

## Book Review

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*Dual Language: Teaching and Learning in Two Languages*, by S. W. Soltero.  
Boston: Pearson Education, 2004. 192 pp. Pb. \$28.60.

For some time, bilingual education has come under attack in the United States. Common criticisms range from its supposed ineffectiveness in helping English language learner children gain fluency in English to its promotion of ethnic balkanization and alienation from mainstream society. Although such accusations generally lack empirical evidence and are frequently politically motivated, they have been widely reported in popular media outlets, leading many non-experts to take a negative stand toward bilingual education. Such attitudes have inevitably discouraged school districts from implementing bilingual programs.

Several resources, however, such as works by Crawford (1999) and Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003), clearly demonstrate to nonspecialists that there are many types of bilingual education programs; dispel myths about bilingual education's political and pedagogical aims and outcomes; and point out that some kinds of bilingual education, specifically, dual-language instruction, can help English language learners gain English fluency, while imparting knowledge of their primary language (L1) and culture to native speakers of English. The authors find that dual-language instruction thus has the potential to positively impact the job opportunities for both native and non-native speakers of English due to increasing demands for bilingual and bicultural employees in the private and public sector. In addition to highlighting these issues, such works also supply nonspecialists with knowledge of how to create and maintain a successful dual-language program.

*Dual Language: Teaching and Learning in Two Languages* does much the same as these previous works: It shows educators and non-educators how both English language learners and native English-speaking students can become bilingual and bicultural, while simultaneously maintaining grade-level knowledge in core academic subjects. The text contains seven chapters, each of which focuses on either theoretical or practical issues implicit in dual-

language instruction. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 discuss theoretical issues such as the principles and parameters of dual-language instruction, and L1 and second language (L2) acquisition in children. Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 then present the reader with more practical issues such as creating individual classroom lessons and assessment strategies. This way of organizing the text allows readers to familiarize themselves with the jargon and underlying issues of dual-language instruction in order to understand the roles of dual-language teachers in everyday instruction. Moreover, the author responds to many of the common myths and objections that people have to bilingual education, in general, and advises program developers on how to cope with skeptics within individual schools and in the larger community.

More specifically, the text starts off by defining the various types of bilingual instruction and distinguishes dual-language instruction from other L2 or foreign-language pedagogies. Soltero discusses important terms, such as structured English immersion and additive bilingual education, and explains that unlike dual-language instruction, these types of programs do not aim to foster the development of L2 among both native and non-native speakers of English. She also shows that even within dual-language instruction, there is a great amount of variation in terms of the instructional time given to each language. In addition, she points out that both languages do not need to be societally dominant languages. Therefore, Vietnamese or Navajo (minority languages) could be taught along with English (a dominant language). Importantly, she cites studies that highlight the success of dual-language instruction in the United States and Canada and explains how various political initiatives, such as California's Proposition 227 (1998), have led to confusion about the pedagogical feasibility of programs such as dual-language ventures. However, additional examples of successful dual-language programs, using other European languages besides Spanish, in addition to Asian and North American indigenous languages, would better illustrate just how successful dual-language instruction can be.

Next, the author provides a lengthy analysis of the theoretical issues involved with dual-language instruction. First, she addresses basic questions regarding the differences between total- and partial-immersion programs, and then goes on to discuss more thorny questions pertaining to how to balance L1 and L2, and how the rate and route of literacy development occur for students in dual-language programs. One of Soltero's more useful sections concerns code-switching. Not only does she explain the phenomenon—which is essential for those without previous training in bilingual education—but she also reveals that, contrary to common belief, children will not become “confused” by using two languages and that they, like all other children, will be proficient communicators—in both languages. In addition, she gives various views of L1 and L2 development from behaviorist, nativist, and interactionist perspectives. While such a discussion is informative, more specific examples of the syntactic, lexical, and phonological stages through

which bilingual children pass could help nonspecialists more readily understand L1 and L2 development. Furthermore, highlighting particular teaching approaches that are based on each perspective would also increase such understanding.

After the initial three chapters, Soltero's focus shifts to program design and other administrative considerations. Notable is her discussion of how nonspecialists can begin to develop dual-language programs. She recommends that teachers and administrators do so by visiting successful bilingual programs and seeking the advice of experienced professionals. Also, she encourages them to develop a strategic plan with a specific time frame, establish program goals, and devise ways in which students and the program, as a whole, will be evaluated. Most importantly, she notes that many parents and members of the local community may be skeptical about placing children in such a program; in order to overcome such skepticism, she urges program designers to hold orientation sessions in which the scope and goals of the program are made clearly visible. During these orientation sessions, teachers and administrators will also be able to address a key concern of native English-speaking parents about the dual-language program in which their children will participate: Why allocate so much time and so many resources to learning a language other than English, which, in most cases, students will only study for a few years and will soon forget? Also, teachers and administrators will be able seek parents' assistance in curriculum planning and implementation.

Although Soltero presents studies that show the effectiveness of dual-language instruction in terms of its ability to foster bilingualism and biliteracy, lacking is an extensive and direct discussion of why it is preferable to English-only approaches. In an America where English-only laws are gaining increased support, and foreign-language or L2 allotments already make up a mere sliver of state and federal education budgets, tangible reasons for embarking on dual-language instruction need to be thoroughly discussed if parents and teachers are to be convinced of its efficacy, especially in southern and midwestern states that have experienced recent influxes of language-minority students, yet know little about bilingual education.

Like other high-quality texts about dual-language instruction, this book gives lengthy attention to specific instructional practices that are commonly used in effective dual-language programs, such as jigsaw, anticipation guides, and the Language Experience Approach. Such examples can introduce parents and other nonspecialists to some of the ways in which children will be taught; yet, while informative, the descriptions of these examples are quite short, and lengthier ones could be used to help give non-experts a fuller idea of what to expect during individual classes. Practicing teachers probably already have been apprised of such practices; therefore, they will not find these parts of the text useful. However, teacher trainers wishing to demonstrate dual-language instruction strategies for future bilingual teachers may find such examples useful.

Soltero ends the text by noting the challenges that will be encountered after initial implementation of a dual-language program, such as maintaining administrative support, encouraging professional development, and dealing with faculty members who may look skeptically upon dual-language instruction. However, this final chapter could have been stronger if there had been more attention given to problems of teacher recruitment. Even though she notes that additional training for noncertified teachers and requests for extra funding could help ease the shortage of qualified teachers, there is little mention of the problem of how to recruit highly qualified teachers into newly developed programs that may lack job stability, and into communities that may lack the urban atmosphere to which they may be accustomed. This is an especially relevant point in light of the current growth of immigrant populations in largely rural states such as Iowa, Kentucky, and South Carolina, which previously had not been accustomed to integrating large groups of immigrants, at least within recent memory. Qualified teachers from more urban states such as California, Florida, and Texas may feel socially isolated in such circumstances.

In spite of such drawbacks, *Dual Language: Teaching and Learning in Two Languages* is a text that has the potential to be highly beneficial for newcomers to dual-language instruction. Specifically, teachers, administrators, and citizens interested in building such a program will find it to be a good introduction to the key issues involved. Additionally, they will find it useful when trying to justify dual-language instruction to skeptical teachers, administrators, and parents. Moreover, Soltero's work can be effectively used as an introductory text in bilingual education degree and training programs. Experts, however, may want to purchase the book as a reference to use when trying to explain dual-language instruction to nonspecialists, yet they will most likely not find new insights in it. Finally, the text is exclusively concerned with bilingual education in the United States. Although individuals from outside the United States could use the text as a starting point for further reading on the topic of dual-language instruction and bilingualism in general, they should take into consideration that the socioeconomic, political, and linguistic conditions under which dual-language programs are operated in the United States may not be applicable to their teaching or learning environments.

## References

- Crawford, J. (1999). *Bilingual education: History, politics, theory, and practice*. Los Angeles: Bilingual Education Services.
- Ovando, C., Collier, V., & Combs, M. (2003). *Bilingual and ESL classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Proposition 227, English Language in Public Schools Initiative Statute, State of California (1998).