

***Teaching and Learning in Two
Languages: Bilingualism and Schooling in the
United States. García, Eugene, E. (2005) New
York: Teachers College Press***

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Teaching and Learning in Two Languages is a fine addition to the body of scholarly literature on bilingualism. García presents not only an extremely substantive overview of the phenomenon of bilingualism (with a focus on bilingual education) in current society, but provides practical material that clearly merits the attention of educators working with bilingual students. García recognizes the multifaceted/interdisciplinary nature of the complex domain of bilingualism. He asserts, for example, "Languages, as cultural and social channels, are one source for placing ourselves as social and cultural agents" (p. 158). The relevance of this statement to the study of bilingualism is apparent throughout the book. Relatedly, in the Preface ("Why This Book?"), García states, "The book addresses an increasingly important challenge confronted by schools in the United States: educating to high standards students from diverse language, culture, and social-class groups" (p. xiii). It is the belief of this reviewer that García addresses this topic most effectively.

A primary commendable feature of the book is its scope, which is broad without any sacrifice of cohesion. In addition to discussing teaching and learning in the narrowest of senses, García establishes a meaningful framework by presenting details on language use in the United States. We learn (from census figures), for example, that almost 10,000,000 youngsters (ranging in age from 5 to 17) are from households where languages other than English are spoken. In addition, the book provides an in-depth treatment of policies/decisions (federal, state, and local) related to bilingualism/bilingual education. The nature of bilingualism is explained by making reference to research in a number of areas (e.g., error analysis, code-switching), but García stresses that bilingualism must be viewed in a larger context. He argues, "Linguistic, cognitive, and social development are interrelated" (p. 38). The book also

notes the multiplicity of programs intended to meet the needs of bilingual students. Believing that "staff should reject program and model labels" (p.39), García offers a series of guiding questions aimed at facilitating the selection process for educators. In addition, he states, "Not all programs that serve bilingual students in U.S. schools serve immigrants or the offspring of immigrants" (p. 75). Issues related to American Sign Language and dialect differences are included in the related discussion. Finally, to round out this overview of the scope of the book, García describes in great detail a longitudinal study on the development of literacy skills in bilingual students at two elementary schools in San Francisco. It is reported, "The data in this study make clear that students from distinct primary-language experiences in Spanish and Chinese can develop sophisticated literacy expertise in their primary language and in English" (p. 145). The succinctly organized chapters (constituting 170 pages of text) all flow together nicely and, in addition, are well researched (note the wide-ranging list of references comprising some 15 pages).

This book would provide excellent reading, not only for prospective educators and, of course, students of linguistics, but for those from allied fields interested in understanding language in a social and cultural setting. The book offers much of value to both theoreticians and practitioners. Among the most important points argued convincingly is that English can and should be acquired, but without erosion of the native language. Relatedly, García asserts, "Educational programs, teachers, and administrators that serve bilingual students well respect the students for what they bring - their language, culture, and worldview" (p. 165). All those who read Teaching and Learning in Two Languages will walk away enriched by the experience. The wider the readership the greater the likelihood of concomitant societal benefits.