The United States has been known for centuries as “the melting pot,” that provides new opportunities for all despite social class, race, gender, and ethnicity. As of late, the terminology has been altered, calling the Land of the Free “the salad bowl,” insinuating that while our country may be filled with a variety of cultures, these cultures may not be intertwining. The future, however, holds many mysteries in store for the culture of the United States. Due to the influx of Hispanic immigrants and the benefits that come with being bilingual, the Spanish language may take the United States by storm in the decades to come. As a result, many college professors believe it is imperative for all students to learn Spanish.

Read the following sources carefully. Then write an essay in which you defend or challenge that Spanish should be a graduation requirement for all American high school students. Support your response with textual evidence and inferences drawn from the source.

*List of Pros and Cons of Bilingual Education*

*OCCUPYTHEORY on 18 January, 2015 at 12:00*

While bilingual education may seem like an easy topic for a person to pick a side and stick with, the reality is that it is a much more complicated issue than most realize. What is considered a pro by one person may be considered a con by another. Different people in different parts of the country have different language needs.

Since the pros and cons of bilingual education vary greatly from person to person, it is important to take an objective look at the pros and cons of this issue. The time has come for a fair assessment of the advantages and disadvantages. Let’s take a more in depth look at the bilingual education debate.

LIST OF PROS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

**1. One Day, It Will Be A Necessary Skill**

As the world’s minority language speaking populations continue to rise, children who are taught to speak multiple languages will become a hot commodity on the job market. In certain states and communities, the Spanish speaking population often outnumbers the English speaking population.

The Chinese population is also rising steadily, as well as those who speak Hindi languages. The children who are prepared to adapt to this rapidly changing world will be much better equipped to face the problems of the future, as opposed to those who only speak one language.

Best of all, a young child’s mind is much more open to learning new concepts than their adult counterparts. Language experts concur that the peak time for a person to learn a new language is during their younger years. Increased language flexibility is a wonderful skill to be able to put on a resume and will open up a far larger job market for those who are educated bilingually.

**2. Learning A Second Language Makes It Easier To Learn A Third**

Once a person has opened their mind enough to take in a second language, it becomes even easier for them to learn a third and a fourth. Becoming bilingual increases a person’s ability to focus on learning new tasks and also triggers increased concentration. Multitasking also becomes much simpler for those who are bilingual.

The area of the brain that is responsible for learning new materials and encouraging spatial growth is further stimulated with bilingual education. Studies show that bilingual education leads to increased brain growth and an increase in the person’s ability to handle multiple tasks at once.

The world is shrinking every day at an astonishing rate. Children who are able to communicate fluently with a variety of cultures and peoples are the ones who will rise to the top in a world that is becoming more far more global that anyone could have anticipated.

**3. There Are Multiple Personality Benefits**

There a plethora of personality benefits to be gained by children who are able to experience a bilingual education. Bilingual education is a great way to enhance your child’s overall working memory. Studies have shown that children who show the ability to handle learning a second language also increase their ability to process new sounds, especially those who use separate languages on a regular basis.

A child who receives a bilingual education is also far less likely to experience a wide range of personal disorders, including anxiety. They are also typically much less lonely than their single language speaking counterparts. Accomplishing a task of this nature is also a great boost to their self-esteem.

Their overall aggression level is also reduced and their ability to reason logically experiences a significant boost. They externalize their anger at a much less frequent rate and less likely to get into arguments with their peers.

**4. Leads To A More Well Rounded Child**

While skeptics believe that bilingual education will only serve to confuse a young student, studies prove that learning a second language enhances the mind and provides the student with a much brighter future, making it easier for them to understand and relate to other cultures throughout the world.

A child who is able to grasp a second or third language opens up a much larger world to themselves and is much more likely to be cultured and worldly. They are able to study abroad and gain more from the experience than those who study abroad without being able to speak the predominant language of the country.

They will have a decided advantage over children who do not speak more than one language. Learning a second language provides a valuable gateway to positive interactions with other races, which leads to personal growth and more rapid development of other important social skills.

LIST OF CONS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

**1. Bilingual Education Is Quite Costly**

Schools all across the country are struggling to keep their foreign language programs funded as is. Running a dominant language program is far cheaper than attempting to educate a minority language student. Often, if a student does not have a strong understanding of the language they are being taught, all of the money spent on establishing the program is a complete waste.

Spending money on bilingual education programs takes valuable funding away from programs that schools are already forced to cut back on. Physical education and music related programs are consistently falling by the wayside, in favor of foreign language programs that are not proven to be successful. For this reason, many schools have elected to stick with their current dominant language programs.

**2. Foreign Language Students Do Not Assimilate As Easily**

One of the most common criticisms of bilingual education is that it provides foreign language students with an opportunity to avoid complete and total assimilation into the culture where they currently live. In order to fully adapt to the current culture of the country where a person resides, a person needs to make certain sacrifices.

Chief among these sacrifices is their dominant language and culture. When bilingual education is offered, it simply serves to widen the cultural gap, as opposed to bridging it. It also becomes more difficult for the student to experience success in other school subjects, such as math or science.

Those who speak a minority language should be able to learn English, while also holding onto their native tongue and their own cultural traditions. Learning a second language should never be an either/or proposition.

**3. Reduces Focus On A Career**

When a child is made to spend a great deal of time learning a second language, this can hinder their ability to develop the skills that they need in other areas. Specializing in one particular area is considered to stunt the child’s overall development and can actually lead to a lack of well-rounded learning.

Teaching a child to be bilingual is an extremely time consuming pursuit and one that can cause a great deal of frustration for both the teacher and the student alike. If a child becomes frustrated with learning, this attitude can spill over into how they relate to other subjects.

Some children respond well to learning a second language, while others do not. For this reason, it is crucial that you are able to read the warning signs in the child you are trying to teach, so that you do not burn them out on learning altogether and adversely affect their chances of reaching their true potential and focusing on the career that they desire.

**4. Lack Of Qualified Teachers**

One of the main issues that continues to arise in the world of bilingual education is the severe lack of qualified teachers who are able to handle the subject. Quality bilingual education requires a firm, patient, expert teacher who has the time on their hands to take care of all the issues that arise.

Unfortunately, these teachers are in very short supply. Many of them are already very busy teaching their normal subjects and do not have the time necessary to add teaching a second language to their already busy schedule.

At a point in time when so many teachers’ capabilities are being stretched to the limit and schools are struggling to fill their staffs with qualified educators, the idea of taking talented teachers and assigning them to teach a second language is not something that is universally supported.





