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## *Foreword*

When my grandfather arrived in New York from Argentina in the early 20th century, he spoke Spanish, Yiddish, and Russian. My grandmother, a refugee from Poland, spoke Polish, Yiddish, and Russian. Yet they spoke to my father only in English. They used Yiddish among themselves only to exchange insults or otherwise keep my father (or, later, me and my brothers and sister) from understanding them. They were adamant that my father would speak only English and would become a “good American.”

America—and Americans new and old—has always been deeply ambivalent about the preservation of languages other than English. In general, immigrants have been expected to keep their language at home, if they wished, but to use English in the broader world, especially in school. Many Latino adults today remember being punished or sent to “Spanish detention” for speaking Spanish among their friends on the school playground, and speakers of other languages have similar memories. As a result, many children of immigrants lost their parents’ language. I know adults who can hardly communicate with their own parents. Ironically, America, a nation of immigrants, has extraordinarily low levels of skill in languages other than English compared to other advanced nations.

All of this changed starting in the 1970s with the advent of bilingual education, which usually provides some degree of native-language instruction while children are developing proficiency in English. The goal of bilingual education is not primarily language maintenance, but it is to enable English-language learners to progress in school subjects even though their English skills are not sufficient for academic content. When their English skills are at a high level, the children are transitioned to all-English instruction. While maintenance of a home language is not the main purpose of bilingual education, it is an important by-product, helping to maintain children’s cultural and family linkages as well as bilingualism itself, a skill of great value in an increasingly integrated and interdependent world.

In recent years, bilingual education has come under attack, especially (but not exclusively) in California. Yet English-language learners need instruction that is comprehensible to them, and genuine bilingualism among children of all backgrounds needs to be developed.

**x Designing and Implementing Two-Way Bilingual Programs**

Dual-language instruction is a rapidly growing response to these needs. In a two-way bilingual (TWB) school, both languages (usually Spanish and English) are equally respected. Spanish-proficient children are seen as a resource to all. Learning a new language is seen as an adventure for all, not a remediation for one group. English-dominant children have an opportunity to gain real facility in Spanish. For some English-dominant students in TWB schools, the Spanish language is a gateway to the rich Latino culture of the Americas and (typically) of their own community. For others, the Spanish language gives them access to their own culture and history, reforging a link that may have been broken between their own grandparents and themselves.

As educators and policymakers turn increasingly toward comprehensive TWB schools, they need to know what such programs look like, what they can accomplish, and how to best take advantage of the opportunities they provide for English- and Spanish-dominant children alike. That is the purpose of this volume. Although TWB programs have existed in some form for a long time, very little is written about them in the education literature. This book fills this gap in an effective and compelling way. It provides a rationale for dual-language instruction, descriptions of TWB programs in action, and a guide to help educators responsible for TWB schools make informed choices about all aspects of their program, from curriculum and instruction to the appropriate roles of the two languages to staff development and evaluation.

This book is certain to be an indispensable guide to planning and practice in dual-language schools. It is practical, down-to-earth, and firmly based in broad experience and research. Every TWB school has its own needs, resources, and constraints, so no one can prescribe exactly how each one should be structured. However, the TWB movement has long needed a wise and well-informed guide. This book fulfills that need, and as such, it is sure to help the movement itself grow, develop, and better serve the growing numbers of children fortunate enough to be learning in two languages.

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