

CHAPTER 2

Effective Instruction for Emergent Bilingual Children

Accelerating English Acquisition While Developing Biliteracy

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Nationally and internationally, there is agreement that all children are entitled to a comprehensive and effective education. In the United States, educational standards have historically been determined by individual states. However, recently, the comprehensive educational movement has been guided largely by the national development and promotion of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which outline what children should know and be able to do in language arts and mathematics. With regard to language arts, the standards prescribe only the skills and abilities that must be achieved in English without also providing guidance about how this is to be accomplished when children enter schools with language and literacy foundations that have been established in languages other than English. We agree that developing formidable proficiency in English is a critical need for children growing up in the United States, and we recognize that effective instruction for these children must consider their unique language and literacy needs in order to accelerate this process. Acceleration, however, need not be at the expense of their current or potential bilingual proficiencies. We propose that, in the right contexts for learning, *English acquisition can be accelerated as biliteracy is developed.*

In this chapter, we examine how the population of emerging bilingual students in U.S. schools has changed in recent decades. Then we discuss issues with regard to English literacy instruction for emergent bilingual students with a focus on two specific issues: (1) the failure of the current “good teaching is good teaching” generic literacy programs for emergent

bilingual learners that have been adopted by many school districts; and (2) the need to discuss and develop literacy programs specifically designed for bilingual programs that can accelerate English language and literacy acquisition. Finally, we present a framework for biliteracy instruction that is best used in bilingual instructional programs, but that can also be used in English-medium settings.

Emergent Bilingual Learners in the United States

Because they hail from homes in which English is not the primary or sole language, 21% of students attending U.S. public schools carry the label *English learner* (EL) or *emergent bilingual learner* (Armario, 2013).¹ To illustrate the magnitude of this figure, let us examine it in comparison to overall U.S. population figures. In the fall of 2014, according to the U.S. Department of Education (n.d.), there were 49.8 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools at both the elementary and secondary levels. Of these, nearly 10.5 million were emergent bilingual learners. This is more than the combined total populations of Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming. In fact, there are only seven U.S. states that have individual populations that exceed this number: California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas. In other words, the number of emergent bilingual learners attending U.S. public schools across the nation exceeds the individual populations of 43 of our 50 states. These figures are not insignificant and they are predicted to increase by at least 2 million by 2020, when emergent bilingual learners will comprise 25% of all students in U.S. schools (Fry, 2008; Loes & Saavedra, 2010).

Although the linguistic diversity of our schools is vast, with more than 400 languages spoken, it is imperative that we recognize that 80% of these students live in homes in which Spanish is either the primary or the supplementary language (Kindler, 2002). In other words, about 8.4 million students currently enrolled in U.S. public schools speak Spanish in addition to English. According to the Pew Research Center, the number of Spanish speakers residing in the United States is up 233% since 1980, and although this growth is projected to continue, there is evidence that the number of Latinos who speak Spanish may drop from the current estimation of

¹We prefer, and use throughout this chapter, the term *emergent bilingual learner* because it reduces the emphasis on English and acknowledges that these students come to school with a bilingual advantage. It is important to note, however, that *English learners* and *English language learners* are the dominant terms used in U.S. schools to discuss this particular set of children.

three-fourths to only two-thirds by 2020 (López & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). This decrease can be attributed largely to a public schooling system that insists on ignoring ample research that indicates that learning in and through two languages confers long-term academic, cognitive, and social advantages (Alladi, Bak, Russ, Shailaja, & Duggirala, 2013; August & Shanahan, 2006a; Bialystok & Martin, 2004). What is even more vexing is that this bias continues in a post-9/11 United States, in which “intelligence-gathering, diplomacy, and national security” require fluency in languages other than English, yet we systematically eradicate our citizens’ bilingualism (Baker, 2011, p. 412).

Communities of practice, by definition, should respond to the needs and resources of the community. Although it may be impossible and financially prohibitive to design instructional environments that sustain and are responsive to all linguistic groups, the preponderance of Spanish-speaking students and families compels us to consider how and to what extent we can accelerate English language acquisition while simultaneously fostering bilingualism/biliteracy. In an era of the CCSS, which promotes the development of language arts only in English, it is important that we interrogate current practices to discover the pockets of hope that complement the goals of the CCSS with a concomitant commitment to biliteracy. Although the CCSS appear to have an assimilationist agenda, there is nothing prohibiting their amplification through a pluralistic enactment of bilingualism and biliteracy (de Jong, 2013). A more pluralistic dialogue and approach takes, as a starting point, the recognition of the reality that, internationally, multilingualism is the norm, and that it can and should be nurtured and sustained in service to the global and individual good. Prior to considering the forms this recognition might take, it is imperative that we critically examine how current practices are, or are not, meeting the needs of our emergent bilingual learners.

Examining “Good Teaching Is Good Teaching”

A problematic assumption about teaching and learning is that *good teaching is good teaching*, and that a framework exists that can be applied universally to guarantee student success. There is a plethora of teachers, administrators, and scholars who invoke the statement that *good teaching is good teaching* to suggest that the need to accommodate an individual student’s learning profile or demographic characteristics is unnecessary (Ragan, 2000; Lipsky & Gartner, 2009; Wyatt & Pickle, 1993). For emergent bilingual learners, this stance is problematic in both monolingual and bilingual contexts. In English-only contexts, a universalist approach to language and literacy instruction is often based upon a body of research that was conducted with

monolingual English-speaking students and then assumed to be applicable to linguistically diverse classrooms. Even if equally effective, such frameworks are not based upon theories of acceleration. Simply achieving equal gains is insufficient to close any real or perceived achievement gaps. In bilingual/dual-language contexts, a second and equally problematic issue is “good teaching” in which literacy is taught in a sequential way and where literacy instruction in a non-English language uses the same methods and materials as literacy instruction in English. By *sequential literacy instruction*, we mean programs that begin instruction solely in Spanish and delay introduction of English literacy for 2–3 years and then often abruptly eliminate Spanish literacy instruction and replace it with English. Such is often the case within Spanish–English sequential programs. In addition to issues with sequential biliterate instruction, these programs also frequently utilize literacy methods and materials in Spanish that are simply translated from English. Moreover, it has historically been the case that English reading instructional frameworks have been applied in Spanish without critical examination of their appropriateness or effectiveness. A notable example is the insistence on teaching phonemic awareness during emergent Spanish reading instruction when we have research that questions the necessity to do so (Goldenberg, Tolar, Reese, Francis, Ray, & Mejía-Arauz, 2014).

Sequential literacy frameworks were appropriate and effective for the bilingual populations of the 1970s to 1990s, because the majority of children were immigrants entering school with little or no English proficiency who also did not have access to preschool or other prekindergarten educational opportunities. This earlier population contrasts with the current population of emergent bilingual students, of which the majority is born in the United States and enter school with diverse life experiences, including preschool experiences that have occurred in both Spanish and English. These 21st-century emergent bilingual children are ready to learn literacy in two languages upon entry into U.S. schools (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2010). In the sections that follow, we examine each of these contexts with the goal of illustrating how and why such approaches are questionable.

Monolingual Contexts

In the United States, what we know about teaching and learning is derived largely from research conducted with monolingual speakers of English. We have no reason to believe, however, that becoming literate, or achieving academically, in languages other than English, or at the intersection of English with other languages, happens in the same way or at the same rate. Still, we use these monolingual pedagogies as proxies for “good teaching,” and we measure and interpret the effects of this teaching with monolingual English language assessments.

The proponents of this belief reduce teaching to a set of high-leverage principles and practices intended to reach all learners and to be equally effective regardless of background. Representative of this stance is Daniel Willingham, a noted cognitive psychologist and neuroscientist at the University of Virginia, who, in a video about teaching and learning, says, “Good teaching is good teaching. And teachers don’t need to adjust their teaching to individual student’s learning styles” (Willingham, 2009). Although Willingham is admittedly making this statement in response to the idea that teachers should not alter their teaching in response to whether or not a student learns best kinesthetically as opposed to linguistically or aurally, we contend that one could easily replace sensory learning modes with any number of learner characteristics and hear the same proclamation. At its core, this argument is reductive and proceeds from the premise that all students learn in the same way at the same rate. The rhetoric implies that if we simply provide teachers with sufficient training in these universal practices and principles, and we ensure that teachers implement them effectively and with fidelity, all students will succeed. Further, it creates the condition that allows us to deflect blame when any one student or group of students is unsuccessful. It is not that the pedagogy is inappropriate or that the teacher is ineffective, but rather that there is something intrinsic to the student that accounts for the differences in learning outcomes. In other words, it provides the umbrella that shields teachers and the educational system as a whole from blame while raining down upon students and families a litany of accusatory shortcomings that reproaches individuals and communities rather than educational systems for disparate outcomes. It casts students and families as deficient.

One example of this universalist approach to teaching and learning is the adoption of the findings of the National Reading Panel (NRP). This panel was charged by the federal government with reviewing and evaluating the extant scientific evidence on reading instruction to determine and report how best to teach children to learn to read. When their findings were released, there was great fanfare regarding the importance of attending to five critical domains of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These became the foundational elements of reading instruction, and they were generalized as being the five key areas of instruction for everyone—despite the fact that the panel made clear that prior to beginning their work, they had debated the inclusion of “several dozen possible topic areas” (NRP, 2000, p. 2) and only restricted themselves to these five to manage the sheer volume of available research on reading. Further, they specifically stated that they “did not address issues relevant to second language learning” (NRP, 2000, p. 3). Several years later, a National Literacy Panel (NLP) was convened to conduct a similar review of research with the specific goal of focusing on studies that included

bilingual learners. In their findings, they noted that instruction in the key components previously identified by the NRP was “necessary, but not sufficient for teaching language-minority students to read and write proficiently in English” (August & Shanahan, 2006b, p. 4). Whereas the findings of the NRP were codified through legislative acts that included No Child Left Behind and Reading First, the findings of the NLP remain largely ignored and its publication was not endorsed by its funding agencies: the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institutes of Health, or the Department of Health and Human Services.

It is one thing to talk broadly about the influence of research findings on instructional practices, but it is perhaps more illustrative to examine a more concrete programmatic and curricular choice being made by schools across the nation. Accelerated Reader™ (AR) is a research-based, CCSS aligned reading product that has been used widely in classrooms for 25 years. In fact, Renaissance Learning (n.d.), the company that produces, develops, and markets AR, claims that it is used in one-third of U.S. schools and has been adopted for use in 60 countries. AR uses technology to evaluate students’ reading levels, determines books that are appropriate in terms of difficulty and interest, and provides quizzes to assess students’ comprehension. A core foundational value of the developers of AR is that “education is a basic human right, and that, given the right approach, virtually everyone can be a successful learner” (Renaissance Learning, n.d.). Stated differently, good teaching is good teaching, and AR has packaged this approach to augment instruction by a teacher. Not only do they put forth a one-size-fits-all package, in the very little attention they give to emergent bilingual learners in their promotional materials, they state, “Best practices for ELLs are generally the same as for native speakers” (Renaissance Learning, 2014, p. 12). Given the extent to which it has been adopted and is being used around the world, it is clear that many, many schools and districts see AR as an important component of language and literacy instruction. The problem is this: Dig deeper into these claims and you find that when it comes to bilingual learners, the claims unravel. In the U.S. Department of Education’s What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report (U.S. Department of Education, 2009) regarding the evidence base on the effectiveness of AR for bilingual learners, one finds the following statement:

No studies of *Accelerated Reader* that fall within the scope of the English Language Learners (ELL) review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *Accelerated Reader* on ELL.

And, although AR claims to include “a number of features to support reading practice for ELLs,” the sole feature that is named is that quizzes and diagnostic reports are available in Spanish (Renaissance Learning, 2014, p. 12). This is hardly “a number of features,” and certainly not representative of what we know about contextualized, meaningful, interactive instruction for emergent bilingual learners. Yet, we regularly witness emergent bilingual students spending significant amounts of the time set aside for language and literacy instruction engaged in silent reading and the independent completion of AR quizzes.

This exemplar is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather indicative of systemic issues that are representative of approaches to language and literacy instruction that are adopted with little regard for whether and how they will impact the language and literacy achievement of emergent bilingual learners. The critiques we have leveled provide a cautionary tale that teachers, parents, and administrators should remember as they make decisions regarding the language and literacy instruction of emergent bilingual learners.

Although most emergent bilingual learners are in English-only educational environments, the “good teaching” approaches are not limited to these contexts. We turn now to a common approach in organizing literacy instruction in bilingual/biliteracy programs.

Bilingual Contexts

Bilingual/dual-language educational models begin from the assumption that these programs can and should be uniquely conceived and implemented differently than mainstream English-only schools, especially in their attention to how language acquisition is intentionally fostered and accommodated throughout the school day. At face value, this seems to be exactly what is required for these learners. Why, then, would we implicate it under the umbrella of *good teaching is good teaching*? To begin, we must return to the current demographics of the students these programs are designed to serve, and keep these demographics present as we evaluate the instructional and theoretical lenses that are invoked to justify particular models of bilingual teaching and learning.

Arguably, the primary goal of education is the generalization of knowledge and skills to a multitude of circumstances through a process known as *transfer*. Transfer theory proposes that a student’s cumulative learning experiences, regardless of the original context, language, problem, or audience, are available to that student when faced with novel contexts, languages, problems, and audiences. This educational mainstay was a foundational organizing principle that guided the development of early iterations of U.S. bilingual programs. What is learned in one language will be easily

and fully applied to the other. Further, it has been used to justify particular instructional practices in the teaching of Spanish.

Early inceptions of bilingual programs began from the premise that emergent bilingual learners were entering schools as monolingual speakers of Spanish, and that their literacy instruction, therefore, should be exclusively in Spanish until the foundational skills of reading and writing were firmly mastered before introducing English language literacy. This sequential approach to literacy instruction resulted in students learning to read and write exclusively in Spanish with all English instruction being relegated only to the domains of listening and speaking until about second or third grade. These programs were predicated upon sequential bilingualism as a response to a particular demographic of students assumed to have had very little exposure to English prior to schooling or to students who had had prior schooling in other countries before arriving in the United States. Ironically, today most emergent bilingual learners are born in the United States and have lived a life fully exposed to both Spanish and English since birth. In fact, the Urban Institute reports that at the start of this century fully 77% of students labeled *ELL* in grades K–5 and 56% of students labeled *ELL* in grades 6–12 began their lives in the United States (Capp, Fix, Murray, Ost, Passel, & Herwanto, 2005). For those children fortunate enough to live in a community that supports their bilingual development, many will attend schools that were created under the assumptions associated with sequential language and literacy acquisition—when, in fact, they are simultaneously learning two languages with a knowledge base that deserves to be developed fully in all four literacy domains (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) beginning in kindergarten. For these students, it makes no sense to delay reading and writing until some abstract set of criteria is met in only one of their languages. In fact, given that in the current era of CCSS, their skills and knowledge will be measured only via English, it is particularly troubling that many bilingual models delay English reading and writing instruction such that they essentially ensure that these students will not appear satisfactory as measured by these assessments.

Beyond the overall dilemma of sequential language and literacy development versus simultaneous biliteracy development, there are the actual instructional practices and curricular materials that invoke the “good teaching” dilemma. All languages have unique internal structures that should guide how they are taught. The implication, of course, is that materials and practices in bilingual/biliteracy programs should vary by language. In other words, literacy materials in Spanish should not be mere translations of those developed in English. Further, pedagogies developed to facilitate the teaching and learning of English should not be forced upon the Spanish language. Although Spanish and English share an alphabetic

principle, their internal structures are quite different. Analytic approaches to teaching literacy need to understand and be based upon the utilization of principles that are specific to each language.

Given the state of the art with regard to creating effective literacy programs for the large and ever-growing population of emerging bilingual learners, it seems imperative to develop, implement, and empirically study innovative programs that enhance academic achievement of emerging bilingual children while allowing them to utilize all of their linguistic resources to learn. The final section of this chapter presents one such innovation.

A Holistic Biliteracy Framework

As discussed above, it is insufficient to impose current literacy practices on emerging bilingual learners without considering how they need to be modified and/or revised. Here, we present a framework for developing biliteracy titled a *holistic biliteracy framework* (Escamilla et al., 2014). This framework is designed to develop and nurture biliteracy in a way that develops Spanish literacy and accelerates the acquisition of English literacy. We consider this framework to be complementary and enhancing, rather than contradictory, to the current CCSS. Our holistic biliteracy framework is presented visually and discussed below and includes an explanation for how it might be adapted for both biliteracy contexts as well as English-medium programs.

Figure 2.1 presents a graphic of a holistic biliteracy framework that was developed for an ongoing research and instructional program known as *Literacy Squared*®. This framework was designed to align with the new demographic reality in the United States in which the majority of emerging bilingual learners comprises simultaneous Spanish-speaking bilinguals. The biliteracy program is a paired literacy model that directly and explicitly develops literacy in two languages for all children, beginning in kindergarten. The framework is broadly indicated in Figure 2.1 (see Escamilla et al., 2014, for more a more detailed explanation of the framework).

As stated above, the framework is unique in that it is a paired literacy model that is not duplicative, but also does not delay the introduction of English literacy until the second or third grade in the way that many sequential transitional bilingual programs currently do. The framework is specific in that it requires that daily literacy instruction include oracy, reading, writing, and the explicit teaching of metalinguistic skills (each icon in the framework represents one of these four domains). The framework suggests that the teaching of these four domains is essential in both Spanish and English to fully develop proficiency in both languages. The model is unique in that it requires that the two language environments (Spanish and

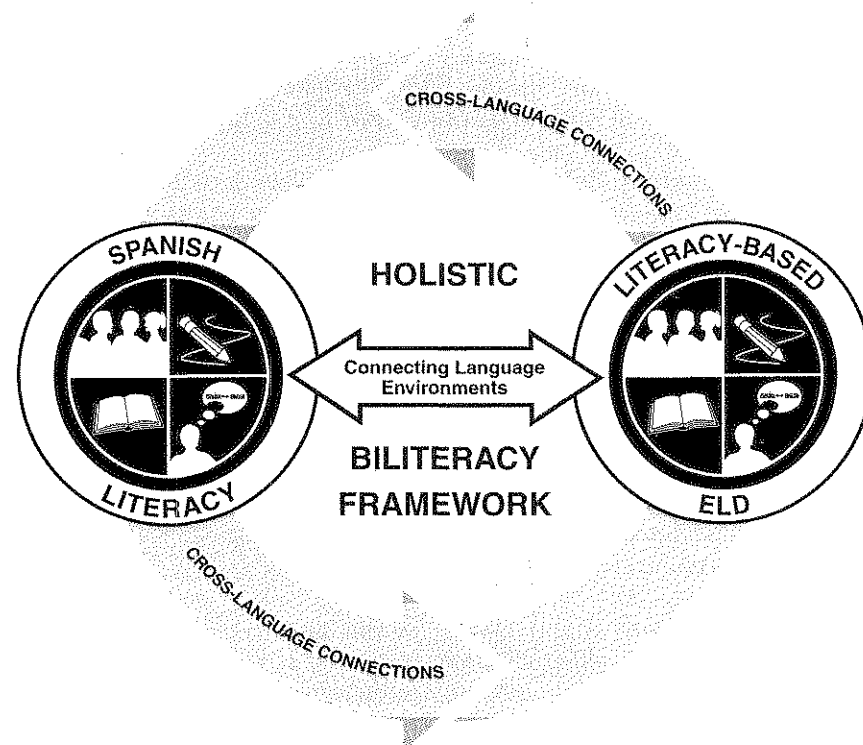


FIGURE 2.1. Holistic biliteracy framework. From Escamilla et al. (2014, p. 6). Copyright 2014 by Caslon Publishing. Reprinted with permission.

English) be connected, but again, not duplicative with regard to instruction. Finally, the model suggests that teachers intentionally and explicitly make cross-language connections.

The framework was created and empirically tested on children in K–5 programs of bilingual education (see Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014; Soltero-González, Escamilla, & Hopewell, 2012; Sparrow, Butvilofsky, Escamilla, Hopewell, & Tolento, 2014); however, we suggest that schools and teachers could also utilize the framework for literacy-based English language development (ELD) if they are teaching in English-medium programs. We would add that nothing about teaching in programs where English is the sole medium of instruction prevents teachers from making cross-language or metalinguistic connections, even if very generally.

The following provides a specific example of the holistic biliteracy framework applied in a bilingual education classroom and highlights a

first-grade biliteracy unit developed by Sandra Butvilofsky (2010) of our Literacy Squared team. This biliteracy unit was developed around the focal text *Abuelita llena de vida* (Costales, 2007) in Spanish and an adapted text for the English version titled *Abuelita Full of Life* (adaptation written by Butvilofsky, 2010).

In our framework, bilingual books are excellent texts for developing literacy in two languages and making cross-language connections. However, texts in two languages can also be connected by theme, literacy objectives, or genre. Bilingual books are appropriate for the following reasons:

- Bilingual books deepen understanding of the Spanish text.
- Bilingual books extend linguistic skills and literacy in English.
- Bilingual book lessons reduce the cognitive load of English text comprehension so that focus can be on acquisition of English language skills.
- Bilingual book lessons deepen conceptual knowledge about literacy.
- Bilingual book lessons activate prior knowledge/cultural schema and are culturally relevant.

Abuelita llena de vida is appropriate for this unit in that it is culturally relevant to Spanish-speaking children, is written at a reading level that is accessible in Spanish to first-grade emergent bilingual learners, is adaptable in English, and lends itself well to developing the domains described in the holistic biliteracy framework above. The unit addresses the following standards:

Reading: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story using key details (CCSS RL.1.3). Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories (CCSS RL 1.9).

Writing: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure (CCSS W1.1).

In this unit, oracy objectives and activities are detailed. *Oracy*, as defined in Literacy Squared, includes explicit attention to the teaching of language structures in vocabulary and dialogue. Table 2.1 identifies sample oracy objectives and activities in Spanish and English in the *Abuelita* unit and indicates how the two language environments are connected, but not duplicative. For example, in Spanish, students work on their understanding of antonyms, and they do something similar in English. However, in English the lesson also includes activities for learning to use the pronouns

TABLE 2.1. Oracy Objectives and Activities

Oracy Objectives—Spanish: Understand and create sentences that show an opposite meaning. Acquire and extend vocabulary related to antonyms.	Oracy Objectives—English: Use descriptive language to express compare–contrast relationships. Ask and answer questions. Use pronouns: <i>he, she, and they</i> .
Dialogue: Describe what your grandparents are like.	Dialogue: Where do your grandparents live? When do they visit? What do you do with them?
Language structures: _____ es _____, pero es _____. Aunque sea _____ es _____. Pienso que _____ es _____ porque _____.	Language structures: She is too old, but _____. He doesn't mind one bit. Abuelita is _____, but/whereas/ however José is not.
Vocabulary: Antonyms: <i>lively, to mature, to be quiet, to rock, even though, to whisper, incense</i>	Vocabulary: <i>Grandma/mother, grandpa/father, plant, lively, chase, together</i>

he, she, and they correctly, which is critical in the acquisition of English as an additional language. Further, the oracy structures in English also allow children to learn commonly used phrases in English (e.g., “He doesn’t mind one bit”).

The unit also includes specific reading and writing activities designed around the approaches that include modeled and interactive read-alouds (and modeled writing), shared reading and writing, collaborative reading and writing, teacher-led small groups, and independent reading and writing. In Literacy Squared, we have focused on shared reading and writing as being more critical to literacy instruction than independent work, and we encourage teachers to design lessons that maximize shared reading and writing activities. We feel that this attention to shared reading and writing is important for several reasons. First, shared activities maximize not only opportunities for repeated reading and writing, but also opportunities for the development of oracy and metalanguage. Next, when children are working in English (a language that may be new to them), they need multiple opportunities to practice with the support of more expert others.

Independent practice, absent guidance, may lead to the fossilization of incorrect language forms, and may impede reading comprehension and writing development.

The *Abuelita* unit consists of Spanish and English reading and writing lessons that span a 2- to 3-week time period. Lessons in Spanish and English are connected and complementary but not duplicative. In the first grade, the unit is planned for a Spanish literacy block that is 2 hours in length and a literacy-based ELD block that is 60 minutes in length. Ideally, the same bilingual teacher delivers the unit, although it can be coordinated between a bilingual teacher and a monolingual English teacher who work in close collaboration with each other. In the *Abuelita* unit in Spanish, the lesson plan calls for reading the text with children, followed by a shared reading activity in which the children and the teacher use the text to examine how the author organized her ideas to describe both *abuelita* and José's reactions to *abuelita*. Children are invited to go back to the text to identify descriptive language. Then the children are asked to pick one phrase that describes *abuelita* that they would like to share with the class and to read this phrase to themselves in preparation for sharing with the class.

When the children read the adapted text in English, they are familiar with the story line because they have already read it in Spanish. The teacher explicitly tells children that they know this text and that they will be reading a summary of it in English. In this way, the language environments of Spanish and English are connected and the learning burden, in English, is reduced for these children as they are reading something in English that they are already familiar with in Spanish. In addition to reading via interactive reading and shared reading, children are given language structures in English to read and respond to that relate to the text. For example, children are given the structure "My favorite character is _____ because _____." In the English shared reading of this text, students engage in a teaching strategy specific to Literacy Squared known as *Lotta Lara*. *Lotta Lara* is a repeated reading strategy that is accompanied by explicit attention to oracy that includes echo, choral, and partner reading, thereby enabling children to read English text and practice with peers and teachers. The oracy component is critically important in that it aids children in comprehending the text and provides specific attention to oral language development (see Escamilla et al., 2014, for a more detailed discussion of the *Lotta Lara* activity).

With regard to writing, the *Abuelita* unit, as is true for all Literacy Squared units, utilizes modeled, shared, collaborative, and independent methods to teach writing, and the writing activities are connected to the reading. In addition, Literacy Squared uses a method called the *Dictado* to teach children how writing is connected to discourse and to explicitly teach semantics, phraseology, syntax, spelling, and conventions (see Escamilla,

Geisler, Hopewell, Sparrow, & Butvilofsky, 2009, for a more detailed explanation of the *Dictado*). In addition to the *Dictado*, children produce a written product in Spanish and English as a culmination to the unit.

In Spanish, children are asked to bring a picture of a grandparent or an older person they admire, and then to write a descriptive text about that person. They are invited to use the language from the text, in Spanish, to help with their descriptions, and they must use structures that require using antonyms. Children present their final written essays to the class, which gives them more practice reading.

In English writing, the final product involves having students pick a favorite character and write about him or her using at least two descriptive sentences. In preparation for this writing activity, students have learned and used various descriptive vocabulary words and have practiced these words in complete sentences. For example, "My favorite character is _____, because _____." Again, the expectations in Spanish and English are connected to the same text, but are not duplicative.

Finally, the *Abuelita* unit has teaching strategies designed to develop metalinguistic awareness both within and across languages. In our framework, we define *metalinguage* as "thinking and talking about language" (Escamilla et al., 2014, p. 67). Becoming literate in two languages necessitates deep and ongoing development of metalinguistic awareness. The *Dictados* in the *Abuelita* lesson provide good examples of opportunities teachers can utilize to develop students' metalinguistic awareness. In Spanish first, then English, the following is the unit *Dictado*:

ABUELITO

El abuelo de Marta es mayor de edad. Abuelito dice que es demasiado viejo para jugar fútbol, aunque zapatea con mucha fuerza cuando baila.

Marta's grandfather is elderly. Grandfather says that he is too old to play soccer, even though he can dance with a lot of energy.

In this *Dictado* the use of the word *abuelito*, following the first use of *abuelo*, for *grandfather* provides an opportunity for children to learn about the many ways in which the diminutive *ito* is used in Spanish. In this case the use of *abuelito* following *abuelo* indicates endearment. The use of the phrase *mayor de edad* (*elderly*) rather than *old* expands the children's metalinguistic awareness of the variety of ways to describe people's age group.

The English *Dictado* reads as follows:

ABUELITO SINGS

Marta and Grandpa dance together. Abuelito likes to sing, but Marta does not. He sings "Las mañanitas" to her.

In this Dictado, children can learn the gender-specific nature of pronouns in English (e.g., Marta = *she* and *abuelito* = *he*). This is an example of within-English metalinguistic development. The students can also learn that the conjunction *and* indicates the same, whereas the word *but* indicates a contrast. The direct and explicit way that the teacher draws attention to the metalinguistic language features in the Dictado talk-through is designed to teach metalinguistic awareness.

In this Dictado, students can also engage in cross-language metalinguistic development. For example, students can learn the concept of writing a title that in English requires that each word in the title be capitalized, but in Spanish only requires that the first word of title is capitalized. Similarly, children can learn that some words should not be translated from Spanish to English or they will lose their meaning. In this Dictado, the words *abuelito* and *las mañanitas* should not be translated and for that reason are left as is and, at times, set off by quotation marks in English. These examples represent cross-language metalinguistic development and help children understand how each of their languages is the same as well as different.

Applying the Holistic Biliteracy Framework in English-Only Classrooms

As stated above, the intention of the holistic biliteracy framework, as it is used in Literacy Squared classrooms, is to develop biliteracy in Spanish and English. However, it can also be utilized in English-medium classes because some, though not all, of the basic principles apply. Literacy-based ELD can be an effective stand-alone ELD program if all four language domains are implemented when teachers design and teach lessons. That would include assuring that the ELD program is book-based, that considerations for cultural relevancy are included, and that the English-medium units include oracy, reading, writing, and metalinguistic development. A caveat to these suggestions is that the *book selection is critical*; the book must be one that the children can comprehend without having the Spanish anchor from which to build.

Assessment and Biliteracy Trajectories

To conclude this chapter, we must restate our continuing concern with not only the monolingual and monocultural nature of the CCSS, in general, but also and more problematically, with the English-only assessment system that determines whether or not children and schools are meeting the mandates of the CCSS. Emergent bilingual children who have the opportunity

to develop bilingualism and biliteracy must be assessed in both of their emerging languages (in this case, Spanish and English) and results of this assessment must be counted in a school's accountability framework. The current and proposed monolingual assessment systems in literacy are sure to provide an incomplete and inaccurate picture of the biliteracy development of all children in bilingual and dual-language programs and an equally inaccurate picture of the English literacy development of these same children. A monolingual assessment system can never shed light on biliteracy development.

Our work in Literacy Squared has included the development of a trajectory toward biliteracy that is designed to allow schools and teachers to observe and record children's developing biliteracy. We suggest that teachers and schools use this trajectory as an additional source of evidence to determine whether or not emergent bilingual learners are meeting high standards. In the development of Literacy Squared, we hypothesized that because the path to biliteracy is uniquely singular, varying by languages, contexts, age of acquisition, etc., an individual's trajectory would be better measured using a two-language continuum that allowed for a student's reading achievement to be interpreted in comparison to a range of levels rather than a fixed cut score (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014). Further, biliterate development is not always a linear process and ranges of levels better reflect the complexity that becoming biliteracy entails (Moll, Sáez, & Dworin, 2001). We recognize that a true biliterate trajectory should include attention to more than just reading. However, to date, our work is limited to a reading trajectory.

Using the Evaluación del desarrollo de la lectura (EDL2) and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)—informal reading assessments in Spanish and English (Weber, 2001)—we created a bilingual reading trajectory (see Table 2.2). This trajectory requires that all emerging bilingual children be assessed in both Spanish and English annually, and it enables educators to see children's progress as developing biliterate readers. The reader will note that often children's outcomes in Spanish (EDL2) are higher than in English. However, it is the cumulative nature of the trajectory that indicates that emerging bilingual children are more than their English outcomes, and that when one combines Spanish with English, the results often supersede what monolingual children acquiring literacy in only one language could attain.

In our most recent research with regard to this trajectory, we found that the vast majority of students in our Literacy Squared schools, who might be viewed as low performing if only their scores in English were considered, are actually performing at grade-level competence in Spanish and are in zones of biliteracy. Further, we found that the percentage of children in biliteracy zones increases across grade levels. Table 2.3 illustrates

TABLE 2.2. Bilingual Reading Trajectory

EDL2 level (Spanish)	DRA2 level (English)
A-3	A-3 (exposure)
4-6	A-3
8-10	4-6
12-16	8-10
18-28	12-16
30-38	18-28
40	30-38
50-60	40+

the biliterate achievement of students in our most recent research projects (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2015). If we are ever going to value biliteracy achievement, it is imperative that we couple bilingual/biliterate school programs with a valid bilingual/biliterate assessment system.

Table 2.3 illustrates concretely the application of the biliterate trajectory. For example, in this particular study, at the end of the first grade 170 students (81%) are at the Spanish benchmark. In and of itself, this is evidence of good achievement in literacy, but it shows only one language (Spanish). However, in our work we also consider how students are progressing in English literacy. In this study, when we consider student progress in Spanish literacy and combine it with progress in English literacy, we find that at the first-grade level 78% of our students are in the biliteracy zone. This means that they are making good academic progress in both Spanish and English. The same is true for all the grade levels represented in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3. Students Reaching Grade-Level Benchmark and in Biliteracy Reading Zone.

Grade	EDL2 goal	Numbers reaching EDL2 (Spanish) benchmark	% reaching EDL2 (Spanish) benchmark (N/209)	% of students at benchmark in Spanish and in biliteracy zone
1	Level 12 or higher	170	81	78
2	Level 18 or higher	190	91	88
3	Level 30 or higher	178	85	92
4	Level 40 or higher	139	68	96

Conclusion

We end where we started. All children are entitled to a comprehensive and effective education that prepares them for college and careers. It is axiomatic that in the 21st century, a comprehensive education ideally includes the opportunity to become bilingual, biliterate, and cross-culturally competent. In this chapter, we have proposed that comprehensive schooling ideally should include opportunities to become biliterate for the nation's large and growing population of emergent bilingual children. We have also proposed that even in the absence of opportunities to become biliterate, emergent bilingual children still need a different pedagogy with regard to the acquisition of literacy. This pedagogy is one that is better tailored to emergent bilingual children's strengths and needs as emerging bilinguals. We believe that the nation has the linguistic and material resources to improve literacy instruction for emergent bilingual children. The question is, do we have the political will?

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