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An Examination of an Introduction to Bilingual/Bicultural Education

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by Gary Mikolinski

INTRODUCTION

Education is needed on both sides if the educational and social problems of the Puerto Ricans are to be solved. The American community must take the time to understand the culture of the Puerto Rican, and the Puerto Rican must learn to cope with American culture.

If the main task of a teacher is to provide the opportunity to learn, then it is imperative that teachers understand the plight of the Puerto Rican student in our public school system.

Puerto Rico has been part of the United States since the end of the nineteenth century and Puerto Ricans are born American citizens. Yet when they migrate to mainland America they encounter a foreign society. A society which demands that they give up their language and their culture.

Language differences complicate the education of Puerto Ricans in American schools. More than 70 percent of Puerto Ricans growing up in the continental United States grow up in homes where Spanish is the only language spoken. (Kinder and Hammerstein 1976: p.234)

When a Puerto Rican child is being scolded at home, he is told to look down and never directly at the adult scolding him. When this child is being reprimanded by an American teacher, he looks away. The teacher, raised in a different culture, sees this as an insult, when actually the teacher is being paid a compliment by the child.

Like other groups from a rural peasant background, Puerto Ricans have very little tradition of classroom schooling. Puerto Rican males identified manhood with short-term daring rather than long-term accumulation of knowledge.

Of all Hispanic young people in the U.S., only 40 percent complete high school (compared with 67 percent of all whites and 46 percent of blacks). In New York City, Puerto Rican children made up 24 percent of the school population, but only 15 percent of them will graduate from high school. (Ehrlichman 1982: p. 6)

I think that Pifer sums up the problem best with his quotation, "What is needed now, is a determined effort by all concerned to improve bilingual education programs in the schools through more sympathetic administrator and community support, more and better trained teachers, and a sustained, sophisticated, and well-financed

research effort to find out where these programs are succeeding and where they are failing and why.” (Pifer 1980: p 5)

This mission becomes more important when we consider that the non-English-speaking population in the U.S. is expected to increase from 30 million in 1980 to about 39.5 million in the year 2000. (Phi Delta Kappan 1983: p. 567)

OBJECTIVES

The content of this unit is both bilingual and bicultural.

Bilingual because I will discuss the need for, and the perplexity of, teaching bilingual education to Spanish-speaking Puerto Rican students in our public schools.

Bicultural in that I hope to give teachers and students an awareness of the Puerto Rican culture.

It is my sincere hope that this curriculum unit will be constructive for the students, teachers, and administrators who participate in its implementation.

My objectives are listed in the order in which they will appear in the unit.

First, to give teachers background information about bilingual education and its goals.

Second, to make administrators and teachers aware of the results of a four year study by the *New York City Board of Education* entitled the *Puerto Rican Study* .

Third, to make teachers aware of the controversy over teaching bilingual education in our schools.

Fourth, to make teachers aware of what educators have learned about bilingual education during the past fifteen years.

Fifth, to make teachers aware of the perplexity of organizing and implementing a bilingual education program.

Sixth, to make administrators and teachers aware of two alternatives to the ‘transitional’ method of teaching bilingual education.

Seventh, to make English-speaking students and teachers aware of the problems experienced by Spanish-speaking Puerto Rican students that attend our public schools.

Eighth, to clarify that the reason many Puerto Rican pupils do not perform well in our public schools is not because they are inherently ‘stupid’, but rather they must adjust to a new language and a new way of life when they migrate to America.

Ninth, to develop in students an awareness and concern for other members of our society, their needs, and problems.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education is not new in the United States. English has not always been the only language used in American schools.

German immigrants (whose population make up the largest ethnic group in America) established German-English bilingual schools in Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Hoboken, Cleveland, and many other cities. These were public schools and German was not only taught as a subject, it was used as a medium of instruction between 1880-1917. These schools flourished until the political tensions of World War I caused their demise.

In Louisiana, French was used as the medium of instruction, and in New Mexico, Spanish was used.

I think it is interesting to note that the recent revival of bilingual education emerged from the political-social issues of the 1960's, not from the area of foreign language teaching. Also, that Dr. Rudolph Troike, former director of the federally funded center for Applied Linguistics and a bilingual supporter, has allowed that the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 was passed by Congress "largely as an article of faith, with little research to support it" (New Haven Register 1983: p. 7)

It was believed that unilingual teaching in English restricted the educational opportunities of non English-speaking students. It was affirmed that education was a basic right, therefore schools had an obligation to use the native languages of these children in their classrooms.

It was in this atmosphere of social equity that the bilingual act of 1968 was passed by Congress as title VII of the amended Elementary and Secondary Education Act which was enacted in 1965. The objectives of Title VII were; to provide funds for the planning and implementation of programs "designed to meet the special needs of children of limited English-speaking ability in schools having a high concentration of such children from families . . . with incomes below \$3000.00 per year." (Cordasco 1982: p. 251)

The Bilingual Education act was renewed in 1974 and again in 1978, and is due for renewal in 1983.

In 1971 Massachusetts was the first state to legislate the establishment of a transitional bilingual program. By 1978, ten states adopted similar bilingual education statues.

THE PUERTO RICAN STUDY

In 1953 the New York City Board of Education spent one million dollars to fund the Puerto Rican study. This was a four year study of the problems of the education and adjustment of Puerto Rican children. It sought answers to the following: (1) what are the most effective methods and materials for teaching English as a second language (ESL) to newly arrived Puerto Rican students? (2) what are the most effective techniques where by the school can promote a more rapid and effective adjustment of Puerto Rican parents and children to the community and of the community to them? (The New York Board of Education 1958: Chapt. 17)

The Puerto Rican study was completed in 1957 and published in 1959. This study, and its related curriculum bulletins furnished a detailed description of Puerto Rican children, devised a scale to rate English-speaking ability, and constructed a detailed program for the in-service education of teachers. This study remains of the

most complete examinations ever made of the Puerto Rican educational experience on the mainland.

I have listed (without the capsuled rationales which accompany them) their conclusions:

1. Accept *The Puerto Rican Study*, not as something finished, but as the first stage of a larger, city-wide, ever improving program for the education and assimilation of non-English-speaking children.
2. Take a new look at the philosophy governing the education of the non-English-speaking children in New York City schools.
3. Recognize whatever is done for the non-English-speaking child, is, in the long run, done for all the children.
4. Use the annual school census as a basic technique in planning the continuing adaptation of the schools to the needs of the non-English-speaking pupils.
5. Recognize the heterogeneity of the non-English-speaking pupils.
6. Formulate a uniform policy for the reception, screening, placement, and periodic assessment of non-English-speaking pupils.
7. Keep policies governing the grouping of non-English-speaking pupils flexible. Place the emphasis upon serving the needs of the individual pupil.
8. Place special emphasis on reducing the backlog of retarded language learners.
9. Recognize "English as a second language" or "the teaching of non-English-speaking children" as an area of specialization that cuts across many subject areas.
10. Use the curricular materials developed by *The Puerto Rican Study* to achieve unity of purpose and practice in teaching non-English-speaking pupils.
11. Capitalize on the creative talent of teachers in finding ways and means of supplementing and of improving the program for teaching non-English-speaking pupils.
12. Recognize and define the school's responsibility to assist, counsel, and cooperate with the parents of non-English-speaking pupils in all matters pertaining to the child's welfare.
13. Take a new look at the school's opportunity to accelerate the adjustment of Puerto Rican children and their parents through advice and counsel to parents on problems normally considered to be outside the conventional functions of the school.
14. Staff the schools to do the job: to help the new arrival to make good adjustment to school and community; to help the non-English-speaking child to learn English and to find his way successfully into the main stream of the school's program.
15. Staff the proper agencies of the Board of Education to maintain a continuing program for the development and improvement of curricular materials and other aids to the teaching of non-English-speaking pupils.
16. Staff, also, the proper agencies of the Board of Education, and set in motion the processes to maintain a continuing assessment or evaluation of techniques, practices and proposals.
17. Take a new hard look at the psychological services provided for non-English-speaking children, especially for Puerto Rican children.
18. Through every means available, make it clear that the education of the non-English-speaking children and their integration in an ever-changing school population is the responsibility of every member of the school staff.
19. Maintain, improve, and possibly expand the program of in-service preparation initiated through *The Puerto Rican Study* for training special staff to assist in accelerating the program in the schools.

20. In cooperation with the colleges and universities of metropolitan New York, create a dynamic program to achieve unity of purpose and more adequate coordination of effort in the education of teachers and other workers for accelerating the program in the schools.
Use the varied opportunities available to develop an ever-improving cooperation between
21. the Department of Education in Puerto Rico and the Department of Education in New York City.
In cooperation with the responsible representatives of the government of the State of New
22. York, continue to explore the mutual interests and responsibility of the city and the state for the education and adjustment of non-English-speaking children and youth.
23. Think of the city of New York and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as partners in a great enterprise.

The reason that the reproduction of the Puerto Rican study has been neglected, may be due to the fact that its publication was done prior to the antipoverty programs of the 1960s.

THE CONTROVERSY

Proponents, of which I am one, applaud the revitalization of languages and cultures through the public schools. We see bilingual education as a natural consequence of the sociocultural realities of a pluralistic society.

We believe that bilingual/bicultural education will be personally satisfying to all students and that it will help them develop the interpersonal skills and attitudes that are essential to a healthy society.

Opponents dispute the use of public funds on bilingual education. It is estimated that approximately one billion dollars has been appropriated for bilingual education since 1968. (New Haven Register 1983: p. 7) Opponents feel that support for bilingual education springs from faith, not from empirical evidence. They fear that the institutionalization of bilingual education in the public schools will further disrupt social cohesion by encouraging youngsters to depend on other languages other than English and follow cultural patterns that may conflict with the mainstream American culture. They argue that such results will hinder upward mobility for students with limited English speaking skills.

Somewhere in the middle are those who believe that students with limited proficiency in English are entitled to schooling in their native language until they can assume the demands of an all English curriculum—but the sooner, the better.

WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED IN THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS?

The educators charged with carrying out the mission of bilingual education had no reliable research to guide them, but today linguists have made important progress in understanding first-and-second language acquisition. Their research suggests that the developmental process is similar and predictable for both children and adults. Thus the learning of a second language requires time and experiences that are tailored to the learner's stage of development.

They have learned that certain methods promote natural acquisition of language, while other methods only promote a mechanical ability to use the rules of grammar. Since learners follow a neurologically programmed sequence of stages in learning a second language our expectations for second language acquisition should follow that sequence. Likewise, the language used by teachers during language lessons should reflect the stages. Teachers should begin with concrete objects, firsthand experiences, and visual aids.

In addition the attitude of the learner toward the second language is as important as his talent for learning languages. Also, the students' ages, and their previous exposures to the new language are factors a teacher must take into consideration.

We learned that bilingualism and biculturalism are not detrimental to cognitive development, and that cognitive skills are transferable across cultures and languages. In fact some evidence suggests that bilingualism may encourage the development of divergent thinking and creativity. (Phi Delta Kappan 1983: p. 365)

A variety of longitudinal studies have also revealed positive academic gains for students who have been enrolled in bilingual programs for at least four years. (Phi Delta Kappan 1983: p. 365)

There is still much work to be done. As bilingual educators become better acquainted with theories of language acquisition and the methods they imply, with the relationships being found between cognition and language, and the findings related to the organization of classroom programs and resources, bilingual/bicultural education will become much more effective. But, the success of bilingual programs depends on support from the sociopolitical environment!

THE PERPLEXITY OF TEACHING BILINGUAL EDUCATION

According to Gaarder, "a bilingual school is a school which uses, concurrently, two languages as a medium of instruction in any portion of the curriculum, except the languages themselves." (Gaarder 1967: p. 110) Often this is a long-range goal rather than an actual description of current bilingual programs.

The need for a practical, realistic, and effective educational approach for non-English-speaking children has created many new curriculum programs. At the present most schools are improvising with meager resources based on limited objectives. Many educators are reluctant to commit themselves to the major staff and structural changes needed to implement a true bilingual system of education.

Even the administrators who recognize the need for bilingual education programs find themselves confronted by such problems as: a shortage of bilingual teachers, a scarcity of appropriate curriculum materials, limited opportunities for teacher training, and a lack of funds. In addition to these problems educators face the major decision of choosing an appropriate model of bilingual instruction. (Cordasco and Bucchioni 1982: pp. 242-243)

According to Marcello Fernandez, director of the District of Columbia schools' bilingual division, Bilingual education has become something of a political football, tossed between legislators and educators who believe it is the role of schools to foster cultural pluralism, and those who think schools should simply assimilate foreign speaking students as quickly as possible. (Education Week March 1983: p. 18)

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The board of education for the Dade County, Florida, public schools system has voted to try a new pilot program that could lead to a shift away from the “transitional” bilingual method of teaching. Dade County has the nation's fourth largest school system and a very large population of Spanish speaking students.

Currently, Miami's nearly 25,000 Spanish-speaking students are gradually integrated into regular classes over a three year “transitional” period. During this “transitional” period they attend forty-five minute “core” classes taught in their native language.

Under the pilot program, a sample of 150 students will be taught for two years in the “total immersion” method, which puts students directly into classes taught in English and eliminates the core periods taught in Spanish. When the two year pilot program ends, school officials will compare the relative educational attainments of the children who have been taught in the immersion method with those of students taught in the transitional program.

The board's vice-chairman, Ethel K. Beckham, said one reason for the board's decision to try a new method was the release a few days before the board meeting of some “discouraging” results of English and writing tests taken by Spanish speaking students who were involved in the city's transitional bilingual program. (Education Week March 1983: p. 5)

One test called the College Level Academic Skills Test, a new test given in Florida only to college sophomores, found that Hispanic students at Dade County Community College (many of whom came from the Dade County public schools), scored “substantially less well in reading and writing skills than other students”, said John Lozak, dean of institutional research at the community college.

A second test, a Stanford achievement test that the Miami schools volunteered to take part as a sample group, showed poor results among Hispanic students.

If O.C.R. (the U.S. Education Department Office for Civil Rights) approves it, Miami's pilot program will start next fall in heavily Hispanic schools and will involve three groups of 150 kindergarten and first grade children. The first group will continue with the transitional method—about one third of their instruction in their native language each day, with the rest in English.

A second group will have the same schedule, but the classes will be smaller, to see if that makes a difference.

The third group will have 30 minutes a day of instruction in their native language. Science, social studies, and mathematics will be taught only in English.

At the end of two years, the proficiency of the three groups will be compared. The cost of the experiment will be \$458.00 per child, compared with \$389.00 per child for the present program.

If the board does adopt the immersion method it could mark the beginning of a shift among major school districts with large non-English-speaking student populations away from the transitional bilingual education. Advocates of transitional bilingual education fear this, ever since the Reagan administration withdrew proposed bilingual education regulations and suggested that they would not prevent school districts from choosing their own methods of teaching foreign-language students.

THE OYSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Oyster Elementary School is the only bilingual public school in District of Columbia. It is one of the very few in our nation that have dual-language instruction for all students.

Its pupils consistently score above the norms for their grade level in tests, and it has a waiting list of more than 300 children from all over the city. It has managed to avoid district-wide budget cuts, and has become the district's showpiece school for dignitaries to visit.

Classes are taught in English and Spanish in an effort to make students' culturally literate in both languages. Each of Oyster's classrooms, from kindergarten through the sixth grade, is taught by two teachers—one English-speaking and one Spanish-speaking. Students learn to respond in either language, depending on which teacher is presenting the lesson.

This teaching format may not be characterized as either "Spanish enrichment" or English-as-a-second-language, Oyster's proponents are quick to point out. "This is the closest thing there is to a well-developed European bilingual school", says Marcello Fernandez, director of the District of Columbia school's bilingual division. (Education Week March 2, 1983: pp. 7 & 18)

Many children live in homes where more than one language is spoken, and such households are models for Oyster's method of instruction.

In contrast to other bilingual programs in America, the Oyster School gives "equal weight" to learning both English and Spanish. This means that English-speaking students must develop the same fluency in Spanish that Hispanic students develop in English.

For example, beginning in the first grade, social studies is taught only in English, while science is taught only in Spanish. Reading, however, is taught separately, by ethnic group, and mathematics is taught in both languages.

Some parents admit that they worry that their children's English suffers because they must learn to read and write simultaneously in two languages. But most seem to agree that being fluent in two languages is worth the risk.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

The following lessons are designed for use with seventh or eighth grade students.

Their objective is to develop in students an awareness and concern for other members of society, their *needs* and *problems*. I chose this particular age group because adolescence is a critical stage in human development, a time when young people form values that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

The lessons are designed so that they reflect the developmental stages of my students. They are designed to provide the students with concrete examples, first hand experiences, and visual stimulation.

Since the active participation of the students is essential to the success of these lessons, I intend to encourage student participation through role playing techniques and group discussion.

I have found that role playing is an excellent tool for helping students to act out their own values and to become more aware of what it's like to be in another persons shoes.

Through group discussion many things are brought out into the open. The teacher is the key to the success of these discussions. He sets the pattern, if he allows and encourages openness, the students will be open about their feelings. However, if the teacher disapproves of honest feelings, the students will quickly sense this and close up.

This will be a personal process. Teachers may find that students are hesitant to discuss their feelings and emotions in front of their classmates for fear of ridicule. A practical solution to this problem is that the students be allowed to write out their feelings about a particular topic on a piece of paper and hand it in unsigned. This will allow the students to share their feelings with one another, yet still remain anonymous.

HOW TO USE THE LESSON PLANS

There is no right way to use these strategies. Change them! Adopt them! Think of your own examples!

You the teacher will determine how much time to spend on each lesson and on the discussion that follows. I prefer to leave this decision to you because you know the needs of your group better than I.

Needless to say, advanced preparation is imperative! Students must be made aware that in order for the class discussions to be productive, they must conduct themselves in a mature and orderly manner.

You must recruit bilingual Puerto Rican students or adults, or both, to speak in front of your class. The teacher should plan the lesson beforehand and estimate how much time each activity will take.

The first lesson is designed to get students actively involved in a class discussion by letting them share any beliefs they may have about Puerto Rican people. It is designed to make the student aware of his/her developing values.

LESSON PLAN #1

STEREOTYPES

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

People young and old, often become confused about their values. But for young people especially, the conflicts are more acute. Young people are ultimately left alone to make their own choice about whose advice to follow. But young people raised by moralizing adults are not prepared to make their own responsible choices. They have not learned a process for selecting the best and rejecting the worst elements in the various value systems imposed on them by others. Thus, very often the important value decisions in life are

made on the basis of peer pressure, submission to authority, or the power of propaganda. They must realize that the members of all ethnic groups have an individuality and are not all cast from the same mold.

PURPOSE— This strategy is bicultural in that it will help the students reveal and explore some of their attitudes and beliefs about Puerto Rican people.

MATERIALS— A blackboard and chalk.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask the students to give you their definitions for the word “stereotype.”
2. Write the dictionary definition of “stereotype” on the chalkboard.
3. Discuss the dictionary definition so that all students understand its meaning.
4. Ask the questions; how are stereotypes created and who creates them?
5. Allow time for the students to discuss their answers to the questions.
6. On the chalkboard, write the unfinished sentence: Puerto Ricans are . . .
7. Ask the students to write at least five responses to that statement.
8. Allow time for the students to discuss and explore their responses through a class discussion.
9. To measure what the students have learned, ask them to write down their responses to the following questions:
 - A. Are stereotypes based on fact or hear-say?
 - B. Are stereotypes accurate? Why or Why not?
 - C. Is it fair to judge an entire group on the basis of only one or two individuals?
 - D. Do you think Puerto Ricans have stereotypes about Americans? If so, what might they be?

LESSON PLAN #2

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The language barrier is a challenge encountered by many ethnic groups which have immigrated or migrated to mainland America. It is estimated that today, more than 70% of Puerto Ricans living in the continental United States grow up in homes where Spanish is the only language spoken. As a result most Puerto Ricans do not perform well in our American public schools and drop out before completing high school.

PURPOSE— The students will become aware of some of the learning problems experienced by non-English-speaking Puerto Rican students that attend American public schools.

MATERIALS

1. A teacher or an adult who is bilingual in English and Spanish.
2. Several students who are bilingual in English and Spanish.
3. Students who speak English only.

PROCEDURE

1. The students will pretend that they find themselves as English-speaking students in a Puerto Rican school classroom.
2. The bilingual teacher and the bilingual students will converse in Spanish only.
English-speaking students will try to participate in the classroom discussion. The teacher and
3. the bilingual students are instructed not to show any empathy for the English-speaking students.
4. All the students will be required to take a quiz, in Spanish, at the end of the lesson.
5. Through discussion, the English-speaking students will share their frustrations from this role playing activity.

LESSON PLAN #3

PUBLIC INTERVIEW

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As a consequence of the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico became part of the United States in 1898. Since 1917, Puerto Ricans have become American citizens at birth, but the culture in which they grow up still

reflects nearly four hundred years of Spanish rule that dates back to its discovery by Columbus. Although the island has been part of the United States for almost one hundred years, its people have continued to live and develop separately from the United States, 1,000 miles from the Florida mainland—and even farther from New York City, where most Puerto Rican migrants have settled. Despite having been Americans for generations, Puerto Ricans are less assimilated than other groups in our American culture.

PURPOSE— This lesson is bicultural in that it will give the Puerto Rican speaker center stage in the classroom and the opportunity to explain his stand on various socioethnic issues.

MATERIALS— A guest speaker.

PROCEDURE

1. The teacher arranges for a bilingual Puerto Rican speaker to discuss life in Puerto Rico and the problems he/she encountered when he/she migrated to mainland America.
2. For a homework assignment, the students will prepare a list of questions to ask the speaker.
3. The volunteer will be situated at the front of the classroom and the students will ask questions from their seat.
The first few times, the teacher reviews the ground rules. The students, one at a time, may ask the speaker about any aspect of his life and values. If the speaker answers the question
4. he must answer honestly. However, the speaker has the option of passing if he does not wish to answer a question that a student may ask. In addition, the speaker may, at the completion of the interview ask the students any of the same questions which were put to him.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you like best about life on mainland America?
2. What do you like the least about life on mainland America?
3. What do you like best about school?
4. What do you like the least about school?
5. If you were a teacher, how would you teach your classes?
6. If you could change some part of the education program, what would it be?
7. Who was your best friend in Puerto Rico?
8. Who is your best friend now?
9. What do you plan on doing this Christmas?
10. What have you done the last two Christmas vacations?

LESSON PLAN #4

EXCLAMATORY PUERTO RICAN AND AMERICAN SLANG

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This lesson is designed to enable English-speaking students to develop Spanish vocabulary mastery. It involves Puerto Rican slang and its American Cultural approximation dealing with exclamations. Thus, the English “translations” are to be considered approximations and not translations.

PURPOSE— This lesson is bilingual in that it is intended to acquaint the English-speaking student with the appropriate Puerto Rican slang associated with exclamations.

MATERIALS

1. A teacher or student who is bilingual in English and Spanish.
2. A vocabulary list of exclamatory Puerto Rican and American slang for each person in the classroom.
3. An activities sheet for each person in the classroom.

PROCEDURE

1. Explain to the class that today’s lesson will concentrate on Puerto Rican slang terms associated with exclamations.
2. Present and introduce the speaker to the class.
3. Distribute the vocabulary lists.
4. Allow the students time to read the vocabulary list to themselves.
5. Have the bilingual speaker read the list to the class.
6. Allow time for the speaker to discuss the correct pronunciation and translation of these words.
7. Allow the students the opportunity to pronounce the words either individually or as a group.
8. To measure what the students have learned, distribute the activity sheet and ask the students to complete it. This evaluation is designed both as an evaluation and a learning instrument.

VOCABULARY LIST

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | Que pasa en el timbeque? | What’s going on here? |
| 2. | Pa’ su escopeta! | Wow! |

3.	Fuego a la lata!	Exclamation of excitement.
4.	Solavaya!	I don't want any part of it!
5.	Contra!	Darn it!
6.	Le zumba la malanga! That's a heck of a thing!	That's really too much!
7.	Alabao sea Dios!	Praised be the Lord!
8.	Pa'lante y Pa'lante!	Forward!, Onward!
9.	Punetero muchacho!	Darn boy!
10.	Como hablas basura!	You talk so much nonsense!

ACTIVITY SHEET

Match the following English and Spanish slang expressions:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Que pasa en el timbeque? | a. That's a heck of a thing! |
| 2. Pa' su escopeta! | b. I don't want any part of it. |
| 3. Fuego a la lata! | c. Wow! |
| 4. Solavaya! | d. Forward!, Onward! |
| 5. Contra! | e. Darn it! |
| 6. Le zumba la malanga! | f. What's going on? |
| 7. Alabao sea Dios! | g. Darn kid! |
| 8. Pa'lante y Pa'lante | h. Exclamation of excitement! |
| 9. Punetero muchacho! | i. You talk nonsense! |
| 10. Como hablas basura! | |

Given the following situations, correctly use a Puerto Rican slang expression from the provided list that relates to the situation.

- You have finally, after two months, found a good job. (answer: Alabao sea Dios!—Praised be the Lord!)
- Two of your friends are planning to rob the neighborhood grocery store. (answer: Solavaya!—I don't want any part of it!)
- You enter your house and find a lot of people yelling, dancing and singing. (answer: Que pasa en el timbeque!—What's going on here?)
- Your neighborhood rent group has just won a fight against the landlords who wanted to increase the rent. (answer: Pa'lante y Pa'lante! Forward!, Onward!)

E. Your son just stepped over a chair and tripped. (answer: Punetero muchacho!—Darn Boy!)

The next two lessons will be based on the article “ *Chasing a Puerto Rican Christmas* ” written by Carmelo Melendez. I would advise that these lessons be used on two consecutive days and that the same guest speaker or speakers be in attendance both of these days. I would also suggest that you plan it so that these lessons will be presented close to Christmas time when children are in the holiday spirit. This will help to maintain the child’s interest and to make the lesson more relevant.

LESSON PLAN #5

CHASING A PUERTO RICAN CHRISTMAS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Christmas is a season when Puerto Rican children have the best of two worlds. Like children in the States, they have Christmas trees and gifts brought on Christmas Eve by Santa Claus. But they also keep the old Spanish Christmas customs. One of these is gift-giving on Three Kings’ Day, which is January 6.

On the night before Three Kings’ Day, children in Puerto Rico put little boxes filled with grass under their beds. The grass is for the camels of the Kings. Legend says that after the camels have eaten the grass, the Three Kings, or the Three Wise Men, as North Americans know them, will leave gifts. Thus it is that Puerto Rican children have the fun and excitement of opening gifts both on December 25 and January 6.

Another Spanish Christmas custom observed in Puerto Rico is the display in the homes of little manger or nativity scenes. The Nativity groups include Mary, Joseph, the Baby Jesus, the Wise Men, the Shepherds, and the animals.

Carol-singing is a Christmas custom in Puerto Rico. Groups of people go from house to house, singing old Spanish carols. Musicians, playing guitars and other instruments, go with the singers. In the old days, the singers and musicians were invited into the homes and offered special Christmas food. This custom is still followed in some places, but today people often give them money instead of food.

In Spanish colonial days, children dressed in costumes and went carol-singing. In San Juan they marched first to San Jose Church, a very old place of worship, each child carrying a basket of fruit or candy. From the church the children went to the Bishop’s Palace and the Governor’s Palace, singing carols and being treated to refreshments at each place.

During the years of American rule, the people were less careful about keeping the Spanish customs. Since the Commonwealth was established, Puerto Rican leaders have been concerned with reviving some of the old customs.

PURPOSE— This lesson is designed to be bilingual in that it will give American students an awareness of the cultural differences between an American and a Puerto Rican Christmas celebration.

MATERIALS

1. A photocopied copy of the article “ *Chasing a Puerto Rican Christmas* ” for each person in the classroom.
2. A bilingual Puerto Rican guest speaker.

PROCEDURE

1. Present the guest speaker/speakers to the class.
2. Distribute the words of the article to everyone in the classroom.
3. Allow the students to read the article to themselves.
4. Have the speaker read the story again, orally with the class.
Encourage the students to raise their hand if they have any questions about the article or his personal experiences in Puerto Rico.
5. Allow time for discussion.
6. Allow the speaker to ask the students about an American Christmas celebration.

7. To measure what the students have learned, ask the students to write down their responses to the following questions:

A.

Why do Puerto Ricans fly back and forth between Puerto Rico and the mainland at Christmas time?

B.

How long does their Christmas celebration last?

C.

What cultural differences are there between an American and a Puerto Rican Christmas?

D.

Why do you think the author describes an American Christmas as a spectator sport?

E.

Which type of celebration is most appealing to you?

F.

Would you feel strange celebrating an American Christmas in Puerto Rico—Why or Why not?

LESSON PLAN #6

CHASING A PUERTO RICAN CHRISTMAS

PURPOSE—This lesson is designed to be bilingual in that it will make students aware of the pronunciation and the meaning of, Spanish words from the article “ Chasing a Puerto Rican Christmas .”

MATERIALS

1. A photocopied copy of the article for each person in the classroom.
2. A photocopied copy of the key, and the definitions of, words taken from the article, for each person in the classroom.
3. A bilingual guest speaker.

PROCEDURE

1. Re-introduce the guest speaker/speakers from yesterday.
2. Explain to the class that today we will concentrate on Spanish words from the article and what they mean in English.
3. Distribute a copy of the article, and a copy of the Spanish words to each person.
4. Allow time for the speaker to go over the pronunciation and the meanings of these words.
5. Allow the students an opportunity to pronounce these words either individually or as a group.
6. After recollecting the article and vocabulary sheets, the teacher will ask the speaker to pronounce the words again, and the students will write the meaning of each word down on a piece of paper to see what they remember.

A related activity could be to arrange for samples of the foods to be brought to class so that the students could sample them. You may want to coordinate this activity with your schools home economics teacher so that your students could actually prepare some of the food samples themselves.

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