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Titel: The Bilingual Reform

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Zusammenfassung

I recommend this book to all who have an interest in the current issues in foreign language teaching and learning.

Vollständige Rezension

Foreign language teachers often attempt to speak only the target language in the classroom. In this book Butzkamm and Caldwell discuss and demonstrate how teachers can use the learner's mother tongue to teach a foreign language with quicker and better acquisition of communicative skills. Their techniques contrast with much current emphasis on avoiding the spoken mother tongue.

Speaking in the mother tongue in classroom instruction contrasts with some foreign language teaching methods. The authors reference and discuss methods that use the learner's L1 skills (Dodson, Curran, Lozanov, etc.), and monolingual methods that attempt to avoid the use of the L1 or that use it only as a last resort when nothing else works (Direct, Natural, Immersion, etc.). Adopting bilingual techniques would affect most methods, i.e., a "paradigm shift." The authors demonstrate bilingual teaching techniques that one can use in order to move efficiently from a dependence on support of the L1 (and/or another already acquired language) to independent use of the new language. For example, early on they introduce the basic sandwich technique: "French teacher of English: 'What's the matter? Qu'y a-t-il? What's the matter?' This technique . . . is the quickest way to make authentic classroom communication possible: statement in L2, restatement in L1 and again in L2; L2 [L1] L2" (p. 33). The learners then use this sentence in communicative exercises until it becomes an acquired skill. This "sandwich technique" shows up during the book in different formats for various situations, and leads to other techniques. The Bilingual Reform also includes a mix of brief quotations from language instructors and learners of the past and present, advanced language learners' statements about methods of instruction they encountered in classrooms, and pithy statements by world cultural leaders. These all support the authors' discussion of the

moment. The authors discuss many issues deriving from their main focus in a format of 14 chapters plus a Foreword, an Introduction, and an Epilogue, each of the latter contributing to the discussion. Chapter and supplement titles give a hint of the unique focus on techniques and theory: Introduction: Ared card for the mother tongue? / Chapter 1: Teaching English through English—with the help of the mother tongue / Chapter 2: How learners break into the speech code: the principle of dual comprehension / Chapter 3: We only learn language once / Chapter 4: Communicative equivalence and cross-linguistic networks / Chapter 5: The mothe tongue as the magic key to foreign grammars / Chapter 6: How to teach structures the bilingual way / Chapter 7: Dialogues, drama and declamation / Chapter 8: Language learning as skill learning / Chapter 9: Maximising high-quality input via the mother tongue / Chapter 10: Translation as a fifth skill—a forgotten art / Chapter 11: More bilingual practice / Chapter 12: The ‘natural’ method / Chapter 13: Ideas for multilingual classes / Chapter 14: Directions for future work / Epilogue: Capitalizing on a priceless legacy. At the end of each chapter one finds a list of possible tasks for classroom assignments, i.e., in a course for tertiary students or professionals. Some of these tasks can guide individual readers in gaining a better understanding of topics and in improving their skills in bilingual instruction. The Bibliography provides the serious reader with a useful fund of carefully selected references to the literature. Butzkamm’s own considerable list of works based on a professional career of dealing with this basic issue, and Caldwell’s background of teaching and research in the Far East, contribute resources for additional details on various points of discussion. An example of a reference that leads to helpful insights: “Mensch, Be Careful! Bilinguale Jugendliteratur für fortgeschrittene Anfänger,” by David Dollenmayer and Susanne Even in *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 38.1 (Spring, 2005), pp. 9–18. And another for a wider audience: “Reexamining English Only in the ESL Classroom,” by Elsa Roberts Auerbach, in *TESOL Quarterly*, 27.1 (Spring, 1993), pp. 9–32. The reader could give these a try and discover whether you find them and other references enlightening and engaging. The authors also reference a varied array of applied research that supports teaching bilingually. For example, after World War II, C.J. Dodson, a professor in Wales, carried out experiments that showed the value of bilingual techniques in foreign language instruction (*Language Teaching and the Bilingual Method*. London: Pitman, 1967, 1972). More recently Yuhua Ji reports on successful experiments of teaching with “sandwich stories” in the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, China over a span of five years: “English through Chinese: experimenting with sandwich stories,” in *English Today* 69, 18.1 (January 2002). Minor glitches in the printing of a book appear here; however, the errors appear to provide little difficulty for the reader or

researcher. Incorrect dates on several references, minor scrambles in the alphabetical listing in the Bibliography, etc. can be corrected in any future edition. For example: Werner Leopold appears in the Bibliography correctly, and incorrectly as "Walter" Leopold in the text (p. 219). The candid style of writing and the broad presentation of ideas and techniques could cause the reader to rethink the use of the mother tongue. The Bilingual Reform serves well as a guide and resource for the teaching of foreign languages. I recommend this book to all who have an interest in the current issues in foreign language teaching and learning.