



# **Educational strategies for working with binational students**

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# Objectives

- Understand instructional implications that are unique to the binational student
- Share effective practices and strategies for the binational student
- Learn about curriculum and instructional resources for the delivery of services to binational students



# Outline

- Who is the binational student?
- What characteristics of the binational student makes him/her different from other migrant students?
- What research-based effective practices and strategies can be adapted for the binational student? What are examples of effective practices?
- What unique strategies and practices do you use with your binational students?
- What resources and materials are available?



## Who is the binational migrant student?

- Binational students are eligible migrants students who have moved between Mexico and the U.S. with their parents or as emancipated youth at least once in the last 36 months.



Evening *secundaria* school with mainstreamed special education students (Morelos)



## **What's unique about binational migrant students?**

- Binational students' lifestyle is characterized by frequent international border crossings and continuous educational interruptions.
- Differences between U.S. and Mexico school systems cause a greater need for communication and intense professional development to address binational students.

# What's unique about binational migrant students?

Binational students who complete *secundaria* in Mexico come to the U.S. believing they have finished school. However, in the U.S., students who are 16 years old must still complete the last two years of their education. Because of the different requirements of the two educational systems, many binational youth in the U.S. who have completed *secundaria* fall between the cracks as dropouts or out-of-school youth.

Evening *secundaria* school with mainstreamed special education students (Morelos)



# What's unique about binational migrant students?

- Binational secondary students attending U.S. schools who travel back to Mexico in the winter lose a semester of high school credit if they do not return in time to take the final exams typically administered in January.
- Binational youth are able to work in Mexico because the school system offers a staggered 3-shift schedule. U.S. schools do not offer this type of nontraditional schedule, resulting in older binational students dropping out of school to work.

# What's unique about binational migrant students?

- Binational students often experience social/cultural identity shock and a lack of sense of belonging on both sides of the border weakening their desire to stay in school.
- Binational students may not receive adequate educational assistance from school staff due to the different requirements in Mexico and the U.S.



Students in Jala, Nayarit

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# Effective practices to meet the unique needs of binational students

*Concern – educational disruption due to frequent border crossings*

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- Network between U.S. and Mexico educators regarding records, schedules, credits, special education issues, promotion and graduation requirements – PROBEM & MEP directories.
- Utilize the Binational Transfer Document to expedite enrollment – training & distribution.
- Design systems to send books, assignments and other course requirements with departing students.
- Utilize correspondence courses and distance learning.

# Effective practices for binational students

*Concern – age/grade discrepancy due to educational interruption, differences in educational standards, curriculum, and language of instruction*

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- Ensure acceptance of credits from “sending” school/ country.
- Utilize tutorial, computer labs, distance learning, correspondence courses, and summer programs to complete credits.
- Facilitate binational student enrollment in ESL classes as needed.

# Effective practices for binational students

*Concern – loss of semester credits due to missing final exams because of binational moves*

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- Facilitate early administration of final exams and end of course requirements.
- Arrange for exams to be proctored by receiving school/country.
- Administer exams and grant credits upon the binational student's return.
- Design and administer alternative assessments prior to withdrawal.



Binational students from  
Guanajuato

# Effective practices for binational students

*Concern - social/cultural identity shock resulting in a lack of sense of belonging*

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- Establish a student welcoming committee, buddy system, peer mentoring, etc.
- Assign a teacher, counselor, or MEP staff to mentor newly enrolled binational students.
- Involve binational students in extracurricular activities such as multicultural clubs, sports, etc.
- Incorporate history and culture of binational students in class-room lessons and school activities.
- Involve binational exchange teachers with binational students.

# Effective practices for binational students

*Concern - inadequate educational assistance from families and school staff due to different requirements in Mexico and the U.S.*

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- Offer workshops for educators, parents, and students on academic requirements in the U.S. and Mexico.
- Encourage educator exchanges between the U.S. and Mexico.
- Provide families with concrete tools to support their children's education.
- Facilitate parent/teacher conferences.
- Provide family literacy activities.



# Key Resources

- Durón, S., Editor (1997). *Handbook on Planning for Limited English Proficient Student Success*. Denver, CO: Colorado Department of Education.
- Peregoy, S and Boyle, O. (2002). *Reading, Writing, and Thinking in ESL*. Englewood, NJ: Longman Press.
- Center for Migrant Education. (2004). *Monograph: XVIII Binational Migrant Education Program Forum*. San Marcos, TX.
- Herrell, A. and Jordan, M. (2003). *50 Strategies for English Language Learners*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Hall, Inc.

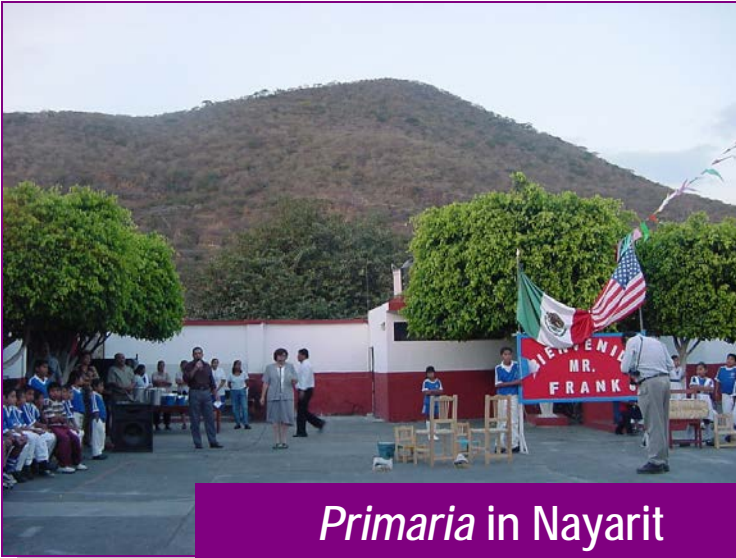


CONAFE School  
in an okra field in  
Morelos



Escuela secundaria  
técnica agropecuaria  
in Morelos





*Primaria in Nayarit*



*CONAFE Preescolar*



*CONAFE Migrant School in Nayarit – Primaria classroom in a sugar cane field*

