Developing and supporting a multilingual learning community

Karin Martin
James Brightman
Today’s aim

• What does it mean to develop and support a multilingual learning community?

• What steps do we need to take to achieve a multilingual learning community?

Language and learning in IB programs (2011)
Today’s outline

• Questionnaire
• ISC strategy
• Latest research
• Discussion/conclusion
Questionnaire: yes or no?

1) Do you know what the source of the cognitive advantages for bilinguals is?

2) Do you know that bilinguals (might) have a smaller lexicon?

3) Have you ever heard about the “Interdependence Hypothesis” by Prof. Jim Cummins?

4) Do you know what BICS and CALP stand for?

5) Do you know that maintaining the first language affects outcomes in school?

6) Do you know that the maintenance of L1 is strongly influenced by the linguistic habits and beliefs of the family?
Answers at ISC

- **Bilingual Development**
  - Yes: 20%
  - No: 80%

- **Interdependence Hypothesis**
  - Yes: 25%
  - No: 75%

- **Mother Tongue**
  - Yes: 20%
  - No: 80%
ISc strategy

- Professional Development for Teachers
- Parents’ Event about Multilingualism
1. in identical ways across languages;
2. without explicit teaching;
3. in a limited amount of time;
4. on the basis of positive evidence.

KEY POINT: LA & LL share a number of common features and stages. This helps us understand the learning process.
Bilingualism

RESEARCH:
1. Bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one person;
2. Bilingual development shares similarities with monolingual development;
3. Languages are always active in the brain.

A bilingual is a unique speaker/hearer

Linguistic & cognitive advantages

Let’s get rid of this monolingual view!

KEY POINT: input + interaction + motivation
Second Language Learning

I. Silent Stage
II. Early Production Stage
III. Speech Emergence Stage
IV. Intermediate Language Proficiency Stage
V. Advanced Language Proficiency Stage

Factors influencing LL

Linguistic
Non linguistic

From BICS 1-2 years to CALP 5-7 years (Jim Cummins)

KEY POINT: emergent bilinguals (Garcia, 2008)
Long-term perspective and five steps:

1. Analyze the needs of the child;
2. Hours of L1, L2, L3,…;
3. Plan when/how to have more L1/L2/L3/…input (be creative and realistic);
4. Observe your plan after a certain period of time;
5. Compare the estimate with observation / change the plan if necessary;

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Adapted from Steiner (2008)
Background **Interdependence Hypothesis** (Cummins, 2000):

- **Myth**: time spent through the medium of L1 does not contribute to the learning of L2;
- **Research data**: showing positive cognitive and academic outcomes for bilingual students who continue to develop both languages in the school context.

**KEY POINT**: serious attempt to promote students’ L1 literacy

**RESEARCH:**
- Tannenbaum (2005);
- Beykont (1994);

**LAP**
(Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012)
Multilingual Education

The amount of formal schooling in the L1 is the strongest predictor of how rapidly students will catch up in the L2, even **stronger than socioeconomic status** (Thomas & Collier, 1997)

**Aim:** to promote Additive Bilingualism instead of Subtractive Bilingualism

Gallagher (2008): reflect upon language

**Problem?**

**Right?**

**Resource?**

What can we do?

- incorporate students’ **background knowledge** and experience into class work in all areas;
- demonstrating that **the school values, respects and admires all its cultures**;

**KEY POINT:** schools need to achieve a culturally inclusive curriculum
1st Myth: Acquiring more than one language at the same time is a burden for the child’s brain.

2nd Myth: Mixing languages means being confused and having trouble becoming bilingual.

3rd Myth: Children absorb a language passively, ‘like a sponge.’

4th Myth: If you want a child to speak the majority language, you should stop speaking your home language with your child.

KEY POINT: planning + creating opportunities for languages to be used + motivation
Summarizing…

- Value linguistic & cultural diversity
- Recognize previous knowledge
- Open the door to other languages
- Collaborative approach & shared vision
- Train teachers and school staff

School Language Policy
Conclusion and discussion

• Ongoing dialogue regarding multilingualism via professional learning communities

• Language policy

• Language plans

• Multilingual best practices

Thank you!