

Bilingual Students

* Linda Burns (burns@scnc.ips.k12.mi.us):

This is my second year teaching Core-Plus 1 at our school, and because I am the only math teacher here that can speak Spanish, all the Spanish speaking/limited English students end up in my class (no matter the math level). Have the Core-Plus courses been translated into Spanish yet? It would be a tremendous help for these students who cannot read our language yet.

* Marcia Weller Weinhold (math_cpmp1st@wmich.edu):

Does anyone have experience that might be helpful to Linda? I will forward your replies (in case she isn't on the list).

* Michele Hall (hallm@sd401.k12.il.us) on September 15, 1999:

I understand where Linda is coming from; many of our students have emigrated from Poland in the last 5 years and do not speak English very well yet. My suggestion would be to target students who are truly bilingual or close to bilingual (meaning, fluent in both English and Spanish) and pair them with students who have English difficulties. Sometimes, those students can use the words in Spanish that will trigger what the idea is to help the struggling students. You may find yourself a lot of times writing and speaking in both languages at the same time just to make sure that you cover all kids. As the year goes on and the kids become more comfortable in English, they will stop relying on the Spanish translation.

That is the only suggestion I can think of...hope it helps!

* Jeri Philbrick (philbrici@VCSS.K12.CA.US) on May 8, 2000:

The teachers at our school have been teaching IMP for 8 years. We started bilingual IMP 1 the year after we started IMP 1. Since then, we have continued to offer bilingual classes in IMP 1, IMP 2, and IMP 3. When students are in IMP 4, they transition to the English version.

We believe that studying math by striving to develop one's own understanding of the material supports learning to communicate in English. Some of the finest student presentations have come from our bilingual students. A graph is a graph is a graph, and even when the independent and dependent variables are written in Spanish, they can also be written in English. Both English-speaking students and Spanish-speaking students can read the graphs.

We all have our own opinions. Our school's results demonstrate that students' studying math in their first language supports English language development.