

## **History of Bilingual Education**

**History in America can show us how constitutional amendments paved the way for the edification of this country; similarly, in education constitutional amendments have had a similar impact in the identification, and importance of bilingual education. In retracing the major events that have paved the road for bilingual education we can take a direct look at the amendments that brought bilingual education to the forefront. We will start by presenting the 14th amendment of the United States Constitution, which was introduced on June 13, 1868 by the Congress of the United States. This amendment was important for all Americans at that time and for American's of today. According to IDRA.org (2012) the "14th amendment was ratified on July 9 1968k and the 14th amendment extended liberties and rights granted by the Bill of Rights to former slaves." Specifics of 14 Amendment of (1868) – This amendment states, No state shall... deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.**

**U.S Constitution Amendment 14 does the following:**

- Protects the privileges and immunities of all citizens.**
- Provides equal protection under the law.**
- Gives Congress power to enforce by legislation**

**This amendment has come to be fundamental to education and bilingual education. The amendment gave Americans the**

**equal protection of the laws and the ability not to be denied the rights presented in the law by any state in America. Another very important and impacting event in the history of education that is connected to bilingual education is the Civil Rights Act of 1964, This act did the following:**

**-Forbade discrimination on account of race, color, age, creed or national origin in any federally funded activity.**

**-Authorized the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare to apply compliance procedures and reviews and to withhold funds.**

**-Authorized the Department of Justice to sue in federal court to secure the desegregation of public facilities.**

**-Authorized the U.S. Office of Education to provide financial assistance.**

**Title VI of the Civil Rights Act – states according to the IDRA.org (2012) that “no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” According to San Miguel (2004), the "support for bilingual education during the mid-1960s was the growing strength of the black civil rights movement. This movement**

focused attention on the various forms of discrimination in America life and suggested new means for eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, including the use of protest, demonstrations and pickets (p. 119). Prior to these law impacting events James Crawford a bilingual education researcher expresses that "most often" minority languages "had been ignored" . (p. 11). Furthermore, when we consider that most minority languages were ignored and at times repressed we can place a great deal of importance on the 14th amendment of 1868-1968 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

According to IDRA.com (2012) "1965 Title I provided assistance for the education of children from low-income families." Title I provided assistance that was much needed during this period, and that would be essential to families of English language learners. Furthermore, Crawford (1999) describes that "in the 1960s, while high school dropout rates persisted among language-minority children, the country's economy had changed. Upward mobility was no longer an option for those without the English literacy. Prospects were doubly limited for groups who faced discrimination on the basis of race as well as language: Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Asian Americans, and American Indians. (p. 11).

The long road taken by America regarding bilingual education brings us to this most essential point that marked the new area of American Education. According to San Miguel (2004) "The era of the 1960s was the most important era for bilingual

education because it influenced several significant contextual factors which influenced ideas and approaches" (p. 5). San Miguel (2004) also states that "among the most important of these during the first half of the 1960s were bilingual research findings, the civil rights movement, federal social legislation and the emerging Chicano and Chicana Movement. These contextual forces brought to light questions about national identity, the federal role in school change, power, and pedagogy, and eventually contributed to the enactment of the federal Bilingual Education Act of 1968" (p. 5).

The Intercultural Development Research Association states that in "1968, Title VII provided assistance for programs designed to meet the needs of limited-English-proficient students". This period in the history of bilingual education was setting the state for what bilingual education is today. Constitutional Amendments were now being passed to address the needs of English language learners. Crawford (1999) points out that in 1968 "lawmakers resolved that something had to be done about the schools' negligence toward children with limited English skills. In short, the Bilingual Education Act was a leap of faith an experiment based more on good intentions than good pedagogy" (p. 12). Regardless of what the indicators presented to commence a plan that met the needs of limited-English-proficient students, we can see today that the leap of faith was successful to start and not be shut down. Today we see the need to meet the needs of limited-English-proficient

students more than ever before in order for the student to prevail in a global society.

From this time forward bilingual education welcomed the era of policy, an era that is concurrent today. The history of bilingual education has not been a path of roses; however, it has been a very challenging one; no different than what it is today.