Area Bilingual Program Working

ST. MARTINVILLE — Mrs. Hazel Delahoussaye, director of Bilingual Programs in St. Martin Parish schools, told a recent meeting of foreign language teachers in Baton Rouge the long range goals of the pilot program are to build skills in the use of the French and English languages as tools for acquiring further education and for gaining a useful livelihood.

She was guest speaker at a meeting of the Louisiana Foreign Language Teachers Association and outlined the progress of the early Bilingual Education Program, a pilot program in St. Martin Parish Schools.

Videotape Shown

Mrs. Delahoussaye presented a videotape of Mrs. Jane Comeaux, specialist teacher of French, teaching a French language arts class to the first grade class of Mrs. Rebecca Brackin, Breaux Bridge Primary School. She explained to the group that the French is not being taught in its entirety as a second language.

One objective of the Bilingual Program is to develop a healthy and confident self-image, and by teaching the children in their mother tongue this is being accomplished, she said. To the French-speaking child, French is taught as his first language and he speaks and relates in French — in the dialect that he knows. To the English-speaking child, French is taught as a second language.

Children Relating

The children are relating, they are speaking, they are demonstrating a readiness for learning. The dialectic French will be developed eventually into standard French. She also cited to the group that parents and the community are involved. A Policy Advisory Committee was formed, and the program has had wonderful support from parents and the communities, from the administration and teachers.

Three of the teachers in the program attended Janquiere College in Canada as an in-service to prepare themselves as Bilingual teachers. In addition, St. Martin Parish has hired two assistant teachers from France to help the specialist teachers and also to assist teachers of French in junior and senior high school in the parish.

Miss Calais Spoke

Miss Gayle Calais, specialist teacher of French, who is also helping develop the curriculum, spoke to the group about the curriculum. She said the specialist teachers and the classroom teachers are working closely together in correlating all units which are taught from the oral approach. Such units as Self-identity, Home and Family, Autumn, Community.