Fjöltyngdar fjölskyldur og skólastarf
Multilingualism in families and schools

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Multilingual development and literacy socialization:
Creating a foundation for educational success in the preschool and primary school years

Overview: Questions and issues

What do preschool and primary school teachers need to know, and what do they need to do, in order to enable multilingual children to develop their full cognitive and linguistic potential?

The presentation is divided into five parts:

- Home language loss is common among immigrant-background children (especially those born in the host country); schools frequently contribute inadvertently to this loss.

- Literacy controversies and confusions

- A basic framework for language and literacy development for all children and school-age students

- What role does language development play in determining children's success in school?

- How important is preschool education for all children, and especially for immigrant-background multilingual children?

- What are the characteristics of an effective preschool program, in general and specifically for multilingual children?

- What is the relationship between L1 and L2 development – implications for preschool instruction?

- How can preschool teachers work with parents to promote multilingual development and counteract the language loss that is typical in monolingual preschool contexts?

- Resources and instructional tools

Home language loss is common among multilingual students;

for example, vibrant multilingual cities like Toronto can also accurately be characterized as linguistic graveyards.

Section 1

Roberto Di Prospero, the principal of Silver Creek Public School in Mississauga, Ontario, grew up in an Italian immigrant household, with parents who spoke Italian:

"I went into school with two languages, and I left with one.

This is the exact opposite of what education should do;

it should add things, not take away things."

Silver Creek Public School, Peel Board of Education

What happens when children's home language is not actively affirmed and supported in the Preschool and Primary School environment?

I am not always comfortable speaking Cantonese when I have to go to the office for some reason. I don't like it because a lot of teachers are at the office and I don't like speaking it in front of them. I know that they are listening to me, I get nervous and afraid. For example, once I didn't feel very well in grade one. So my teacher took me to the office to call my grandma. My grandma can't speak English and she also can't hear very well, so I had to speak in Cantonese very loudly for her to hear. So when I spoke to my grandma, I felt very nervous.

Section 2

Which groups underachieve and why?

A framework for understanding opportunity gaps that can result in underachievement and also what schools can and should do (according to the research evidence) to address these opportunity gaps

Which Groups Underachieve and Why?

According to the OECD and many other research studies, there are 3 overlapping but conceptually distinct groups that tend to experience disproportionate underachievement:

- immigrant-background students who are learning the school language as L2,

- students from socially disadvantaged backgrounds,

- students from socially marginalized groups that have been subject to racism and various forms of exclusion from educational and social opportunity often over generations.

Different causal factors or *opportunity gaps* predictive of underachievement are operating within each of these settings. We have considerable research evidence that schools **can** respond effectively to at least some of these underlying causal factors.

Instructional Responses to Potential Opportunity Gaps

- **Take-Away:**

- In order to support multilingual students academically, schools need to do more than just support students in learning the school language.

- They also need to respond to opportunity gaps associated with poverty/low-income and racialized/marginalized status.

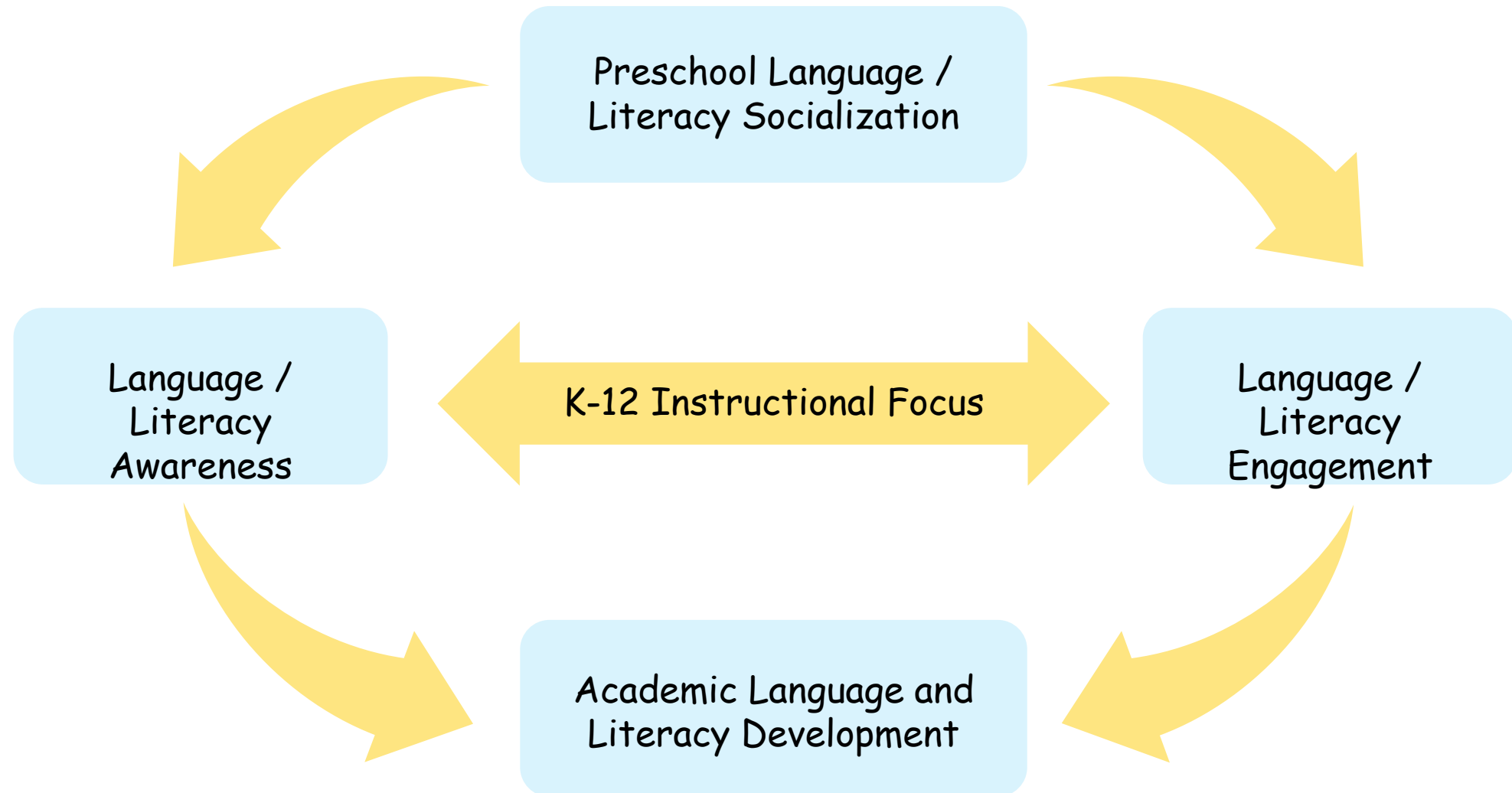| Student background	Linguistically Diverse	Low-SES	Marginalized Status
Sources of potential disadvantage	-Failure to understand instruction due to home-school language differences;	-Inadequate healthcare and/or nutrition; -Housing segregation; -Lack of cultural and material resources in the home due to poverty; -Limited access to print in home and school;	-Societal discrimination; -Low teacher expectations; -Stereotype threat; -Stigmatization of L1/L2 language varieties; -Identity devaluation;
Evidence-based instructional response	-Scaffold comprehension and production of language across the curriculum; -Engage students' multilingual repertoires; -Reinforce academic language across the curriculum;	-Maximize print access and literacy engagement; -Reinforce academic language across the curriculum;	-Connect instruction to students' lives; -Decolonize curriculum and instruction through culturally sustaining pedagogy; -Valorize and build on L1/L2 language varieties; -Affirm student identities in association with academic engagement;

Section 3

Literacy controversies and confusions
(at least in the USA, Canada and the UK….)

The resurgence of the ideology of 'phonics as panacea'

A Simple View of (the Science of) Reading Instruction

Preschool Language / Literacy Socialization

Language / Literacy Awareness

K-12 Instructional Focus

Language / Literacy Engagement

Academic Language and Literacy Development

Jim Cummins

Section 4

Impact of Preschool

Preschool Matters

- The UK-based **Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education project** (EPPSE) reported that high-quality preschool attendance exerts significant educational and social effects that are evident into secondary education (Taggart et al. 2015).

- "Preschool matters. Preschool matters for children's short-, medium- and long-term development. Children at 16 were still being influenced by their preschool experience for many of their outcomes. …

- It's important that they attend a preschool of high-quality. What makes a high-quality preschool? Simply having very good practitioners who understand children's learning, who know what children should learn, and who encourage children's thinking."

Brenda Taggart

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/research-projects/2022/jan/effective-pre-school-primary-and-secondary-education-project-eppse

Taggart, B. et al. (2015). *Effective Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE 3-16+): How Pre-school Influences Children and Young People's Attainment and Developmental Outcomes Over Time.* London, UK: Dfe Publications.

Preschool Education is an excellent societal investment for all children, and this is especially true for immigrant-background children

- **Long-term cost/benefits** analysis of high-quality preschool provision in the US showed that by the time participants were 21 years old, the overall benefits were more than $7 for each dollar invested and these benefits increased subsequently to $16 at age 40.

- The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that 15-year-old students from countries around the world who had attended preschool for at least 1 year scored **more than 30 points higher in reading** than their classmates who had not experienced preschool education. This is the equivalent of 1 year's additional schooling.

- **The long-term effects of preschool education extend across generations**. Children of parents who attended Head Start preschools in the United States experienced significantly stronger educational and social outcomes than children of parents who did not attend preschool (Barr & Gibbs, 2017)

- The OECD (2015) report noted that 15-year-old **immigrant-background students** who reported that they had attended pre-primary education programs scored **49 points higher** in the PISA reading assessment, on average, than immigrant-background students who reported that they had not participated in such programs.

- The report also noted that, on average, **immigrant students are 21% less likely than students with no immigrant background to have attended pre-primary education.**

- The report recommended that access to high-quality early childhood education programs should be expanded to encourage immigrant parents to enroll their children at the youngest possible age

What are the characteristics of 'high-quality' preschool programs?

What are the characteristics of 'high-quality' preschool programs for multilingual children?

Is a monolingual L2-only preschool program optimal for multilingual children?

What happens to children's home language under these conditions?

Section 5

Cognitive and Academic Development is Directly Related to the Quantity and Quality of Adult-Child Interaction and Communication

Early learning opportunities for children at risk of social exclusion: Opening the black box of preschool practice

Brecht Peleman, Michel Vandenbroeck and Piet Van Avermaet (study in Flanders, 2020, p. 22)

- The preschool age is a **crucial period** for young children's language acquisition; *(85% of brain development occurs by age 5)*

- … children learn by acting and **communicating in everyday situations** with their parents, other educators and other children;

- Establishing a high-quality [preschool] environment … requires a **rich, natural and spontaneous language input** that actively stimulates children to use verbal expression and to articulate actions and thinking processes; *(there needs to be a focus on input and output)*

- The language used by adults … should start off from **the lifeworld and experiences of the children** themselves. … To achieve this in the context of a preschool class, it is necessary for children to be offered many rich opportunities to practice, and for them to receive supportive feedback on their verbal utterances;

- A key aspect for migrant children is the **valorisation of multilingualism** as an 'added value' and 'resource', rather than a 'problem' or 'deficit'.

Characteristics of High-Quality Preschool in New Zealand (Wylie et al., 2003, 2006)

- Wylie and colleagues' longitudinal research carried out in New Zealand from preschool through age 16 identified five components of early childhood environments that contribute significantly to students' academic and social progress through adolescence (age 16). These include:

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- staff responsiveness to children,

- staff actively guiding children in activities,

- staff asking children open-ended questions,

- staff joining children in their play and

- **providing a print-saturated environment.**

- The first 4 components all imply a rich set of language interactions between staff and children; The 5th component is particularly important for children who may not be experiencing a print-saturated environment in their homes.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
New Zealand

Contributions of early childhood education to age-14 performance

Evidence from the Competent Children, Competent Learners project

Cathy Wylie, Edith Hodgen, Hilary Ferral, and Jean Thompson

RESEARCH DIVISION
Wāhanga Mahi Rangahau

Literacy Saturation – A Key Component of Effective Preschool Provision
(Wylie et al., 2003, 2006)

- An ECE centre that achieved the highest possible rating for [provision of a print-saturated environment] would be very print focused. It would encourage print awareness in children's activities, have a lot of printed material visible around the centre, at children's eye-level or just above, and offer children a range of readily accessible books. A centre that scored the lowest possible rating would have no print evident at all: no books, posters, or other forms of writing.

- At age 10, for children from low-income homes, there was a difference of 18 percentage points in reading comprehension between those who attended the least and most print-saturated ECEs.

- At age 14, pupils who had attended a non-print-focused ECE scored 12–15 percentage points lower than the three other quartile groups who had experienced greater print saturation at ECE.

Implications for Working with Parents/Caregivers of Multilingual Children

- Parents should know that the most effective thing they can do to prepare their children for success in school is **create an ecology of literacy socialization in the home**;

- Ideally, this should be in the major home language (L1) in order to **build a foundation for biliteracy development** throughout the primary school years;

- If parents are not literate in their L1, or can't find reading material in L1, then **sharing oral stories in L1 is also a powerful strategy**;

- It's fine for parents to also **take advantage of opportunities for literacy exposure in the school language** – for example, read-alouds, dramatizations, etc. in the local library.

Some Research Data

Hall and Moats (2015) summarized the empirically demonstrated benefits of reading aloud to children as follows:

> Reading aloud to a child is a critical activity in helping a child gain the knowledge and language skill that will enable good comprehension later on. Reading aloud increases background knowledge, builds vocabulary, and familiarizes children with the language in books. (p. 29)

- They point to research (e.g., Whitehurst et al., 1988) that highlights the additional benefit of interactive story reading that encourages active listening and engages children in dialogue about the story by means of open-ended questions.

- Reading to children, even in their first year of life, pays dividends (Jimenez et al., 2020; Leech et al., 2022).

- Leech et al. (2022), for example, demonstrated the unique effects of shared book reading to infants at nine months of age on subsequent vocabulary development at 36 months.

- Neuroimaging studies have confirmed these effects and identified brain regions that are directly affected by patterns of literacy socialization in the early years (e.g., Hutton et al., 2021; Noble et al., 2006).

Section 6

Nature of language proficiency and L1/L2 Relationships:

Among multilingual children, L1 development provides a conceptual foundation for learning L2

The Nature of Language Proficiency

Conversational Fluency

- The ability to carry on a conversation in familiar face-to-face situations;

- Developed by the vast majority of native speakers by the time they enter school at age 5;

- Involves use of high frequency words and simple grammatical constructions;

- Students learning the school language typically require 1-2 years to attain reasonable fluency in everyday situations.

Academic Language Proficiency

- Includes knowledge of less frequent vocabulary as well as the ability to understand and produce increasingly complex written language;

- Frequent use of passive voice and nominalization (e.g., acceleration) which are rarely used in conversation;

- Because academic language is found primarily in books and printed texts, extensive reading is crucial in enabling students to catch up;

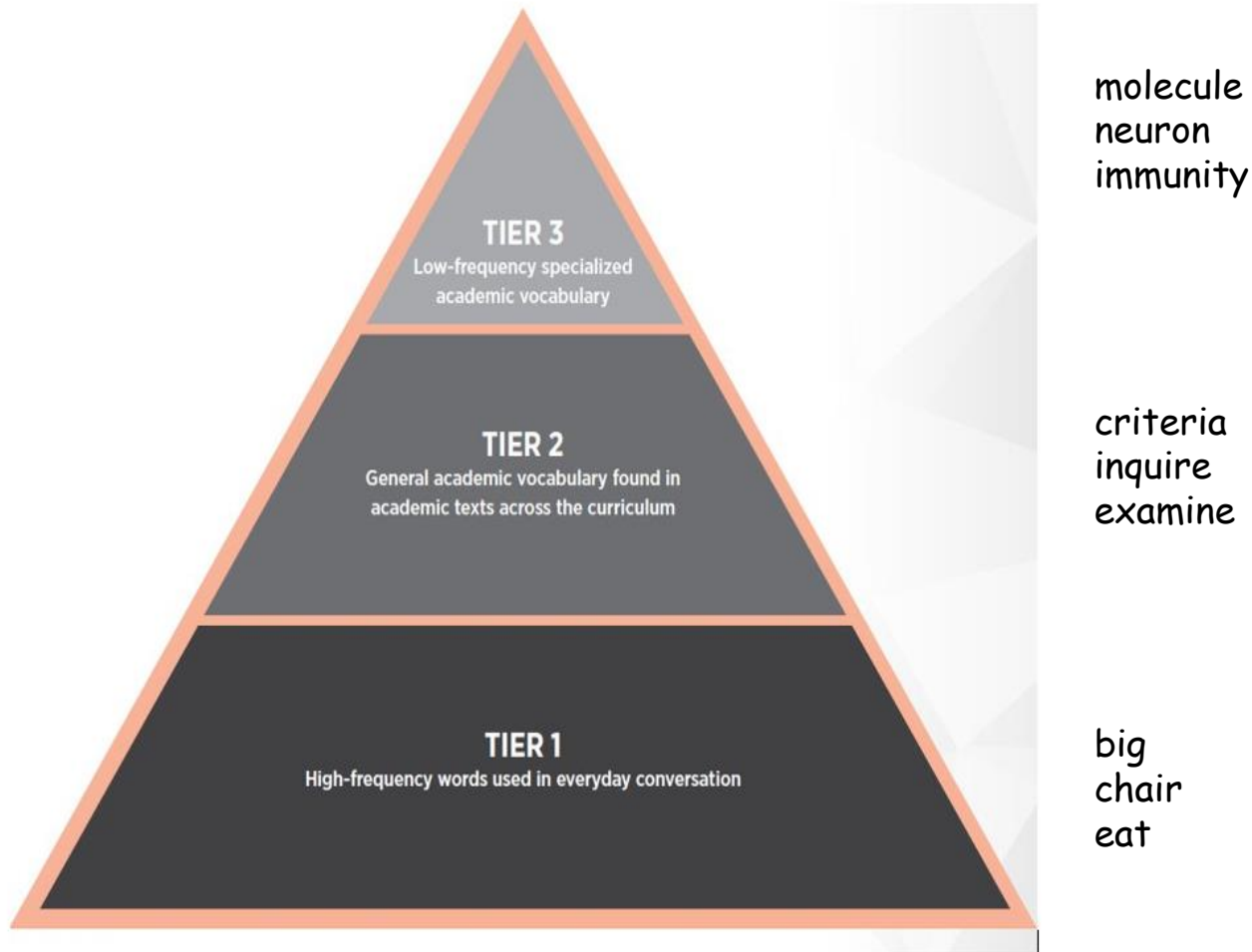# Different Kinds of Vocabulary and the Crucial Role of Print Access

TIER 3
Low-frequency specialized academic vocabulary

molecule
neuron
immunity

TIER 2
General academic vocabulary found in academic texts across the curriculum

criteria
inquire
examine

TIER 1
High-frequency words used in everyday conversation

big
chair
eat

Figure 4.1. Levels of vocabulary (based on Beck et al., 2008)

Even children's picture books, intended for very young children, contain almost **twice as many sophisticated or rare words compared to the speech adults direct to children or speech between adults** (Massaro, 2015).

Therefore, children who experience less access to print at home and school have less opportunity to expand their vocabulary knowledge and develop familiarity with other aspects of academic language (e.g., grammar and discourse conventions).

Students from low-income backgrounds experience significantly less access to written language in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods (e.g., public library access) than is the case for higher-income students (Duke, 2000; Neuman & Celano, 2001).

Common Underlying Proficiency Model:
Dynamic interdependence across languages

The Dual Iceberg representation of bilingual proficiency

Surface Features of L1

Surface Features of L2

Although languages can be distinguished in our cognitive system (e.g., aphasia studies), there is overlap and dynamic interaction among languages.

Section 5

Monolingual preschool programs may unintentionally contribute to language loss among multilingual children.

How can preschool teachers promote multilingual development and counteract the language loss that is typical in monolingual preschool contexts?

Peleman et al.:
"While it is often readily assumed that preschools matter and may contribute to reducing inequalities in education, the findings suggest that preschools may also be part of the problem, rather than part of the solution" (p. 38).

- "Classroom interaction of high quality and a rich verbal interaction climate is pivotal to enhancing language learning.

- However, our study suggests that this potential is not always reached. Both the quantity and the quality of individual verbal interactions were found to be low, and the opportunities for children's language production were very scarce.

- This was especially true for children with a home language different from the dominant one in the school as feedback was almost non-existent and often interrupted by children with more skills in the dominant language" p. 38).

Early learning opportunities for children at risk of social exclusion. Opening the black box of preschool practice

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ABSTRACT

Influenced by a growing number of longitudinal studies showing positive effects of preschool attendance, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is framed as a potential equaliser of opportunities, benefitting children at risk of social exclusion and children from families with a migration background. However, as research into daily interactions in contexts of diversity and multilingualism remains scarce, the qualitative processes by which preschool may reduce or rather reproduce inequalities, remain under-theorised. In the present study, eight children were closely followed during their first year in pre-primary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium through video observations of daily interactions. The results suggest that both the quantity and quality of individual verbal interactions were low, with few opportunities for language production. The majority of utterances by teachers were disciplining in nature. The few occasions where a home language was used in individual interactions were intended to better direct the behaviour of the child. By closely observing these interactions, unintended mechanisms that hinder an equal distribution of learning opportunities were found in each of the classes.

KEYWORDS
Preschool; teacher–child interactions; learning opportunities; transitions; multilingualism

The Language Friendly Schools Network was started in the Netherlands as a Teacher-Led Initiative to enable all students to gain insight into how languages work, both linguistically and socially, and to affirm multilingual students' identities as legitimate users of multiple languages (languagefriendlyschool.org)

An Example from a Preschool in Alsace
(Mary & Young, 2017, 2021)

- *'To make headway, you have to go against the flow'*. These words express the pedagogical and social philosophy of Sylvie, a preschool teacher with 35 years experience, working with highly diverse children and families in a low socioeconomic area in the northeast of France.

- Over the course of her teaching career, Sylvie had come to reject the assimilationist instructional practices that were the norm within the French educational system. She learned words and phrases of the various languages of her pupils as a result of interacting with them in the classroom and talking with their parents.

- She used the limited knowledge she had of these languages regularly in the classroom to facilitate children's learning.

- Unlike many of her colleagues over the years, Sylvie welcomed children's languages into the classroom and encouraged her pupils to use their languages in discussing books that they had listened to or browsed through. She also invited parents to spend time in her classroom and to read books in their languages to the children.

- In one of her interviews with the researchers, Sylvie remarked that other *teachers 'had said that it was chaos in my classroom, parents in the playground, parents in the corridors, in the classrooms, headscarves in the school, well, everything you can imagine'* (Mary & Young, 2021).

Migration, Multilingualism and Education
Critical Perspectives on Inclusion

Edited by
Latisha Mary,
Ann-Birte Krüger and
Andrea S. Young

new perspectives on language and education

An Example from a Preschool in Alsace (Mary & Young, 2017, 2021)

Mary and Young (2017) identified four overlapping purposes of translanguaging in Sylvie's classroom:

- ***To meet children's basic needs.*** For example, on one occasion when a Turkish-speaking child was distressed, Sylvie used the little Turkish she had learned to comfort the child and she asked her assistant to bring in an older Turkish child to translate for him.

- ***To make connections between home and school.*** For example, Sylvie made links to children's home culture by initiating an activity using plasticine about the making of *lahmacuns* (Turkish pizzas popular with Turkish families).

- ***To build on children's prior knowledge and scaffold their learning of French.*** For example, in an activity where Sylvie read a story book to the children in French and a parent read the Turkish version in parallel, Sylvie repeated what children said in Turkish and also used simple Turkish phrases inserted into her French reading and dialogue with the children.

- ***To foster engagement with literacy.*** This example also illustrates how Sylvie used translanguaging to foster literacy engagement. Mary and Young point out that encouraging children to interact with print resources in the language of their choice resulted in extensive engagement with books: 'Literacy played an important part in the life of this classroom and children were frequently observed attentively poring over picture books which they were either looking at by themselves or huddled together and discussing animatedly with their peers' (2017: 121–122).

Some Tools and Resources

- The CUNY-NYSIEB project: **https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/.**

- The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML): **https://www.ecml.at/.**

  For example, the project *Teaching the School Language in a Context of Diversity* highlights   language   diversity as a resource and provides many tools to support teachers in changing from a monolingual to a plurilingual mindset

  (**https://maledive.ecml.at/Home/Projectdetails/tabid/3481/Default.aspx**).

- The Language Friendly Schools project: http://languagefriendlyschool.org

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