

# The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education

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How can the educational system meet the needs of minority language children? This is a question that a growing number of conscientious educators, legislators, parents, researchers, and others are addressing seriously. The federal government has responded to this concern by legislating assistance for the implementation of bilingual education programs.

In 1968 bilingual education received its first impetus on a national level from the Bilingual Education Act, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended. Further amendments in 1974 and 1978 have expanded and strengthened the effort. Over the years many programs have been funded, ranging from classroom projects to a variety of support services including teacher training programs, bilingual education service centers, materials development efforts, evaluation dissemination and assessment centers, graduate fellowship programs, and assistance to state education agencies.

One of the most innovative support service provisions of the Bilingual Education Act called for the establishment of

a clearinghouse on information for bilingual education, which shall collect, analyze, and disseminate information about bilingual education and such related programs.

The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, NCBE, began its operation on October 1, 1977, funded through a contract awarded

to InterAmerica Research Associates by the National Institute of Education and the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, of the US Department of Education.

NCBE has several basic functions: To provide research, reference, and referral services to bilingual educators; to establish a computerized data base to ensure effective retrieval, processing education; to develop and make available timely information products to consumers interested in bilingual education, and to coordinate information gathering and processing among bilingual education programs. These functions are carried out by providing a variety of services. NCBE's activities are directed toward teachers, students, project directors, administrators, researchers, and anyone else who has an interest in bilingual education.

## **Toll-Free Hot Line**

The Hot Line (800-336-4560) provides Clearinghouse clients with reference and referral services via a toll-free WATS line. Information is available in various areas of bilingual education, such as types of instructional materials for use in bilingual programs, funding sources, research, evaluation, and teaching practices. Information is also available in special areas such as computer-assisted instruction and bilingual vocational education. NCBE has gathered a knowledgeable team

of researchers and information specialists to respond to inquiries quickly and effectively. When possible, an immediate response is given. Sometimes users are referred to specific individuals or other agencies best able to answer their questions. At other times staff members conduct research to provide the needed information. The Clearinghouse regularly analyzes the types of questions that users are asking in order to plan products and services that are most useful to the field.

## **Information Processing**

One of the problems encountered in bilingual education today is how to manage the current and continual information explosion. To help meet this challenge, NCBE has developed a computerized data base which is the only one of its kind specializing in bilingual education. NCBE has gathered and continues to collect curricular and noncurricular materials that pertain to the following scope areas: Curriculum and instruction; parent and community involvement; bilingual programs; bilingual education history and legislation; teacher and administrator education; tests, measurement and evaluation; special populations; language and linguistics; culture; English as a second language; international education, and ethnic and linguistic minority groups. After NCBE receives a particular document that has met the selection criteria and is pertinent to a particular scope area of the data base, the item is then abstracted.



The item is also assigned major and minor descriptors from the ERIC Thesaurus, so that it will be searchable by topic, as well as by author, title, and other identifiers. The entire record of that item is then entered into the NCBE data base "BEBA" (Bilingual Education Bibliographic Abstracts), as well as housed physically in the NCBE library, and is retrievable by searching the data base by computer.

The data base can be used in responding to a wide variety of queries. Information such as addresses of organizations and agencies or bibliographic references of documents can be retrieved rapidly. The goal of NCBE's data base is to maintain a complete and up-to-date record of information relevant to bilingual education and to establish an information system

capable of delivering on-line services to bilingual education programs throughout the country.

The Clearinghouse provides, on a limited basis, on-line bibliographic computer search services to individuals. BEBA, as well as the Education Resources Information Center's data base, ERIC, are primarily accessed in response to a request. Other data bases, such as Exceptional Child Education Resources, Dissertation Abstracts, and Psychological Abstracts are also accessed, depending on the subject of the search. The user may call or write in a request topic, and when a search has been completed receive an annotated bibliographic printout of books and articles on the request topic.

### Information Products

Each year NCBE commissions and publishes a series of documents entitled Information Analysis Products, IAPs, which address the specific information needs of the bilingual education field. Well-known and highly respected authors address critical topics, providing new insight about issues of particular concern. Current titles include:

- A Guide to Culture in the Classroom
- Second Language Learning: A Review of Related Studies
- Special Education Needs in Bilingual Programs
- The Bilingual Education Act: A Legislative Analysis
- Working with the Bilingual Community
- Research Evidence for the Effectiveness of Bilingual Education
- Outstanding Dissertations in Bilingual Education



**Reading in the Bilingual Classroom:  
Literacy and Bilitery**

**Federal Recognition of the Rights of  
Language Minority Groups**

**Language in the Process of Cultural  
Assimilation and Structural  
Incorporation of Linguistic Minorities**  
**Language Renewal Among American  
Indian Tribes**

**A Guide to Family Reading in Two  
Languages: The Preschool Years**

**The Bilingual Education Act**

**Teaching English for the Job**

**Children's English and Services Study,  
Volumes I-III**

In addition, NCBE staff members  
have compiled a directory series  
which includes titles such as the  
following:

**Guide to Materials for English as a  
Second Language**

**Guide to Publishers and Distributors  
Serving Minority Languages**

**Guide to Resource Organizations**

**Guide to State Education Agencies**

**Directory of Computerized Resources  
in Bilingual Education**

NCBE also has a photocopy service  
which provides copies of various  
unpublished manuscripts, as well as  
materials, addressing small language  
groups, which have been previously  
published but distributed on a limited  
basis. The list of titles of the  
photocopy material is available from  
NCBE and the photocopy materials  
themselves are available at a  
reproduction charge of 15 cents per  
page.

**National Newsletter, FORUM**

FORUM, NCBE's bimonthly national  
newsletter, contains news articles  
and items concerning bilingual  
education. Regular features of this  
award-winning newsletter include  
up-to-date information on  
Clearinghouse activities; "In-View,"  
brief summaries of happenings  
around the country; comprehensive,  
in-depth articles; a column on new  
books and articles in bilingual  
education; and current reports on  
relevant research and legislation.  
Subscription is free of charge and  
anyone wishing to be placed on the  
mailing list may write or call NCBE  
toll-free (800) 336-4560, or local  
number (703) 522-0710 in the  
Washington, D.C. area.

### Information Packets

NCBE has compiled information packets on topics that are frequently requested. These packets include short articles on the topic, lists of publishers of materials, information sources on the topic, and lists of programs and materials. The following are among the current topics: Effectiveness of bilingual education; bilingual special education; bilingual vocational education; computer-assisted instruction in bilingual education; English as a second language; early childhood education; Indochinese programs and resources; Japanese bilingual education; Greek bilingual education; refugee resources; gifted and talented bilingual education; Chinese bilingual education; Korean bilingual education; Arabic bilingual education; parental involvement in bilingual programs, and Punjabi bilingual education.

### Information Resources

A continuing task of NCBE is to identify and maintain current information about organizations and individuals involved in bilingual education. Some of the key resources that are consulted in order to respond to inquiries include the following: Title VII projects including classroom projects, fellowship projects, training projects, and service projects; professional organizations of interest to bilingual education; federal government projects that serve minority language populations; researchers currently involved in projects related to bilingual education; consultants with expertise in different areas of bilingual education; bilingual educators at state education agencies; Congressional representatives and committees; administrators, teachers, and other practitioners in bilingual education; publishers of instructional

materials designed for minority language groups, and government agencies that provide services and funds of interest to minority language groups.

### Technical Assistance

NCBE staff members stay in touch with the field by attending meetings and conferences throughout the United States, providing on-site technical assistance, and making presentations about the Clearinghouse and its functions. The Clearinghouse participates in annual meetings of organizations such as the National Association for Bilingual Education, NABE; Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, TESOL, and state bilingual education organizations. NCBE views these field activities as a means not only of providing information but also of receiving information and suggestions from the bilingual education community.

To provide technical assistance in highly concentrated bilingual communities on a regional basis, the Clearinghouse has established field offices in Oakland, California; Miami, Florida; Albuquerque, New Mexico, and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Field representatives working out of these offices conduct workshops, attend conferences, respond to information requests, and prepare informative documents especially suited to the educational needs of target groups in these geographical areas.

### Cooperative Efforts

As bilingual education has expanded over the years, the need for cooperation has expanded as well. NCBE shares information and

conducts joint efforts with a variety of groups and agencies, including the following: The National Network of Bilingual Education Centers; Title VII bilingual education programs; NIE bilingual education programs; National Origin Desegregation Assistance Centers, NODACs; ERIC clearinghouses; information clearinghouses; Office of Education dissemination projects; NIE dissemination projects; state education agencies; institutions of higher education; professional organizations; the US Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, OBEMLA, and the National Institute of Education, NIE. The Clearinghouse Advisory Panel also represents a cooperative effort between NCBE and the bilingual education community. Panel members reflect the needs of parents, students, teachers, administrators, and researchers in bilingual education. They represent a variety of ethnic, cultural, language, and regional perspectives.

### Two-Way Communication

The Clearinghouse encourages members of the bilingual education community and others to share their knowledge. The information provided is only as current as the input received from the field. NCBE accepts copies of studies, publications, conference papers, directories, manuscripts, and other resource materials dealing with bilingual education for inclusion in the data base to assist with information inquiry responses.

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