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IB Africa,
Europe & Middle East
Regional Conference

Supporting the Development of a Bilingual Program in the PYP

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A little about Lebanon & Beirut

- Long history of invasion, colonization and perseverance, which resulted in a rich cultural heritage and a strong will to survive and succeed

- Small land area – 10,452 km², about 200 km along the Mediterranean coast and about 65km inland

Roman ruins in downtown Beirut

A little about Lebanon & Beirut

Famous Raouche Rock

Beirut's beautiful sea front

A little about Lebanon & Beirut

- 18 different religions represented in government

- Approx. 4 million people in Lebanon -- 1.4 million in Beirut, and more than 4 million as expatriates around the world

A little about Lebanon & Beirut

- About 65-70% of children attend private schools

- 3 official languages (Arabic, English, French)

- National testing at 9th grade, 11th and 12th

Place de l'Etoile in downtown Beirut, facing the Lebanese Parliament

A little about Wellspring

LEARNING COMMUNITY

- Just began our fifth year (Age 3-14 and growing)

- Year 1, started with 20 students, 25 staff members, 4 classes from Nursery to grade 3

- Now, we have around 320 students, 85 staff members, 17 classes from Nursery to Grade 8

A little about ![Wellspring LEARNING COMMUNITY]

- About 52% Lebanese students, 22% foreign students and 26% students with dual nationalities (Lebanese/Foreign)

- About 16% foreign teaching staff with no Arabic proficiency

- PYP from the beginning, got authorized in April 2011, MYP till Grade 8 this year and growing, going for the DP in secondary

- Long term aim for bilingual English/Arabic program—equal status for both languages
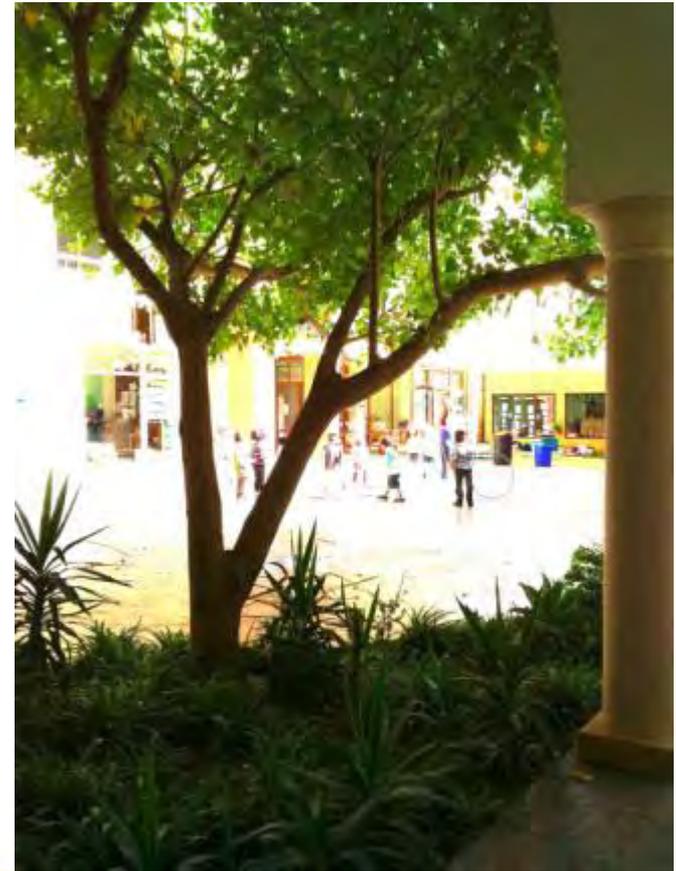
Wellspring's
Araucaria tree

Lebanese Language Context

- Being bi- or multilingual is socially desirable; English or French viewed as of higher status than Arabic

- Lebanese Arabic and French are the most common "mother tongues", English is gaining more popularity

- Lebanese Arabic is a dialect and not a language of literacy (our school also has Yemeni, Saudi, Syrian, Jordanian, Egyptian and Kuwaiti students with different dialects)

- Modern Standard Arabic taught in school, but not used commonly in everyday speech

- No clear majority language

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Common models for Arabic/English

- Main instruction in English with Arabic and AFL throughout (most Anglophone schools)

- Main instruction in French with Arabic and AFL throughout (most Francophone schools)

- All instruction in Arabic except Math and Science throughout (with EFL or FLE)

- Main instruction in Arabic until grade 3, then switch to English

- All instruction in Arabic until grade 6 or 7, then switch to English (or French)

Some challenges for us

- Classical Arabic/MSA required in national curriculum

- Arabic not always respected—Parents want strong English

- Students who attend non-Arabic universities tend to get the better jobs because of a perception that their English or French is strong and their Arabic literacy is weak--the other languages are often not strong enough either

- Multilingualism is assumed, so few parents really work on it deliberately with their children

- Teaching of Arabic is highly focused on rote memorization—which people see as limited, yet they cling to it

- Teachers are not used to actively engage with bilingualism – in their own education or in their previous teaching experiences

Wellspring's Literacy Bell

In this complex context, a clear vision and careful planning are imperative!

Needs to Address

- Accommodate the diverse desires of families

- Cater for students coming in with diverse linguistic backgrounds and educational experience

- Accomplish our goals in the context of the PYP/MYP and eventually DP

- Build capacity of teachers, parents and school environment to support these goals (learning community)

- Develop a professional development program that will support a strong bilingual program in an inquiry context*

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Supportive Design Features

Mission of the school includes aim for equal status of Arabic and English; developing both languages required of all

IB-PYP requires focus on more than one language using same approach to all, as well as strong international and cultural component

Staffing Model: Team teaching -- Two homeroom teachers in each classroom (a native speaker of English and a native speaker of Arabic) in addition to the Arabic language teacher who teaches more than one section

Developing a Bilingual Program that Engages All Stakeholders

Outcome of the first four years

Educating Ourselves

- All staff (teaching and administrative) read, studied and discussed an extensive bibliography of research on bilingual instructional models

- About midway in the first year, we brought in an expert to help us focus toward codifying what we were learning into a strategic model for classroom practice

- Informally trying out strategies and sharing experiences

Developing Useful Tools

A. Written document "Language Allocation Options Chart" representing a continuum of strategies from separation to concurrent use of the two languages – including rationales for when/why to use various strategies or why not to use them in our setting

A. Arabic Logs – a data collection tool where teachers log the time (in minutes) per week they engage students with Arabic outside of Arabic class, specifying the strategy used

A. Strategies on the continuum

SEPARATION

- Subject
- Topic
- Person
- Place
- Time
- Medium of Activity
- Function
- Student (preference)
- Curriculum material

CONCURRENT USE

- Curriculum material (dual language)
- Trans-languaging
- Purposeful concurrent use
- Previewing and Reviewing
- Translation
- Random code switching

Examples from Options Chart

	category	Use	Rationale
Separation	By Time	Not recommended	Incompatible with inquiry approach that requires more meaningful and natural language separation
Separation	By Topic/Theme	Encouraged depending on fluency; we already plan with it	We can support both languages all the time; supports meaningful Arabic integration in units of inquiry
Concurrent	Trans-languaging	Encouraged	Sometimes needed to help make sense—also ideal when focus is on expression of ideas regardless of language
Concurrent	Random code switching	Not allowed	Does not lead to development of fluency in either language

B. Arabic Logs and Targets

- Logs collected daily information on amount of time spent using colloquial vs. formal Arabic and in what types of activities

- Initial model for Arabic Targets developed based on actual proportions of time according to the logs and recommendations for types of activities also based on actual use across classes (*USE OF Inquiry/ DATA MODELING PROCESS TO SOLVE A REAL PROBLEM–part of professional development in the school*)

- Revised model for bilingual targets and continuation of data collection through Arabic Logs (added dimension of which strategies were used)

Communicating with Parents

- Realized we have to communicate all this with parents and engage in joint study with them

- Selection of readings to study with parents in study groups

- Information sessions throughout the year

- Authentic bilingual inquiry sessions in class

Communicating with Parents

- Multiple occasions for whole-school events

- Invite them to student-led conferences

- School communications done in both English and Arabic

    ✧ Class newsletters, all formal letters, monthly newsletter from the Head of school, invitations, announcements, etc.

Examples of parent/teacher study group questions

- How can we relate multilingualism to the PYP?

- How can we support strong literacy base at home?

- How does Wellspring's approach compare to various bilingual program models?

- How are we (at home and school) helping our children to appreciate our cultural heritage? What are the obstacles to that in Lebanon?

- How does language influence culture—can the two be separated?

Appreciation تقدير	Commitment الإلتزام	Confidence الثقة بالنفس
Cooperation التعاون	Creativity الإبداع	Curiosity الفضول
Empathy التعاطف	Enthusiasm الحماس	Independence الإستقلالية
Integrity النزاهة	Respect الإحترام	Tolerance التسامح

Developing a Professional Development Program that Supports our Bilingual Program

Engaging teachers in authentic bilingual learning experiences

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Our Professional Development Program

Ongoing, practice-based, evidence-based professional development is at the core of our learning community.

Our PD program engages all staff members in:

- Setting PD goals – individual and collective
- Conducting bi-weekly teachers sharing sessions
- Having monthly PD sessions
- Benefiting from IB workshops (regional, in-school, online)
- Conducting peer observations (minimum requirement)*
- Engaging in collaborative planning and teaching*
- Forming study groups

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Supporting the Bilingual Program in PD

- Allocated PD time to the study and discussion of the options chart

- Agreement for Arabic to be integrated in all PYP units of inquiry

- Launching of data collection (Arabic Logs) followed by an analysis of Arabic Log data and establishment of targets for use of Arabic outside of Arabic class

- Classroom observations and feedback specifically on the use of bilingual strategies

- Conducting PD sessions bilingually using some of the strategies because of the foreign staff we have (including using bilingual materials)*

- Many new teaching staff every year requires that we spend time on this in our ongoing professional development (reading and text discussion, sharing classroom experiences, creating video case examples of using various strategies)

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Supporting the Bilingual Program in Other Areas

- Revised model for bilingual targets and continuation of data collection through Arabic Logs (done at specific points in time during the year)

- Repetition of Parent/Teacher study group with more bilingual resources

- Task force to develop BILINGUAL PERSON PROFILES

- Integration of Arabic language required in all PYP units; Arabic teachers have grade level focus and considered as third HR teacher

- Master schedule includes Arabic Inquiry Time different from language instruction*

- Language development courses for Parents and Teachers in both languages

Some Things We Learned

- We should continue the study group and make it more widely accessible

- Bilingual instruction model should be centered on students' needs

- Home Language Policy needs to be addressed in our parent orientation processes—equally important as school policy

- We need to explore how to factor in choice about language/culture in the classroom

- We need to develop tools for representing the kind of bilingual fluency/functionality we are aiming for with our students

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Continued Challenges

- Overcoming traditional understandings of subject matter separation and instructional approaches– among teachers, parents and students!

- Building stronger understanding of bilingual instruction on the part of all stakeholders
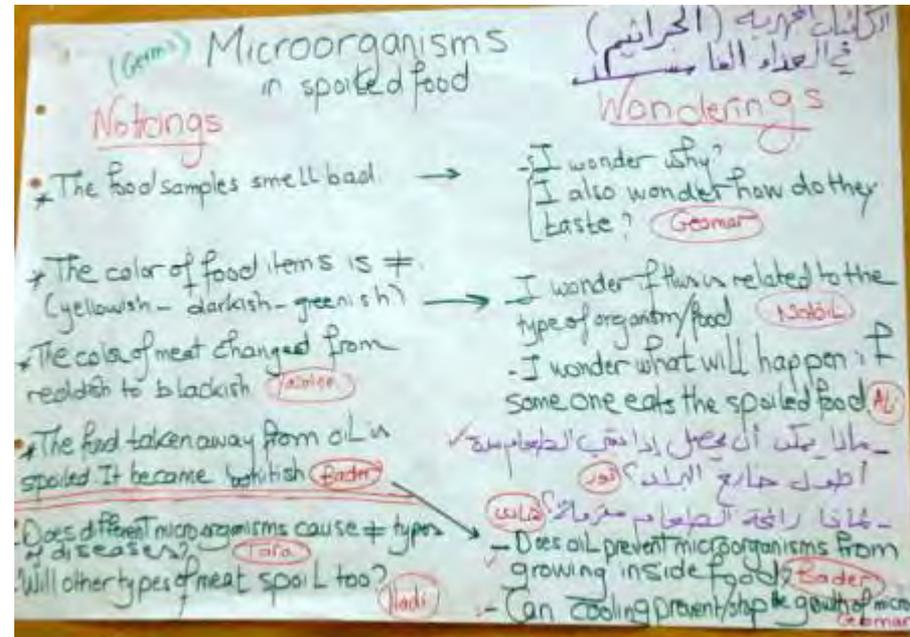
Continued Challenges

- Keeping our language policy up to date and consistent with our mission and goals, and balancing that with the realities of background and experiences of our current students

- Increasing our bilingual documentation with our staffing and resource limitations as a start-up

Sharing Time

- What questions has this shared experience raised for you? What does it make you think about?

- How is this alike or different from your own experience?

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Thank you!

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