been working on for that month. I will add a column, so that parents can give suggestions on topics they would like their child to learn as well. I think this idea will be a great way to get the parents involved in their children’s education. It will give them the opportunity to be a part of the decision making when it comes to what their children should be learning.

Another change that I would like to make is in my classroom environment is to create a multilingual ecology because children need to see their cultures represented in school. Children need to feel safe, and they need to feel a sense of belonging. Seeing their culture in the classroom is very important, especially for children who immigrated to this country. They left their countries, a place that was familiar to them, then they came to the United States. A place that is new and unfamiliar to them. Integrating their cultures in schools can make the transition easier. They will see signs or words that are in their home language, thus making them feel welcome and safe because they have a piece of their home with them in school.

### References:

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- Nieto, S., & Bode, P. (2018). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Pearson.
- Portes, P. (2008, April 8). *A cultural Approach to Establishing Equity and Closing the Educational Achievement Gap*. Retrieved July 6, 2022, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ835625.pdf>
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# **Culturally Responsive Teaching Project Paper**

**Name: Paola Gomez**

**Course Name: 671**

**Professor's Name: Dr. Jasmin Cowin**

**Date: 7/16/2022**

## **Introduction**

More students attend schools with children of different races and cultural diversity than ever before. Schools in New York City and the United States have struggled to provide students and families of diverse cultures with quality education that represents and celebrates their cultures. Schools need to create and adopt ways of understanding the students' cultures as well as learning styles to provide these children the opportunity to learn and grow during their educational journey. A culturally responsive teaching approach takes into consideration each students' cultural needs. What's more, it will create a positive, and inviting learning environment for those students who are new to the United States. Culturally responsive teaching is designed to "use students' customs, characteristics, experience, and perspectives as tools for better classroom instruction" (edweek.org).

Showing an interest in the student's cultures, fosters relationships between teachers and parents. In addition, it shows the families that their culture is reflected in the school community. In addition, implementing and teaching a culturally responsive curriculum not only benefits the students and their families, but it also benefits the teacher because they get to learn about the diverse student body that is present in their classroom. Research has shown the benefits of culturally responsive teaching. According to newamerica.org, "Previous studies have found that drawing from students' cultural knowledge and norms contributes favorably to reading comprehension and mathematical thinking. According to neuroscience research, this is partly because everyone learns new information best when it is linked to what they already know"

(newamerica.org). In other words, using texts, materials, and examples that draw from students' cultural background and knowledge makes learning easier because it leverages students' "existing neural pathways" (newamerica.org). Incorporating and fostering a culturally responsive teaching style and curriculum is the best way to teach learners of diverse cultural backgrounds in the school community.

### **History and Background of Culturally Responsive Teaching**

It is important for schools to create a culturally responsive teaching environment because children need to see their cultures being represented in school. Children need to feel safe, and they need to feel a sense of belonging. This fact is very important especially for children who emigrated to this country. They left their countries, a place that was familiar to them, then they came to the United States. A place that is new and unfamiliar to them. Integrating their cultures in schools can make the transition easier. They will see signs or words that are in their home language, thus making them feel welcome and safe because they feel validated through plurilingual language.

To have these principles in place, first, we need to understand the history and origin of culturally responsive teaching. Culturally responsive teaching "stems from the framework of culturally relevant pedagogy, which was introduced by scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings in the 1990s" (edweek.org). Ladson-Billings was tired of hearing the same misconceptions about Black children. People used to say that Black children were deficient and deviant and that there was something wrong with them. Based on these comments, she dedicated her time to finding out what was right with Black children, their families, and their communities. She studied the practice of effective teachers of Black students.

For about two years, “Ladson-Billings observed teachers who were identified by both principals and Black parents as being excellent. The teachers had different ways of teaching, but they all had high expectations for their students and fostered academic success. They all valued and integrated themselves in the community from which their students came” (edweek.org). Ladson-Billings took all the commonalities, beliefs, and practices from these teachers and integrated into the culturally relevant pedagogy, “which is defined as a model that not only addresses student achievement but also helps students accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (edweek.org).

The next big push for culturally responsive teaching occurred in 2018. In January 2018, the New York State Board of Regents directed the Office of P-12 Education and Higher Education to assemble a panel of experts to develop a Culturally Responsive Sustainable Education Framework from the ground up. “The Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) framework was intended to help education stakeholders create student-centered learning environments that affirm cultural identities; foster positive academic outcomes; develop students’ abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; empower students as agents of social change; and contribute to individual student engagement, learning, growth, and achievement through the cultivation of critical thinking” (NYSED, 2018).

The Culturally Responsive Framework has four underlying principles. 1) a welcoming and affirming environment, 2) high expectations and rigorous instruction, 3) inclusive curriculum and

assessment, and 4) ongoing professional learning. Each principle is illustrated by a set of characteristics rooted in the elements of quality education that describe how the CR-S is viewed in practice across a range of areas in the classroom. The framework is an opportunity for teachers, administrators, and parents to continue to work together and plan for the unique needs of their communities. In addition, the culturally responsive teaching framework reflects the State's commitment to improving learning results for all students by creating well-developed, culturally responsive-sustaining, equitable systems of support for achieving dramatic gains in student outcomes (NYSED, 2018).

### **History and Background of School/Location**

The action plan is for the school where I teach. I teach at P186X in the Bronx, a District 75 school. P186X's mission statement is for "students to become productive members of society through their educational experiences" ([www.p186x.org/priorities.html](http://www.p186x.org/priorities.html)). Their vision statement is to "improve students' problem-solving skills and view themselves readers as a result of participation in culturally responsive and authentic reading tasks" ([www.p186x.org/priorities.html](http://www.p186x.org/priorities.html)) Our organization is big, so we are split up at different sites across the Bronx. At my site, our multilingual population is mainly students from the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. We also have students of Indian descent. Our staff is also very diverse. We have staff that come from different countries and speak a variety of languages. Our school is categorized as a title I school, a federal education program that supports low-income students throughout the nation. Our site has a total of 12 classes.

We primarily have students on the autism spectrum at our site, but we also have students with other classifications. We have students who are standardized and alternately assessed at our site. There are seven 8:1+1 classes, two 6:1+1 classes and three 12:1+1 classes at our site. I teach one of the 8:1+1 classes and all my students are alternately assessed. We used to have one ENL teacher, but we recently welcomed another ENL provider. They not only service the students at our site, but they also travel to other sites on select dates to service other students.

According to our school Comprehension Educational Plan (CEP) and EDAT “74% of our ELLs identify as Hispanic and 37% of Hispanic ELL families identify as Blacks and 53% as Whites. 70% of non-Hispanic ELLs are Blacks, 18% of them are Asian and 9% are Whites. My school has 220 Current ELLs which is 30.8% of the school population. Four (0.5%) of or ELLs are Former or Ever ELLs” (CEP, 2021-2022). These percentages are for the entire organization, we unfortunately do not have data for my site. There are four children in my class that receive ENL services. The services are part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Students need to have ENL as a service in their IEP to receive it. Students get their ENL services is during Math and English Language Arts periods. The ENL teacher pushes into my classroom during either of these two periods. We collaborate and talk about what the students are learning during each period, and she brings materials that are supplemental or that support the students’ needs. She also pulls out students for progress monitoring and testing.

We now have an English Language Arts curriculum and culturally responsive literacy (CRL) texts are selected in alignment with each month’s unit topic. According to my school, “by

integrating these texts into the instructional program, we hope to promote a welcoming classroom environment that honors students' diversity, values, and backgrounds. Additional texts are also included to provide opportunities for students to engage in literacy activities that reflect their own backgrounds, as well as those of their peers and their communities" ([www.p186x.org/cep.html](http://www.p186x.org/cep.html)).

## **The Action Plan**

### **Welcoming and Affirming Environment**

It is very important for students to grow and thrive in the classroom by creating a welcoming and affirming environment. What does this welcoming and affirming environment look like? It is a place where students and adults collectively learn about each other's cultures and communities. In this classroom, students see their cultures being represented and they learn about each other's cultures. Students should be respectful of each other's cultures and beliefs. An exercise that I would implement to put the action plan in motion is to use a strategy called name stories. This strategy works toward bringing the stories of individuals to the forefront in the multicultural experience. I would have students write and share stories about their names or nicknames. Students will answer questions such as what is the meaning of their name, why was it given to them, and how they relate to them? This type of activity is great because it gives everyone in the classroom an opportunity to learn more about the history and cultural background of their classmates' names or nicknames. This type of activity can also be utilized as an ice breaker. It can be a way for students to introduce themselves the first week of class.

Students should be encouraged to share and talk about issues that are affecting them. There should be a bond and a trust between teachers and students, so that students feel comfortable

sharing any information with the teacher. To make this a reality at my school, this is what I would implement. I would create a student fishbowl. The students will write any ideas, experiences, and critiques on this piece of paper. This can happen early in the morning when the students first come into the classroom. Then, when the students come in from lunch, the teacher can form a circle and go around giving each student an opportunity to draw from the fishbowl. The students can then start a discussion in class when they see the idea, experience, or topic on the paper. “Incorporating a student fishbowl gives pre-service and in-service educators an opportunity to hear the experiences, ideas, and critiques of current students while giving the students an opportunity to be active in the dialogue on multicultural education and education transformation” (Cowin, 2022).

Activating student knowledge is another important aspect of creating a welcoming and affirming learning environment. Teachers should activate students’ prior knowledge. Students are not blank slates; they enter the classroom with diverse experiences. Teachers should encourage students to draw on their prior knowledge to contribute to group discussions, which provides an anchor to learning. Taking a different approach to the literature that’s taught in classrooms is one example of this. The way I would have teachers at P186X implement this strategy will be to use an anchor chart. The students will be given an important topic to talk about such as racism. The chart will have three different columns: what do I know, what I do not know, and what I would like to know? This chart is a great way to access students’ prior knowledge not only on this topic, but many others.

### **High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction**

Having high expectations and rigorous instruction allows students to work toward reachable goals and to work and solve problems independently. It also serves to empower and give

them motivation to overcome challenges in the classroom, but also in their lives outside of the classroom. Engaging students in student-led civic engagement, encourages them to have critical examination of power structures. In my school I would like to have members of the community or even parents come in and speak to the students about different career options and opportunities. Speakers can talk about their personal path to where they are now. After the speaker shares their professional journey with the students, students will get the chance to ask the speaker questions about their career. Based on this visit, the teacher can take this lesson even further. The teachers at my school can also implement a writing lesson in which students write about what career they would like to study when they are older.

Teachers can also take the opportunity to create project-based learning that rely on social justice issues. Students can do research and do a presentation for the class on a topic that they believe needs a radical change and that they are passionate towards. In my school, I would like to have students write thank you letters. The students will be asked to research someone still living who influenced an impactful historic, legal, economic, or social change. It can also be someone they admire for their bravery and commitment. The teacher will then teach the students how to write a formal, yet heartfelt letter. After completing the letter, the students can then research the address of the famous person and mail the letter to them.

Finally, having a classroom where the teacher holds the students to high expectations and delivers rigorous instruction, can encourage students to take the opportunity to become leaders. Students become leaders by taking ownership of their learning. They can have a say on what they want to learn. I would like to implement student choice at my school. The teacher will pick a

variety of books, then he/she will provide a description of the book to the students. The students will then take a vote on the book they want to read. Implementing student choice will give teachers the ability to provide their students with the opportunity to pick what they want to learn. The student choice will foster an environment of collaboration between students and teachers. The student choice strategy will also help students who are shy come out of their shell. They will begin to feel empowered and believe that they can be leaders as well.

### **Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment**

Inclusive curriculum and assessment give educators the opportunity to elevate historically marginalized voices. It encourages “learners to learn about power and privilege in the context of various communities and empowers learners to be agents of positive social change” (NYSED, 2018). An inclusive curriculum incorporates current events into instruction. I would like to implement current events in my school in the following way. Teachers can bring newspapers or can ask the students to search on the internet for a newspaper article. The students will read through the current events and pick a topic. For example, since we are in the year 2022, the students can write about the following topics: Russian Invasion of Ukraine, bombing of Odessa, and Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After the students pick the topic, they will answer the following questions: what happened, when did it happen, and what is their opinion on the topic? Students will then write their current events and then they will have the opportunity to read it in front of the class. The teacher can then open the floor for other students in the classroom to comment on the issue. Teachers at my school can take this lesson and extend it. The next class they can have the students have a debate on a current event. One student can agree, and then the other student can disagree about the current event. I believe that incorporating current events at P186X will make sure

students stay up to date on current issues that are happening in our society. In addition, using current events, teachers can encourage students to have debates about these issues in the classroom.

An Inclusive curriculum “may be defined as one which provides all students, regardless of background and immutable characteristics, with an equal opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes of their program”( [www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/3/12/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/3/12/)). An inclusive curriculum also takes students’ suggestions and opinions about their own learning and see students as co-designers of the curriculum. In order to make this happen at P186X, I would like teachers to do an inclusion/exclusion exercise with their students in the classroom. This can be done in a circle time manner. Teachers will ask students to share their own experiences as students. They will ask the students to talk about a time in which they felt included or excluded from the learning process. This is a great way for students to give feedback to teachers at P186X. This will be a great opportunity for teachers to edit the way in which they teach and to include more differentiation to meet all their diverse students’ needs.

Assessments are a very important aspect of school. Assessments is how teachers measure students’ growth over time. Assessments should incorporate strategies that adapt to diverse learning styles. Instruction needs to be differentiated to meet each student’s needs. Assessments should also be created in different languages to assess what the students are capable of. When teachers give students access to an inclusive curriculum and assessment, they can “learn about perspectives beyond their own scope and work towards dismantling systems of biases and inequities, and decentering dominant ideologies in education” (NYSED, 2018).

## **Ongoing Professional Development and Support**

Ongoing professional development is “rooted in the idea that teaching and learning is an adaptive process needing constant reexamination. It allows learners to develop and sharpen critically conscious lens toward instruction, curriculum, assessment, history, culture, and institutions” (NYSED, 2018). Educators need to continue to learn and evolve. It is important to attend professional developments that offer teachers the opportunity to acquire and apply new ways of teaching. We are in an era of technological advancements. For example, teachers could use the Lee and Low Books’ Classroom Library Questionnaire to integrate inclusive and culturally responsive practices into their curriculum. For books on the classroom library shelf, the teacher could ask the following questions: What books might serve as mirrors for my students of color/Multilingual Learners? What books are written by authors of color/MLs? What books are #ownvoices (written by an author that shares an identity with the character) What books have problematic representations that I should consider reading?

Teachers need to learn how to implement technology in their classrooms. The use of technology can enhance and improve teaching practice. Teachers can use the smart board to project a book. Teachers can assign homework and reading materials through the online academic platform. The learning resources and materials that technology can provide are endless and incorporating them into the classroom can benefit the teacher and the students. Not all size fits all. It is important for teachers to learn about the different ways in which students learn.

Teachers need to learn about different strategies and ideas that they can implement into their instruction to make sure that each students’ needs are met. Finally, it is imperative that teachers be supported by their school, particularly their administrators. Teachers need support in

aligning curriculum and instruction to the histories, languages, and experiences of traditionally marginalized voices. Teachers need trainings or professional developments in which they learn how to incorporate students' life experiences into their curriculum. Students go through so much inside and outside of school.

It is important to find opportunities in which students have the chance to express their feelings and their creativity. This opportunity can be tied to a book that they are reading in class. There can be specific questions addressing themes in the book that can happen in the real world or in the lives of these students. These are some of the ways in which teachers and administrators can prepare and inform themselves to provide learners with the most inclusive and supportive learning environment.

## **Conclusion**

These action plans are something that every school in New York City should have to create a school community in which students can succeed regardless of their culture, race, sex, religion, and socio-economic background. Teachers should encourage and celebrate students' uniqueness. Students should feel seen and heard by their teachers. They should see their culture represented in the classroom, but also in their school community. Teachers should challenge students to talk about difficult topics such as racism. Having discussions and talking to other peers in the classroom strengthens relationships between students. Furthermore, these are topics that are affecting our society and students should be given the platform to talk about it.

Students should have an opinion on what they are learning. If they are wanting to learn more, they can collaborate with teachers on these topics. These collaborations create a sense of trust and build meaningful relationships between teachers and students. Once you have all these things in place, students view school as a safe space, and they are happy to be there every day. Learning becomes something fun and not something they feel they are obligated to do.

I will end this plan proposal with a quote from Amy J Samuels, that sums up the importance of having a plan that is centered around the culturally responsive teaching framework. “Along with examination of self, engagement in purposeful discourse and reflection on promoting cultural responsiveness as a clear, distinct, concrete, and practical process are critical components to creating an environment that promotes equitable excellence and embraces a climate and culture of trust, understanding, and imagination of new possibilities. If we truly desire to teach to transform, we must be able to promote and sustain both agency and advocacy for educational equity” (Samuels, 2018).

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**Paola Gomez**

**Fieldwork Study Focusing on Students of Hispanic  
background at P186X in the Bronx**

**Class 671**

## **Introduction:**

For my fieldwork assignment, I chose to study students of Hispanic background. According to wherewelcome, 40% of students in New York City public schools identified as Hispanics during the 2017-2018 schools year. Hispanic students are the largest population of any other group of students not only in New York City, but across the United States. P186X in the Bronx serves 220 multilingual learner students out of 712 students. The percentage of multilingual learners attending P186X is 31% (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>). At P186X, Spanish is the home language of multilingual learners with the largest representation (78%). My research is focused on students in Special Education who are Hispanic and multilingual learners in grades K-8<sup>th</sup> at P186X in the South Bronx. The students are between the ages of 5-13 years old. These students speak both English and Spanish. Spanish is their first language and English is their second language. These students come from low-income families. P186X is categorized as a title I school which is a federal education program that supports low-income students throughout the nation. The educational backgrounds of parents of Hispanic students varies at P186X. There are parents who only have a middle school education. There are others who have a high school or college education. According to Cohen, “for working-age Hispanics, the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree attainment rate is below 25% in all 10 of the Bronx’s census-defined neighborhoods. For working-age Black residents, the BA attainment rate is below 25% in six of the Bronx’s 10 neighborhoods” (Cohen, 2021). For “many Hispanics, economic factors remain an obstacle to college enrollment. In a 2014 National Journal poll, 66% of Hispanics who got a job or entered the military directly after high school cited the need to help support their family as a reason for *not* enrolling in college, compared with 39% of whites” (Krogstad, 2020). Students at P186X come from different family situations. Some live with their mom and dad, dad and dad, mom and mom, single mom, single dad, grandparents, or even foster parents. In addition, some of these students are only children or have siblings.

## **Methodology:**

All the research was done online. Extensive hours were spent looking for information on Hispanic students at P186X. When starting the research, there were many obstacles that led the research in a different direction than what was intended. The research was supposed to gain insight about Hispanic students experiences with bilingual education in New York City, but as the research went on, there were no students accounts or articles that could be utilized that could back up this research. A survey was created and distributed, but there were no middle school students attending P186X during the summer. The survey was distributed to standardized assessment students in grades 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, but the results of the survey were never sent. There was also no information about bilingual curriculums that are offered to bilingual Hispanic students across the United States. Considering these challenges, the research was modified, and the focus of the research became Hispanic students At P186X. The research explored if Hispanic students with special needs at P186X are receiving quality bilingual education that leverages their home

language (Spanish) as well as the acquisition of the English Language. The research also focused on P186X classroom practices, school, and community culture. While doing this research, this were the kinds of questions that were considered: What bilingual programs are offered? What kind of teaching practices were in place in the classroom to encourage the use of students' native language? How does the school see students' bilingualism? Are the students' cultures being acknowledge and celebrated in the school community? Curriculum was also a big part of this research. Research was conducted on the curriculum and texts that are offered at P186X to Hispanic students with special needs and what activities are offered to them through their curriculum. Keeping all these factors in mind, I also evaluated the curriculum strengths and if it met the students' linguistic and cultural abilities.

### **Findings:**

#### **Bilingual Education Programs offered at P186X**

P186X in the Bronx serves 220 ELL students out of 712 students. The percentage of ELLs attending P186X is 31% (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>). The first program that is offered at P186X is ENL. The way the ENL program works is five ENL teachers provide standalone and integrated ENL instruction to develop and build English language skills. Students are grouped homogeneously. ENL teachers provide 360 instructional minutes per week for Entering/Beginning students (180 standalone ENL and 180 integrated ENL/ELA). For the Low Intermediate/Emerging students ENL teachers provide two instructional units of study (360 minutes) per week 90 minutes of standalone ENL and 180 minutes of integrated ENL/ELA and 90 minutes of standalone or integrated ENL (with ELA or any other content area). Intermediate/Transitioning students receive 180 minutes of ENL 90 minutes integrated ENL/ELA and 90 minutes of standalone or integrated ENL (with ENL or any other content area). Advanced/Expanding students receive 180 total minutes of ENL, with a minimum of 180 integrated ENL/ELA. Proficient/Commanding students receive 90 minutes of ENL [minimum of 90 minutes of standalone or integrated ENL (with ELA or any other content area)]. The language of instruction is English.

The next bilingual education programs that P186X offers are Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and Dual Language Program (DL). P186X has one TBE 12:1:1 Elementary Alternate Assessment Spanish class taught by a certified Bilingual Education teacher. The certified bilingual teacher provides 540 minutes of ENL instruction per week. The instruction is provided in Spanish on Mondays, Wednesdays, and alternate Fridays, and in English on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and alternate Fridays. All content areas are taught in both, English and Spanish Art/music/phys. ed are taught in English (using ENL methodologies) for 45 minutes each per week.

P186X has two 8:1:1 elementary Alternate Assessment Spanish Mixed Group classes, and two 12:1:1 Mix Group Classes co-taught by a certified Bilingual Special Education teacher and a Special Education Teacher. At least one student in this classroom has bilingual mandates in IEP. Students in the MGC classes receive four periods of Home Language Arts (HLA), and two different content areas taught in Spanish (e.g., math/science; math/social studies; science/social studies) by the classroom teacher. For these students, a certified ENL teacher provides the ENL component of the required CR Part 154 Units of Study (i.e.,minutes) (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>).

## **Instructional Practices, Books and Curriculums for Hispanic Students with IEP's**

P186X makes sure that Hispanics multilingual students receive instruction in their home language. “Recent research has found that careful and strategic use of a student’s primary language—whether through a translation by a teacher, peer tutor, bilingual aide, or assistance from students themselves—can in fact help English language learning, particularly in understanding grammar concepts, vocabulary, instructions, and in developing teacher-student and student-student relationships” (edweek.org, 2021). ENL and Bilingual teachers provide appropriate instructional support to make grade-level coursework comprehensible and accessible for Hispanic multilingual learner students participating in Self-Contained ENL, Freestanding Integrated/Stand Alone ENL, TBE, and Dual Language Programs. These teachers use modified and adapted assessments that allow Hispanic multilingual learners demonstrate their content knowledge. Hispanic multilingual learners are provided with additional time to complete tasks and assessments. P186X ENL/Bilingual teachers are adept at creating opportunities for Hispanic multilingual learners to interact with proficient English speakers, and opportunities for Hispanic multilingual learners to build on their strengths, prior experiences, and background knowledge. Academic language is a vital part of content-area instruction; the goal is to improve academic vocabulary use and comprehension across all four language modalities (listening, writing, reading, and speaking).

Instructional approaches and methods used to make content comprehensible to foster language development and meet the demands of the Next Generation Learning Standards and/or the Dynamic Learning Maps: DLP: scaffolding, task-based language learning, immersion, community language learning, all content areas taught in both English and Spanish languages during the school day (50% English/50% Spanish). DLP uses the academically rigorous Estrellita (Spanish)/Palabras a su Paso /Maravillas (Spanish)/Wonders (English) Words Their Way (English) curricula which is aligned with Next Generation Learning Standards for ELA/HLA, Social Studies, and Science. DLP students have use of the curriculum aligned bilingual libraries to provide home language support. TBE: scaffolding, task-based language learning, immersion, community language learning, all content areas taught in both English and Spanish languages during the school day (60% English/40% Spanish). TBE uses the academically rigorous Estrellita (Spanish)/ Maravillas (Spanish)/ Palabras a Su Paso (Spanish), Wonders (English)/Words Their Way (English) curricula which is aligned Next Generation Learning Standards and New/home Language Arts Progressions for ELA/HLA, Social Studies, and Science. TBE students have the use of curriculum aligned bilingual libraries to provide native language support. Freestanding Integrated/standalone ENL: scaffolding, the Natural Approach, task-based language learning, native language support and all instruction is provided in English with the support of Alternate Placement Paraprofessionals for bilingual Hispanic students.

Home language support in the content areas is provided through collaboration with the content area teachers to teach academic and content vocabulary while simultaneously providing language acquisition support. ENL teachers incorporate multilingual posters, labels, multimedia presentations and dictionaries (picture and word) to help make core content accessible and

comprehensible. ENL teachers support the Next Generation Learning Standards aligned curriculum utilized by the classroom teachers. English is used as the instructional language (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>). Adaptive communication devices are an essential tool employed for working with students placed in classes with 12:1:4 staffing ratios. A variety of attractive and familiar communication devices are regularly employed when working with this population, in order to allow the students to show what they know and also to communicate important needs or desires (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>).

### **Newcomers, Long term, and former Hispanic multilingual learners**

Newcomers make up 56.4% of P186X population. To differentiate instruction for Hispanic newcomer students, P186X educators start by identifying prior knowledge and educational experiences. First the newcomer's grasp of the Roman alphabet is assessed, emergent literacy or pre-emergent literacy is assessed, as well as their numeracy and mathematical skills. Independent practice and one-to-one instruction are provided, scaffolded on the students' prior knowledge, taking into consideration their cultural, linguistic, and educational background. Newcomer Hispanic students are paired with peers who are more proficient in English to assist them in feeling comfortable and lowering the affective filter to allow for the newcomer to receive more comprehensible input. An important element to help improve literacy is reading to Hispanic newcomer students every day. According to [educatingbilinguals.com](http://educatingbilinguals.com), "reading to children is important because it is the first step in learning a language. Researchers Li and Fleer (2015) share that parents' and teacher's interactions with students during a shared book reading is essential for building students' interest in reading" ([educatingbilinguals.com](http://educatingbilinguals.com), 2022). In addition to differentiation and instruction, ENL and bilingual teachers use Tier III RTI interventions with Hispanic newcomer students (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>). 12.3 % of multilingual learners are long-term multilingual learners at P186X. To differentiate instruction for Long-Term Hispanic multilingual learners, P186X staff first identifies the student's level of knowledge in each of the subject areas. Standardized test scores, student work and the student record are used to determine this information. Effective differentiation requires ongoing evaluation of students' needs and conscious attention to designing instructional activities and assessment to meet those needs. Content is differentiated for long-term Hispanic multilingual learners. ENL/Bilingual teachers facilitate in different ways to help students understand key material and provide evidence of understanding in multiple ways based on their language proficiency levels. P186X ENL/Bilingual teachers use ongoing assessment to guide instructional decisions and track data. Small group instruction is a very effective way of making sure that all students can access important content and keeping groups flexible allows teachers to match students with different peers for different types of activities (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>). 0.5 % of students are former multilingual learners at P186X. They provide former Hispanic multilingual learners with 90 minutes per week integrated ENL services for up to 2 years after they exit ELL status. P186X monitors all former Multilingual learner students' academic progress and needs over the next 2 years after they pass and exit ELL services. If a former multilingual learner/exited ELL student is not progressing academically as expected and monitoring suggests a persistent language need. Small group instruction is used to ensure that former multilingual learners can access important content. ENL teachers of P186X provide all multilingual-identified students integrated ENL or other services that monitor and support the student's language development and academic progress at minimum the equivalent 0.5 units of study meaning 90 minutes per week.

As was mentioned above, At P186X, Spanish is the home language of multilingual learners with the largest representation (78%). They have Spanish speaking staff members such as teachers, paraprofessionals, psychologists, social workers, and family liaisons. P186X supports communication and learning that values Hispanic students' culture and home language in a variety of ways. Educational research shows a positive correlation between effective parental engagement and student achievement. According to Alyssa Shlensky, "schools need to begin looking at how they can support the frequently at-risk population and design programs for success as they move throughout the educational systems. I have noticed that educating Latino children might look differently, and differentiation in all aspects of education should be considered. Through various acts, such as the NCLB, parental involvement has been one of the focal points of raising student achievement in low-performing groups. Schools are being held more accountable for ensuring the success of all students, and it needs to be carried through in culturally sensitive and appropriate methods" (Shlensky, 2016, p.20). P186X tries to have constant communication with parents in order to ensure students' achievement in the classroom. To better serve parents and improve lines of communication between parents and teachers, the school has created a policy. The school's policy is designed to keep parents informed by actively involving them in planning and decision-making in support of the education of their children. Parents are encouraged to actively participate on the School Leadership Team, Parent Association (or Parent-Teacher Association), and Title I Parent Advisory Council as trained volunteers and welcomed members of the school community (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>). Some of the ways in which P186X supports parents is by encouraging them to become trained school volunteers, providing written and verbal progress reports that are periodically given to keep parents informed of their children's progress. In addition to developing and distributing a school newsletter or web publication designed to keep parents informed about school activities and student progress, P186X provides school planners/folders for regular written communication between /teacher and the home in a format, and to the extent practicable in the languages that parents can understand (<http://www.p186x.org/cep.html>).

### **Conclusion/Reflection/Recommendations:**

In researching and studying the curriculum and services provided to Hispanic multilingual learners, P186X is trying to make sure that these students are getting the bilingual education that they deserve. As shown is the research above, P186X has an enormous number of resources for Hispanic multilingual learners. They have technology such as smart boards that teachers can utilize to project visuals and read alouds. Students even have access to iPads, and these can be utilized to search the meaning of a word or translate a sentence or a word from English to their native language or vice versa. Students also have access to a library with texts and dictionaries in Spanish at school. Finally, they have a very comprehensive curriculum for both Spanish and English. The curriculum meets Hispanics students' linguistic and cultural abilities. They use several multimodal strategies that have been identified by researchers as being beneficial for students who are multilingual learners. According to Mark B. Pacheco, "multimodal composition, a practice in which students leverage images, texts, sounds, and animations, among other modalities, within a digital environment, is one avenue for accessing strengths in secondary classrooms" (Pacheco, 2021).

Teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals at P186X seemed prepared to educate their Hispanic multilingual students. They are up to date with research-based strategies and teaching

practices to better serve their Hispanic multilingual population at their school. Teachers and paraprofessional attend professional developments regularly and they learn and bring important information that they can implement in their classrooms. The teachers are certified bilingual teachers and Spanish speaking paraprofessionals are integrated into the bilingual classes to support the teacher in developing the language skills of the students. In addition, teachers and administrators see the value in having parents be involved in their children's education. There is constant parent outreach from teachers and parents are given the opportunity to attend trainings to learn more about their children's school and education.

As I mentioned above, P186X is providing their Hispanic multilingual learners with quality education. However, there is always room for improvement. These are my recommendations based on my findings. P186X, should expand their bilingual classes to other sites as well. Currently P186X has bilingual classes at their main site and 306 off site. I work at the 146 site, and we do not have any bilingual classes for our Hispanic students in our building. The Hispanics students at 146 would benefit from being in a bilingual class. In my class alone, I have four children that receive ENL services, it would be amazing for these children to be able to use their home language in other capacities in my classroom. I would like to see them speaking and writing in their home language as well. A bilingual newsletter to parents once a month is also a great idea, this way parents can read about what their children are learning in school. A newsletter is also a great way to communicate with parents and keep them informed. Another suggestion I have for 186X is to implement a translanguaging approach with their bilingual classes across their organization. "Translanguaging pedagogies is the theory that refers to instructional practices that integrate the use of two or multiple languages. For example, Hamman states that "Garcia (2009) first defined translanguaging as the 'multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds'. Translanguaging, in this framing, is the authentic way that bilingual individuals and communities actually use language" (Hamman, 2017, p. 6). In using a translanguaging teaching practice, teachers can do activities that involve other subjects such as music. Music is a powerful tool, and most students use it as means to express themselves and to show their culture. My suggestion will be to have teachers implement the music activity and incorporated into the curriculum by having the students select from a list of songs. They will have songs such as "Stand by Me" by Prince Royce, "Promise" by Usher and Romeo Santos, "Despacito" by Luis Fonsi featuring Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber, and "Mi Gente" by J Balvin featuring Willy William and Beyonce. Once the students have chosen one of the songs, their task will be to analyze the meaning of the song. The songs are a mixture of Spanish and English, thus utilizing a translanguaging approach. The students can then talk about the songs in the language of their choice. Then, to take it further, the teachers can ask students to discuss the songs in small groups and see if they found any similarities or differences in their songs. This activity is great because "students' language practices and cognitive abilities are included in the learning process and students' identities are affirmed" (Garcia and Kleifgen, 2018, p. 113). This activity also fosters a community in which teachers and students develop a collaborative relation of power in the classroom. This concludes my recommendations for P186X.

In conclusion, my research on P186X has demonstrated that the school has robust resources for Hispanic multilingual learners with IEP's. The future as a bilingual education teacher looks promising for me. All the resources that were mentioned above will set me and my Hispanic students up for success. I will be able to provide my students the opportunity to leverage their

bilingualism by implementing their culture and life experiences into our bilingual curriculum. Furthermore, I believe that with the suggestions that were given above, P186X will have one of the best bilingual education programs for Hispanic multilingual learners in the Bronx and possibly in New York City.

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## **Resources for teaching multilingual learners**

<https://www.starfall.com/h/> - Great early-literacy practice for English Language Learners.

<https://www.myon.com/login/index.html> - Myon is a great digital tool to use with multilingual learners. I currently do not have texts that are in Spanish and most of my students come from Spanish speaking families. Myon will be a great tool because they offer a variety of texts in different languages. Myon also has the voice input capability as well, which makes it easy for students who are emergent readers to read. The program demonstrates accessibility as it is easy to use. It is an app that can easily be added onto the iPads that we use in the classroom, and it can also be accessed on computers, which students have access to in the classroom. It is multimodal because it is a visual tool and tactile as well. As well, it is interactive, and it has a lot of visuals. These Visual supports can be a great tool for stimulating student creativity.

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org> – They have free online games, songs, stories, and activities for children. For parents, they have articles on supporting children in learning English, videos on using English at home.

<https://www.dictionary.com> – great tool for students to look up the meaning of a word.

