

Bilingual Resource Center for BIA Schools in Nome Agency

"We are planning and developing a total curriculum program which will allow students to be equally proficient in their Native language and in English," state Lonn Poage, Director of the newly formed BIA Nome Agency Bilingual Resource Center.

Poage comes to the job as Director with several years of bilingual experience. Until recently he was Director of the Akiachak Early Childhood Community Center and Principal of Akiachak Day School where a bilingual curriculum has been in effect for the past three years.

"Our first project is to build on the bilingual program which was started on St. Lawrence Island two years ago by the Alaska Native Education Board (ANEB). The people of the two villages on St. Lawrence, Savoonga and Gambell, speak and Eskimo dialect called Siberian-Yupik," explains Poage in outlining the Resource Center's activities. Continuation of the St. Lawrence project has been made possible through Title VII, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) grant to expand and further develop the bilingual program including the formation of the Bilingual Resource Center located in Nome.

Presently there are seven staff members at the Center including Director Lonn Poage, three resource developers, an illustrator, a curriculum specialist, and a linguist.

The Resource Center staff has been working with Resource Councils made up of parents in the two villages and with the on-site teachers and bilingual instructors. From their discussions policy direction has been established by the Councils.

Utilizing input from the schools staffs and the communities a bilingual education model is under construction which will provide learning development in Siberian Yupik and English to assist students in developing competence in both languages as bilingual speakers.

The Siberian Yupik-English model is designed on the premise that bilingual education can be achieved through controlled experiences in two languages. Recent studies completed on second language acquisition show a controlled language learning situation provides a workable format.



BILINGUAL RESOURCE CENTER Staff in Nome discuss chart showing bilingual curriculum model. Left to right, seated: Resource developer Henry Silook, illustrator Mike Apatiki, typist Beverly Immingan. Standing: Resource developers Linda Golodergen, Ray Oozevaseuk, linguist Dave Shinen, curriculum specialist Myra Poage and Center director Lonn Poage.

Modification of this format will provide a basic design for the SYE Model to be used with Eskimo children on St. Lawrence Island.

The design structure organizes the educational program in two components: the Siberian Yupik Eskimo learning center and the English learning center. Each center will be totally programmed in one language for a specified number of hours each day, directly relating to the language. The learning centers will be designed to provide experiencing and exploring in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in each language.

The primary objective is to assist the student in developing the understanding that when in the language learning center, there will be one constant language used. The intent of the design is to assist the student individually in English and Eskimo as he moves through the program. A general rule of thumb is for first graders to have one hour of English each day, second graders one and a half hours, third graders two and a half hours.

"We are keeping these time limits in mind as a base, but our ultimate objective is for the student to move into 50/50 parallel language learning as he progresses through the bilingual program. We have set the 50/50 goal knowing the impact the kindergarten instruction will make on the child and the

parent/child learning program we are designing for the home. As these two programs become operational we feel the student will be able to handle more English at a younger age," Director Poage points out.

"Many of the parents on St. Lawrence Island have expressed concern on not having enough English taught. With this in mind, the planned Model was presented to both communities for their comments and received very positive reaction. The parents also showed concern for their children being literate in Eskimo.

"As a result of their recommendations we are planning to start Eskimo literacy classes next year in grades 4-8. The classes are planned for around two and a half hours a week, scheduled by the principals of each school. As the students become competent in reading and writing Eskimo, the plan is to move into literature and a study of the different dialects on the Island," states Poage.

Along with developing the bilingual SYE Model the Center staff is in the process of organizing a written Siberian Yupik alphabet, textbooks, and other curriculum materials. Books are written in English, translated into Siberian Yupik by the resource developers, then illustrated by Illustrator Mike Apatiki showing contemporary village scenes which children will be able to identify as being similar to their own environment.

The Center also provides training for the instructors. In addition to on-site instruction for the bilingual instructors and the certified teachers, workshops for developing curriculum and learning teaching techniques in a university or urban setting are planned.

The first such workshop was held in Anchorage, February, February 10 to 14, with instruction by Dr. John Turner, professor of education from the University of Alaska; Margo Zeulow, instructor at Bethel Community College; David

Shinen, linguist from the Summer Institute of Linguistics; and Carol Tate, professor of education, Central Washington College.

In summarizing the work of the bilingual education project, Director Lonn Poage says, "We believe the program will provide a valuable and realistic learning experience focusing on the individual needs of students on St. Lawrence Island. In the near future, possibly next year, we hope to expand the bilingual model to include other villages and schools."

Request for Transportation Dept. - 'NO'

Establishing a State Department of Transportation for Alaska received a firm "NO" from members and supporters of the Highway Users Federation of Alaska. Responding to a mailed ballot and fact sheet outlining both the claims for and against the proposed new State agency, the response was over 80% in opposition.

Federal objections cited included the concentration of authority and control of public funds under the proposed Commissioner of Transportation. Other objections were the weakening of legislative authority in transportation matters, less responsiveness to the public, possible diversion of highway user taxes into non-highway uses, such as mass transit.

Highway users expressed the feeling that Alaska needs more and improved highways, not a department to figure out alternatives to highways.

The Federation fact sheet to its members recognized the need for better coordination and communication between the various State agencies in planning transportation facilities and projects but pointed out that this could be accomplished administratively without the creation of a "super agency".

Bills have been introduced in both the House and the Senate to create a State Transportation Department although the Federation states that organization charts drafted within the administration for such a Department differ substantially from the wording in the legislation under consideration.



PAGES OF AN EARLY elementary text book on health written in Siberian Yupik, being prepared for reproduction, is checked for language and content accuracy by Center Director Lonn Poage (l-r), Resource Developer Ray Oozevaseuk and Curriculum Specialist Myra Poage.

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Tax Rebates: No Effect on Food Stamps

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has sent a telegram to the states saying that the income tax rebates and special payments will have no effect on the eligibility of food stamp participants.

Those rebates and payments were provided for in the Tax Reduction Act of 1975 which President Ford signed into law on March 29, 1975.

The law provides refunds on 1974 individual income taxes and a special \$50 payment to recipients of social security, railroad retirement, and Supplemental Security Income Benefits.

The Tax Reduction Act of 1975 requires that refunds and special payments shall not be counted as income or resources for purposes of determining eligibility or the amount of benefits received under any federal assistance program.

Therefore, these refunds and special payments will not be included as income or resources under the food stamp program.