

The HABETAC Newsletter

Haitian Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center @ Brooklyn College



HABETAC @ Brooklyn College
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Fall 2005 Issue
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Message From the Director

Dear Colleagues and Friends of HABETAC:

First, we need to tell you about a major accomplishment: the HABETAC Office is finally occupying its very own space at Brooklyn College. Please make note of our new room, telephone and fax numbers. We hope to celebrate this milestone by hosting an open house in the near future. Until then, please do not hesitate to visit our office in your quest for information on the laws, regulations, curriculum, testing and accommodations, and other important matters regarding the education of our Limited English Proficient Haitian youngsters.

Many individuals were instrumental in welcoming, accepting and securing HABETAC's old and new space. Topping the list is Dr. Regine Latortue, formerly chair of the Africana Studies Department, and one of Brooklyn College's most valued and senior faculty. Dr. Latortue serves as co-principal investigator for HABETAC. We are grateful to all the faculty and staff of the Africana Studies Dept. for their support, patience, understanding and generosity during our stay with them. We are very grateful for the support of Provost Roberta Matthews and Dean Deborah Shanley of the School of Education and HABETAC's co-principal investigator. The list of people to thank would run longer than the space provided for this cover article. The HABETAC thanks all of the staff, faculty and students at the college who have helped and supported us in adjusting and becoming a part of the college family.

As we enter this academic year, we are considering all the recommendations and suggestions that were made at the Haitian Child Conference this past May, along with the pressing needs and concerns of our community. Our community faces many issues. The need for quality Bilingual Education programs for our newly arrived youngsters is primary. The disappearance of Bilingual Haitian Creole Programs in the City Schools is alarming. Of concern also, is the excessing of Haitian teachers from schools with a significant Haitian population. One or two periods of ESL a day will hardly provide these students with the skills and knowledge required by today's standards-test driven system. How is the promise of the LAU decree, CR Part 154, Title III being realized for these children? Where is their opportunity to succeed and not *be left behind*? Furthermore, Haiti's socio-political digressions have caused many Haitian children to experience an inadequate and interrupted education. Our students with interrupted or no formal education, known as *SIFE*, will never be able to even "get on the bus," if they are not given good academic support to quickly build literacy skills in their native language as they prepare to tackle those high stakes exams at the city and state levels. Finally, creating and maintaining good and equitable bilingual programs start with culturally-sensitive, concerned and knowledgeable administrators, staff and well-informed parents. We look forward to working with everyone in the community, educators, parents, CBOs who must play an active role in ensuring excellence and equity in our children's education.

The Parent Gallery

Senator Clinton Urging Families and Children to a Healthier Lifestyle

Obesity is a huge problem in this country, for adults and children. According to a recent article in the New York Daily News of Sunday, July 10, 2005, it is reported that about half of the students in the public elementary schools in New York carry excess weight around. These extra pounds they lug can cause a myriad of problems, beginning with health issues to emotional problems, which in turn affect these students' performance.

New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, with help from some of her counterparts in the U.S. Senate, has launched a *Six Step Plan Program* to help New York kids and their families become more health conscious and lead healthier lifestyles that would benefit the whole community.

Below is Senator Clinton Six Step Plan

Program:

1. We must educate parents and children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, eating good foods in reasonable quantities, and getting regular exercise.
2. We should ensure that the food children get in schools is good for them. [Schools should] provide free fresh fruits and vegetables in elementary schools and to reduce the amount of junk food available there.
3. Schools should develop curricula that emphasize the importance of nutrition. The kids Growing Food program run by the New York Agriculture in the Classroom, has helped thousands of students learn about food and nutrition and increased community involvement with schools and local farmers.
4. We should push to restore Physical Education (PE) programs, both during and after school hours. According to the Centers for

Disease Control (CDC), only 56% of high school students were enrolled in PE classes in 2003.

5. Health Care professional and communities need to join the anti-obesity campaign. The Senator has co-sponsored the Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity (IMPACT) Act, which would train doctors and nurses to prevent, diagnose and treat obesity and eating disorders and fund community-based programs that promote healthy eating and increased activity.

6. The Business community has to become more involved in this issue. Restaurants and fast food providers should offer options for their customers and not put so much emphasis on promoting larger sized, high fat products.

Using the Arts to Help ELL Students Develop Communications Skills

English Language Learners who just arrive in the U.S. always confront the language barrier problem, regardless of whether they had had some English classes. As we all in Bilingual Education know, there is a big difference between acquiring social language and academic language. Fact that often confuses educator who are unaware of these nuances. Being able to speak a language for survival does not mean having the ability to comprehend all texts read; and to be able to analyze and synthesize dense and difficult materials in the English language, to only mention a few of the communications skills a student needs to become proficient and to perform at the highest standard.

HABETAC developed a language arts workshop series for teachers in which we use visual arts to stimulate the four language competencies: listening, speaking, writing and reading. We held several sessions throughout the academic year: in two schools in Region Six, at our office at Brooklyn college, for the Bilingual Haitian Teachers in training



Haitian metal sculpture

at the New York City Department of Education Bilingual Pupil Services (BPS) and NYSABE.

In some sessions, we use Haitian post cards, paintings and photographs to generate discussions. Using the notes taken collectively, teachers assist students to write about the pictures: thoughts and feeling that the image brought to mind. Teachers can also help students create art work about places, people or objects that carry special memories.

These personal art pieces in turn become the source of all the communications competencies. Upon completion, the students are given time to speak about their creations and to take questions from classmates about the role and importance the person, place or object had played in their lives, to further provide opportunities for speaking. The following assignment may be to create a piece of writing about the art piece, incorporating novel ideas and suggestions from classmates. Students' work (art and writing) can be anthologized, displayed collectively and individually.

We have also extended the simple class activity of "show and tell" to "show, tell and write about it," and formulate a complete instructional experience for students. Students may bring to class an item of great value (emotional/cultural) to show, tell and write about. Items and writing pieces may be exhibited for the whole school community to appreciate and enjoy.

Freebies and Great Materials for your Classroom

National Council for the Social Studies

Logging on to the site of the National Association for the Social Studies (NCSS) is rewarding. The site has information on all the subjects covered in social studies curricula (K-12) and more. There are lesson plans and great hands-on projects on topics such as, civics and citizenship, the civil rights movements, womens' rights issues, Native American history, etc. NCSS online address is: www.socialstudies.org/resources.

Annenberg/CPB Learner.Org

The Annenberg/CPB Learner site has a series of math activities, dealing with daily life on topics such as, population growth, cooking, savings and credit. You can access these great fun math activities by visiting their site at: www.annenberg/cpblearner.org



Teach with Movies

Today's kids are multi-taskers. They can talk on the telephone, watch television and still tell you that they are studying or doing homework. In fact, it takes more than just lecturing to engage the 21st century student. "Teach with Movies" operates a site that offers teachers and their students great "learning guides" to utilize with certain movies. The organization's list contains biographical and epic films as well as some classic movies. Teachers can visit them online at: www.teachwithmovies.org

Donors Choose

DonorsChoose, a nonprofit organization was created by a former teacher to help teachers and their students. Educators log on to their website, register and write mini proposals about any project ideas that they will like to carry out with their students. DonorsChoose helps teachers with supplies and equipments that help make their classrooms more conducive and exciting for learning.

The minute award teachers receive to buy classroom supplies is always insufficient. They often must dip in their own packets to purchase basic items, such as computer disks or a camera. DonorsChoose is there to help teachers and their students. Log on to www.donorschoose.org for more information and to register.

(continued in insert page)

Another Successful Annual Conference on the Education of the Haitian Child

The 2005 conference on the Education of the Haitian Child was held Friday, May 27 at Brooklyn College. For the past eight years, under the auspices of HABETAC, educators, bilingual Haitian Creole and others, working with the Haitian English Language Learners, gather to reflect upon practices, and look at policies and regulations, affecting the education of the Haitian Child in New York State's public school system.

This annual conference day brings together decision makers at the State and City Departments of Education, Haitian researchers, and scholars, parents, school leadership and classroom practitioners. It gives educators the opportunity to debate issues, and formulate plans of action that could ameliorate school and classroom situations for the Haitian student. **(Continued on inserted page)**



Photo Credit: Tequila Minsky 2005

A Panel of educators speaking at the Haitian Child Conference of May 2005 at Brooklyn College. From left: Yves Raymond, Berthe Faustin, Yvette Williams, Marina Vinitzkaya, and Jean Previllon.

Please send text contributions, comments, and questions to:
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Telephone (718) 951-4668/4696 Fax (718) 951-4909 or
Email: habetac@brooklyn.cuny.edu

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*Welcome Back
And
Have a Great School Year!*

Remember these major HABETAC Yearly Activities:

Career Day for Haitian High Schoolers

Haitian Spelling Bee

Conference on the Education of the Haitian Child

Freebies and Great Materials for your Classroom

***REMINDER ***

Do not forget to check the New York State Education website at: www.nysed.gov; and the New York City Department of Education at www.nycdoe.net for academic or other extracurricular programs; and for breakfast and lunch programs in the schools in your neighborhood.

HABETAC is finally in its own and new office at Brooklyn College.

Please note **the changes be-**

low:

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Newspaper in Education

Many newspapers in the New York area participate in the Newspaper In

Education (NIE) Program. Teachers and their students can enroll and use these dailies to supplement their instructional plan. The papers contain world, national and local news. Editorial and opinion pieces can be used as models to teach/demonstrate to students how to craft persuasive essays. Photographs can be used in many ways. They can help to stimulate students to speak and/or write.

The New York Times and the Daily News are participants in the NIE Program. For more information and to see how your class can participate, log on to www.nytimes.com and/or nydailynews.com.

HABETAC's 2005 Haitian Child Conference at Brooklyn College

(Continued from page 3)

The keynote address was given by Professor Paul Latortue, dean of the School of Business and Economics at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras. His presentation drew a picture of the historical, economic and social contexts in which the Haitian child might come out of. He did not shy away from comparing the Haitian nation of the 1800's and the one of today. His well-researched and thought-provoking talk helped the educators to understand best the Haitian youngsters in their schools.

Ms. Carmen Perez Hogan of the Office of Bilingual Education at the New York State Education Department addressed the educators and took burning questions from them on several issues, ranging from concerns for the lack of prompt and appropriate placement services for newly arrived youngsters to unfair testing requirements and regulations for these recently arrived students. She encouraged the exchanges and thanked them for their hard work.

Ms. Perez Hogan is a staunch advocate for equity and excellence in education for all students. Her leadership has been invaluable to the

work of the Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) around the state. She promised to take their concerns and problems back to the State Education De-



Photo Credit: Tequila Minsky 2005
Two Teachers at the Haitian Child Conference

partment and to continue working to ameliorate the education services for our English Language Learners (ELLs).

Ms. Maria Santos, the Senior Instructional Manager from the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Division of English Language Learners

shared data gathered by the NYCDOE on the performance of ELLs. She outlined areas of success, and highlighted challenges ahead if we are committed to preparing our kids for the 21st century world. Ms. Santos reaffirmed that being bilingual is an asset not a deficiency.

Many panelists presented the difficulties that our Haitian ELLs are facing in the schools, starting with the virtual absence of Bilingual programs in the city to respond to their needs to the lack of appropriate special education services for ELLs with disabilities.

A problem that panelists and educators raised and debated is the huge number of Haitian students who come into the system with limited or no formal schooling. These kids are literate in no language and their deficiencies are really not addressed. The educators felt that the Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE) Program needs to be strengthened, expanded and even redefined, if these youngsters are not to be totally "left behind."

The HABETAC Newsletter

SUMMARY OF KEY PRESENTATIONS

HAITIAN CHILD CONFERENCE 2005

Presentation of Jean Previllon
Retired NYCBOE Resource Specialist
Title: The Promise and the Reality

Concerns:

- The disbanding of Haitian bilingual classes throughout the system.
- The substitution of personal decision-making versus research-based program implementation.
- In spite of all energies deployed by expert proposal writers, in spite of all written promises, in spite of all action plans, LEP/ELL students, the beneficiaries of millions of allocated dollars end up being misidentified, misplaced and as a result, misdiagnosed, miseducated, and lately, mistreated, and misnamed.
- Ladies and gentlemen, let it be inscribed in the records in permanent ink that our children are not animals. “N ap veye yo.” We are keeping watch over the development. Thanks to the diligence and initiatives of parents, sympathizers, and CBOs, the matter, of late, caught some sympathetic ears of the powers that be, mistreatment of our Haitian-American children will not be tolerated.
- Now, let’s agree that this will only take care of only one “mis, the mistreatment” leaving all the other ‘misses’ (misidentification, misplacement, miseducation) of the Haitian child to be reconciled with.
- How can parents, advocates or taxpayers ensure that funds generated by LEP students: tax levy, CR Part 154, Title III are used appropriately and effectively? Is there any access for inquiry?

Recommendations:

- The NYC Dept. of Education should follow suit in preparing for the formation of Haitian bilingual classes for the beginning for the 2005-2006 School Year. In order for the schools to be able to do that, they should have already identified their ELL students in the Spring as required by regulations.
- To ensure the implementation of all regulations regarding the education of ELL’s specifically, of Haitian-American students to reach their highest potentials and standards, the NYC Dept. of Ed. should allow a third party group composed of knowledgeable, linguistically competent, and sympathizing parents, CBO members and bilingual educators for the purpose of collaborating with decision makers in overseeing the implementation and in enforcing established education laws, mandates, regulations, and guidelines.
- The formation of such group would indeed be a single action designed to redress all the ‘misses’ mentioned earlier and to inform parents in their language so as to be able to make intelligence decisions about their children’s education.
- Finally, let us all wish to celebrate the day when statements such as: Information is power. In America, be all you want to be. In America, if you can dream it, you can achieve it. In America, liberty and justice for all are declared authentically, genuinely, sincerely not necessarily in good faith but in a faith that is good for the Haitian child, for America.

Presentation of Ms. Berthe G. Faustin
Principal P.S. 189K

Title: The Complex and Multifaceted Challenges of Leading an Urban School

Challenges: About 1,200 families
 Over 100 staff
 Kindergarten to 8th grade
 5 Floors and 2 buildings
 Title I School with 96% of families eligible for free lunch, about 20% recent immigrants Large number of English Language Learners

Lack of Resources: Funds
 Human
 Haitian-Creole Materials

The Building: Aging Building
 Lack of adequate facilities
 Gymnasium
 Playground
 Overcrowding

Parental Involvement:
 Many parents work multiple jobs
 Language barriers
 I.N.S. status
 Unaware of the benefits of parental involvement
 No access to transportation

Impact of parent’s socio-economic conditions on children:
 Large number of latchkey children
 Children raising children
 Children raising parents
 Children lack socialization skills
 SIFE population
 Cultural differences (e.g., use of corporal punishment, unaware of U.S. laws)

Action Plan
 Providing Services to Parents
 Parenting classes
 Academic classes (GED)
 Literacy in the Native Language
 E.S. L.
 Dual Language Program in Spanish and Haitian Creole
 Gifted Program
 Mentoring

Presentation of Yolette Williams
NYCDOE Clinical Social Worker
Evaluating English Language Learners

The evaluation process for English Language Learners (ELLs) for possible special education services must account for the student's identified disabilities as well as his/her cultural and linguistic differences. During the evaluation, ELLs language proficiency must be assessed in both the native language and English. Consideration should be given to the ELLs language proficiency, educational/experiential background, cultural experiences and learning characteristics.

ELLs must be assessed:

- In both their native language and English by a bilingual assessment team;
- Using culturally non-biased assessments;
- Using information from parents, bilingual/ESL teachers, bilingual clinicians and others, and must include observational data, academic/educational test data, and sociocultural information;

Special consideration must be given to the overall context of how, where and who will provide special education services to ELLs.

Challenges for our bilingual students:

Bilingual teams are made of one bilingual clinician instead of the former two, responsible to determine the student's language proficiency, possible disability and whether services should be provided in a bilingual setting or through ESL. The termination of all bilingual entitlement is also recommended when deemed warranted.

1. Bilingual supervisors/Administrators are no longer available nor required to review bilingual service exemptions.
2. Bilingual special education classes/programs are almost non-existent. They are continually being eliminated. Students requiring such programs are often provided with the services of an alternate bilingual Paraprofessional in a monolingual setting even when their IEP (Individualized Educational Program) clearly recommend instruction to be provided bilingually.
3. ESL programs often constitute services one period daily.

Pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act (IDEA) all children with disabilities are to be provided with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). An appropriate program begins with an IEP which accurately reflects the results of evaluations to identify a child's needs, establishes instructional objectives and ensuring the integrity and appropriateness of the child's education.

When FAPE is not provided to students as required by law, the parents have the right to seek recourse through mediation and/or an impartial hearing.

DOE Impartial Hearing Office
Brooklyn Community Mediation
131 Livingston St. # 201
210 Joralemon Street, #618
Brooklyn, New York 11210
718- 935-3280
(718)834-6681

Presentation of Yves Raymond
Mentor
NYCDOE Region Eight

**Title: Success and Challenges for
Haitian High School ELLs
Issues**

- Schools serving Haitian ELLs in New York City, namely Erasmus Hall HS, Prospect Heights HS, Tilden HS, Wingate HS, Springfield Gardens HS have been reorganized and broken up into small schools. The students they served have been dispersed into the smaller schools in a way that doesn't create the numbers necessary to offer bilingual services. As a result, the bilingual programs they previously offered have been either diluted or eliminated.
- The number of Haitian Language Arts classes has been drastically reduced due to the elimination or cutback of bilingual programs serving Haitian students.
- There is a lack of instructional materials written in Haitian Creole, especially in the content areas (math, science, social studies).
- Supervisors of Haitian bilingual programs lack the linguistic or cultural expertise to effectively help the teachers involved in the program grow and improve their practice.
- The English Language Arts Regents requirement is keeping a good number of our students from graduating High School, especially those who have been in the country for two years or less.

(Continuation of Yves Raymond's Presentation)

Recommendations

- Some of the small schools being created should specifically address the needs of our bilingual students. In some cases, students should be clustered in order to create the critical mass necessary to offer bilingual services.
- Haitian Language Arts should be an integral part of any Haitian bilingual program.
- Appropriate instructional materials should be developed or adapted to meet the needs of our bilingual students.
- Supervisors of bilingual programs should be knowledgeable about the language and the culture of the students they serve.
- Graduating High School seniors who have been in the country for two years or less should be exempt from the English Language Arts Regents. The passing rate of ELLs on the ELA Regents should be evaluated in relation to length of study in an English language school. Depending on the findings, an alternative test could be developed to assess ELLs who are ready to graduate from High School.

Presentation of Marina Vinitskaya ELL ISS, Region Six in Brooklyn

**Title: English Language Learners
Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling (ELL SIFE)**

Defining SIFE

- Come from a home where a language other than English is spoken and enter a school in the US after grade two;
- Upon enrollment, have had at least two years less schooling than their peers;
- Function at least two years below expected grade level in reading and mathematics; and,
- May be preliterate in their native language.

Ten percent of New York City school children are SIFE, about 143,575. (Source: BESIS, * preliminary 2004-05, ATS). There are a total of 43 SIFE sites in New York City. Brooklyn counts 18, Queens 12, Manhattan 8, Staten Island 3, and the Bronx 2. The largest amount of SIFE is concentrated between 3rd and 9th grades (IBID).

Recommendations

- Raise SIFE Awareness in our educational community;
- Provide continuous citywide Professional development to build skills and capacities of schools and educators working with SIFE Students;
- Provide planning and implementation grants to schools and community based organizations working with SIFE families and children;
- Continue effort of identifying and serving SIFE children in our schools to help them meet the academic standards;
- Create academic programs that are rigorous and effective to support the ELL SIFE native language literacy and the acquisition of English as a Second Language;
- Engage parents of SIFE in the school and in the learning experiences of their children;
- Recruit and support highly qualified, certified and conscientious educators to work with SIFE children;
- Read research materials of Jim Cummins and Lily Wong Fillmore on language acquisition to better understand the ELL SIFE population.

Suggested Resources for SIFE and Useful Websites

- [Http://www.ncela.gwu.edu](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu)
- [Http://www.esl.com](http://www.esl.com)
- [Http://www.a4esl.com](http://www.a4esl.com)
- [Http://www.gonyc.about.com](http://www.gonyc.about.com)
- [Http://chief.com](http://chief.com)
- [Http://visitnewyork.com](http://visitnewyork.com)
- [Http://www.nycboe.net](http://www.nycboe.net)
- [Http://www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)
