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10-6-2020

GSU Experience Clarifies Bilingual Education Path

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University Park, IL,
October
06,
2020

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Governors State University alumna Adelia Brienzo is the new Coordinator of Early Learning and Bilingual Education for Community Consolidated School District 146; a district where 33% of students call a language other than English their home language. The top four languages spoken are Arabic, Spanish, Polish and Tagalog (standardized national language of the Philippines). Altogether, 30 different languages are spoken in District 146.

The ability to connect on a personal level is necessary when there are so many cultural and communication differences—an ability that Adelia honed through her experiences at [Governors State University](#) (GSU).

“What’s special about GSU is that it is so personal. I knew all my campus contacts on a first-name basis”— professors, advisors, and staff. “Everyone was so helpful sharing advice, scholarship and career opportunities,” Brienzo said.

“I got my Associate Degree at Moraine Valley, and knew I wanted to go into Education. When I met with my advisor at GSU, John Powers, he was amazing! He told me about a home visiting program in Kankakee (for birth to age 3), a state-funded grant that assists at-risk, low-income families, many of whom are limited-English proficient (LEP).”

This experience shaped the work that Brienzo does now, as it solidified her [Early Childhood Education](#) path. An introduction to the student group [Association of Latin American Students](#) (ALAS) by Professor Vinicio Reyes, as well as growing up in a Hispanic neighborhood in Blue Island, further shaped her passion for bilingual education. She was even awarded a scholarship through this student group affiliation.

Now Brienzo and the District 146 team are partnering with [School of Extended Learning](#) to deliver a virtual ESL for Parents program. “This is the second year we have worked with District

146 on ESL for Parents,” says Akiko Ota, Director of the [English Language Learning Center](#) (ELLC) at GSU. “They are dedicated to the ESL community, and we look forward to potentially partnering with them to provide this community with language, computer literacy, and career skills.”