

Enseña English, pero teach español, también

OUR OPINION:

Mandatory bilingual education for all Americans is overdue

Si usted pueda leer esta frase, sea uno de los millones de personas que hablan español. Desafortunadamente, usted es parte de una minoría en los Estados Unidos.

The debate surrounding bilingual education has been hotly debated in federal and state forums in recent years. While people from all over the world immigrate to the United States for a "better way of life," none has encountered more hostility and rejection than Mexican immigrants in California and the Southwest.

According to a 1993 Urban Institute study, one out of every six students in the California school system was born outside the United States. The Los Angeles school system educates 30,000 new immigrant children each year. The majority of them emigrated from Mexico and Central American countries.

Thus, school systems on both coasts have been inundated with non-English speaking students that they must find a way to educate.

Some insist on teaching only English, while others teach all subjects in the students' native language and teach English as a separate subject. Still others integrate the two. The problem with these programs, however, is that they are delivering bilingual instruction only to immigrants. Bilingual instruction should become a part of public education from the first-grade level.

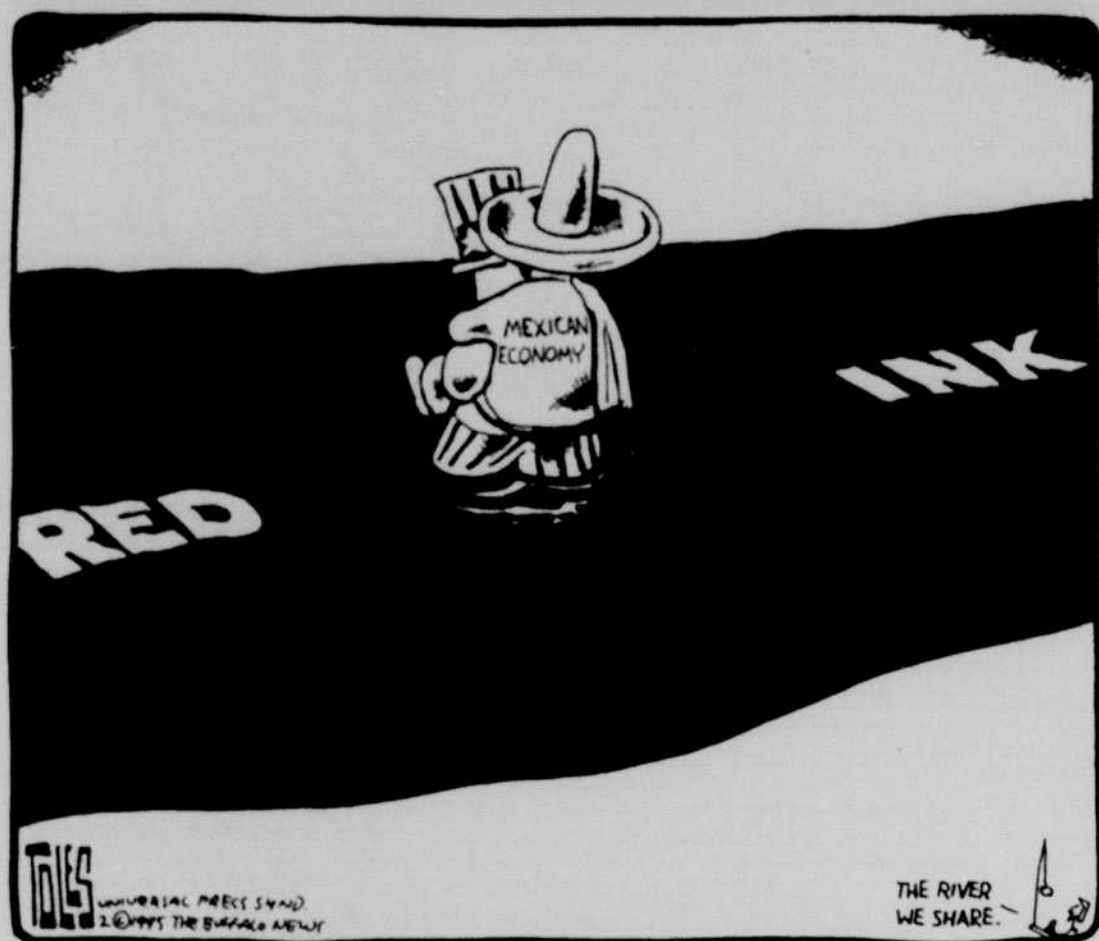
America is the only devel-

oped nation that does not require proficiency in a foreign language. Unlike European countries, we have had the luxury of being big enough (geographically and economically) to isolate ourselves from the sound of foreign tongues. As we are reminded daily, however, the world is getting smaller, and we must be able to communicate in more than one language if we are to compete and cooperate in the global village.

Mandatory Spanish instruction in public schools would solve the dilemma of what to "do" with non-English speaking children. *Hoy en día, esos niños están aislados desde los demás porque el idioma es una barrera.* By teaching all students Spanish, schools would teach English-speaking children empathy for the difficult process of learning a foreign language.

Critics of this idea argue that immigrants have always assimilated to America's values and its language. Mexicans, they say, should be no different. But separating Mexican children from American children only emphasizes the us-and-them mentality that permeates our country. Across-the-board bilingual education would actually accelerate the assimilation process. Students would begin to realize that just because someone speaks a foreign language, it does not mean he or she is less intelligent or does not feel joy and sorrow.

Somos una gente, and mandatory bilingual education would allow us to prepare the next generation for the world it will inherit.



Watch out — paranoia is bad for your health

It is not enough to have a good mind. The main thing is to use it well.
—Rene Descartes

Why the hell is everyone so damned paranoid these days? You've got everything from people thinking that Bill Clinton is a homosexual, atheist, commie-loving, french-fry munchin' moron to the belief that an ad of a tattoo on some woman's butt is going to incite people to acts of violence. You know something? Bill Clinton is all that (and more) and yes, every guy I talked to since seeing that ad felt an insatiable urge to go out and wreak havoc on the global female population.

By the way, did I mention that God exists in your sub-atomic particles and that I've got Elvis and Jimmy Hoffa in my freezer? I've also got a bridge that I can sell ya, real cheap.

Ladies and gentlemen, stop over-thinking so damn much. It makes you look like a twit, and it cuts off the circulation to your higher reasoning functions in your noodle such as your common sense. Now I'm not saying to just quit reasoning altogether or to become intellectually spineless.

Healthy debate's good for you. It gets the blood flowing and your dander up. Pick a subject, any subject. Try sex, politics or religion. Get really creative and try to combine all three. Get passionate about something. Just don't be stupid and interpolate something that really isn't there (yes, I've already made that mistake, big-time), by over-analyzing. You'll seem paranoid and there's no way anyone in their right mind will take you seriously. That's why they call them nuts. Or conspiracy freaks (Oliver Stone shot J.F.K.).

What if you don't think enough? Well, take the "militias" for example. These reactionary inbred jeds who have family trees that don't branch are complete loony toons. They go out in the woods, take on Bambi with an M-16, then sit around and blame the "Zionist Operated Government" (what ever the hell that is) and the United Nations for all of their woes. I would be extremely curious as to how many of these quacks have actually given what they believe in any type of coherent thought. Perhaps they would realize just how ridiculous some of their ideas are.

Ignorance seems to breed fear. It also seems to breed a notion that all your problems are everyone else's fault. And where do these whackos get their opinions? Rush Limbaugh, the NRA, the tooth fairy — who knows. But if they were a

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little bit more educated I highly doubt they'd be so paranoid that everyone was out to get them.

But if ignorance breeds fear, then haughty intellectualism breeds sheer ridiculousness. It's almost funny how in probably the most educated part of the state, some of the most ridiculous things occur. Political Correctness anyone? Who ever came up with this tripe should be drawn and quartered. Remember grade school? No one gave a damn who you were or what color your skin was; except for girls, they all had cooties. Most people still don't care. They've got more important things to worry about than pissing off some Norwegian by accidentally thinking that he's American. (Us white people all look the same.)

In academia it gets even worse. I remember hearing a visiting professor give a talk on how in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra not only was Antony in love with Cleopatra, but with Enobarbus as well. Some how she got it in her head that Shakespeare had subconsciously written in this hidden love between the two men and that every scholar for the past 400 years had somehow managed to miss it. Well maybe they missed because it was never there. Oh, did I mention that I have a Ph.D. in English literature?

People can get so over-concerned about the most stupid trivial issues that they lose sight of the larger picture. Just start enjoying life and stop being such a paranoid over-analyzing ninny.

Let me reiterate once again. Do not stop thinking. I have to say this again to prevent nitwits from sending editorial letters decrying that fact that I'm being "anti-intellectual." Our ability for higher reasoning is what makes life so damn fun. But we have to use it properly and not abuse it (like I'm doing) with attempts to seem learned or erudite.

Question what you find absurd. If someone is being preposterous, let them know. Their response will probably be something like "well I never" and stomp off in a huff. Then you'll know you nailed it.

So go forth and question the ludicrous, the inane, the corny; but most importantly, enjoy doing it.

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