

At Buford Middle School, students participate in an intensive ELL program to prepare them to pass the ACCESS test. After passing the ACCESS test, students undergo three years of monitoring before they exit from the program. Before ACCESS testing, students have a variety participate in many small group, one-on-one, and computer-aid classes to help them achieve mastery in English. The program works very well, and depends mainly on the strength of the teacher.

Gollnick and Chinn (2013) identified language as a means to “socialize children into their linguistic and cultural communities, where they develop patterns that distinguish one community from another” (p. 209). The ELL program helps students develop the patterns for success. Students participate in regular education classes as well as ELL classes. The regular education class allows students to develop language to interact with their peers as well as different teachers. They learn the standard language used in class as well as the informal language used to develop positive peer relationships. This system will break down if the teacher does not fully accept the ELL student into the class. For example, students with low English skills use Duolingo in many classes instead of participating in the regular curriculum. Duolingo is a wonderful program used to help learn many languages. The student will become more proficient in English, but they miss learning the informal language of their peers. In my class, I require full participation in the curriculum. I remember how a Japanese girl in my neighborhood taught me “nisen yen” by stating the phrase over again slowing and demonstrating during my first two days in Japan. Nisen yen is about \$20, and I learned it quickly because she expected me to pay just as the other customers did the next time I entered the store. It takes time, but ELL students will learn more language when they participate in regular education class in addition to ELL classes.

The actual ELL classes at Buford Middle consist of about twenty-five students each with one teacher. The class size can overwhelm many teachers because the students have different proficiency levels, but we have one of the most amazing teachers I have ever met at our school. The class is broken into centers based on the level of the student and the activity for the day. Many students use a computer program to take them through lessons based on their individual needs, while others have an independent assignment. The third group works directly with the teacher during class. The students completely engage during class and work hard without any discipline issues. The Buford Middle program supports the English only movement Gollnick and Chinn (2013) describe as “only the limited use of bilingual education” (p. 224). Teachers and students only use the native language as a last resort during the school day, and should only speak English even with their peers.

Gollnick and Chinn (2013) stated, “Bilingual education accepts and develop native language and culture in the instructional process” (p. 229). The BMS program depends on the strength of our teacher, Mrs. Misy. Mrs. Misy has two Hispanic Parent nights a year, and she takes the students to several leadership conferences. The Hispanic Parent night is a tremendous event in Buford with dancing, celebration of Hispanic heritage, and helpful information relevant to current issues facing parents. One year, we had a lawyer come to speak to parents about their rights. Another year, college students returned to display traditional dance and talk about success after high school. Each event has a high attendance from entire families to the school superintendent. The leadership conferences instill pride in the students, and encourage them to work hard to achieve their dreams. Telemundo interviewed one of our students, at one of the conferences, and they loved her confidence and grace. When she first came to school, she could speak a little English and she was very shy.

I have seen our ELL program have great success based on the curriculum, the teacher, and support from the school and community. There are many areas for improvement, but only a few students enter high school without passing the ACCESS test.

Resources

Gollnick, D., & Chinn, P. (2013). *Multicultural education in a pluralistic society* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.