



LAES has developed a series of immigrant issue instructional modules entitled "Tierra de Oportunidad" for orientation to our complex society.

Date: _____

Student Name _____

Teacher Name _____

Module 18 Analyzing and Debating Issues

Instructions

Please join with three or four other students to work on this activity as a group. The activity is divided in two parts. The first part asks you to discuss two issues which have been in news recently. The second part asks you to reflect on your work with this module and tell us what you have learned.

Part I. Students should work in pairs or in small groups.

1. Share with your partner or other group members what you already know about the following two social issues: (a) the use of methyl bromide, or (b) bilingual education. If the class has Internet access and the Instructor approves, you might want to look for more information on the Internet.
2. Decide with your partner which issue to focus on-- methyl bromide or bilingual education. Then read the appropriate selection
 - The reading on methyl bromide comes from the April 1996 issue of the Sonoma County Environmental Impact Reporter. The article was written by Patty Clary. It has been simplified and shortened.
 - The article about bilingual education comes from The National Association for Bilingual Education report called "Bilingual Education: Separating Fact from Fiction." It was published September 18, 1995 and written by Richard V. López. It too has been shortened.
3. Decide what opinion you and your partner or group have about this issue. In deciding, be sure to pay attention to whether the point of view in the article is objective or whether it favors one side of a an issue. The choices are, for:

Methyl Bromide

- a. Ban the use of methyl bromide
- b. Continue the use of methyl bromide

Bilingual Education

- a. Favor bilingual education
- b. Opposed to bilingual education

4. On the answer sheet provided, list:
 - a. your group's position,
 - b. the reasons for that position,

c. two reasons people with the opposite opinion might have.

5. Write a letter or make an oral presentation defending your position. If you make an oral presentation, we would like you to write down the key points of your presentation, and hand them into the teacher.

To defend your position well, express sound and clear reasons for your opinion, be persuasive in your writing, anticipate objections to your opinion and address them, indicate consequences of actions both in favor of and against the opinions you hold.

Part II.

Please tell us what you learned from your work with this module

1. Did you benefit from your work on this module regarding any of the following?

<i>Understanding how to:</i>	Yes/No	Please comment on either: < How you benefited; or < Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
a. Determine what the issues are, in your community or in the US in general, which most affect your family and community?		
b. Discuss with your neighbors and fellow workers which issues they feel are most important?		
c. Assess what impact a belief, policy decision or business practice might have on your life and on the life of your community?		
d. Use a variety of different information and data sources to assess and refute the arguments of your opponents?		
e. Find out who is backing an issue or promoting a business or public policy change?		
f. Determine if information about an issue, from media or other sources, is biased?		

2. Did your work in this module help you in any of the following areas?

	Yes/No	Please comment on either: < How you benefited; or < Why you feel this module was not useful for you in this area
a. Read written materials (from newspaper or other sources) to understand key aspects of an issue or formulate your position.		
b. Listen carefully and respectfully to the point of view of someone who does not agree with you; and check whether or not you have really understood what he or she is saying?		

c. Take note of the strong points of those who disagree with you?		
d. Talk about why you disagree with someone, with the object of persuading people who don't agree with you that yours is the better position?		
e. Gather relevant facts which support your point of view?		
f. Research the relevant facts surrounding an issue?		
g. Use computer data resources to research an issue?		
h. Anything else? Please tell us about it below		

Answer Sheet for Module 18: Analyzing and Debating Issues

<p>Social Issue Chosen _____</p> <p>Opinion _____</p>

Reasons for opinion

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Possible Reasons for Opposite Opinion

1. _____

2. _____

3.

Letter or Presentation Notes:

Reading Methyl Bromide Marches On by Patty Clary, 1996

Ignoring pleas of environmentalists and farm workers from throughout his district, Northcoast Senator Mike Thompson joined other state senators to approve a bill mid-February that saves farmers from a ban of the highly toxic and ozone-depleting pesticide methyl bromide. The Assembly later passed the bill and it was signed into law by Governor Pete Wilson in early March.

The senate rejected amendments proposed by Senator Nicholas Petris to provide protections for public health while the chemical continues to be used in fields, buildings and export facilities around the state.

Methyl bromide, which is used at flower farms, plant nurseries and in wine grape fields on the Northcoast, was due to be banned in late March because its manufacturer has not yet finished research on laboratory animals required under the Birth Defects Prevention Act. First passed in 1984, the Act required studies of the birth defect effects on laboratory animals of 200 pesticides. The deadline for information on several chemicals was extended in 1991 to March 1996, and manufacturers of methyl bromide needed yet another extension to finish studies by the end of 1997.

Senator Diane Watson, chair of the Senate Health Committee where the bill's fate depended on Thompson's swing vote, revealed that her sources had found at least one study which had shown methyl bromide to be a significant birth defect agent. Unconfirmed rumors abounded that the chemical was difficult to study because animals would die from its effects before results were in on whether the chemical could harm developing fetuses.

Research completed in Great Britain three years ago indicated structural deformities of rabbit fetuses caused by material exposure to methyl bromide. Based on this study, the U.S. EPA began requiring labels for methyl bromide fumigation of structures to indicate the possibility of birth defects. California regulators decided to require that people remain out of building for longer periods of time after methyl bromide fumigation shortly after a California man died when he re-entered his home following a legal fumigation.

The state also studied field fumigation with methyl bromide and learned it can drift several miles offsite during inversions and other weather conditions frequently experienced on the coast. Most of the nineteen million pounds of methyl bromide used in California each year are used in coastal counties.

Methyl bromide is categorized as an extremely acute toxic by the US. EPA because it will kill anyone unfortunate enough to breathe it at high quantities. It killed fifteen people who illegally entered houses during tenting and fumigation between 1980 and 1992. It also injures, sometimes permanently, especially farm workers. Methyl bromide primarily attacks the central nervous system, causing dizziness, trembling, respiratory difficulties, intoxication-like symptoms and permanent loss of sensation and motor skills.

Methyl bromide is also a significant destroyer of the earth's protective ozone layer, causing at least 10 to 15% of current ozone depletion.

The main use of methyl bromide is to kill soil pests prior to planting crops. It is especially used on the strawberry crop. It is also used post harvest on crops for storage or export. Methyl bromide is used to fumigate buildings to kill wood eating insects.

Farmers have not been required to warn surrounding communities in advance of field fumigation, in spite of studies showing its ability to cause birth defects and research showing it can drift up to several miles at "excessive rates."

School teachers, farm laborers, environmentalists and health care providers from around the state called for the end of the use of methyl bromide during two months of fierce debate leading up to the Senate vote. Intense media coverage and numerous editorials, letters and phone calls put more of a spotlight on legislators who supported the bill than any had anticipated.

Environmentalists called on senators to at least pass amendments to provide buffer zones for schools, hospitals and playgrounds and give ample notification to people living, working, attending school or in hospitals near fumigation. The senators, however, were unwilling to provide even the minimal protections.

Meanwhile, in Washington D.C. the Clinton Administration began drafting legislation to change the Clean Air Act to allow continued production of methyl bromide past the federally mandated phase-out date in 2001. Legislation is being written to weaken ozone depletion provisions of the clean air law.

Environmentalists say that the move to change and weaken the Clean Air Act in regards to methyl bromide appears to be an election year trick since agriculture in key electoral states Florida and California accounts for most U.S. methyl bromide use.

Reading Bilingual Education: Separating Fact from Fiction September 18, 1995 Richard V. López

Bilingual Education: Separating Fact from Fiction is a short report that helps policy makers, the media, and the public better understand bilingual education. It draws on current government data and scholarly, independent research to identify what is fact and fiction in a discussion of the education on limited-English proficient students. (LEP students)

Fiction: *"Studies prove that bilingual education doesn't work."*

Fact: There is agreement in the research community both on the soundness of the theory and effectiveness of bilingual education. In 1990, the Department of Education asked the NAS to review two studies, covering thousands of Spanish-speaking limited-English proficient (LEP) students. The NAS is the National Academy of Sciences and is the most prestigious research body in the world. The NAS has researchers and social scientists recognized as the best in their fields. The NAS review of the studies affirmed the finding that LEP students in bilingual education programs made greater academic gains in content areas, like math, than the students who received all instruction in English.

Fiction: *"Language-minority parents and communities oppose bilingual education."*

Fact: Polls show that language-minority communities solidly support bilingual education. For example, more than 80% of the Latinos interviewed back bilingual education, according to a poll

by the Los Angeles Times.

Fiction: *"Studies confirm what common sense would tell you: the less time you spend speaking a new language, the more slowly you'll learn it."*

Fact: The studies validated by the NAS directly addressed and refuted this claim. "The study concluded that providing LEP students with substantial instruction in their primary language does not interfere with or delay their acquisition of English language skills, but helps them to "catch up" to their English-speaking peers in English language arts, English reading, and math. In contrast, providing LEP students with almost exclusive instruction in English does not accelerate their acquisition of English language arts, reading or math., i.e., they do not appear to be "catching up." To use an example from Washington, D.C., Public Schools, students at the Oyster Bilingual Elementary School - where the students are about half native English and native Spanish speakers - students are taught half the time in English and half the time in Spanish. Sixth grade students at the school scored the equivalent to twelfth grade students in English language art on the California Test of Basic Skills. In other words, sixth grade bilingual education students were not only performing at the level of high school seniors in English, they were also fully literate in Spanish.

Fiction: *"Many 'bilingual' programs use the student's native language almost exclusively in the first few years. Students aren't learning English."*

Fact: This claim is refuted by the studies validated by the NAS. The studies found that English was used the majority of time in bilingual education programs and by the fourth grade only 3 % of instruction was in the student's native language. Specifically, the studies found that in transitional bilingual education classrooms, English was used 65.8% of the time, in Kindergarten, 69.1% in Grade 1, 74.5% in Grade 2, 80.3% in Grade 3, and 97.3% in Grade 4. Even in developmental bilingual programs, where the goal is fluency in both languages, English was used a majority of the time in Grades 3-6. Every bilingual education program includes significant coursework in teaching English language skills.

Fiction: *"My grandparents were immigrants and made it without bilingual education or any other special help."*

Fact: Contrary to the myth that earlier immigrant groups managed without special programs, most immigrant children who entered schools were more likely to sink than swim in English-only classrooms. In 1908, for example, just 13% of the twelve-year-olds enrolled in New York public schools, and whose parents were foreign-born, went on to high school, compared with 32% of white children whose parents were native born. Today's high-skills, high-technology labor market makes it even more difficult to succeed in the American job market without education.

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