



BILINGUAL EDUCATION STUDENT ORGANIZATION (BESO) MEMBERS AND DR. ESQUIERDO AT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION (NABE) CONFERENCE IN DALLAS, TEXAS.

# Center for Bilingual Studies Newsletter

MARCH, 2017

*“One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way!”-Frank Smith*

## CONFERENCES

Center for Bilingual Studies delivered a total of six research-based presentations at national and local conferences in 2017. Three research presentations were delivered at the local conference, Rio Grande Valley-Texas Association for Bilingual Education (RGV-TABE) Conference in South Padre Island in January 2017. The presentation titled *Intertwining Academic Standards & Culture: Authentic Writing Opportunities for PK-16*, was delivered on January 20<sup>th</sup> by Dr. Joy Esquierdo and Ana Karen Mata, teacher of La Joya ISD. The purpose of this session was to provide teachers with engaging and culturally relevant methods to better serve bilingual students develop writing skills. When teachers of bilingual students are more strategic in developing their students' linguistic, academic, and affective skills they help build the foundation needed to support long-term retention.

The second presentation, *Increasing Relevancy and Engagement in Social Studies in English and Spanish*, was delivered on

January 21<sup>st</sup> in collaboration with the Center for Mexican American Studies. Dr. Stephanie Alvarez, Associate professor from Mexican American Studies and Dr. Esquierdo presented a session on designing a Social Studies curriculum in both English and Spanish for elementary schools, Project CRESS (Culturally Relevant Education through Social Studies). Project CRESS's goal is to be a resource that provides a culturally appropriate curriculum guide for educators that includes hands-on activities, authentic readings, and local, state, and national archives within a place-based framework. The presentation introduced the curriculum and showcased sample lessons that focused on the rich history of the Rio Grande Valley, Texas and across the nation.

The third presentation, *The Bilingual Learners' Giftedness: What are the Characteristics Educators Should be Looking For?* was delivered on January 21<sup>st</sup> by Dr. Esquierdo. The session focused on how Bilingual Students in Gifted and Talented Programs are underrepresented. The objective of this presentation was to have participants understand the characteristics of gifted Hispanic bilingual/ESL students and gain strategies to differentiate curriculum to provide students with an appropriate level of challenge through project-based learning.



Dr. J. Joy Esquierdo, Director



Dr. Amy Weimer, Associate Director



Yajaira Rivera, Program Coordinator



Lucero Martinez, Office Adm II



Deidra Tafolla, Graduate Research Assistant



Kayla and Lily Weimer working on their activity during our first Fall 2016 Bilingual Story Hour.

The National Association for Bilingual education (NABE) conference was held in Dallas, Texas. One of the presentations delivered at the NABE conference was titled *How to Nurture Bilingual, Biliterate and Bicultural Children* was presented on February 23<sup>rd</sup> by Dr. Amy Weimer, Dr. Francisco Guajardo, Dr. Joy Esquierdo, Yajaria Rivera and Lucero Martinez. This session provided firsthand accounts of how different community environments affect the perception and acceptance of being bilingual and engaged teachers in a rich conversation on the role community can play in a bilingual student's development. The other two presentations were titled *Latino Bilingual Students' Underrepresentation in Gifted Programs* with Drs. Isela Almaguer and Joy Esquierdo and *Building a Bilingual, Bicultural and Biliterate Community through a Bilingual University* by Drs. Guajardo and Esquierdo which described the process of building a bilingual university that embraces the cultural assets of the region as a historic opportunity and employs a theory of change that subverts deficit thinking through an asset-based approach. It utilizes the cultural and linguistic infrastructure in public schools, particularly those schools that implement *dual language enrichment programs*, to transform itself into a bilingual, bicultural and bi-literate community.

## OUR COMMUNITY

On February 2, 2017 CBS and the Internal Advisory Board met and shared thoughts and ideas on how to meet the key initiatives for the center; study the bilingual pipeline of the Rio Grande Valley, publish research on bilingualism in the Rio Grande Valley, and advocate for children and families in the community. The next Advisory Board meeting will be April 13, 2017.

Parents in the McAllen area community expressed support of Dual Language Enrichment Education. This led to a partnership between CBS and McAllen ISD to provide quality dual language education. CBS and parents met with Superintendent, Dr. José Gonzalez, Dr. Sylvia Ibarra, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services, and Bridgette Vieh Associate Superintendent Instructional Leadership. McAllen ISD is committed to offering quality Dual Language Programs from pre-K to 5th grade in 5 selected campuses across the district: Fields, Jackson, Perez, McAuliffe and Sanchez Elementary. For

more information visit:  
<http://www.mcallenisd.org/bil/>

## BILINGUAL STORY HOUR

Interested in learning how to use Spanish culturally relevant literature with children? You and your children are welcome to join us in our bilingual story hour. CBS will host the Spring Bilingual Story Hour on April 4, 2017. For more information please visit our website.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Center for Bilingual Studies invites everyone to be part of the Parent Advocacy Conference on April 21st. The purpose of this conference is to build a bridge between parent groups and the university to support K-12 quality enriched dual language immersion programs. The one-day conference will be held on April 21, 2017 at UTRGV Edinburg Campus CESS Building from 8:30 am- 3:30 pm.

CBS supports Dr. Zulmaris Diaz from the Department of Bilingual & Literacy Studies in the planning and organizing the Torneo de Ortografía happening on May 6 2017. The Torneo de Ortografía del Valle del Rio Grande is a competition in which students from various school districts demonstrate their skills in the Spanish language. The purpose of the tournament is to promote the use of Spanish and recognize our Latino roots. Students must demonstrate extensive knowledge in Spanish spelling in order to be able to take first place.

The TABE state conference McAllen, Texas, will be on October 18-21, 2017 at the McAllen Convention Center. If you are interested in participating and would like more information please feel free to contact the CBS office at 665-3213.

## CBS WEBSTIE

You can visit us at [utrgv.edu/center-for-bilingual-studies](http://utrgv.edu/center-for-bilingual-studies) and/or [www.utrgv.edu/cbs](http://www.utrgv.edu/cbs). You can find news of upcoming events, activities and programs, resources for teachers, and more.



Zoe Cavasos working on her activity during our first Fall 2016 Bilingual Story Hour.



Elementary students getting ready for their test in the 2016 Torneo de Ortografía.



High School students in the 2016 Torneo de Ortografía.

