



School and Community Partnerships

Bilingual and ESL Classrooms

Carlos Ovando, Mary Carol
Combs, Virginia Collier



Why are the parent and community components important?

- The school and local/greater community can contribute to a solid foundation for effective bilingual and ESL programs.
- Parent involvement has been deemed as paramount to effectiveness in academic programs in schools.
- When language plays a significant role in the academic programs, more than likely other factors are important: socio-economic, political, psychological, cultural.
- Wholistic approach is necessary; teachers need to understand complex issues in educating students.

The “Bilingual” Community

- The *extended community*: besides the school players, there are different community members and resources that can have a positive impact on the school.
- Wanted: A community of learners and leaders.
- The establishment of positive relationships is key to improvement.

Programs in McAllen

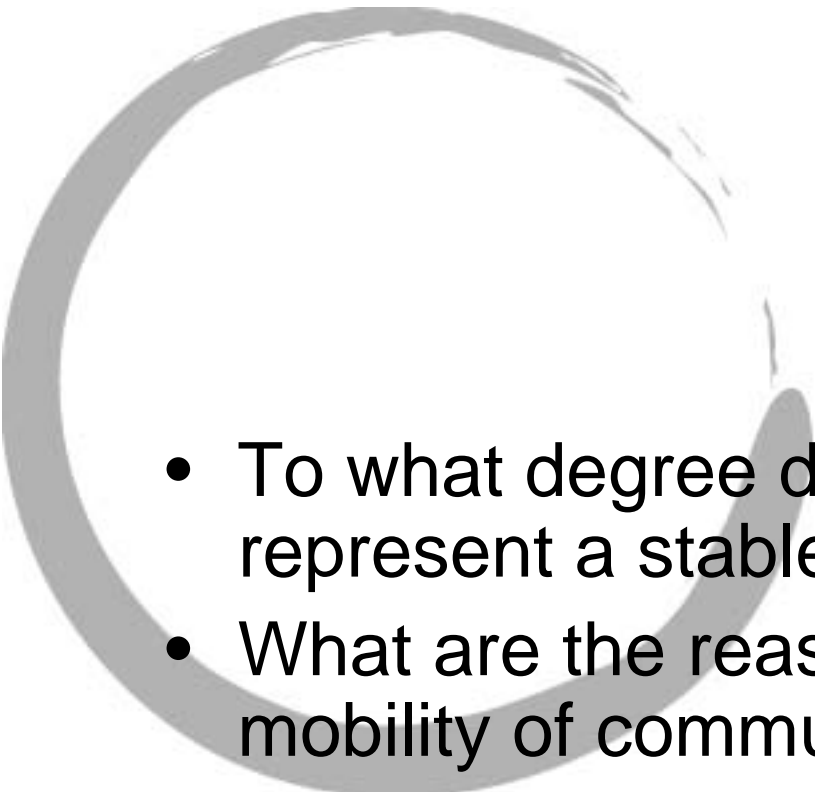
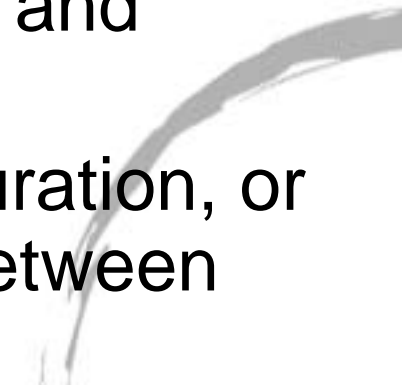
- Adopt-a-school program: community provides financial and/or volunteer assistance to a school(s).
- Parent/student community center: operated outside of school hours - help for students, classes for parents: ESL, parenting skills, basic literacy, and computer instruction.
- Transitioning program for 5th graders;
- Family unification program;
- Drop-out prevention program;
- Make-and-Take sessions that help parents make instructional materials for their children;
- Radio talk show on parent and school issues;
- Parent participation in school governance.

Programs in Arlington County

- Language intake centers to enroll students;
- Parent orientations in both languages;
- Interpreters at school meetings;
- Learning materials for parents to take home;
- Support groups in the native language;
- Recruitment of parents to serve in advisory council;
- Support of family outreach activities;
- Annual multicultural conference;
- Long-range plan for continuous involvement.

Investigating/Learning the Community - QUESTIONS

- P. 402: Ethnicity in the Community
- How is ethnicity reflected in the immigrant or in the indigenous status of community members?
- What is the ethnic and mainstream mix within the neighborhood?
- What are the characteristics of the relationships between the various groups?
- How isolated from or integrated with the mainstream community are the language minority communities?

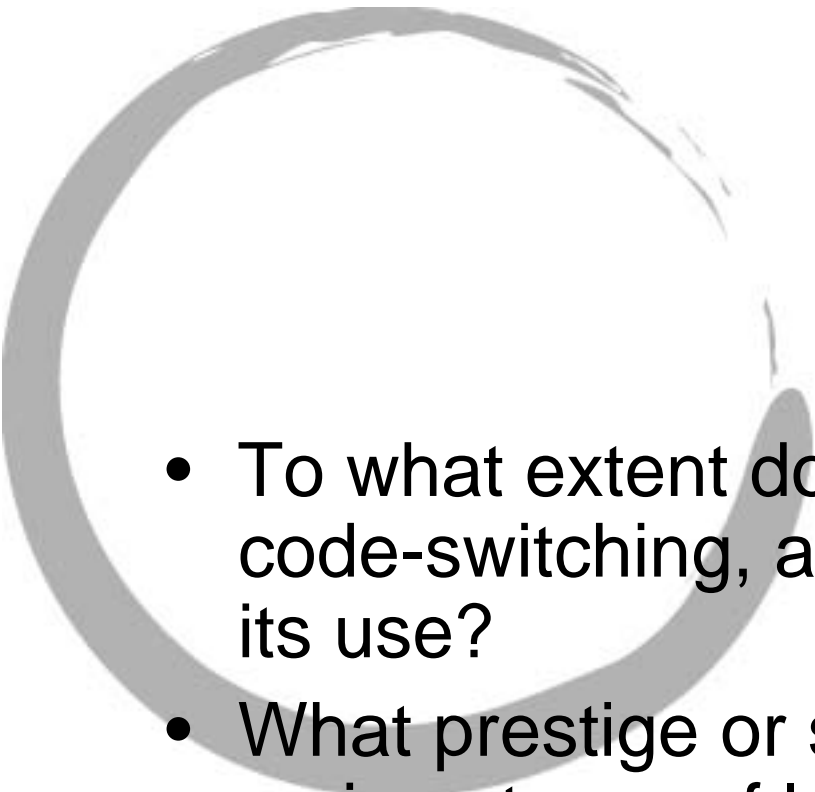
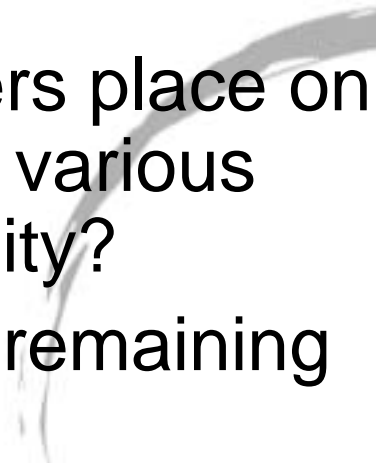
- 
- 
- To what degree does the community represent a stable or a mobile population?
 - What are the reasons for the stability or mobility of community members?
 - What is happening to community members in terms of maintenance of ethnicity and acculturation or assimilation?
 - How have minority status, acculturation, or both, affected the relationships between younger and older generations?



Socio-economic Issues

- How is wealth distributed in the community?
- How is the local economy tied in to the national and international economy?
- Which community groups or members tend to have higher social status than others?
- Who are the leaders in the community and how are they perceived by other community members?
- To what extent is upward socioeconomic mobility a part of the community's definition of success?
- What are the perceived socioeconomic rewards for literacy and school achievement?
- What are the socioeconomic costs and benefits of membership in a particular ethnic group?

Language Use in the Community

- Who speaks which languages, and when are the various languages spoken?
- Which languages do individuals read and write in the community? If they read and write in more than one language, which languages are used for which kinds of literacy events?
- What is the level of proficiency of community members in the various languages?
- What language variation is present within each language? For example, is a particular dialect of the language or a nonstandard version of the language used?

- 
- To what extent do community members use code-switching, and what are the patterns of its use?
 - What prestige or stigma is attached to the various types of language present in the community?
 - What value do community members place on speaking, reading, and writing the various languages present in the community?
 - How is language use changing or remaining the same within the community?
- 

- 
- 
- It's important to identify the language goals of the community members and compare those with the school's.

Pathways to Partnerships

- The two-way street: the best route to success. (enrichment versus deficit)
- Parent centers and family literacy projects;
- Working relationships based on respect, understanding and common goal of providing the best educational opportunities for children.
- Parents feel welcomed, appreciated, and confident that the school provides the best education for their children.



• The End.

