

Mano a Mano Dual Language Program

157 Perry Avenue Norwalk, CT 06850

[http://ses.norwalkps.org/mano- a- mano](http://ses.norwalkps.org/mano-a-mano) T: (203)899-2950

Oral language development and why it is so important

Something we have been studying and discussing a lot here in our Mano a Mano program is how to develop oracy in our dual language students. Oracy is a relatively newer term in the dual language field. It is the control of academic listening and speaking, using more complex vocabulary and being able to speak in formal settings. Of course we want our students to be able to carry on social conversations with their peers and family members, and we work on that all the time! But we want so much more for our students! We want our Swans to be able to debate, make comparisons, analyze data, and reason in BOTH languages. This requires a very different kind of language than we use in everyday conversations, so we have to set our students up for success. So how is this done, exactly?

Students learn best through hands-on activities that allow them to experience the concepts through their senses. When we set up these experiences, allowing students to explore with their peers in a fun, stress-free environment, we get their attention, we get them thinking, and we get them TALKING. While their interactions, at first, may be more informal (remember, they don't yet have all of the words to explain this new concept), as teachers we start to move them toward using more vigorous academic vocabulary. We teach our students the difference between talking amongst our friends and how to speak more like a scientist (or a historian, a lawyer, or a mathematician). Both ways of speaking are perfectly wonderful, but we all just need to know when it is appropriate!

As parents, you can help us in our quest to deepen our students' oracy development! The number one thing you can do is converse with your children about what they are learning in their classes. Ask them to explain what they are researching, what they are reading, a picture they have drawn. Ask questions that have them compare how things are the same or different. Encourage your child to justify their reasons. At the dinner table, ask questions like, "Would you rather have a pet alligator or a pet shark and why?"

Remember, listening and speaking are the foundations of reading and writing. Truly, oracy is at the core of everything we do as human beings.



MAM Lottery Drawing

When: April 20th at 6pm

Where: Silvermine Gymnasium

If you have entered your child's name in the MAM lottery, you are welcome to attend the lottery drawing, though you are not required to be present. You will receive a phone call or written notification of the lottery results following the drawing. We are so excited to find out who our next cohort of dual language students will be! Good luck to everyone!



As parents, you can make such an impact on developing your child's native language by filling their worlds with rich conversation. It will have a profound effect on your child's academic achievement.

Which job seekers are in hot demand? Bilingual workers.

Adapted from an article appearing in the Boston Globe on March 13, 2017

By [Katie Johnston](#)

Help wanted: people who can speak more than one language.

Banks and cellphone providers are hiring employees who can communicate with potential customers in their native tongues. Software firms are seeking out translators and customer service representatives who can help them build their business around the world. And health care providers looking to serve the immigrants in their communities, as well as patients traveling to the United States for medical care, are beefing up their staffs with people who can understand, and convey, their concerns. The number of online job postings targeting bilingual workers more than doubled nationwide between 2010 and 2015, rising 162 percent, according to a new report by New American Economy, a coalition of mayors and business leaders that supports immigration reform. The languages seeing the biggest rise in demand: Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic.

Bilingual job listings for higher-end positions, including those in finance and engineering, grew the fastest, but the majority of bilingual jobs didn't require a bachelor's degree, including medical assistants and customer service representatives. In Massachusetts, online job listings for bilingual workers increased by 160 percent between 2010 and 2015, with Chinese, Spanish, and German skills showing the largest rise, according to the study. Teaching, health care, and insurance jobs accounted for many of the positions posted for Chinese and Spanish speakers, while pharmaceutical and electronics companies that have a strong presence in Europe drove the demand for German.

The share of jobs seeking dual-language speakers is relatively small, just 2.3 percent of all online listings in 2015. But that's up from 1.9 percent in 2010. During that time, employers added jobs for bilingual workers at a faster pace than for workers overall. In some cases, reaching out to immigrant communities is the only way for a business to grow, said Annalisa Nash Fernandez, a New York-based intercultural strategist who advises companies about bilingual employees. And with one in five Americans speaking a language other than English at home, up from one in nine in 1980, the number of people growing up fluent in multiple languages is rising. And this is who employers want, Nash Fernandez said — not people taking Spanish classes at night. "There's enough now of

The Multicultural Fair is fast approaching!

On May 5th we will be setting up our multicultural displays for our community viewing. We are asking families to help by submitting artifacts representative of the cultures being displayed (which will be returned to you following the event). If you have something to submit, please contact your child's teacher to coordinate. Thank you, in advance, for your help in making this event spectacular! The following countries/ regions will be represented:

Argentina

Austria

The Caribbean

The Netherlands

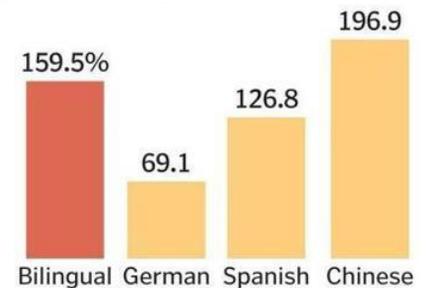
Columbia

Egypt

Bilingual help wanted

The change in the number of job postings in Massachusetts seeking candidates who speak world languages.

(2010 to 2015)



SOURCE: New American Economy

these first-generation Americans and second-generation immigrants that are perfectly bilingual, and it's hard to compete against that," she said.

The employer leading the way in bilingual job listings, both nationally and in Massachusetts, was Bank of America, which posted positions seeking dual-language speakers in more than a third of its online job listings around the country in 2015. Sometime in the 2040s or 2050s, according to projections, the United States will become a majority-minority country.

Spotlight on Staff: Elizabeth Chahine

Education: BA George Washington University: Latin American Studies, Economics, minor in Spanish Literature. MA DePaul University: Bilingual Education. National Board Certified Early and Middle Childhood Reading

Position and Start Year at Silvermine: Dual Language Coordinator and ESL Teacher, 2016

Where were you born and raised? I was born and raised in Central and Eastern Connecticut.

Why are you in education? I can't think of a better way to spend my day than around kids! Some of the most influential people in my life have been teachers, and I guess I always wanted to have the chance to do the same for others.

What are your hobbies and interests? I love to knit, read, and garden, though these days as a busy mom it seems my kids' hobbies have become mine! So for now I enjoy playing swordfights, Minecraft, and zombie tag with my two young sons.

What was the last good book you read? [The Life of Pi](#) by Yann Martel. I loved the beautiful language he uses to describe India and his incredible adventure with a Bengal tiger on a life raft.

What are your guiding principles? Treat people with fairness, kindness, and understanding. Remember to take a step back from things to regain perspective.

What are the traits you admire most in others? Work ethic, creativity, and compassion.

What profession, other than education, could you also see yourself doing? For many years I worked for a well-known wedding planner in Chicago, which I always loved. I also could see myself as a farmer. I grew up having horses and have always loved doing physical outdoor work.

What attracted you to a dual language program? I believe in everything dual language represents! It gets children together from all sorts of backgrounds, learning together as equals. I believe in the power of multilingualism and multiculturalism and know that two-way dual language is the most effect program for both learning a second language and bridging the achievement gap for our English language learners.

Other Important Events

Spring testing is here! Fifth graders will be taking the CMT Science test on April 3rd.

3rd-5th grade SBAC testing window will take place April 19th through May 5th.

Please be sure to have your student have a healthy breakfast and get plenty of rest the night before (as they always should!) best of luck to all of our Silvermine students!

STEM Expo night will take place here at the school on April 27th at 6pm.

Silvermine Beautification Day will be happening April 29th from 9-12. Join us to get our garden ready for the growing season!

What is the main challenge of teaching/ working in a dual language school? Educating the public and those who make large-scale decisions. There are a lot of misunderstandings about dual language. And programs like ours have to operate within a monolingual context. It requires a lot of advocacy.

Let's Talk About Culture

One of the three goals of Mano a Mano's program is to develop positive cross-cultural attitudes amongst our students, staff, and families. We thought we might take a moment to examine **culture** and **cultural competence**.

There are many different definitions of **culture**; however, one of the key things to remember is that culture is not easily understood or observed. While we often think of customs, such as foods, holidays and manner of dress when we discuss culture, these are only very superficial representations of culture. While such easily observed aspects of culture may be tied to the deeper values and beliefs of a group of people, these things alone do not constitute culture.

Here at Silvermine, we recognize diversity as a strength and resource and teach our students to consider the following when trying to understand the range of perspectives individuals may bring to a situation. They learn:

- Culture is not static; it is dynamic and ever changing. Cultural beliefs and behaviors are influenced by new information and experiences.
- Culture, language, ethnicity and race are not the only determinants of a person's values, beliefs and behaviors. Many other factors (gender, age, educational level, geography, socioeconomic status, personal experiences, etc.) influence how individuals and families function.
- Diversity is relational; each individual or group is diverse from another. One cannot assume that one group or value or belief is normative and acceptable, and that others deviate from the norm.
- No cultural, ethnic, linguistic or racial group can be described in generalities. Families and family members cannot be defined by characteristics of a group.
- Everyone has a culture and that culture is influenced and shaped by one or more cultures. No one is "ordinary."

In order to be **culturally competent**, one must consider her own beliefs, values and behaviors and be open and reflective when interacting with people from different backgrounds. Cultural competence is described as "the ability to think, feel, and act in ways that acknowledge, respect, and build on ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity."

The process of becoming culturally competent is an ongoing learning process that involves:

- Self-awareness – Becoming aware of personal values, beliefs and assumptions and which of these are tied to one's own culture. Gaining insight into one's own cultural background and its influence on how people think and act is the first step in learning to appreciate the different perspectives of families from other cultural backgrounds.
- Increased knowledge – Gaining knowledge of other cultures and the ways in which values, beliefs and behaviors might differ across cultures.

It is important that children have the opportunity to talk about and reflect on their own culture and how it shapes their own ideas about the world. By providing time both in school and perhaps at the dinner table to have these kinds of conversations, we will all raise our kids to be positive, understanding members of society.