



# **The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981 (Fronteras Series, sponsored by Texas A&M International University)**

*Carlos Kevin Blanton*

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Despite controversies over current educational practices, Texas boasts a rich and vibrant bilingual tradition—and not just for Spanish-English instruction, but for Czech, German, Polish, and Dutch as well. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Texas educational policymakers embraced, ignored, rejected, outlawed, then once again embraced this tradition.

In *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas*, author Carlos Blanton traces the educational policies and their underlying rationales, from Stephen F. Austin's proposal in the 1830s to "Mexicanize" Anglo children by teaching them Spanish along with English and French, through the 1981 passage of the most encompassing bilingual education law in the state's history. Blanton draws on primary materials, such as the handwritten records of county administrators and the minutes of state education meetings, and presents the Texas experience in light of national trends and movements, such as Progressive Education, the Americanization Movement, and the Good Neighbor Movement.

By tracing the many changes that eventually led to the re-establishment of bilingual education in its modern form in the 1960s and the 1981 passage of a landmark state law, Blanton reconnects Texas with its bilingual past.

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