

## English Learners in American Classrooms: 101 Questions, 101 Answers

James Crawford and Stephen Krashen. New York: Scholastic, 2007.

This slim but pithy handbook is a rich and highly accessible resource for in-service and preservice teachers, parents, administrators, and laypeople interested in issues related to English language learners (ELLs) in U.S. public schools. Crawford and Krashen address important issues in a straightforward and easily comprehensible way, steering clear of overly academic narratives, discipline-specific jargon, and in-text research citations. That said, the content is firmly grounded in well-constructed and up-to-date research, and the notes at the back of the book provide an extensive listing of the research cited in each of the 101 responses. Language policy expert James Crawford and distinguished ESL scholar Stephen Krashen ask the questions that need to be answered regarding ELLs—the big and important, the contentious, the confusing, the legal, the historical and political, and even the emotional.

The authors anticipate readers' curiosity in the 101 questions and corresponding answers, which are presented under 12 headings: Students, Programs, Pedagogy, Research, Heritage Languages, Criticisms of Bilingual Education, Public Opinion, Legal Require-

ments, Assessment and Accountability, Politics of Language, History, and Language Policy. Questions such as "How does native language teaching help ELLs acquire English?" (p. 18) and "But doesn't it help ELLs to practice speaking English as much as possible?" (p. 19) are given thorough treatment in the Pedagogy section. In the Research section, readers learn the answers to contentious and sometimes confusing questions such as "Isn't it important to teach English early, since young children are best at language acquisition?" (p. 33) and "Why do some ELLs do well in school without bilingual education?" (p. 35). In the Legal Requirements section, readers learn for example, that although the federal government does not mandate bilingual education, certain states, including Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey, require schools to provide bilingual education programs under certain circumstances.

In the Politics of Language section, readers gain interesting insights into the role of English in other countries and in the United States through questions such as this: "English is the official language in many countries. Why should this idea be controversial in the United

States?" (p. 61). The answer indicates that no country has designated English as its sole official language, but rather that nations with English as an official language are bilingual or multilingual; this policy contrasts with the monolingual situation that could arise in the United States. Undoubtedly, issues like these can invoke deep emotional responses from readers, but it is critical that they are addressed in the literature.

The one weakness of this book is also its strength: brevity. Because the book is so succinct and concise, it is hard to gain a thorough understanding of the individual issues that are presented. However, the ambitious reader can use the references and Internet resources provided to garner further knowledge. It is without question that *English Learners in American Classrooms: 101 Questions, 101 Answers* should be on the bookshelf of all who work with ELLs.

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option is the most fascinating one, because visitors see a map on the left-hand side of the page, with dots representing the newspapers of various locations. As they move the mouse over each dot on the map, the corresponding front page appears on the right. In any of these three possibilities, the front pages may be sorted by geographical region: USA, North America, Asia,