

Dream of a Common Language. Sueño de un Idioma Común.



Photograph by Jeff Wilson

The graduates of a radical bilingual education program at Alicia R. Chacón International, in El Paso, would have no trouble reading either of these headlines. What can they teach the rest of us about the future of Texas? by [Nate Blakeslee](#)

On (En) a warm spring morning in east El Paso, I watched a science teacher named Yvette Garcia wrap duct tape around the wrists of one of her best students. We were in a tidy lab room on the first floor of Del Valle High School, in the Ysleta Independent School District, about two miles from the border in a valley once covered with cotton and onion fields but long since swallowed up by the sprawl of El Paso. Garcia taped a second student around the ankles, bound a third around the elbows, and so on, until she had temporarily handicapped a half-dozen giggling teenagers, whom she then cheerfully goaded into a footrace followed by a peanut-eating contest. It was a demonstration of the scientific concept of genetic mutation—or at least I think it was. The lab was taught entirely in Spanish, and my limited skills didn't allow me to follow a discussion of an advanced academic concept. But these kids could grasp the lesson equally well in Spanish or in English, because they had been taught—most of them since elementary school—using a cutting-edge bilingual education program known as dual language.

In traditional bilingual classes, learning English is the top priority. The ultimate aim is to move kids out of non-English-speaking classrooms as quickly as possible. Students in dual language classes, on the other hand, are encouraged to keep their first language as they learn a second. And Ysleta's program, called two-way dual language, is even more radical, because kids who speak only English are also encouraged to enroll. Everyone sits in the same classroom. Spanish-speaking kids are expected to help the English speakers in the early grades, which are taught mostly in Spanish. As more and more English is introduced into the classes, the roles are reversed. Even the teachers admit it can look like chaos to an outsider. "Dual language classes are very loud," said Steven Vizcaino, who was an early student in the program and who graduated from Del Valle High in June. "Everyone is talking to everyone."

Teaching advanced Spanish literacy alongside English is a goal that no other form of bilingual education even aspires to, but it is the secret to the success of the dual language model. "In most districts, kids are moved out of bilingual education just as soon as they learn rudimentary English," said Elena Izquierdo, a professor of bilingual education at the University of Texas at El Paso. Dual language takes longer, in part because so much time is

devoted to Spanish grammar and literacy. But it pays off down the road. “Learning how Spanish works helps them develop the cognitive skills they need to learn English well,” she said. When it all clicks into place, she said, it’s an amazing thing to see. “Switching between English and Spanish is like breathing for us now,” said Vizcaino, who is going to college in the fall at the University of the Southwest.

Ysleta’s success shows what is possible. It does not, unfortunately, show what is typical. Texas’s adventure in bilingual education is nearing the end of its fourth decade, and the enterprise, by and large, is floundering. Students in bilingual programs across the state are scoring well below native speakers on standardized tests, even after they have been in the classes for years, and they are dropping out of school at more than twice the rate. In many districts, kids who need the classes exit the program too early—or are never enrolled at all—in part because many Texas school administrators either don’t believe in bilingual education or can’t find enough certified teachers to fully staff their classes. But bilingual education is also failing because the Texas Education Agency has scaled back its commitment to the program, and the districts are following suit.

What makes this so dangerous is that bilingual education has never been more critical to the future of this state. Roughly 16 percent of all students in Texas public schools are not fluent in English, a figure that has more than doubled since 1991 and one that most experts consider to be a conservative estimate. Only California has more English learners in its schools. Most of these kids were born in the United States to Spanish-speaking parents and have grown up using Spanish at home. The situation is most acute in the largest school districts, such as Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Austin, each of which is now a majority Hispanic district. In Dallas, one in three public school students is not fluent in English. Research shows that if these kids do not become proficient in English by the ninth grade, the likelihood that they will drop out of school increases dramatically. This is a big part of what is driving the alarming Hispanic dropout rate in Texas, where just seven in ten Hispanic kids finish high school. (This number is according to the TEA; other studies have put the figure much lower and called into question the TEA’s methodology.)

The consequences of this trend are sobering. In 2003 former Texas state demographer Steve Murdock caused a stir with a book called *The New Texas Challenge*. In a plainspoken, matter-of-fact tone, Murdock laid out a statistical analysis of the implications of the achievement gap between Anglos and minorities in a state with a rapidly growing Hispanic population. (Between 2000 and 2007, the Hispanic population in Texas grew at more than three times the rate of the non-Hispanic population, thanks to a combination of immigration and high birth rates. Texas is now 36 percent Hispanic; by 2040, or sooner, according to some experts, the state may be majority Hispanic.) The median income for Hispanic families is 40 percent lower than it is for Anglos, in large part because more Anglos finish high school and attend college. Unless we can close the education and income gap between Anglo and minority Texans, Murdock warned, a generation from now Texas will have a population that “not only will be poorer, less well educated, and more in need of numerous forms of state services than its present population but also less able to support such services.” Texas, of course, is already a poor state by most measures (such as the number of children living in poverty or the number of residents without insurance). What Murdock is talking about is a whole new ball game: a state where businesses will not relocate; a government that has no money for roads, schools, and bridges; and a home that young people will leave to find a better future.

The good news is that the solution to this problem, or at least a big part of the solution, seems to be in front of us. Like any district that serves a large number of low-income kids, Ysleta has had its struggles. But the dual language experiment has been a success by any measure. By the sixth grade, kids in the program—regardless of which language they spoke when they first enrolled—are outscoring native English speakers on the TAKS tests. They can also read, write, and speak Spanish at a sophisticated level. Not all schools in Ysleta offer dual language, but some that do have waiting lists of families seeking admission for their kids. And for obvious reasons: There was something amazing about sitting in the back of Garcia’s classroom and watching a group of confident and fully engaged young men and women tackling a college-level science course, knowing that most of them had started kindergarten with the enormous disadvantage of not speaking English.

So why aren’t state leaders getting the message? Why, for example, didn’t the state legislature pass a single one of the bilingual education bills introduced in the 2009 session? Why, 34 years after the state was first sued for failing to educate kids who don’t speak English, is the TEA once again under the threat of a federal injunction?

The answer, of course, is politics. Always controversial, bilingual education today has become mired in the ongoing debate over what to do about illegal immigration, which remains the single hottest issue among conservatives in Texas. Education reform advocates have struggled to unhinge the two issues, but so far they have not been successful, perhaps because both debates circle around the same question: What kind of state will Texas become?

Ysleta's experiment with dual language education began in earnest in 1995, when a visionary superintendent named Tony Trujillo asked a young principal named Bob Schulte to run a new kind of elementary school. Trujillo's concept became a language arts magnet school called Alicia R. Chacón International, which was a dramatic departure from the status quo in more ways than one. All kids at Alicia Chacón would learn English, Spanish, and a third language of their choice, making the school one of the few places in Texas where elementary school students could learn Russian, German, Japanese, or Chinese. The curriculum included instruction not just in language but in foreign cultures; kids studying Chinese would practice kung fu during gym class.

What was truly radical about the new school, however, was the way the curriculum turned the whole concept of bilingual education on its head. "In my experience, most principals judge success by how few kids they have in bilingual ed classes," Schulte said. Typically, as higher level speakers exit a bilingual education program, he explained, slower learners and recent immigrants are left behind, and a stigma becomes attached to being "stuck" in bilingual classes. At Alicia Chacón, bilingual education was not thought of as remedial, that is, as a way to "fix" the English language deficiencies of certain students. It was an end in itself.

Marta Valles, whose son Lalo was one of the first kids to enroll at Alicia Chacón, recalled the school's initial organizational meeting. "There were only three of us there," she said. "We said, 'Uh-oh, this is not going to work.' But they said, 'Trust us.' " Lalo was enrolled in second grade at another elementary at the time, where he was being taught in a traditional bilingual education program. Valles, who was born in Mexico and came to El Paso as a teenager, couldn't judge Lalo's progress in English, because she did not speak much English herself. But she noticed that his grammar in Spanish seemed to be getting worse, and she was ready to try something different.

The first year at Alicia Chacón was a struggle. Administrators relied heavily on parents, who were required to volunteer four hours a month. The curriculum was a work in progress, and Lalo struggled with English at first, as many kids in dual language programs do. He didn't pass the TAKS in English until sixth or seventh grade.

Today, however, he is working on a master's degree at Our Lady of the Lake University, in San Antonio. Valles sent four more of her kids through the program, and like most of the first generation of Alicia Chacón parents, she became an evangelist for the school, which grew rapidly through word of mouth. Joann Orrantia, another pioneer at Alicia Chacón, was attracted to dual language for a different reason. She was raised in Fabens, a small town near El Paso. "When I grew up, we weren't allowed to speak Spanish in school," she said. By the time she had kids of her own, she had lost most of her Spanish, and her daughters, Sara and Renee, were raised speaking English. (Like many El Pasoans, the only Spanish speakers they could understand well were their own grandparents.) Orrantia was reluctant to put them in Alicia Chacón, where they would start out hearing Spanish most of the day, but she decided to give it a try. "My parents were petrified. They said, 'You're an American, what are you doing? If you want them to know Spanish, you can teach them.' But what could I teach them? How to speak to each other, maybe, but doing business in Spanish? No." Orrantia decided that if her children were going to succeed in El Paso, they needed to learn both languages.

Enrolling a child in a dual language program requires a leap of faith. "All of us, I'm sure, in the first year or two were thinking, 'Are they really gonna pick it up? Are they gonna lose their English or lose their Spanish?'" Orrantia recalled. Recognizing this, principal Schulte had the first group of parents sign contracts promising they would stay in the program for at least five years. "They're in Spanish for the first four years, and all of the sudden in the fifth grade they get the English," Orrantia explained. "That's where the contract comes in. You have to give it time to work."

The Ysleta ISD now offers a dual language program at sixteen elementary schools, five middle schools, two K—8 schools, and three high schools. Dual language high school courses are available to a limited number of qualified students, like those I visited at Del Valle, where the program has evolved into something akin to an honors track.

At Alicia Chacón, admission is by lottery, not by merit. Nevertheless, graduates of the program have acquired an impressive local reputation. Orrantia's daughter Renee, who graduated from Del Valle in June, recalls that when she entered high school, the other kids looked at her and her fellow Alicia Chacón alumni with awe. "They said, 'You're like those little geniuses that learn all those languages, right?'"

Bilingual education has been the law in Texas since 1973, when Governor Dolph Briscoe signed the Bilingual Education and Training Act and the state legislature finally conceded that English immersion, that is, putting a child who doesn't speak English into a classroom where nothing but English is spoken, simply doesn't work. The new law directed districts with more than twenty kids in need of English language instruction in a single grade to offer bilingual education classes, at least in the early grades. Educators use the acronym LEP when referring to such children, meaning "limited English proficient." In general, LEP students from seventh through twelfth grade are taught in English as a second language (ESL) classes, which are courses taught not in Spanish but in simplified English, typically with a watered-down curriculum.

In 1975 a group of plaintiffs represented by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund sued the state of Texas, arguing that it had failed to provide an equal educational opportunity for LEP kids, despite the provisions of the 1973 law. Six years later federal district judge William Wayne Justice ordered the TEA to overhaul the program, which has been effectively under his jurisdiction ever since. In 2006 MALDEF petitioned Judge Justice to intervene again, arguing that the state had essentially stopped enforcing the 1973 law and that the LEP program was a failure. It pointed to test scores showing that English learners were scoring well below native speakers on standardized tests—despite the fact that the great majority of those tested had been enrolled in Texas schools for years—and were dropping out of school at more than twice the state average. In a July 2008 ruling, Judge Justice agreed, for the most part. Citing marginal but improving scores among elementary school students, he ruled that the state's program for younger LEP kids was adequate. But he ordered the TEA to come up with a plan to remedy the achievement and dropout gaps among LEP students at the secondary level, where the crisis was undeniable, and to revisit the way it monitored compliance with the law.

Numbers don't always show the whole truth, though. Judge Justice's ruling was welcomed by experts in the field, but many also felt, privately, that it was not entirely correct, or at least that it did not ask the right question. While it is true that the achievement gap between English speakers and English learners is most evident once the students reach ninth grade, the numbers may be concealing the fact that most bilingual education programs are failing students much earlier, and in ways much more difficult to quantify.

"The poor secondary program is a reflection of the failure to implement quality bilingual programs at the elementary level," said José Ruiz Escalante, a former president of the Texas Association for Bilingual Education and the current president of the National Association for Bilingual Education. Though they may not label it as such, many districts in Texas are using what amounts to an "early exit" model of bilingual education. Based chiefly on their performance on an exam, students are moved into standard classrooms after only a couple years of instruction in Spanish, despite the research that shows that it takes four to seven years to truly acquire academic proficiency in a language. Others never enter bilingual education programs at all, often because immigrant parents think that the classes will slow their children's acquisition of English, a belief that many school administrators in Texas quietly share and which some seem to be exploiting in order to avoid complying with the law. In Port Arthur, for example, parents refuse bilingual services at eight times the state average, which has produced a school district with a large number of Spanish-speaking kids sitting in English-only classes. This practice, according to experts like Iliana Alanís, who is the current president of the Texas Association for Bilingual Education, amounts to a de facto form of English immersion and a circumvention of the intent of the law. English learners often manage to pass the first significant assessment they face, the third-grade TAKS, only to fall further and further behind their native-speaking classmates as the language spoken in school moves from a rudimentary level to a more sophisticated form of English. "It's not that they can't speak English—they can," Alanís said. "But being fluent enough to grasp academic concepts in your second language—that's a different measure entirely, and it takes more time. For a lot of educators, it's nothing malicious. They just don't understand the principles behind bilingual education."

Because a student who exits the program early is no longer officially classified as an English language learner, his or her subsequent setbacks—repeating a grade, failing a later TAKS test, or eventually dropping out of school—don't go down in the books as a failure of the state's bilingual education program. But they should. A 2002 study found that limited English speakers whose parents declined to put them in bilingual education classes lagged behind their peers who did participate and dropped out at a higher rate.

Kids enrolled in the programs, meanwhile, are often not getting the services the Legislature intended. Classes are supposed to be taught by certified bilingual or ESL teachers, but the TEA rarely denies requests to waive this requirement. Especially in larger districts, like Dallas, which has been inundated with new immigrants, this has meant a lot of kids being instructed by teachers who, while they may speak Spanish, are not properly trained to deal with a special population.

The TEA has long been criticized for failing to properly monitor bilingual education programs to ensure that they complied with state policy. Six years ago the agency stopped its on-site visits altogether. For veteran observers of this issue, there is a certain circularity to the struggle to reform bilingual education. Twenty-eight years ago, Judge Justice chastised the TEA for failing to properly enforce the law, observing that the staffing of the agency's bilingual education division was "grossly inadequate" for the task. At the time, the division had ten professional employees. By 2006 it had one.

If the Ysleta ISD schools offer a glimpse of one possible future for Texas, those in Plainview offer another. A city of about 21,000 located fifty miles north of Lubbock, Plainview has already been through the massive demographic shift predicted by Steve Murdock, thanks to the expansion, in the nineties, of the local meatpacking plant, Cargill Meat Solutions, and the construction of Azteca Milling, the world's largest corn masa flour plant, both of which employ large numbers of Mexican immigrants. In 1980 Hale County, where Plainview is located, was 34 percent Hispanic, a figure that included many migrant workers who did not enroll their children in the local schools. Today the county is 53 percent Hispanic, and the local school district's enrollment is 72 percent Hispanic. These days Plainview feels like a border community situated three hundred miles from Mexico. Forty-one percent of local families do not speak English at home.

Plainview's school system is in crisis. For the class of 2008, the four-year dropout rate—that is, the percentage of kids in a freshman class who don't make it to graduation—was nearly twice the state average. The vast majority of the dropouts were Hispanic kids: Hispanics in Plainview's class of 2008 were almost two and a half times as likely to drop out as Anglos. Not surprisingly, the percentage of Plainview residents with a high school diploma is low: 67 percent. Per capita income is about \$16,000, roughly \$10,000 less than the national average, and the poverty rate is 50 percent above the norm. Rates of homeownership lag behind national averages. The property crime rate is 30 percent higher than that of other rural towns the size of Plainview.

"People here are worried about the future," said Tommy Chatham, who ran the Houston School, an alternative high school in Plainview, for fourteen years before retiring last year. The school provides a day care for teenage parents and a four-hour school day, which allows kids to work and attend classes at the same time. Both concessions are important, since Chatham's students had left Plainview High for any number of reasons—pregnancy, family problems, or because they simply weren't learning in regular classes. Many of the kids had jobs, and getting them to see the value of coming back to school was an obstacle. "There are plenty of jobs in Plainview that do not require a high school diploma, and the kids know it," Chatham said.

At the district headquarters, I met with superintendent Ron Miller and Edna Garcia, who coordinates Plainview's bilingual program. Miller, an avuncular, mustachioed man in his early sixties, was happy enough to answer questions about his district's troubles, but after a while he began to seem like a man under siege. He was facing pressure from the TEA to lower his dropout rate, of course, but he had other problems too: Plainview's tax base was shrinking, voters had recently rejected school construction bonds, and the federal government had just cut the budget for students from migrant worker families.

Despite Plainview's changing demographics, Miller did not seem to think that language problems factored into the district's high dropout rate. He has recently received a grant for a new dropout prevention program, but the focus will be on training teachers, encouraging attendance through prizes, and finding internships and training opportunities for students with local employers, not on dealing with the growing number of kids who aren't

fluent in English. By the district's reckoning, in fact, there aren't really that many kids in need of bilingual classes. In 2007 Plainview reported that only 9 percent of its kids were LEP. Districts around the state with comparable demographics typically report in the neighborhood of 25 percent LEP.

Garcia told me that the district's numbers are so low because as a rule the district tries to move kids out of bilingual classes in first or second grade. Plainview also has a large percentage of parents who refuse bilingual services for their kids, though even Garcia seemed surprised when I told her that it was as high as 27 percent in 2006.

Part of the problem, she said, is that an LEP child in Plainview may have to switch schools in order to stay in bilingual education classes. Plainview has six elementary schools, each of which serves pre-kindergarten through fourth grade, but only two of them offer bilingual education for all grades. One offers classes for pre-kindergarten through second grade, one for kindergarten through third grade, one for kindergarten through fourth grade, and one school, Edgemere Elementary, has no bilingual program at all, though 70 percent of its students are Hispanic. Switching schools, Garcia said, is a logistical hassle that some parents are hard-pressed to handle. "Maybe an aunt is picking them up, but she can't do it across town," Garcia said, "so they go with what is more convenient, rather than what is best for the child."

Some might argue that that is also a good description of Plainview's bilingual education program itself, the scope of which seems to be driven less by demand than by the administrators' estimates of what is possible. But neither Miller nor Garcia, who was born to migrant farmworkers herself, seemed particularly chagrined by the patchwork nature of Plainview's bilingual education program. Bilingual-certified teachers were hard to come by, Miller said, and the district had the best program it could manage under the circumstances. "We have been to recruiting fairs in El Paso and had a grand total of zero takers," he said. "They say, 'Oh, Plainview, that's by Dallas, right?' I say, 'No, that's Plano.' Then they go to the next table." They have tried to grow their own bilingual teachers—the local college, Wayland Baptist University, has a certification program—but there just weren't that many biliterate students coming out of Plainview High, nor that many college students willing to stay in the town after graduation.

Irene Favila, a social worker for an agency that serves migrant workers, said that the Hispanic middle class in Plainview, to the extent that there is one, is not reproducing itself. "I'm a baby boomer, and we're starting to retire," she said. Favila served twelve years on the city council, while her husband, Rocky, was a longtime school board member. "We are losing so many of these kids," she said. "Who will take over these positions if our kids are not skilled or educated?"

This is the question, writ large, that Texas lawmakers must do their best to answer in the coming years. Yet not a single bilingual education bill made it through the Legislature in the 2009 session, despite Judge Justice's looming federal injunction. "Racism and old notions of education block reform session after session," explained El Paso state senator Eliot Shapleigh. "We already know what works in educating limited-English populations. What is clearly lacking is the political will to create the programs, fund them, and make them work."

Shapleigh, a fifth-generation Texan now in his fourth term in the Senate, has emerged as the Legislature's most vocal champion for bilingual education. He refers to Ysleta's vision statement, which calls for all students to graduate from high school fluent in at least two languages, as the "revolutionary key to the future of Texas." A Rice graduate with silvering hair, he is a self-taught expert on public education, though his outspoken views on the subject have prevented him from getting appointed to the Senate education committee.

But that has not stopped him from attempting to educate his fellow senators. A few years ago, Shapleigh persuaded Senate education committee chair Florence Shapiro, a Republican from Plano, to come see Ysleta's dual language program firsthand, and she has spoken positively about it since. This past session, Shapiro authored a couple of modest bills aimed at helping districts identify best practices and improving teacher training for bilingual education. But she also allowed three key bilingual education reform bills to die in her committee. "I think we're doing as much as we can at this particular time," Shapiro told reporters after the session ended. There is never a good time for a Republican to get behind bilingual education in Texas, but Shapiro has found herself in an unusually tricky spot politically. She is considering a run for the U.S. Senate if Kay Bailey Hutchison resigns, as expected, to run for governor next year. Because Shapiro is a moderate, she has to protect

her right flank against the more conservative Republicans who will jump in the race with her, most likely Attorney General Greg Abbott or Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst. The challenge for bilingual education reform advocates is not convincing someone like Shapiro. The challenge is convincing the Republican party primary voters to whom she must appeal. The number of people in this state who actively oppose bilingual education is actually quite small, but so is the number of people who would vote in a Republican primary election (or a special election), and the intersection between those two sets is considerable.

For many conservatives in Texas the debate over bilingual education is just one front in the fight over the state's most pressing issue, illegal immigration. "We really don't feel like taxpayers should be funding education for the children of people who came here illegally," said Rebecca Forest, one of the founders of the Immigration Reform Coalition of Texas. Forest, who describes herself as "just a Texas mother," became concerned about immigration after September 11. Forest said she also considered the last session to be a failure, but for a different reason: None of the key immigration reform bills the group was backing made it through the House, despite the thousands of faxes that supporters of the coalition and other groups delivered to legislators. She felt the media, and maybe some conservative legislators, were underestimating the level of agitation in the grass roots over illegal immigration. "I mean, people are mad."

More than one person I asked about the politics of bilingual education wanted to talk about the Civil War. Opponents of bilingual education, they argued, are trying to preserve a way of life that, in their minds at least, has been slowly dying for 150 years. Their greatest fear is that Texas will become a state with two official languages, which will mark the end of the dominance of Anglo culture in Texas. If that is true, the fault lines were actually drawn in 1848, by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, when the Rio Grande became the official border of Texas. The inclusion of a wide swath of Spanish-speaking lands—known as the Nueces Strip—meant that Texas was always destined to be an artificial political construction, which, like the creation of Yugoslavia after World War I or Switzerland in 1848, combined more than one culture.

Though it's hard to imagine a more frightening future than the one that has befallen the former Yugoslavia in recent years, it is the Swiss model that most alarms ideological opponents of bilingual education. Switzerland has four national languages, and almost all children are required to study a second national language from an early age. Although learning Spanish is clearly a way to get ahead in Texas—Texas does more business with Mexico than it does with the entire European Union—nobody is talking about making Spanish an official language here. Still, the fears of conservatives are not overblown in one sense: Even if immigration levels off, as experts predict it will, Texas is headed for an increasingly bilingual future.

What that future will look like hinges in large part on whether our public education system can change. Public education in Texas is already rapidly becoming two-tier: The middle class has largely abandoned urban districts like Dallas, moving to the suburbs. But can the state really afford to abandon the roughly 800,000 LEP kids currently in the system? Or, as Senator Shapleigh put it, "Are we going to have a public education system that prepares everyone to succeed, or are we going to have a shipwreck full of kids who don't speak English and can't afford to go anywhere else?"

Dual language programs may provide a lifeline. Boosted by the success of Ysleta, as well as research showing the long-term effectiveness of the model, the adoption of similar courses seems to be gaining momentum, with some eighty districts in Texas now offering dual language on at least one campus. After years of atrocious test scores under its early-exit bilingual program, Dallas schools recently adopted a dual language model. Following that, an unprecedented number of LEP kids scored high on the most recent third-grade TAKS test. Brownsville, while not using dual language, has had considerable success by keeping kids in bilingual classes longer, at least until fourth grade. In some elementary schools in Brownsville, virtually every teacher is bilingual certified.

In many other places, however, superintendents and principals are not buying in, and that includes districts in South Texas and along the border, which have long been run by Hispanic administrators. In the El Paso ISD, for example, which is right next door to Ysleta, an early-exit model is used; sure enough, the district has struggled with LEP test scores and dropouts. "In a lot of areas people running districts now were educated under English immersion, in the old days in Texas," said José Ruiz Escalante, the former president of the Texas Association for

Bilingual Education. “And they feel, ‘Well, if it was good enough for me, it’s good enough for these kids.’ But what they forget is how many of their fellow students did not succeed.”✚

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