



Received: 28 March 2017
Accepted: 26 April 2017
Published: 11 May 2017

*Corresponding author: Fernando Rodríguez-Valls, Secondary Education Department, College of Education, California State University, Fullerton, CA, USA
E-mail: frdriguez-valls@fullerton.edu

Reviewing editor:
John W. Schwieter, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Additional information is available at the end of the article

CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teaching social studies in Spanish in dual immersion middle schools: A biliterate approach to history

Fernando Rodríguez-Valls^{1*}, Jordi Solsona-Puig² and María Capdevila-Gutiérrez³

Abstract: As many K-6 students enrolled in dual language and bilingual programs enter middle and subsequently high schools that implement similar programs, content area teachers in Spanish face a twofold challenge: to remain aligned with the classroom discourse utilized in Spanish Language Arts (SLAs) and to implement effective strategies while teaching content in the target language. A cohesive language and content program provides students with the opportunity to obtain deep and critical understanding of the content area and to acquire and maintain high levels of biliteracy. To accomplish both, teachers must have the adequate language skills to create, scaffold, and assess the students' language development in Spanish. Here, we propose a collaborative model where teachers across subject areas—Social Studies and SLAs—work together identifying common assignments, strategies, and skills. This process could help students increase their discernment of how knowledge is assembled within the subject area of history as well as their capability to use the target language when deconstructing primary and secondary sources. The foretold outcome would be to ensure students could read their world and their words with biliterate, historical, and critical eyes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Fernando Rodríguez-Valls, Jordi Solsona-Puig, and María Capdevila-Gutiérrez's work focuses on equitable instructional practices for dual immersion students as well as on the linguistic and sociocultural factors affecting their academic achievement, educational continuity, and school engagement. Their pragmatic inquiry underlines the significance of designing and implementing methodologies in which the teaching and learning of language occurs through both explicit language instruction as well as an integrated component of content instruction. These two ideas guide their research and teaching in compulsory education settings and in Teacher Preparation programs. The main outcome of their practices is a bicultural and biliterate individual—a teacher and/or a student—who has the knowledge, awareness, and commitment to read the worlds and the words with critical and thoughtful eyes.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Acquiring high levels of biliteracy skills calls for interdisciplinary methodologies in which Language teachers work in unison with Subject Area teachers (social studies, mathematics, and science). This article describes the strategic and intentional curriculum designed by a Spanish Language Arts teacher and a Social Studies teacher in a middle school dual immersion program. The core of their curriculum provides a cohesive, well-articulated, and continuous support to students who are learning content knowledge in the target language, Spanish. Collaborative models such as the one depicted here may be utilized in secondary dual immersion programs as well as in any school setting where teachers are willing to develop a shared commitment: biliteracy and quality learning for all students. Through interdisciplinary lesson planning, teachers not only increase student achievement in all areas, but also model essential collaborative practices which students require in order to become conscientious, holistic, participatory, and global citizens.

Subjects: Teaching Practice - Education; Teacher Education & Training; Teaching & Learning - Education; Teachers & Teacher Education

Keywords: biliteracy; classroom discourse; collaboration; language development; historical eyes; content-based language instruction

1. Introduction

Language and content are connected in K-6 dual immersion (DI) and bilingual classrooms. Teachers in elementary grades facilitate dialogs with their students in both Spanish Language Arts (SLAs) and the subject areas: mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, and art. Moreover, teachers are fully cognizant of how students are progressing in terms of the language development in Spanish as well as how their growth in Spanish language proficiency supports and enhances the deeper understanding and a more independent use of the language as a thinking and inquiry tool (Vasquez, 2016; Zwiers & Crawford, 2011). In this setting, students are exposed to a *constant* classroom discourse because the same person teaches both Spanish and in Spanish (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008). The classroom discourse is coherent and adheres to one person/teacher, who walks the students through the contextual features. Gibbons (2015) illustrates such features in the work by Halliday and Hasan (1985): *the field*, as when the same teacher goes over the concept of synonyms and analyzes the causes of the Mexican–American war in the 1800s; *the tenor*, both the speaker and listeners are the same across registers and language domains; and *the mode*, students and teachers listen to each other, for example, in a discussion on stereotypes or read together the chapter “*Niños y niñas* [Boys and Girls]” from *La Casa en Mango Street* [The House on Mango Street] by Sandra Cisneros (1994).

In contrast, when students enter middle and high schools that are implementing dual immersion programs, the classroom discourse in the target language is somehow fragmented, as their SLA teacher is, oftentimes, different from the one teaching other subject areas in Spanish. This fragmentation in the classroom discourse may impact the acquisition of the target language, Spanish. Corcoran and Silander (2009) depict this fragmentation in middle and high schools where “Most teachers spend each day independently teaching topics in one content area ... Work outside the classroom is also highly departmentalized, with teachers organized into departments by their subject matter specialty” (p. 160). Furthermore, as Rodríguez-Valls, Kofford, and Morales (2012) explain, the curriculum in middle and high schools sometimes “*fences* the voices of ... [biliterate] students within the areas comprised in the Language Arts curricula ... thus limiting solely to Language Arts classes the space where students can refine and enhance their language” (p. 98).

This constraint in opportunities for students to increase their language skills limits the possibility of acquiring language beyond the Language Arts instruction. If we take, as an example, one of the Common Core Standards in Reading for Literacy in History Social Studies grades 6–12 (2013) “Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies” (p. 81) and its translation to Spanish in the Common Core Standards en Español “*Determinan el significado de palabras y frases utilizadas en un texto incluyendo vocabulario específico de las materias relacionadas con la historia y los estudios sociales*”,¹ we see the importance of designing an alignment between the SLAs instruction and the language instruction occurring when teaching Social Studies in Spanish.

In aligning the DI subject matters, the selection of quality sources likewise presents challenges. One rare example of a bilingual primary source found in the Library of Congress can help suggest the controversies of historical sources regarding language use. The Article I of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) reads as follows: “*Habrá paz firme y universal entre la República Mexicana y los Estados Unidos de América, y entre sus respectivos países, territorios, ciudades, villas y pueblos sin excepción de lugares y personas* [There shall be firm and universal peace between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic, and between their respective countries, territories, cities, towns, and people, without exception of places or persons]”.² In this case, DI students would better analyze the text

in Spanish. However, the English version may provide the students with some tips to interpret the text by comparison. Using the same primary source, when reading and analyzing the Article IV in Spanish “*Todos los prisioneros de guerra tomados mar ó tierra por ambas partes se restituirán á la mayor brevedad posible despues del cange de las ratificaciones del presente tratado* [All prisoners of war taken on either side on land or on sea shall be restored as soon as practicable after the exchange of ratifications of this treaty]”,³ students would continue to analyze the text in Spanish, if both teachers—SLA and Social Studies—draw from each other’s instruction in vocabulary expressions such as “*á la mayor brevedad* [as soon as practicable]”, etymology and linguistic borrowings such as “*cange* [exchange]”, and grammatical differences and historical variations of language, that cannot be noted through reading the English version. Additionally, having the two versions available may help in expanding the meaning of concepts in both languages, providing a holistic approach to historical events from two different cultures.

This alignment is framed with Lévesque’s (2009) idea on educating the new generations of students who are capable of developing historical thinking. As she states, students who are equipped “with ‘the rules of the game’ ... can make sense of the conflicting views of history they encounter in and outside the classrooms” (p. 20). In developing this understanding of “the rules of the game”, students in dual language middle and high schools could better understand the role English and Spanish have when narrating history in each one of the languages. Speaking, writing, reading, and listening about history in Spanish as compared and contrasted to when they might have heard the same historical events in English create a new value when acquiring Spanish literacy and historical literacy in Spanish (Cassany, 2010; López Bonilla, 2013). Within this context, the Spanish Language, as Berthoff explains in the introduction of Freire & Macedo’s (1987) book *Reading the Word and the World*, “assures the power of envisagement: because we [teachers and students] can name the world and thus hold it in mind, we [teachers and students] can reflect on its [Spanish] meaning and imagine a changed [biliterate] world” (p. xv).

In the following sections, we will examine the language demands needed when teaching Social Studies in Spanish, a framework designed to fulfill these language demands to the maximum, an effective interdisciplinary model to implement in dual immersion (DI) programs, and the implications drawn in terms of rethinking how bilingual authorization programs for single-subject candidates are designed in California. We will conclude with some recommendations that might ignite new bodies of research on all the aforesaid areas and ideally a revised understanding of what a highly qualified biliterate/bicultural teacher entails in the bloom of a multilingual and inclusive twenty-first century.

2. Language demands when teaching and learning history in Spanish

The features the history teacher must bring in order to create a successful DI program are many and hard to find in just one person (Emery, 2016). To begin with, this ideal teacher must be a target language role model with proficiency in both oral and written language, or in Lindholm-Leary’s words (2005) a “native or native-like ability”. This person needs to master not only subject matter, but also the academic language associated with the content class. The teacher needs to be comfortable using target language tier two words during instruction and be knowledgeable of the tier three words required by the field of expertise. According to Calderon and Minaya-Rowe (2011), tier two includes: vocabulary words that have different meanings across academic content areas, transition words, idioms, and phrasal clusters, among others. Tier three vocabulary words are low frequency and academic content specific.

The teacher must combine linguistic proficiency, academic language knowledge, content mastery, and language and content teaching expertise. These features describe a holistic teacher that is at the same time a linguistic model, a facilitator for content acquisition, and a provider of opportunities for appropriate language production. Finding all these features in one person has proven to be one of the major challenges DI administrators and school districts face (Emery, 2016; Lindholm-Leary, 2005).

The history student in a DI class needs also to meet certain expectations that, in combination with those of the holistic teacher described above, lead toward effective teaching and learning, and excellence both in language and subject matter. A middle school DI student, having been in a DI program for 6 years, approaches a content class as a goal in itself, and uses language, Spanish, as the tool to reach that goal. Spanish mastery is essential at various levels, but there are some crucial aspects in which a DI student needs to show proficiency in order to demonstrate readiness for the history DI class. Below, we will discuss the lexical, grammatical, and literary skills that middle school DI students need in order to continue improving academically and linguistically—and how the history teacher helps develop those skills.

In regard to vocabulary and academic language, students need an appropriate command in understanding and production of the academic language that pertains to the social studies class, both in terms of tier two and tier three words (Calderon, 2007). One of the language demands depends on the need to use the content vocabulary taught by the history teacher each year, but over a growing foundation of good understanding and usage of tier three vocabulary in the target language. Often times, due to the reduced amount of time students spend speaking the target language at school, they come to the content class with a considerably higher ability to understand oral and written language than their ability to produce it orally (Páez, Tabors, & López, 2007).

In this sense, the demand to produce academic language that is both age and level appropriate, as well as content driven, is a challenge which both the SLAs teacher as well as the history class teacher help support and scaffold. Students may acquire increasingly complex and more academic words in both classes by means of linguistic transfer, metalinguistic observation, and discussion. For instance, students may make sense of cognates like *analizar* [analyze], *sobrestimar* [overestimate], *sintetizar* [synthesize], and *contextualizar* [contextualize]. In turn, the SLA and history teachers use this need to scaffold and support history vocabulary as a way to contextualize teaching and learning and make meaningful connections among disciplines. These linguistic connections and lexical transfers, that are used mostly instrumentally, become in the mind of the student more meaningful, useful, and academically profitable as they benefit learning in various classes and disciplines.

Regarding vocabulary teaching, learning, and use, there are also some challenges both teachers and students face. One of the main challenges is probably the difficult transferability of some tier two vocabulary. This is especially the case when the history teacher must have students learn certain concepts that do not necessarily exist in the other language or that lack the cultural weight or transferability in the target language. The history teacher needs to help students understand both concept and word, using the target language only. Let's use "checks and balances" as an example of this. Translated into Spanish by various sources as "controles y contrapesos" or "frenos y cortapisas", this important tier two concept may sound decontextualized and empty of meaning when translated into Spanish. DI students may know the meaning, or various meanings, of the each separate word in the concept, but both Spanish words in combination can hardly express the historical, political, and cultural importance "checks and balances" entails. In this sense, the history teacher becomes both a linguistic and historical decoder for the DI students.

Another language demand students face in the content-specific history class is in regard to reading, reading comprehension, and textual analysis. DI students must be able to read texts making meaning of vocabulary that is specific to history, but more importantly, they need to look at historic documents and texts with critical eyes (Freire, 1999). They need to be able to decode the various textual layers, tones, voices, perspectives, and intentions within a text. Only through this critical and analytical reading ability will students become active readers, interpreters, and critics of history in the target language. The SLA class and teacher have an important, supportive role in this since they become the platform and the facilitator that help students learn and practice how to decode texts and interpret their various layers of meaning. In the SLA class, a context in which history is not the objective but the excuse for language learning and textual discussion, the document becomes a tool for practice. In turn, the SLA teacher finds in the text a meaningful example to help students practice

decoding these texts as well as learn about various literary devices and textual features in a contextualized manner (Lazar, Edwards, & Thompson McMillon, 2012).

Our last focus of this section delves into the grammatical demands students have in a history class as well as the written ability required. As we mentioned above, the content class must be also a second language class in which students continue to use and practice the linguistic structures learned in SLA. In a similar way, the language conventions used in written language could be put into practice, corrected, discussed, and assessed in both classes. In the writings produced in or for history class, students could continue to look at textual aspects learned in the SLAs class, such as structure and organization, transitions, features of textual typology, orthography, and language accuracy and correctness.

An example of how teachers could help DI students meet all those language demands (lexical, literary, and grammatical) would be an activity in which both teachers and students read and analyze excerpts from *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* by Bartolome de las Casas (Casas, 2005). A look at this sixteenth-century narrative provides a meaningful example of how both language and content classes in DI can and must work collaboratively to achieve mutual goals for language and content learning. Through the reading, discussion, and analysis of this text, students would work with history-specific vocabulary and review historical facts learned in the social science class. They would also deepen mastery of SLA standards through the work with a specific textual typology and its structure: the chronicle. In the reading and analysis of this text, they would find a meaningful example from which to learn and discuss literary aspects such as writer's intention behind the text, the type of narrator used and why this type is required in a chronicle, the textual tone, and the intended reader for it.

A reading that connects a historical and linguistic understanding of this text would be done through the reflection and discussion of questions such as: What are those adjectives the author is using when describing the natives? What are those adjectives and what impression do they convey about the natives? Why does Bartolomé de las Casas mostly use verbs when describing the Spanish conquerors through their actions? What is his intention behind that choice? How is the text and its language different from a contemporary one in terms of verbal usage? What patterns do you notice in the verbs that are not used nowadays?

These questions would help the students make reflections on language—parts of speech or verbal tense differences—and, at the same time, lead the students toward a greater, deeper understanding of the text and its historical time and context. Questions of this kind would help students connect their linguistic ability with their comprehension of a historical text.

Through this choice of meaningful texts that connect both disciplines, and by means of the use of deeper thinking questioning and highly rigorous analysis of these texts, DI students could grow linguistically and in their ability to read, write, and interpret as historians (Janks, Dixon, Ferreira, Granville, & Newfield, 2013). Maybe more important than that, this work and improvement in DI classes are also helping students develop their critical and analytical skills, which are quintessential in their process to becoming successful and independent bilingual citizens and lifelong learners (García & O'Donnell-Allen, 2015).

3. Teaching history and developing materials in Spanish

As seen in Section 2, challenges and expectations for teachers and students of history in a DI program can be perceived as the ultimate example of Content-Based Instruction (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013). In middle school, the students learn the second language using it in a content-level subject such as history, becoming an important opportunity for them to use Spanish as a learning tool rather than solely as a learning goal in itself. Critical thinking skills develop rapidly during adolescence, entering the Piaget's last stage of cognitive development by approximately the age of 12 (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Despite this, previous research has pointed to a generic middle school

plunge in achievement (West & Schwerdt, 2012) that also affects DI programs (Gaffney, 1999). Additionally, while the academic demands augment in two languages as students progress, the amount of instruction time in the target language gradually dwindles in certain models: “The decrease in the amount of instruction in Spanish from 50% in elementary to 30% in the middle school (and to less than 10% in high school) tangibly diminishes the status of Spanish and limits students’ access to Spanish language and literacy development in school” (De Jong & Bearse, 2012, p. 21).

In this context, the challenge of teaching subject content, history developing high-quality instructional materials, and integrating language and content instruction has been a constant in DI programs, especially in middle and high schools (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2013). Certainly, teaching becomes more meaningful with the support of well-designed materials. However, as noted by De Jong and Bearse (2012), one of the concerns when teaching in Spanish DI programs has been the need to go beyond the official curriculum. On the outskirts of curriculum, teachers may have encountered situations in which the “lack of appropriately leveled materials that were aligned with the grade level curriculum made high-quality instruction challenging” (p. 25). Reasonably, developing biliterate students through history requires the exposure to multiple historical texts (Goudvis & Harvey, 2012), both primary and secondary sources. In pursuing the goal of reading like a historian (Reisman, 2012), students are urged to evaluate the author’s context, purpose, and perspective altogether. According to all aspects aforementioned, the process of teaching and developing historic materials in Spanish unfolds with its specific demands, roadblocks, and pathways. This section looks at potential source materials, strategies geared specifically toward dual language instruction, and the question of testing in a DI environment.

When DI programs have reached middle school, they have become a highly demanding academic habitat. Selecting a historic primary source that would be both grade-level adequate and suitable for all students can become a daunting task. Aiming for more demanding texts rather than simpler ones would facilitate the option to work from the source in layers of depth. Most often than not, this situation implies finding sources beyond the beaten path of the official curriculum. There is a myriad of history grade-level resources in English. This is not always the case in Spanish; in many instances, translating from those English sources into the target language is the only option. DI teachers would be required to use their translation skills to compensate for the lack of original sources. Another issue might be the use of sources originally written in English—e.g. the Washington’s “Farewell Address” or Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address”—in a Spanish DI class. These original sources might lose some of the structural or cultural features when translated, e.g. the mythical initial sentence of the Gettysburg address “Four scores and seven years ago”, translated in diverse sources as “Hace 87 años” or “Hace ocho décadas y siete años”, still does not match the powerful message of the original source and the cultural complexities attached.

In addition to selecting appropriate materials, DI teachers must use strategies geared toward interpreting bilingual/bicultural materials. Using a multiple reading strategy, the textual analysis process could start with a simpler breakdown (author, year, location, events, big idea), then go deeper into the meaning (context, purpose, connections with the present), and even deeper (perspective, bias, connections between events). In doing so, the DI history teacher can design more inclusive lesson plans to better accommodate students’ learning needs utilizing scaffolding techniques, prompts, or graphic organizers to facilitate the learning process. In balancing academic content and language instruction, the question would be what comes first in a content-based instruction (CBI) classroom: language or content? The answer is both.

Integrating language exercises on a daily basis during history instruction time that are embedded in the class content helps develop language skills in context (Applebee, Adler, & Flihan, 2007). For instance, given a set of reading comprehension questions intentionally leaving the verb in infinitive form, students would complete the verb as they answer the exercise. Attention can be paid, also, to verb forms particular to writing about history, as when, for example, one is tracing cause and effect, or when one is suggesting possible alternatives to events. Another daily exercise could be to create

a list of vocabulary interferences drawn from the student-produced exercises (e.g. the nonexistent word “*populación*” mistranslated from *population*). In doing so, the students could build up the class’s own dictionary of nonexistent or incorrectly used words. This can be done with lists of cognates too.

Another special circumstance involves the frequency with which Roman numerals are used in Spanish historical texts and sources. *The Real Academia de la Lengua Española* (RAE) signals the labeling [*spelling*] of centuries, dynasties, and popes or kings seriations with the use of Roman numerals instead of Arabic numbers, e.g. “*Siglo XVI*”, “*Dinastía VIII de Egipto*”, “*Papa Clemente IX*”, or “*Rey Enrique VIII de Inglaterra*”. In finding trouble reading these Roman numerals in different sources, DI students may experience distractions, interruptions, or misinterpretations of the historical events depicted. It becomes a prerequisite that students should master the reading of Roman numerals before advancing in the historic content in Spanish.

Other strategies such as narrow reading (Krashen & Brown, 2007), document-based question essays (DBQ), reading the text in the original English then analyzing it in Spanish, exercises of translation, and composing from historical texts increase the students’ ability in the composing process for all languages. The use of images as texts, such as political and satirical cartoons, maps, graphic charts, and historical photographs, has a powerful effect on the mind of the young learners. In providing the tools to reading an image as a text, and subsequently producing oral or written responses, multiple means of learning are provided to cement the knowledge of a given topic. The approach to this strategy should be structured and scaffolded in different steps (Gómez, Freeman, & Freeman, 2005). As a first step, the students would practice observation skills to produce an accurate objective description. In the second step, the students would enrich their narrative with the subjective description of the image: feelings, interpretations, context, and biases. In a third step, students would connect their own experience and the present times with the historical topic.

Testing presents another conundrum in the DI classroom. As a non-written principle for DI teachers, language instruction should be monolithically in the target language, although “this is not to say that language mixing itself is harmful; clearly, the sociolinguistic skill of language mixing or code switching is important in bilingual communities” (Lindholm-Leary, 2005). The same author states that DI students should be assessed in two languages to preserve the quality of instruction. However, district and state benchmark tests such as the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) test have been always delivered in English. In other words, the DI students learn in Spanish and are tested in English. The history teacher, teaching in Spanish, should ensure the delivery of content in the target language while maintaining a watchful and steady eye on the English assessments.

As mentioned above, testing becomes a sort of impossible equilibrium. Sporadically using external language role models, when the main role model is absent, to deliver content or tests in English every now and then becomes a practical option. If instruction is excessively focused on academic language in Spanish, students might be *at-risk* of becoming a non-functional language speaker in daily life (Brisk & Zisselsberger, 2011). This effect is increased when DI students do not interact in the target language outside the class. Establishing discussions in class with daily life experiences that involve the use of daily expressions or vocabulary might be remedial to this particular academic language exacerbation. When assigning writing assignments, one should recommend using first-person voices of the past from various layers of society, depicting historic events from the perspective of what Howard Zinn (2000) calls the *Unsung Heroes*.

Clearly, historical literacy requires specific skills and strategies (Lévesque, 2010) in order to read, write, and think critically to run the gamut of historic media: text, image, sound, artifacts. Biliterate students’ ultimate goal is to apply these skills proficiently in both languages. The design of historical materials should consider students’ bilingual proficiency as an advantage rather than an interference or limitation. All in all, the process of designing high-quality materials for a DI content area

such as Social Studies helps in balancing the asymmetrical linguistic status between the target language and the mainstream language. In offering high academic content as rigorous as any other in Spanish, we contribute to equalizing the linguistic benefits for all students (De Jong & Howard, 2009).

4. Collaboration model

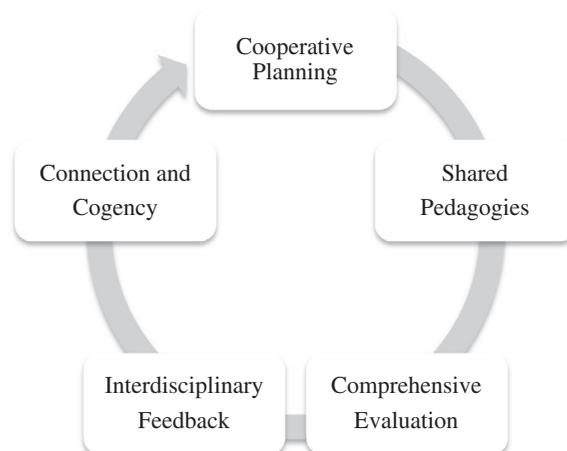
Section 3 presented the language demands and how they are met when teaching history and language in DI programs. We have so far offered a description of the requirements, difficulties, and teaching strategies both teachers and students face when using historical sources in Spanish in DI programs. A key element of this synergy between the SLA and the history teachers is the collaboration model used to ensure the cohesiveness of both instructional and designed language and content scaffolding. Both teachers must collaborate to ensure the effectiveness of their methodologies. However, the contrary is not uncommon, as DuFour (2004) noted when depicting effective professional learning communities: “Despite compelling evidence indicating that working collaboratively represents best practice, teachers in many schools continue to work in isolation” (p. 8).

In an attempt to prevent the fragmentation that may be caused in students’ language acquisition when they are exposed to various teachers, we need to carefully look both at the challenges as well as benefits of this new DI educational setting. Collaboration, in the form of interdisciplinary approach to language proficiency, may facilitate instructional practices. Corcoran and Silander (2009) find that “evidence ... suggests that teacher teaming may facilitate changes in instructional strategies and discussions of students’ learning that might lead to improved student outcomes” (p. 162). With multiple teachers working on the development of their biliteracy, DI students receive exposure to various language styles, domains, regional or national accents, vocabulary, and jargons. By means of this tight collaboration and articulation across disciplines in middle school, what is a source of fragmented language input becomes a source of linguistic improvement as well as subject matter enrichment.

Designing and implementing language and history interdisciplinary curricula is not new in the literature (Applebee et al., 2007; López Bonilla, 2013). Hence, we argue that both the history and the SLA teachers must be at the same time language and content teachers. The SLA class establishes the foundations to be transferred, implemented, and practiced in the Spanish Social Studies class. Reflections on language and language use, reading techniques, textual structure, typology, and orthography are regularly used and discussed across all the disciplines taught in Spanish (Parodi, 2010). The history class, then, provides for a content-based, highly academic environment to put into practice, develop, and fully acquire language concepts introduced in the SLA class. Through collaboration, practices are implemented horizontally, and language acquisition reinforced daily from various classes.

This horizontal collaboration between DI teachers must be implemented across both classes and in several aspects (Figure 1):

Figure 1. Horizontal biliteracy.



- Teachers would strongly cooperate in planning.
- Teachers would use common methodologies and strategies.
- Teachers would share correction rubrics and keys for written assignments that students understand and recognize as core or DI materials.
- Students should receive corrections and comments both on their language use as well as on their content in both classes.
- Students would become proficient in both dimensions, and see the importance of them due to the continuity and validity in their DI classes.

This strong collaboration and mutual information provides opportunities to support one another's class and overall student learning. If the SLA teacher is working, for example, in fixing potential language fossilization problems in the use of "Qué" vs. "Cuál" question words, the history teacher could stress the importance of the concepts and support its acquisition by including a choice in the class activities for the day: "*¿Qué/Cuál fue la intención de Abraham Lincoln con la Declaración de la Emancipación en 1863?* [What was Abraham Lincoln's goal with the 1863 Declaration of Emancipation?]" Through these practices, students realize the importance of the concept taught and see how its acquisition benefits their learning, linguistic improvement, and performance in all classes.

In addition, there must also be a strong collaboration in both the discussion of goals and in the strategic monitoring of student progress. Regarding goals, teachers must be aware of the goals each content class has for the specific year. There must also exist a set of common language goals toward which DI teachers work together. If both teachers are aware of the objectives in the other class as well as the common goals for both classes, the outcome in terms of student improvement in biliteracy will be exponential. Lindholm-Leary (2005) states, "Strong planning processes should be in place that focus on meeting the goals of the program (in dual language, this means promoting the students' bilingualism, biliteracy, and multicultural competence)" (p. 30). As for the second aspect, monitorization of progress, technology may help with timely visits to the grade book if grades are placed in an online platform. Furthermore, added to annual state benchmarks, many districts are using their own benchmarks to monitor achievement progress mediated by technology. The use of another external benchmark for linguistic improvement, that is prepared and practiced in both classes, can also serve as a common goal that all DI stakeholders see as a final proof of community work, effort, and achievement. All these sources of data may help in the process of making data-driven decisions and on how to use the student performance data to inform instruction. Schaffhauser (2012) contends that despite the fact of having an abundance of data on student performance, it requires stamina and expertise to assemble the much-needed information. It is evident, though, that these practices entail numerous hours of collaboration between teachers outside of the classroom. Lomas (2014) suggests school leadership and school districts must find ways to provide planning and collaboration hours to teachers implementing these programs. Similarly, DI schools, teachers, and districts must also emphasize the need for continued professional development on DI in a proactive manner.

5. Implications for bilingual authorization/teaching credential programs

In Section 4, we have outlined a model which could support language development and content understanding and mastery of DI students. We have claimed that language development calls for a horizontal collaboration between SLA teachers and content area teachers. This collaboration provides a cohesive scaffold for all the students learning history in Spanish. Moreover, the continuity across methodologies raises the language and content academic expectations for DI students. Learning history, or any other subject, in Spanish should have the same rigor as that in English-only classrooms. The latter poses key questions when rethinking how teacher preparation programs should support the new generations of highly qualified biliterate and bicultural teachers.

Currently, in California, the requirements for any credentialed teacher or teacher candidate who wants add the *bilingual authorization*⁴ are as follows: (a) pass a test demonstrating language proficiency in four areas—use of language, reading, listening comprehension, oral and written expression,

(b) pass a methods course, and (c) pass a culture class. Though these requirements provide a solid foundation for teachers working in DI classrooms, we underline the importance of equipping bilingual teachers with the pedagogy and the tools to work as a team with their colleagues from other subjects. Moreover, the design of preparation programs and professional development for DI teachers should focus on a biliterate approach that considers the interconnection between content and language instruction as something not only necessary, but also vital. Otherwise, as Cammarata and Tedick (2012) stress, “preparation programs (PD) do not help immersion teachers understand the critical connection between language and content, and thus do not help them develop that sense of awakening regarding the interdependence between language and content” (p. 263).

We are concerned that if SLA teachers work in isolation from content area teachers teaching in Spanish, DI students will become stagnant in their language development, and thus their potential for becoming fully biliterate would be at risk. Furthermore, if language development is confined within the SLA classroom, DI students could become Long-Term Spanish Learners, which could negatively impact the benefits of Dual Language Instruction (Endos, Genesse, Savage, & Haigh, 2010; Ramirez, Perez, Valdez, & Hall, 2009).

Hence, we identify four areas where further research is needed to better understand the challenges and opportunities for growth embedded in DI programs. The first area is teacher preparation of bilingual teachers. Universities, school districts, and county offices must work in conjunction to stream a pathway that would secure the quality and thoughtfulness of DI programs. Secondly, universities, school districts, and county offices must outline the key traits a school administrator working in a DI school must possess in order to become both a leader and a coach. Thirdly, scholars must commit to write and publish their research in languages other than English. There is somehow a fallacy behind the idea of requiring bilingual authorization candidates to become fully biliterate, yet faculty narrows their work in monolingual expressions. Lastly—perhaps most importantly—currently one of the biggest challenges in higher education is to ensure all the courses required for the bilingual authorization programs are taught in the target language by faculty members who have high levels of language proficiency in all the aforesaid areas. Moreover, all the work—written assignments, presentations, and lesson plans, program evaluations—bilingual authorization candidates produce should be in the target language.

If we are invested in creating a truthful multilingual education system, all languages used and taught in the classroom must have the same status. As Mougeon, Ndaski, and Rehner (2010) explain, there is a big difference between the concept of bilingualism and biliteracy. Bilingualism may produce the traits of speaking and listening, which Cummins (1979) categorizes as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). However, biliteracy must sustain the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) of DI students, and so involves the teaching and learning of Spanish both in the SLA class and in the content area classes taught in Spanish. Both components are needed; hence, we would like to ensure that all the agencies supporting, promoting, valuing, and reinforcing biliteracy see the need to teach language across content areas. The ultimate goal must be to create spaces where students can read the words and the worlds with biliterate and critical eyes. These students will have the tools to make personal decisions and to participate in civic cultural affairs and economic productivity with the understanding that a biliterate community is the underpinning of an inclusive and global society.

Funding

The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Author details

Fernando Rodríguez-Valls¹

E-mail: frdriguez-valls@fullerton.edu

Jordi Solsona-Puig²

E-mail: jsolsona@gusd.net

María Capdevila-Gutiérrez³

E-mail: mcapdevila@gusd.net

¹ Secondary Education Department, College of Education,

California State University, Fullerton, CA, USA.

² Glendale Unified School District, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA, USA.

³ Glendale Unified School District, Universidad Castilla-La Mancha, Ciudad Real, Spain.

Citation information

Cite this article as: Teaching social studies in Spanish in dual immersion middle schools: A biliterate approach to history, Fernando Rodríguez-Valls, Jordi Solsona-Puig & María Capdevila-Gutiérrez, *Cogent Education* (2017), 4: 1326202.

Notes

1. Common Core Standards en Español: https://commoncore-espanol.sdcoe.net/Portals/commoncore-espanol/Documents/NA_ELA_SPAN_6-12.pdf.
2. Library of Congress (2017a): <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=975>.
3. Library of Congress (2017b): <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=978>.
4. Bilingual Authorization: <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/creds/english-learners-faq.html>.

Corrigendum

This article was originally published with errors. This version has been corrected. Please see Corrigendum (<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2017.1335464>).

References

- Alanís, I., & Rodríguez, M. A. (2008). Sustaining a dual language immersion program: Features of success. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 7, 305–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348430802143378>
- Applebee, A. N., Adler, M., & Flihan, S. (2007). Interdisciplinary curricula in middle and high school classrooms: Case studies of approaches to curriculum and instruction. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44, 1002–1039. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831207308219>
- Berthoff, A. E. (1987). Foreword. In P. Freire & D. Macedo (Eds.), *Reading the word and the world* (pp. xi–xxiii). Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Brisk, M. E., & Zisselsberger, M. (2011). We've let them in on a secret: Using SFL theory to improve the teaching of writing to bilingual learners. In T. Lucas (Ed.), *Teacher preparation for linguistically diverse classrooms: A resource for teacher education* (pp. 111–126). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Calderon, M. E. (2007). *Teaching reading to English learners, grades 6–12: A framework for improving achievement in content areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Calderon, M. E., & Minaya-Rowe, L. (2011). *Preventing long-term ELs: Transforming schools to meet core standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Casas, B. D. L. (2005). *Brevissima relación de la destrucción de Las Indias*. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Editorial Edaf.
- Cassany, D. (2010). *Investigaciones y propuestas sobre literacidad actual: multiliteracidad, internet y criticidad*. Cátedra UNESCO para la Lectura y la Escritura: Universidad de Concepción, Chile. Retrieved from <http://www2.udc.cl/catedraunesco/05CASSANY.pdf>
- Cisneros, S. (1994). *La casa en mango street*. New York, NY: Vintage Español.
- Corcoran, T., & Silander, M. (2009). Instruction in high schools: The evidence and the challenge. *The Future of Children*, 19, 157–183. <https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.0.0026>
- Cummins, J. (1979). Cognitive/academic language proficiency, linguistic interdependence, the optimum age question and some other matters. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, 19, 121–129.
- De Jong, E., & Howard, E. (2009). Integration in two-way immersion education: Equalising linguistic benefits for all students. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 12, 81–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050802149531>
- De Jong, E. J., & Bearse, C. I. (2012). Dual language programs as a strand within a secondary school: Dilemmas of school organization and the TWI mission. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 17, 15–31.
- DuFour, R. (2004). Schools as learning communities. *Educational Leadership*, 61, 6–11.
- Emery, M. C. (2016). *The unprecedented growth of dual language immersion programs: What leaders need to know* (Doctoral dissertation). San Diego State University.
- Endos, C., Genesee, F., Savage, R., & Haigh, C. (2010). Individual differences in second language outcomes. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 15, 3–25.
- Freire, P. (1999). *La importancia de leer y el proceso de liberación*. México: Editorial Siglo XXI.
- Gaffney, K. S. (1999, February). Is immersion education appropriate for all students? *The Bridge: ACIE Newsletter* (pp. 1–8). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.
- García, A., & O'Donnell-Allen, C. (2015). *Pose, wobble, flow: A culturally proactive approach to literacy instruction*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Genesee, F., & Lindholm-Leary, K. (2013). Two case studies of content-based language education. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 1, 3–33. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jicb>
- Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching English learners in the mainstream classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gómez, L., Freeman, D., & Freeman, Y. (2005). Dual language instruction: A promising 50-50 model. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 29, 145–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2005.10162828>
- Goudvis, A., & Harvey, S. (2012). Teaching for historical literacy. *Reading*, 69, 52–57.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, R. (1985). *Language, context, and text: Aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Huitt, W., & Hummel, J. (2003). Piaget's theory of cognitive development. *Educational psychology interactive*, 3(2), 1–5.
- Janks, H., Dixon, K., Ferreira, A., Granville, S., & Newfield, D. (2013). *Doing critical literacy: Texts and activities for students and teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Krashen, S., & Brown, C. L. (2007). What is academic language proficiency. *STETS Language & Communication Review*, 6(1), 1–5.
- Lazar, A. M., Edwards, P. A., & Thompson McMillon, G. (2012). *Bridging literacy and equity: The essential guide to social equity teaching*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lévesque, S. (2009). *Thinking historically: Educating students for the 21st century*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Lévesque, S. (2010). On historical literacy: Learning to think like historians. *Canadian Issues*, 2010, 42–46.
- Library of Congress (LOC). (2017a). *The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty* (page 922). Retrieved from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=975>
- Library of Congress (LOC). (2017b). *The Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty* (page 925). Retrieved from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=978>
- Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2005). Review of research and best practices on effective features of dual language education programs. *Center for Applied Linguistics*, 35. Retrieved from http://www.lindholm-leary.com/resources/review_research.pdf
- Lomas, C. (2014). La educación lingüística, entre el deseo y la realidad. In C. Lomas (Ed.), *La educación lingüística, entre el deseo y la realidad: Competencias comunicativas y enseñanza del lenguaje* (pp. 9–17). México: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales.
- López Bonilla, G. (2013). Prácticas disciplinares, prácticas escolares: Qué son las disciplinas académicas y cómo se relacionan con la educación formal en las ciencias y en las humanidades. *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*, 18, 383–412.

- Mougeon, R., Ndaski, T., & Rehner, K. (2010). *The sociolinguistic competence of immersion students*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Páez, M. M., Tabors, P. O., & López, L. M. (2007). Dual language and literacy development of Spanish-speaking preschool children. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 28, 85–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2006.12.007>
- Parodi, G. (Ed.). (2010). *Alfabetización académica y profesional en el siglo XXI: Leer y escribir desde las disciplinas*. Santiago: Editorial Planeta Chilena, S.A.
- Ramirez, M., Perez, M., Valdez, G., & Hall, B. (2009). Assessing the long-term effects of an experimental bilingual-multicultural programme: Implications for drop-out prevention, multicultural development and immigration policy. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 12, 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050802149523>
- Reisman, A. (2012). Reading like a historian: A document-based history curriculum intervention in urban high schools. *Cognition and Instruction*, 30, 86–112. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2011.634081>
- Rodríguez-Valls, F., Kofford, S., & Morales, E. (2012). Graffiti Walls: Migrant Students and the Art of Communicative Languages. *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, 32, 96–111.
- Schaffhauser, D. (2012). Closing the Gap: There is a veritable chasm between the shiploads of data collected on student performance and the teachers who could use that data to make instructional decisions: How do districts bridge that divide? *The Journal (Technological Horizons In Education)*, 39, 10.
- Vasquez, V. M. (2016). *Critical literacy across the K-6 curriculum*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- West, M., & Schwerdt, G. (2012). The middle school plunge. *Education Next Review*, 12, 62–68.
- Zinn, H. (2000). Unsung heroes. *The Progressive*, 64, 16. Retrieved from <http://howardzinn.org/unsung-heroes/>
- Zwiers, J., & Crawford, M. (2011). *Academic conversations: Classroom talk that fosters critical thinking and content understandings*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.



© 2017 The Author(s). This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) 4.0 license.

You are free to:

Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format
Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially.
The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms.

Under the following terms:

Attribution — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.
You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.
No additional restrictions

You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits.



Cogent Education (ISSN: 2331-186X) is published by Cogent OA, part of Taylor & Francis Group.

Publishing with Cogent OA ensures:

- Immediate, universal access to your article on publication
- High visibility and discoverability via the Cogent OA website as well as Taylor & Francis Online
- Download and citation statistics for your article
- Rapid online publication
- Input from, and dialog with, expert editors and editorial boards
- Retention of full copyright of your article
- Guaranteed legacy preservation of your article
- Discounts and waivers for authors in developing regions

Submit your manuscript to a Cogent OA journal at www.CogentOA.com

