

Lau v. Nichols and Chinese American Language Rights

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Front cover image description

During the 1971–1972 school year, Miss Lucinda Lee taught in the Cantonese-bilingual pilot program at Commodore Stockton Elementary School (now Gordon J. Lau Elementary), the largest school in San Francisco's Chinatown. Her classroom, 10M was located in the basement. Lucinda's students came from across the city due to mandatory busing orders for racial integration (*Johnson v. SFUSD*, 1971). The school once homogeneously Chinese and Cantonese speaking would change dramatically with students coming from Noe Valley, the Mission, and Hunter's Point, representing students from different linguistic and racial identities. Drawing strongly from her training in early childhood and project based learning, alongside the bicultural emphasis of the burgeoning bilingual program, she took her students across the greater Bay Area to explore parks, the planetarium, and the aquarium. Locally, she took children across the street to area restaurants and markets where they would eat Chinese foods distinctive of the season, discussing the historical context of the cuisine with the children. During that school year, children identified a field trip of 'impression' and were assigned a part of the Commodore Stockton wall that encased their concrete playground. The Chinese children, many of whom had not traversed beyond the community of Chinatown drew pictures of Fairyland, the aquarium, and the planetarium. Students outside of Chinatown painted images of their buses that brought them to Chinatown and the community of Chinatown that was unfamiliar to them. The mural is now painted over, but prior to its cover up, Linda Chu, a student in Lucinda's classroom in the 1971–1972 school year had a boyfriend who was an excellent listener and photographer. Hearing Linda's stories about her days at Commodore Stockton, her then boyfriend, William Tsui took pictures of the spaces she traversed as a young child and assembled it into a photo album for her. Later, they would marry. Thank you William for preserving this distinct period in time which captures the intersectional exploration of racial and linguistic integration.

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The Sunrise and Sunset of
Bilingual Education

Trish Morita-Mullaney

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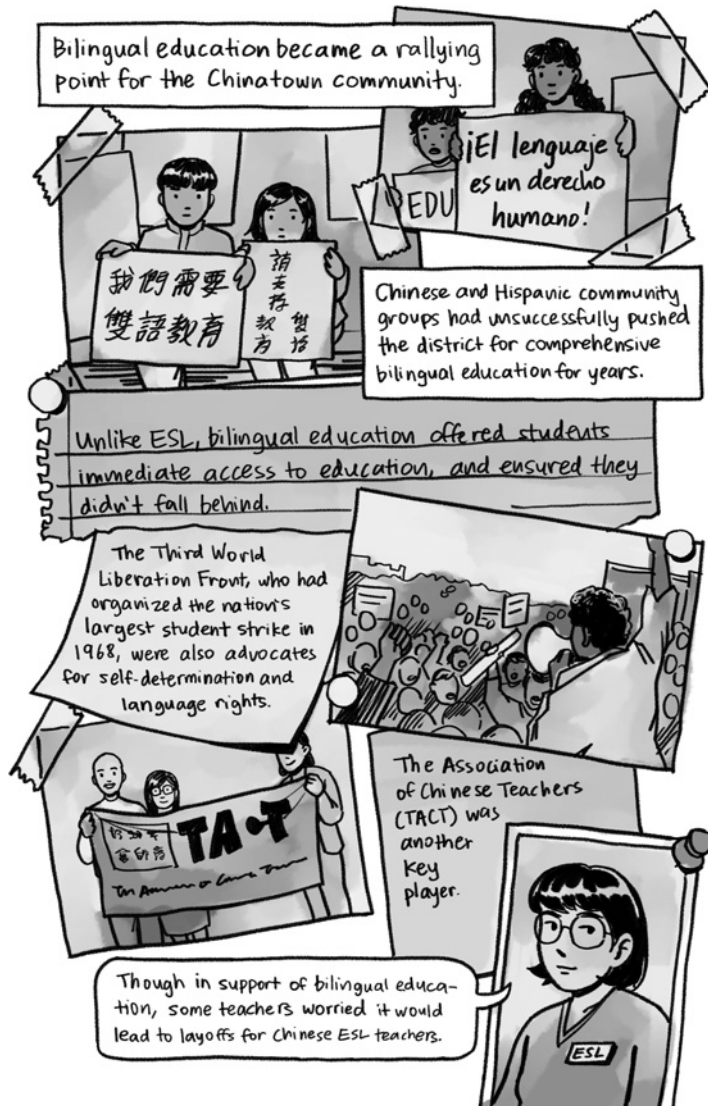
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