



Resource 10

Bilingual Education in New Mexico

Research studies have found many benefits of Bilingual Education Programs, including:

- Building self-esteem and improving academic achievement by incorporating the students' cultures into classroom instruction;
- Enhancing student intellectual flexibility, creativity and problem solving;
- Developing students' literacy skills in English and in the home language;
- Building lessons from resources that exist within students' experiences and backgrounds in order to promote more active student engagement and increased student learning;
- Encouraging parent participation in school activities and goals;
- Expanding student access to people and resources;
- Increasing opportunities to compete in the workplace; and
- Supporting the development of a stronger national economy.

What is Bilingual Education in New Mexico?

Bilingual Education is an instructional program that uses two languages, one of which is English, as a medium of instruction in the teaching-learning process (New Mexico Bilingual Education Regulation, June 2002).

Models of Bilingual Education in New Mexico and Their Purposes

- A **Two-way Dual-Language Immersion** model is designed to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in English and another language for both English-speaking and students with a home language other than English.
- A **Maintenance** model is designed to develop and maintain proficiency and literacy in the student's home language and English.
- A **Transitional** model is designed to transfer students from instruction in their home language to an all-English curriculum.
- An **Enrichment** model is designed to further develop the home language of fully English proficient students and to teach the cultures of the state.
- An **Indigenous Language Revitalization** model is designed to support and revitalize a student's native language and culture through oral and/or written language instruction with tribal approval.



Important Facts About Bilingual Education

- Bilingual/ESL teachers teach English more effectively. They have more training on how best to instruct children learning English.
- Bilingual Education is PROVEN to close the gap better and faster than English Immersion.
- English Immersion is proven to widen the gap.
- Bilingual Education is supported by second language acquisition research and experts.
- A person who speaks two languages increases his or her marketability in the work place.
- Bilingual Education enriches academic productivity, creative talents and self-esteem in students.
- In the era of globalization, the rest of the world prepares their students to communicate in more than one language. We should join in.
- Bilingualism is a window into two worlds.
- Bilingualism and multilingualism ultimately provide a competitive advantage in the workforce and allow for additional job opportunities.
- The student's native language supports the learning of the second language and the comprehension of all subject areas.

Source: New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education (NMABE) web site www.nmabe.net (2006)