Dual Language EDUCATION

Program Design and Implementation

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To my parents,

Patricia and Peter,

for your love and support,

and for giving me the gift of

a bilingual education.

Without the wonderful opportunities

you gave me,

none of what I have accomplished

would have been possible.

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Make the strangers welcome in this land, let them keep their languages and customs, for weak and fragile is the realm which is based on a single language or on a single set of customs.

—St. Stephen, first King of Hungary, in a letter to his son St. Eneric, 1036 AD

When her principal began talking about starting a two-way dual language program, Alexa thought, "Here we go again, jumping on the bandwagon of the latest fad. Don't we already have enough on our plate?" She was not the only teacher in the school who was growing tired of what seemed like a never-ending revolving door of new programs and initiatives that they had to invest time and energy in learning about and aligning to their curriculum and instruction. Alexa, a well-respected and dedicated teacher, had taught in the transitional bilingual program at Recoleta Elementary School for more than seventeen years. Alexa's original negative reaction came from years of implementing new programs imposed from district and school administrators, only to be abandoned a few years later. She thought they did not need to embark on yet another short-lived "experiment" and made this abundantly clear to the other teachers, parents, and the principal whenever she had the opportunity. But after months of discussions, the majority of the teachers, support staff, and parents voted in favor of implementing a dual language program at Recoleta. Even though she would not technically have to teach in the program for a few years, she made it known that when dual language reached fourth grade, she would move to the middle school grades to avoid teaching in the program.

Unexpectedly, by the time dual language reached fourth grade, Alexa was one of the program's most enthusiastic and committed supporters. What made her change her mind so drastically? During the planning phase and the first year of implementation, Alexa began to hear about dual language education from the prekindergarten (PK) and kindergarten teachers and from parents of children who had participated in the program that first year. She slowly became interested in learning more about dual language and realized that maybe this new initiative would not just be a passing fad like all the others had been. She began to understand that many of the premises on which dual language is based very much aligned with her own views about

developing bilingualism and bilingual teaching approaches. Years later, Alexa shared that her change of heart was partly because she felt free to express her opinion and ask questions. She also thought that this time the decision-making process was more collaborative, and there was a more comprehensive "fact-finding" effort and a well-thought-out planning process. Alexa saw firsthand how students in the dual language program were progressing academically in their first and second languages. She also often heard how happy parents were with their children's participation in the program. What impressed her most were the friendships and interactions that had developed between English learners (ELs) and native English-speaking students, bilingual and general education teachers, and families from the two language groups. This was something that seldom happened before the dual language program was implemented. EL families and their teachers had little interaction with students and families from the general education classrooms, so it was a welcomed and unexpected surprise for Alexa that this was happening. This segregation was slowly giving way to meaningful collaborations and friendships across languages and cultures at Recoleta.

The transformation that Alexa experienced illustrates the types of positive outcomes that come from developing comprehensive understandings about dual language education and the many possibilities and opportunities it affords when well-designed and implemented. This book provides guidelines and research-based evidence to build the comprehensive knowledge necessary to plan and implement sustainable high-quality dual language programs.

I write this book from the lens of a practitioner, not just an outsider researcher. My background and experiences as a dual language public school teacher for fourteen years and dual language program coordinator give me an unusual insider viewpoint and understanding about what it takes to create effective, long-lasting dual language programs. Because I am also a product of dual language education, I have firsthand experience of what it is like to be a dual language student in K–12 schools. This book is based on my thirty years in the field of bilingual education as a dual language teacher, dual language program coordinator, researcher, and professional developer. The focus of my research over the past decades has been on dual language program design and curricular development, as well as leadership practices in program implementation, sustainability, and improvement.

This book is intended for teachers, school leaders, and district administrators interested in implementing new dual language programs, as well as those looking to improve their existing models. Each chapter examines the pedagogical and organizational principles of dual language education and the specific conditions and features necessary for their effective implementation and sustainability. Included are in-depth discussions on fundamental elements that must be considered when

putting dual language education into practice, as well as challenges that often arise while developing and implementing dual language programs.

Without a doubt, current demographic changes in the PK–12 student population present many challenges for educators, while at the same time offer exciting new opportunities to implement innovative and forward-thinking additive language programs that benefit all students alike. In the last few years, there has been a resurgence of interest in dual language education from policy makers, educators, and parents. Several states have launched statewide initiatives to grow and implement dual language programs, including Utah, Delaware, Rhode Island, and North Carolina. The Seal of Biliteracy, legislated into law in a number of states, points to a collective desire to celebrate and embrace multilingualism in the United States. The Seal of Biliteracy was first passed by the California legislature in 2011, followed by New York in 2012, and Illinois in 2014. Currently twenty-one states, plus the District of Columbia, have passed legislation making the Seal of Biliteracy state law, and thirteen others are developing legislation.

Another positive trend has been the sudden increase in universities and colleges offering dual language coursework and special certificates. Teacher-preparation programs across the United States are offering this specialized coursework in response to school districts' needs for better-prepared dual language teachers and school leaders. Currently, universities and colleges that offer coursework on dual language education include San Diego State University, University of Minnesota, Webster State University, Bank Street College, California State University Long Beach, University of Texas at Arlington, University of Saint Thomas, Brigham Young University, Utah State University. These statewide initiatives and teacher-preparation trends, coupled with a growing thaw on restrictions of bilingual education in several states (most notably the current movement in California to overturn Proposition 227, which banned bilingual education), indicate strong leanings toward acceptance and promotion of bilingual education for all. Shin (2013) argues that "creating a 'language competent' society requires a concerted effort of educators, policymakers, families and communities. As a society, we need to realize that the languages spoken by ethnic and linguistic minorities are a national asset, a resource that must not be wasted. Students who come from homes where languages other than English are spoken should be supported to maintain those languages while learning English. And students who speak English natively should be supported to learn another language" (95).

About This Book

Because the majority of dual language programs are in PK–6 schools, many of the examples, considerations, and recommendations in this book have an elementary

school lens. While most of the suggestions and examples also apply to middle and high school settings, differences in planning and implementation are discussed throughout the book, accompanied by examples that speak specifically to these grade bands, particularly for scheduling. Many of the premises and guidelines presented here also apply to transitional bilingual education, especially late-exit programs. This book is intended primarily for the United States context, but the topics are also relevant to dual language and additive bilingual programs in other countries where two languages are part of the educational curriculum. Each chapter includes real-life narratives from teachers, parents, and school leaders as they reflect on their experiences planning and implementing their programs—all names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Chapter 1 introduces the theoretical and research premises, as well as the foundational structures of dual language education. **Chapter 2** explains the planning process and steps for designing comprehensive, sustainable, and high-quality programs. **Chapter 3** elaborates on key programmatic components and processes in the first few years of implementation that build on program planning discussed in the previous chapters. **Chapter 4** focuses on various aspects of bilingualism, the relationship between the first and second language in the context of teaching and learning, as well as current research findings on the neurological and cognitive advantages of bilingualism as a foundation for expanded bilingual and biliterate skills. **Chapter 5** describes the types of instructional and assessment practices that are best suited for dual language classrooms that optimize bilingual learners' academic and biliterate development. In **Chapter 6**, the focus is twofold: culturally responsive schoolwide practices and supportive leadership practices. The two appendices at the end of the book offer a variety of resources for dual language teachers, school leaders, and families: **Appendix A** includes a glossary of terms used in the field of dual language education; **Appendix B** provides a comprehensive list of resources, including professional organizations, information and research centers, national education conferences, instructional materials catalogs, films and videos, and Internet sites and blogs.

This book offers a comprehensive view of what it takes to create well-designed, effective, and sustainable dual language programs. The recommendations for planning, implementation, improvement, and evaluation are based on dual language research and theoretical foundations. The quote at the beginning of this introduction speaks to the inclusive nature of dual language education and the need to embrace the multiple languages and cultures that are the common realities of most countries around the world, including the United States. Almost a thousand years ago, the King of Hungary made the powerful statement to his son, who was soon to be the next king. As you read through this book, keep in mind the words spoken by the

King of Hungary as the most fundamental premise that drives us to create and implement dual language programs, reflected in a more current quote that follows.

> *The very act of acquiring knowledge and linguistic competence has a positive disproportional impact on the economic potential of an individual. Furthermore it contributes to the likelihood that the individual can make a greater contribution to his/her society. Quite literally their capacity to participate in their society is considerably enhanced . . . But in a society where there are large linguistic minorities, failure to promote equal treatment of the language of the minority involves losing the contribution that the minority group can make to the overall value added in the human capital or knowledge-based sector.* (Chorney 1997, 181) ✶

CHAPTER

2

Dual Language Program Planning

Educators developing new programs or reviewing the effectiveness of existing programs can rest assured that over forty-five years of scientific evidence confirms that school-age children are able to mature and thrive in these programs. A great deal of effort goes into creating a quality dual language program. However, there is tremendous satisfaction in knowing that dual language students have what it take to be successful in the globalized communities in which they will be living. It is education for the future.

—Else Hamayan, Fred Genesee, and Nancy Cloud,
Dual Language Instruction from A to Z

Effective and sustainable dual language programs share one critical element: at least one full year of planning before implementation. Planning ensures that programs begin with the strongest possible footing and with all the necessary elements to create long-lasting and well-functioning models. Even before initial information is gathered and the planning phase is conceptualized, school leaders, teachers, and families must consider the many issues that could affect the implementation of the program. These factors may include student mobility rates, levels of family involvement, extent of teacher and family buy-in, languages spoken by students and their families, teacher qualifications and knowledge, and access to professional development. The long-term success or failure of a program partly depends on the decisions made prior to its implementation. Lindholm-Leary (2012) points out that "there are also important challenges in DLE [dual language education] that can impact the quality of these programs; that is, how well the programs are designed and implemented. These concerns include issues related to program design, accountability, curriculum and instruction as related to biliteracy, and bilingual language development" (258). Understanding each of the components of a well-designed program and how these fit together creates the foundation for informed decision making (see Figure 2-1). In dual language education, theory guides practice while research provides the necessary empirical evidence. Ongoing professional development enhances

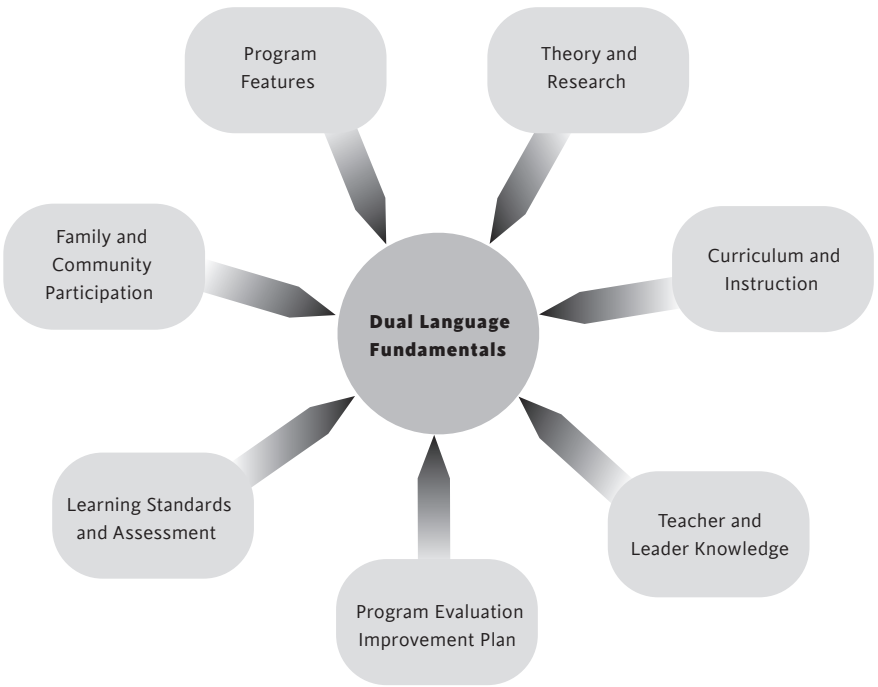

FIGURE **2-1**
Dual Language Fundamentals

teacher and school leader knowledge of dual language, while family and community participation support program quality and sustainability.

The Planning Year: What to Expect

The year of planning is an intense process that needs to start early and be carefully thought out. Schools adopt new curricular practices in response to what appear to be constant changes in instructional programs, methods, assessments, and standards. Teachers and school leaders feel increasingly overwhelmed trying to keep up with national, state, and district policy shifts and demands. Therefore, the decision-making process must be responsive to school needs and inclusive of all stakeholders. School leaders should seek consensus to implement a dual language program by creating many opportunities for discussion, reflection, and shared decision making. Top-down directives from district administrators or school leaders typically result in weak or short-lived programs. A more effective approach is to build school buy-in *before* the program is implemented. Because dual language requires a substantial amount of work and ongoing attention on the part of teachers and school leaders, a well-planned program can cut down on the types of problems that typically arise in the first few years. Investing at least one entire year for planning pays off in the long run, as the experiences and success of the program at the Fusang Elementary Academy show.

After much discussion and deliberation, families, teachers, and school leaders at Fusang Elementary decided to implement a schoolwide two-way Mandarin-English dual language program, starting with PK–K. During several early meetings, the discussion focused on the needed balanced number of students from each language, family support, and bilingual qualifications of teachers and staff. The next step was to determine whether to implement a total or partial immersion model. Many parents and teachers expressed concerns about implementing an 80-20 model because they feared students would fall behind academically and not develop strong literacy skills in English. Some teachers also had reservations about the effects of student mobility on program effectiveness. Although teachers and parents had visited two nearby schools implementing 50-50 models, they had not observed any 80-20 programs. Two teachers who attended a national dual language conference brought back information and research about both models. Based on all the information gathered, they concluded that the school had the right "ingredients" to implement an 80-20 model since they had near-balanced student representation of the two languages and many teachers had bilingual endorsements. Because the school had been implementing bilingual and Mandarin foreign language programs for some time, they had a significant amount of Chinese instructional materials. In addition, parents were very supportive of their children continuing to build their Chinese language and heritage pride.

Those teachers who supported the total immersion model shared information about the pros and cons for each model, invited a dual language expert to talk to families and staff, and arranged for a daylong visit to a school implementing an 80-20 model in a nearby city. All this proved to be successful in convincing families, teachers, and the principal that the school could effectively implement a total immersion model. The teachers and principal also made a yearlong plan for professional development and family workshops to increase their understanding of second language acquisition and dual language education. After ten years of implementation and several changes in district and school administrators, the full immersion dual language program at Fusang Elementary Academy continues to thrive, so much so that the school has a waiting list because so many parents want their children in the program.

Differences Across Elementary, Middle, and High School

While the fundamental premises of dual language education (goals, professional development, etc.) apply across the different grade spans, some components differ between elementary, middle, and high school (see Figure 2-2). Elementary schools, typically grades PK–6, are sometimes configured as PK–2 or PK–5. The language allocation in the elementary grades where one teacher teaches all content areas is usually by time, and sometimes by content or by teacher (in team-teaching contexts).

FIGURE **2-2**
Differences Between Elementary School and Middle and High School Programs

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PK–6)	MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL (7–12)
Classrooms	• Self-contained	• Departmentalized
Curriculum	• Core content and specials (preps)	• Core content and electives • Service learning
Language Allocation	• 90-10, 80-20, or 50-50 • Time-based	• 50-50 • Period-based • Dependent on master schedule
Teachers	• One or two teachers • Multidisciplinary • Grade-level teams	• Multiple teachers • Content specialists • Department heads
Guidance	• Classroom teacher • Parents	• Counselors • College and career paths
Size	• Fewer students/teachers • Smaller teacher-student ratio	• More numbers of students/teachers • Larger teacher-student ratio
Extracurricular	• Assemblies • After school	• Student government • Event planning and clubs

In middle school (generally grades 7–8) and high school (grades 9–12), core subjects are departmentalized and taught by different teachers specializing in each content area. For these grades, the language allocation is based on content area teachers with separate content periods. Scheduling is one of the most challenging parts of dual language regardless of the grade band, but it is especially so in middle and high school programs.

In addition to differences in how content areas are taught, high schools tend to have many more students and programs, larger class sizes, less family involvement, electives that compete for students' interests, and more extracurricular activities. Student government, student associations, and clubs are a big part of high school culture in the United States, but are typically not as much in elementary school. In high schools, various student groups plan events like homecoming, prom, and graduation while others are involved in committees like yearbook, school newspaper, and radio show. Student clubs often include areas that are relevant to dual language education like culture and language clubs, advocacy and social justice clubs, and international clubs. In contrast to elementary schools, high schools have social workers and counselors who address students' developmental needs and provide career/college pathway advice. In addition, many high schools also have a service-learning component that requires students to do volunteer work in the community.

Dual language education in high school should not be thought of as a standalone curriculum (like science or fine arts), but rather be viewed as a comprehensive program that incorporates all aspects of high school dual language students' experiences. For example, the service-learning component could be coordinated with relevant language and cultural experiences, like volunteering in a nearby elementary dual language program or a center for the elderly where the LOTE is spoken. Other types of coordination with the dual language program can include incorporating the LOTE and its cultures in major school events, like homecoming and graduation. Extracurricular programs and clubs can reflect relevant cross-cultural and biliterate activities that support and promote dual language goals.

Many elementary dual language programs have no pathways to high school dual language, so program expansion plans should be thought out early on, especially in districts that have significant numbers of elementary programs. Articulation between elementary, middle, and high school is critical in providing pathways for bilingual students to continue their biliteracy development through the secondary grades and into college. Figure 2-3 provides a snapshot of what a PK–16 articulation and vertical alignment can look like. The long-term plan discussed later in this chapter further explains this vertical articulation and program expansion.