

Bilingual night.

One of the things that I had on the calendar this month was the bilingual night at my children's school. It is held a few times a year, to inform parents about progress being made with the school's dual language program. Tonight was the first meeting of the year, and there had been lots of preparation for it. My daughter, who is in kindergarten, had been practicing three songs. I had heard her singing around the house, but it took me a few days to ask her if there was something that she was practicing for. Sure enough, kindergarteners and first graders were going to perform on stage for the parents, to impress them with some bilingual songs. It was a rush to get there on time because Domini had just finished a gymnastics class, I had to drop one of my sons at his basketball practice, and then get to the school lunch room on time, where seats had been put out in rows for all of us. Going to one of these is not a new thing for me. All four of my kids are going through the same elementary school, so I know all about the bilingual program. I'm thrilled that they can be exposed to Spanish, and, hopefully, each year pick up more and more. As I sat chatting to another parent, the students came out and lined up on the little stage. The music teacher played the guitar, and sang loudly, opening his mouth very wide, to get the children to follow him. The kids did a great job. They sang four songs, each a mix of Spanish and English. Every now and then, when they came to a difficult part, the singing trailed off and became quite quiet, and then in the easy parts, they got very loud and confident. You know what it's like with children: they fidgeted, looked at their shoes, at the ceiling, whispered to each other, and some even picked their noses. It all added to the performance. When the singing was over, we actually sneaked out, and didn't stay for the talk about the importance of being bilingual. I've heard the talk many times, and, besides, I'm already a believer in language learning!

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: to be exposed to, to trail off, confident.

1. The miners were exposed to toxic gas; they need medical treatment.
2. He forgets what he's talking about, and his speech trails off.
3. She is confident, and speaks her mind with ease.