The ACIE Newsletter

CARLA
Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition
University of Minnesota
Driven to Discover℠

News from the American Council on Immersion Education

Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond: An International Conference for the 21st Century

May 2009
Vol. 12, No. 3

Theme Issue:
Bilingualism & Beyond

A participant in the 2004 *Pathways to Bilingualism* conference expressed the desire to see "a more international focus…." We hope that same participant attended the 2008 conference, *Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond*. With over 650 registered attendees, last October's conference in St. Paul, Minnesota was indeed an international and multicultural affair. Plenary speakers and pre-conference workshop presenters came from Canada, Finland, Hong Kong, and New Zealand in addition to U.S. educators and researchers who work in Cherokee, Chinese, Dakota, French, Hawai'ian, Ojibwe, and Spanish immersion settings. Session presenters during the two-day conference represented one-way, two-way and indigenous immersion programs in all those countries and native language groups plus Brazil, France, Ireland, and Japan as well as North American immersion programs in German, Hebrew, and Seewepemc (a First Nations language spoken in western Canada). Furthermore, conference participants had the opportunity to interact with additional colleagues from Australia, Greenland, Mexico, and Nigeria. To summarize, a participant from Pathways 2008 commented, "The many different perspectives – researcher and practitioner, local and national and international, one-way, 2-way, and indigenous – was amazing and really gave the conference a uniqueness and breadth missing from so many."

Conference co-chairs, Donna Christian from the Center for Applied Linguistics and Tara Fortune from the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

Nearly 150 conference goers took the opportunity to visit an immersion school in the Twin Cities area like this Spanish immersion continuation program in a St. Paul middle school.

This issue of the *ACIE Newsletter* will give our readers a taste of this breadth and depth. We hope you will also visit the post-conference website for downloadable documents and a video of one of the plenary sessions - *www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/past/immersion2008*.

Bilingualism and Beyond, *continued on page 2*

WHAT'S INSIDE?

THE ACIE NEWSLETTER

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American Council on Immersion Education

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SCHOOL VISITS

Five immersion schools in the Twin Cities area graciously opened their doors to visitors one day before the conference convened. These visits – to a one-way Spanish immersion, a two-way Spanish immersion, a one-way French immersion, a one-way Chinese immersion charter school (all elementary), and a middle school Spanish continuation program – proved popular. Gathering in the hotel lobby at 8:30 the morning of the visits, participants jockeyed good-naturedly for seats in the sold out coaches. **On page 4 you can read a profile of Yinghua Academy,** the Mandarin immersion school visited by thirty of our conference goers.

Dean McQuaid opens the immersion conference.

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

On Thursday, sixteen pre-conference workshops addressed topics relevant to teacher educators (Indigenous Immersion Teacher Education), curriculum specialists (Developing a K-12 Chinese Language Curriculum Framework), administrators (Principal and School Administrator Competencies), classroom teachers (Literacy-based ESL and Cross-Language Connections), and parents (Parent Involvement Strategies) – to name just a few. **One of the workshops, Language Awareness, is summarized on page 3**, and PowerPoint presentations or handouts from some of the others can be downdloaded from the post-conference website.

PLENARY SPEAKERS

The conference officially opened on Thursday evening with introductions by Associate Vice President and Dean of the University of Minnesota's Office of International Programs, Meredith McQuaid, and the conference co-chairs. Mimi Met, a perennial favorite among immersion educators, gave the opening address, *Immersion Education: Intercultural Competence for Tomorrow's Global Citizens*. Her engaging talk was followed by student performances from three local immersion schools.

Each of four conference themes was explored by the plenary speakers: Immersion Pedagogy by Roy Lyster of McGill University, Culture and Identity by Kauanoe Kamana and Bill (Pila) Wilson of the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, Policy and Advocacy by Philip Hoare of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, and Program Design and Evaluation by Fred Genesee of McGill. **This issue's Bridge features reviews of each plenary session by immersion practitioners** who have a particular interest in the theme they reviewed.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

For two days, conference attendees heard presentations on a range of topics covering all the conference themes. In addition, immersion education researchers were asked to present the results of their recent research at several invited symposia. **Three articles in this special conference issue are based on symposia presentations. See pages 7, 9, and 11.**

EXHIBITORS

Strategically located outside the main ballroom where plenaries and sessions were held, the exhibit hall attracted participants moving between sessions. The Center for Applied Linguistics also set up a computer station to encourage school administrators to update the information on **CAL's immersion databases (see page 10).**

Thank you to all who made it possible, planners and attendees alike,

Kimerly Miller, Editor

Language Awareness: Examining the Role of Language in Society

By Cécile Sabatier and Diane Dagenais, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC

In Language Awareness activities, students attend to language diversity by examining the role of language in pluralistic societies and comparing the patterns of their own languages and other languages. Van Lier (1995) defines Language Awareness as "an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life. It includes an awareness of power and control through language, and of the intricate relationships between language and culture." (p. xi) Accordingly, language is seen as a tool for learning about the unequal status of languages in school and society and for developing positive attitudes towards speakers of diverse languages. Such a perspective empowers learners and enables them to challenge dominant discourses that privilege some languages over others (Cummins, 2000).

Language Awareness activities were first implemented in England by Eric Hawkins (1984) at the beginning of the 1980s, and then readapted in curricular innovations in the late 1990s in France, Switzerland, and Spain, through European collaborative projects known as *Evlang* or *Eole* (Candelier, 2003; Perregaux, de Goumoëns, Jeannot, & de Pietro, 2003; Sabatier, 2005). Recently, Language Awareness activities were adapted for Canadian classrooms in Montreal, Quebec and Vancouver, British Columbia (Dagenais, Armand, Maraillet & Walsh, 2008).

As documented by Dagenais, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre and Armand (2008), elementary school children participating in these activities examine multilingualism and language diversity in their communities and develop literacy practices as they interact with various forms of mono/bi/multilingual scripts in their neighborhoods. The objective is to develop literate citizens who study the role of texts in diverse languages present in the environment, consider who the readers and writers of these texts are and question what they indicate about the different status accorded to official languages such as English and French, languages of First Nations people and those brought to cities through immigration. These activities draw students' attention to the ways languages are valued or devalued in their communities and encourage them to become aware of stereotypic representations of speakers of diverse languages.

During the *Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond* conference, participants in our pre-conference workshop were introduced to a variety of language awareness activities that we have used in elementary schools in British Columbia over the course of a 3-year action research project. The activities, often involving multiple languages at a time, required participants to use their own general knowledge of languages, of specific languages, of cultural differences, etc. to come to various conclusions about grammar, syntax, vocabulary, the role of language in society and more.

Anchored in children's experience of the local linguistic landscape, the activities we shared with our workshop participants and others like them provide a promising avenue for teaching about language diversity, the role of language in pluralistic societies, and literacy practices from a critical perspective. As well, it enables teachers to move beyond the typical focus on religion, culture and ethnicity explored in multicultural education. By examining the contact of communities in our multilingual cities, children may develop a new understanding of the relationships between language groups in their communities.

Language Awareness, *references on page 6*

Diane Dagenais and Cécile Sabatier conduct their pre-conference workshop. For more information about language awareness activities, contact Cécile Sabatier at sabatier@sfu.ca or go to www.elodil.com (in French).

BEST PRACTICES

In-service immersion teachers frequently explore new ideas for teaching and learning in the classroom. Sharing ideas that work is the emphasis of this regular feature, Best Practices.

In this section, teachers can read about tried and true, practical instructional techniques that immersion colleagues might also adopt for their classrooms.

SCHOOL PROFILE

There has been dramatic growth in the number of immersion programs during the last decade. More and more communities have chosen to support this educational option, whose benefits to students are well documented. In this feature we spotlight immersion schools and explore factors that make each one unique.

Four other schools opened their doors to visitors during the conference. The ACIE archives at www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie *has articles related to three of them.*

- ***Highland Park Junior High*** *- Doing Oral History in a Spanish Immersion Social Studies Classroom (Nov. 1998)*
- ***Normandale French Immersion*** *- Meeting the Challenges of Second Language Writing Development in the Immersion Classroom (May 2006)*
- ***Park Spanish Immersion*** *- Parallels Between Music Learning and Language Acquisition: From Fluency to Literacy (Nov. 2004)*

The fifth school, ***Emerson Spanish Immersion Learning Center****, will be featured in an upcoming issue.*

America's First Chinese Immersion Charter School: Yinghua Academy

By Cindy Moeller, Chair, Board of Directors, Betsy Lueth, Director, and Dr. Luyi Lien, Academic Director, Yinghua Academy, St. Paul, MN

Yinghua Academy, the first Chinese immersion school in the Midwest as well as the first Chinese immersion charter public school in the U.S., opened in the fall of 2006 with 76 students in kindergarten to third grade and has grown to 235 students in kindergarten to fifth grade. The school is committed to providing a strong academic education, the opportunity to develop high levels of functional proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking Mandarin Chinese, and a positive and nurturing school environment that fosters personal and social development.

The school currently has eight Mandarin immersion classrooms: three kindergarten, two first grade, two second grade, and one third grade. Students in our fourth and fifth grade classrooms are taught in English but receive a daily lesson in Chinese because the school had not yet opened when they were in the primary grades. The school plans to transition those grades to immersion as primary students move up and eventually to expand the program to eighth grade. According to school board policy, the maximum class size is 25 students, although a lower teacher-student ratio is maintained in kindergarten with full-time educational assistants. Most students come from English-speaking families; only 5% come from Chinese-speaking families. Compared to the first year, we see a growing interest among families with more diverse backgrounds.

Yinghua Academy's staff includes people from China, Singapore, and Taiwan as well as U.S. citizens. All of the Chinese immersion instructors speak standard Mandarin and use simplified characters and pinyin with the students. Staff and teachers must have primary level teaching experience and be licensed or eligible for a teaching license or waiver in the state of Minnesota. All teachers have participated in professional development focused on immersion teaching strategies, lesson planning, the Core Knowledge Sequence, the Minnesota Academic Standards, and the Singapore Math primary curriculum. Yinghua Academy's teaching team is aware of the differences between Eastern and Western teaching philosophy and pedagogy. For example, most Eastern educators stress the importance of practice in order to master math concepts whereas Western educators often emphasize the thinking process. Yinghua Academy teachers understand the two schools of thought and make decisions consciously while working with students in the classroom.

Students have many opportunities to learn in Chinese. Art and physical education classes are taught in Chinese, and we hope to have a music teacher and a calligrapher teaching these specialist classes in Chinese in the near future. We have full-time special education staff working with children who have learning, speech and language disabilities. For other

A kindergarten teacher at Yinghua helps students with class work.

special education needs we contract additional staff on an as needed basis. Our speech and language pathologist is a Mandarin speaker and delivers instruction in both Mandarin and English. Our contracted staff includes an occupational therapy and school psychologist.

PROGRAM FEATURES

100% Early Total Foreign Language Immersion

Yinghua Academy is an early, total foreign language immersion program. Full-day kindergartners and first graders work 100% of their school day in Mandarin. English Language Arts is introduced in the second grade for 45-60 minutes per day. The percentage of time spent working in English increases to approximately 50% by fifth grade.

Curriculum

The foundation of Yinghua Academy's curriculum is the Minnesota Academic Standards and the Core Knowledge Sequence. The former specify what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. The latter, first advocated by E.D. Hirsch from the University of Virginia, lays out a body of knowledge that educated Americans commonly acquire in a systematic and sequential way. (For information on both, see the reference section.)

Language is best taught in meaningful contexts. Therefore, Yinghua Academy's curriculum is mapped into thematic units that integrate social studies, science, and math concepts into daily language lessons. Beginning reader texts for Chinese Language Arts have been created by Yinghua Academy's Academic Director and teachers to complement these themes. Like all immersion educators, our teachers use many strategies to help students acquire language and learn content simultaneously such as introducing and reinforcing vocabulary learning through music and rhyme. Yinghua Academy has adapted the Singapore Math curriculum (see reference section) which is internationally recognized for its clear concepts and logical lesson arrangement.

Yinghua Academy encourages students to use Mandarin in social situations as well as for academic purposes. Students are intentionally taught social language in the classroom and are expected to use it throughout the day. For example, in a lesson about finding friends, the teacher may design a role play activity to include the language students may need to make friends. With high expectations for using Chinese on the playground and in the lunchroom, we have heard increased Chinese conversation among students.

At Yinghua Academy becoming proficient in English is just as important as becoming proficient in Mandarin Chinese. Native English-speaking teachers use only English during English Language Arts lessons. All students participate in guided reading, writing, spelling and vocabulary activities in English starting in the second grade.

Assessment Practices

Teachers observe students' progress in both languages and create individual portfolios. Students' oral proficiency in Mandarin is assessed using the Center for Applied Linguistics' SOPA/ELLOPA oral language proficiency measures (see reference section). Yinghua Academy uses internally developed Mandarin reading and writing tests three times a year. The program's academic director, Dr. Lien, developed these assessment tools using examples from China, Singapore and Taiwan.

Of equal importance are English language tests. Our primary level students take standardized tests in English, developed by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), to assess literacy skills, math and science. According to NWEA's studies, students' test scores are good indicators of proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-II), which every public school student in Minnesota is required to take in third grade and above. The MCA-II is conducted in English and measures student progress toward

Yinghua Academy, *continued on page 14*

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Yinghua Academy

- *Target language: Mandarin Chinese*
- *Location: St. Paul, Minnesota*
- *Type of school: Charter, one-way early total foreign language immersion*

HISTORY

- *Opened in September 2006*
- *Current grade levels: Kindergarten – 5th grade*
- *Program goal: Kindergarten – 8th grade*

ADMISSIONS

- *Open to all students residing in any school district in Minnesota*
- *Preference given to students with a sibling currently enrolled*
- *No prior knowledge of Mandarin required*
- *Lottery held for any grade that is oversubscribed following the Open Enrollment period*

STUDENT POPULATION

- *Total: 239 (K-5)*
- *Class size: no larger than 25*
- *African-American: 4%*
- *European-American: 34%*
- *Asian/Pacific Islander: 58%*
- *Latino/Hispanic: 2%*
- *Native American: 2%*
- *Free/reduced lunch: 9%*
- *English Language Learners: 5%*
- *Gifted and Talented: 5% (identified)*
- *Special education services: 9% (identified)*

School information, *continued on sidebar on page 14*

Language Awareness, *continued from page 3*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Illinois Resource Center will offer its annual Dual U Summer Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico, from June 14 to June 19, 2009. The training is intended for all dual language stakeholders: administrators, teachers, parents, and school board members. DUSI offers two strands; an introduction to the foundations and research behind dual language education; and a trainer of trainers strand where participants will gain the expertise to use the Dual U curriculum as a professional development tool.

For information please go to www.thecenterweb.org/irc or contact Karen Beeman at kbeeman@cntrmail.org *or call (224) 366-8541.*

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Download PowerPoints and Handouts

Following the conference, CARLA requested copies of PowerPoint presentations or handouts from presenters. A selection have been posted and can be downloaded at *www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/past/immersion2008/schedule.htm*. See samples in the table below.

Strand/Level/Language	Session title
Indigenous	Constructing Language Assessments in Indigenous Languages to Inform Immersion Instruction (Pre-conference workshop)
One-way foreign language	The Balancing Act: The What, When, and How of Balanced Literacy (see Friday at 11:15AM)
Two-way bilingual	English and Spanish "Para un Futuro?" Families Consider Two-Way Immersion (see Saturday at 10:00AM)
Chinese	Developing a K-12 Chinese Language Curriculum Framework (Pre-conference workshop)
French	Reference Framework for Oral Communication Competencies of French Immersion Learners (see Friday at 11:15AM, pdfs in English and French)
Spanish	Developing a K-12 Spanish Language Curriculum Framework (see Friday at 3:00PM)
Elementary	Assessing Reading and Writing in the Target Language (Pre-conference workshop)
Secondary	Secondary Immersion: Making the Connection Between Complex Content and Advance Academic Language (Pre-conference workshop)

Three Perspectives on the University of Ottawa's New Immersion Program

Presenters: Elise Weinberg, Professor, and Sandra Burger, Professor, University of Ottawa

Reviewed by Mandy Menke, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

The University of Ottawa has offered content-based language learning opportunities to its students for over twenty years. In order to be able to better meet their goal of promoting Canada's official languages, they launched a new, large-scale program, *Régime d'immersion en français* (French Immersion Studies or FIS), in 2006. Students who participate in the FIS program take the regular courses required for their major plus courses for a second language certificate; the path of each student is highly individualized, depending on his/her second language proficiency, language objectives, and major. This particular symposium presented findings from both macro- and micro-level evaluations designed to identify the student population served by FIS, how FIS is being implemented, and student perceptions of the program.

The variety of measures employed as part of this program assessment enabled researchers to name specific steps necessary to strengthen their particular immersion program. Demographic information collected on FIS students from university records and electronic surveys identified what student populations are being served by FIS and revealed why some eligible students elect not to enroll in the program. Through survey information it was also possible to document what supplementary services and resources were being used by students as well as their satisfaction with the different courses. By asking students to rate the quality of teaching of specific skills (e.g. vocabulary, listening, writing, grammar) and the helpfulness of different instructional activities, researchers were able to verify the general satisfaction of FIS students with their courses. Such macro-level measures alone obscured significant differences in student ratings of the helpfulness of instructional activities and also concealed the reasons behind the ratings. Micro-level measures such as focus group discussions revealed such information. In focus groups, students commented on the usefulness of activities for content learning, language learning, and their general satisfaction with the activities. For example, while students found writing weekly logs (*journal de bord*) and summary texts somewhat useful for content learning, they did not find them to be useful for language learning as instructors did not correct or respond to their language. If micro-level analyses were not conducted, researchers would not have been able to identify why students did not find these instructional activities useful.

As a result of this large scale program evaluation, researchers were able to comment on student satisfaction and make specific recommendations to program stakeholders (e.g. publicize more widely the available services and resources, use listening and reading activities as a stimulus for language production). The researchers recognized, however, that the measures employed so far are only the beginning. Information gathered from both content and language instructors as well as data from objective measures of language and content learning will provide program stakeholders with a more complete understanding of the program's effectiveness and outcomes.

The University of Ottawa has committed itself to implementing an immersion program as evidenced by its financial support of the program and the on-going assessments of program effectiveness. Other programs can look to the process conducted at the University of Ottawa for tools to conduct their own program evaluations.

Mandy Menke can be reached at flemi096@umn.edu.

THE BRIDGE

Educational research is vital to validating effective practices, challenging ineffective ones, and encouraging innovations. Yet research is only valuable if teachers read and implement findings in their classrooms.

The Bridge feature is included as an insert to encourage teachers to collect them for future reference. We hope this pull-out insert will help immersion educators stay abreast of the latest research and allow it, when applicable, to affect their own practice.

Since 2000, **Iran Arbabi Amin,** Ph.D., has been the foreign language instructional specialist in Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools. She is involved in teacher training, curriculum development and assessment for French, Spanish, and Chinese programs. Prior to her current position, she taught for seventeen years in elementary and middle school immersion programs and high school International Baccalaureate programs. She has regularly presented at national foreign language conferences.

Maureen Curran-Dorsano has taught French for over thirty years to students of all ages and in many different settings. In 1992 she became one of the "founding mothers" of Normandale Elementary French Immersion School in Edina, Minnesota. It was during those early, heady, days of the school that Roy Lyster and Normandale teachers forged a long-standing relationship, and she has been an avid fan of his ever since.

Cantemaza (Neil McKay) is an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Oyate and is a Dakota Language instructor at the University of Minnesota. He has a B.A. in American Indian Studies from the U of M and is currently an M.A. candidate in Second Languages and Cultures Education. His specific teaching and research interests are in the area of preservation and restoration of the Dakota language and culture, creating a Dakota Language Teacher Education Program and decolonization through Dakota language acquisition.

Originally from Iowa, **Mike Bostwick,** Ed.D., is the founding director of Katoh Gakuen Bilingual School - the first English Immersion school in Japan. It is also the only school in Japan that is a K-12 program and is accredited by both the Japanese Ministry of Education and the International Baccalaureate. Since the school's inception in 1992 he has been actively promoting research and teacher professional development in immersion education throughout Japan.

Donna Gouin has been a French immersion educator for 28 years: 8 years as a first grade teacher, 6 years as a fifth grade teacher, and is currently in her 14th year as coordinator of one of Montgomery County, Maryland's early total French immersion programs at Sligo Creek E.S. She presented a pre-conference workshop at the recent *Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond* conference and attended conference sessions where she meet colleagues from all over the world, shared information about her program, and learned about many others.

Bilingualism, Biliteracy, Biculturalism: Recent Research on the Goals of Two-Way Immersion

Presented by Donna Christian, President, Center for Applied Linguistics; Kathy Escamilla, Professor, University of Colorado; Ester de Jong, Assistant Professor, University of Florida; and Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, Professor, San Jose State University

Symposium review by Kathy Lindholm-Leary, Professor, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA and Practitioner presponse by Luis Versalles, Program Coordinator, Richfield Dual Language School, Richfield, MN

SYMPOSIUM REVIEW

Donna Christian, Center for Applied Linguistics, organized a symposium entitled Bilingualism, Biliteracy, Biculturalism: Recent Research on the Goals of Two-Way Immersion. This symposium featured three reports on recent investigations of the generally accepted goals of two-way immersion education: bilingualism, biliteracy, and biculturalism for all students.

The first presenter was Kathy Escamilla, from the University of Colorado, who talked about her research examining the writing of emerging biliterate children. After presenting a brief review of the literature, she presented the results of her study, which examined writing samples in English and Spanish of emerging biliterate students in grades 1-3 who are participating in a bilingual intervention study. In this mixed methods and longitudinal study, students responded to prompts that were similar but not the same across the languages. The quantitative analyses indicated that there were significant correlations between Spanish and English writing outcomes at all grade levels. In analyses of the writing samples, the writing strategies used by emerging bilingual children were complex, and multiple cross-language strategies were used, both within words and across words and sentences. She concluded that analyses need to examine both languages together and separately and that there is a strong need to develop a paradigm of inter-language development and not interference.

Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, from San Jose State University, was the second presenter. She talked about two lessons we have learned from research on biliteracy in Two-Way Immersion (TWI) programs. First, research shows that students in TWI programs achieve in reading at levels comparable to or higher than their peers in English-only programs. This result occurs in schools with different demographic characteristics (e.g., different income levels, even in schools with mostly Hispanic students) and in both Spanish and Chinese programs. Specific data were discussed that document this result. Second, programs with a strong foundation in Spanish can lead to higher levels of achievement in Spanish and English, but programs that (are required to) focus increasing attention on English are seeing weaker results in both Spanish and English, especially for ELL students. She concluded that programs that work toward quality implementation in both languages are likely to have higher achievement outcomes measured in both English and Spanish.

The third presenter on this panel was Ester de Jong of the University of Florida. This presentation focused on Anglo and Latino adolescents' views of their two-way program and reported on the experiences of 48 TWI students in grades 6-12 and their perceptions of how the program changes from elementary to middle to high school. Using both survey and focus group data, Ester discussed the students' perceptions of bilingualism and biculturalism, views of the role of Spanish and how these views compare with the program's stated goals, and observations about effective classroom practices. Latino and Anglo students valued different outcomes from the program; Anglo students saw AP Spanish as a beneficial outcome, wanted

Bilingualism, Biliteracy, *continued on page 10*

RESEARCH REPORTS

In an effort to push the edge of what we currently know about learning, researchers continue to design and publish new studies on issues important to immersion education. Keeping up to date with current research is a time-consuming task.

This regular feature will help inform the immersion education public about recent research by providing our readers with brief summaries of selected studies.

Bilingualism, Biliteracy, *continued from page 9*

more opportunities to speak Spanish, and wanted to learn about other cultures, whereas Latino students connected Spanish with social settings such as home and friends. Latino students saw the use of their L1 as a protection against language loss, they perceived culture more as a lived experience, and they viewed the program as playing an important role in maintaining friendships with friendships. There were important implications in discussing whether TWI programs create different motivations for learning languages, how TWI programs address differences in lived cultural experiences and cultural knowledge, and what teacher preparation should look like at the secondary level.

PRACTITIONER RESPONSE

Dr. Escamilla's presentation emphasized the importance of sound understanding of bilingual theory and biliteracy development in making informed administrative decisions in the two-way context. Indeed, two-way immersion students cannot be viewed through the lens of the monolingual English or Spanish speaker, but rather should be viewed for what they are: learners navigating their ways between two languages in increasingly sophisticated and interrelated ways. Our assessment practices need to account for this complexity in order to better understand their biliteracy development. The Lindholm-Leary presentation emboldened me as an immersion administrator to continually advocate for the need to privilege the partner language. The critical role of immersion language development as the catalyst for desirable levels of academic and bilingual attainment in both languages of study was apparent in Dr. Lindholm-Leary's research. It has informed my understanding of the unintended outcomes of compromising partner language development, particularly as administrators are increasingly feeling the need to demonstrate higher levels of English academic outcomes in a shorter period of time. The symposium administrators would caution us, however, that there is a cost for such a tunnel-vision approach. The De Jong presentation identified the powerful, interesting role of culture in motivating two-way immersion students at the secondary levels. This presentation caused me, as an administrator, to reflect on the implications for tailoring secondary immersion to be more culturally relevant to the life experiences and orientations of the diversity of student populations within the model.

PowerPoints from each presentation are on the CARLA website at *www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/past/immersion2008*. Search by the presenter's name. ❍

ASTRONOMY FOR CHILDREN

The Kokone website has numerous educational activities in Spanish for children. One of them is an online planetarium with information about outer space, the planets in our solar system, and more, available at www.kokone.com.mx/planetario/home.html.

CAL's Directory of Foreign Language Immersion Programs in U.S. Schools and Directory of Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs in the U.S.

The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) maintains a foreign language immersion database at *www.cal.org/resources/immersion* and a two-way immersion directory at *www.cal.org/twi/directory*. Conference participants were able to update information about their immersion programs on computers set up in the Exhibits area and earn the chance to win a door prize. CAL is always happy to accept new information about established immersion programs (enrollment, grade levels, change of address or staff, etc.) or add information about a new program. Visit the site at any time to make necessary modifications or to add your program to the database.

Twenty Years of Swedish Immersion in Finland

Professor Siv Björklund & Associate Professor Karita Mård-Miettinen, Centre for Immersion and Multilingualism, University of Vaasa, Finland

IMMERSION MILESTONES

As immersion education progresses through its fourth decade, schools around the world have much to celebrate. In this occasional feature we join the well-deserved festivities.

Finland, with five million inhabitants, is an officially bilingual nation in northern Europe. Finnish is the native language of about 90% of the population; 5.5% have Swedish as their native language, and the remaining 4.5% speak various immigrant and minority languages. The national school system in Finland is divided into Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking sections, which guarantees monolingual education in the native language for both language groups. Children who are Swedish-Finnish bilinguals have to select one of their native languages as their language of instruction, and they typically enrol in Swedish-speaking schools. Even though the schools in Finland teach monolingually, all students receive language arts instruction in at least two other languages in addition to their native language during the period of compulsory education (nine years of comprehensive school).

THE DISTRIBUTION OF IMMERSION EDUCATION IN FINLAND

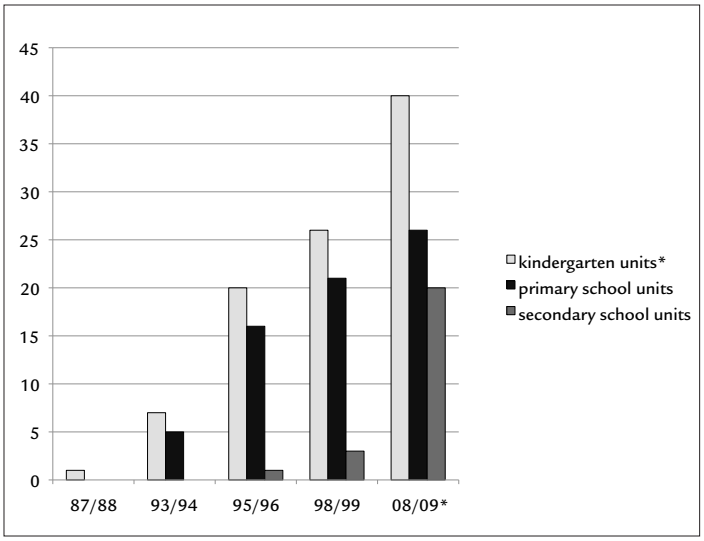
Since 1987 Finland has offered immersion education in Swedish within the Finnish-speaking school section. Swedish immersion is intended for Finnish-speaking children who do not have Swedish as one of the languages spoken in their homes. A national immersion parent survey conducted among the families that enrolled their child in immersion in 2004 shows that most immersion parents communicate only in Finnish with their immersion child. If they use another language, it is typically not Swedish, but may be English, German or Russian (Bergroth, 2007).

The pioneer city offering Swedish immersion in Finland is the bilingual city of Vaasa/Vasa with about 71% Finnish-speakers and 25% Swedish-speakers. Since its beginning in Vaasa/Vasa, Swedish immersion has been introduced in linguistically different environments. In some cities Swedish is part of daily life and in others it is hardly heard or used outside the classroom.

Immersion education started in Vaasa/Vasa in 1987 with 25 children in one preschool. A national survey conducted at the school level in 1999 showed that immersion education spread fairly slowly during the first five years, but experienced an explosive growth in the mid 1990s (see Figure 1; Buss & Mård, 2001).

In 1999 about 1,900 school-aged children were enrolled in Swedish immersion in Finland, and the number of kindergarten and preschool children was estimated at 600. Immersion education has grown steadily in the 2000s, and the number of immersion students from kindergarten to secondary school is today (2009) estimated at 4,500 . The number of immersion students will no doubt continue to grow in the future, since the demand for immersion education in many municipalities is greater than the number of places available in existing programmes. Geographically, immersion education is concentrated in the

Figure 1: *The number of kindergarten, primary school and secondary school units offering Swedish immersion in Finland in 1987–2009. The figures on primary and secondary schools for 1987–1990 are based on a national survey (Buss & Mård, 2001).*



** Estimated number of units based on the number of units sending participants for in-service training on immersion at the Immersion Centre, University of Vaasa.*

Swedish Immersion, *continued on page 12*

Authors Siv Björkland and Karita Mård-Miettinen at the Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond Conference.

Swedish Immersion, *continued from page 11*

bilingual coastal areas of Finland. On the national level Swedish immersion is a small educational programme comprising about 0.5% of the entire school population in Finland. It is, however, recognized nationally and mentioned in the national core curriculum as a programme option with specific language goals (National Core Curriculum, 2004). In some municipalities the immersion students form 10–50% of the school population.

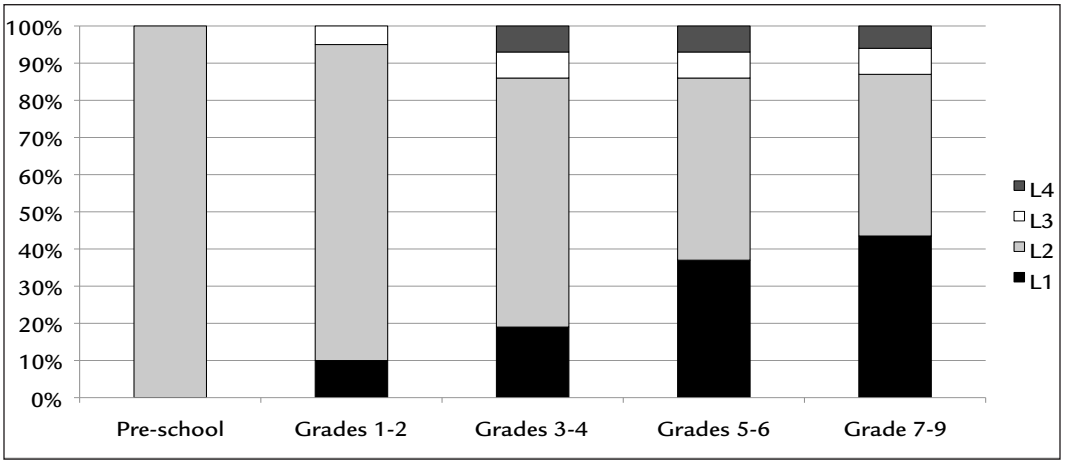
PROGRAMME DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

The first immersion programme in Finland was an early total Swedish immersion programme. It was broadly based on the original early total French immersion programme in Canada (Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Children who enrolled in the optional preschool programme at the age of 6 (one year before they started primary school) had no knowledge of Swedish. The teachers were native or near-native Swedish speakers who used the immersion language for 100% of instructional time. Once the students' first language was introduced in the school a policy of separating the languages (Swedish-speakers only using Swedish, etc.) was implemented.

The pioneer Swedish immersion programme in Vaasa/Vasa differed, however, from the Canadian model in two respects. Teaching in the students' first language was introduced already in grade one in primary school. This was originally due to the requirements of the national education authorities, but has since proved to be advantageous to the development of biliteracy (see e.g. Björklund, 1997; Cummins, 2007). The other major characteristic of the pioneer Swedish immersion programmes was a multilingual orientation. This was a natural feature stemming from the long European tradition of teaching several languages within one educational programme. The pioneer immersion students were introduced to a third language in primary school and to an optional fourth language in secondary school. The third and fourth languages were taught as language arts by using the principles of immersion pedagogy. Finnish immersion research has clearly shown that bilingualism favours the acquisition of additional languages concerning both the rate of acquisition and students' linguistic competence in the additional languages (Bergroth, 2006; Björklund & Suni, 2000).

All immersion programmes in Finland are based on the Vaasa/Vasa Swedish immersion model. The structure of the Swedish immersion programme implemented today is broadly the same as was used in the pioneer programme. Today children enrol in immersion most often two years before they start school (at the age of 5), but some kindergartens offer immersion even for children 3–4 years of age. As for the

Figure 2: *The structure of early total Swedish immersion programmes in Finland.*



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multilingual orientation, a third and a fourth language are introduced in the programme earlier than before; a third language in grade one or two, and a fourth language in grade four or five (see Figure 2). Many schools even offer a fifth language in grade eight. These languages are typically English, French, German, or Spanish.

RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND TEACHER TRAINING

The Centre for Immersion and Multilingualism at the University of Vaasa was involved in the implementation of the pioneer immersion programme in Vaasa/Vasa and has since conducted research and teacher training in immersion education. The Immersion Centre in Vaasa/Vasa is the only university unit in Finland that specializes in the field of immersion education and, as such, has developed a broad international network on immersion issues.

A choir of immersion students and educators celebrates 20 years of Swedish immersion in Finland.

The research and evaluation of immersion in Finland began with comparative studies of the Canadian product-oriented linguistic results in order to prove the viability of immersion in the Finnish context (Centre for Immersion and Multilingualism 2009). As in all immersion contexts, Swedish immersion was soon considered a successful programme in Finland too. More importantly, the first immersion researchers and teachers developed close and interactive contacts when working together to establish the pioneer immersion programme. This open dialogue made it possible and natural to view the linguistic outcomes in light of classroom processes. The open dialogue between researchers and teachers that still characterizes immersion in Finland provides not only a creative research environment but also an efficient tool for teacher training and qualitative programme development. Immersion research at the Immersion Centre at the University of Vaasa has long focused on issues of language development and language pedagogy. Today emphasis is placed on conceptualization processes in multilingual immersion inspired by the theories of professor Christer Laurén (2006).

NEXT TWENTY YEARS

In twenty years early total Swedish immersion has strengthened its position in the Finnish educational system. The programme is popular, has a virtually non-existent drop out rate and gives good results. The ground is thus solid and the time is ripe for further development. In the next twenty years, research at the Immersion Centre will continue to focus on the interesting interplay between second language acquisition and classroom teaching in immersion. The open dialogue between researchers and teachers will focus especially on the formation of content-specific concepts and concept systems in a second language by immersion students of different ages and teachers' ways of presenting and contextualizing concepts and concept systems in immersion classrooms. Research outcomes will benefit from earlier research in both second language acquisition and language for special purposes.

The multilingual orientation of Swedish immersion programmes is another research dimension which will be developed in the years to come. Our preliminary results already show that the early introduction of several languages in immersion offers a potential for multiple language learning about which we today know far too little. ❍

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Yinghua Academy, *continued from page 5*

Minnesota's academic standards and meets the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

In a Kindergarten social studies class students pretend to be American presidents.

Finally, at the beginning of each school year, the Academic Director and each grade level team discuss that year's academic goals. Depending on the learning outcomes and products that are set for the students, each classroom prepares songs, skits, poetry, written projects, and/or science models to present to the community in the spring. These performances also help school leaders to evaluate students' learned Chinese language in academic content, beyond paper and pencil assessments.

Media Resources

Yinghua Academy currently has a library of more than 1,200 Chinese books and 2,000 English books. In addition, each classroom has a library corner where 30 to 200 books are displayed and stored. The teachers' resource center has more than 400 Chinese CDs, VCDs, DVDs and reference books for teachers to use in their classrooms. Students can use one of the 25 computers in the computer lab to self-assess their English reading comprehension levels or to do online research in Chinese. Fourth and fifth grade students have a daily Chinese language class in the lab where they use IQ Chinese, a type-to-learn software program.

Homework

Homework is never new learning at Yinghua so students are expected to complete their Chinese homework by themselves. Yinghua provides strategies for parents to help students with their Chinese homework, including email communication with teachers in English, and daily homework logs where notes from teacher or home can be recorded. Chinese teachers are also available to help students with their homework in school. However, we encourage parents to spend time reading with their children every night in English. These reading activities will help students to acquire and maintain their home language.

Parent Involvement

The Yinghua Academy Community Association (YACA), developed by a group of Yinghua parents, serves as the main contact organization to help the school in fundraising, developing artistic partnerships, hosting parent education events, and recruiting volunteers for various school activities. YACA issues monthly newsletters to keep parents informed and also provides resources for family learning opportunities.

INNOVATIONS

Yinghua Academy has hosted a two-day Chinese mini-conference and teacher workshop with the support of a World Language Pilot Grant from the Minnesota Department of Education. Yinghua's experienced educators were invited to discuss practical issues that Chinese immersion teachers face during their daily practice, such as the conflict between different teaching methods, lesson planning, and communication with parents.

CHALLENGES

Literacy development

The lack of empirical research findings in the area of early literacy development for native English-speaking children learning Chinese is one of our biggest challenges. Yinghua Academy administrators have consulted and discussed this issue with

School information,
continued from page 5

TEACHER/STAFF POPULATION

- *Instructional staff: 23*
- *100% proficient in Mandarin, 16 native Mandarin speakers, 7 native English speakers*
- *Teacher-student ratio: 1:14 to 1:25 depending on grade*
- *Administration: 1 native Mandarin speaker, 2 native English speakers*

immersion educators, teacher educators, and experienced Chinese language teachers. As time goes by, we are accumulating field experience and collecting our own data to enrich this field. We look forward to having opportunities to contribute our field experience to the research in early literacy development.

Teacher Recruitment

Recruiting and retaining high quality teachers is critical for an immersion program and is one of the most challenging situations we face every year.

We look for teachers who have Minnesota elementary teaching licenses and can speak Mandarin Chinese with native or near native fluency. Our teaching candidates also need to be able to cope with the culture and language challenges they will face every day in the classroom. Hiring a teacher from another country without giving her any training or in-service support doesn't work. Providing pre-service workshops and training, in-service professional development and social support are critical for Chinese teachers to function well in U. S. immersion programs.

The Minnesota Department of Education has been granting our teachers non-licensed community expert waivers. However, each teacher eventually needs to get a Minnesota teaching license. This requires going back to school or, alternately, applying for licensure via portfolio. The latter requires teachers to collect evidence that demonstrates their ability to teach in elementary schools. Most full-time teachers have modest incomes and already work overtime to prepare good lessons. It takes time and money to pursue a Minnesota license during the school year.

The school also needs to retain good teachers. We must deal with the legal work status for each teacher as well as assist with individual career development plans. Many teachers come to the U.S. alone to pursue a teaching career. A warm environment that not only focuses on supporting their work, but also helps teachers build connections with others will have a positive influence on the program and will help us to retain quality teachers.

Resources and materials

Another challenge we face is the dearth of ready-made materials in Mandarin. There are few textbooks that can be used immediately in the immersion classroom. Teachers thus spend a lot of their preparation time translating materials. Supplementary materials are difficult to acquire in an expedient fashion. Although today ordering online is convenient, it is still a challenge to order materials without adequate information about their fit for immersion.

Yinghua 2nd graders show off their eager learning faces.

Most of the time, the Yinghua Academy staff work together to deal with these challenges in very creative ways. In our third year of operation, we are still learning, reflecting on, and adjusting our daily lessons. The board, staff, parents, and students of Yinghua Academy are enthusiastic about the school that they are creating and are confident that Yinghua Academy students will receive a strong academic education, will develop high levels of functional proficiency in Mandarin, and will become "engaged and productive global citizens" (from the Yinghua Academy mission statement).

The authors from left to right: Luyi Lien, Betsy Lueth, Cindy Moeller

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Center for Applied Linguistics SOPA/ELLOPA oral proficiency assessments:
www.cal.org/topics/ta/oralassess

Core Knowledge Foundation:
coreknowledge.org/CK/index.htm

IQ Chinese:
www.iqchinese.com

MN Academic Standards:
www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/Academic_Excellence

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments:
www.education.state.mn.us/MDE/Accountability_Programs

Northwest Evaluation Association:
www.nwea.org/research/state.asp

Singapore Math:
www.singaporemath.com

Yinghua Academy:
www.yinghuaacademy.org

GUIDE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

We welcome submissions to be considered for publication and give preference to those that relate to our current features, including best practices, parent communication, new teacher tips, technology and second language education, immersion research, guest editorials, and "The Bridge," an insert with a focus on bridging research and practice.

Manuscripts should be between 750 and 1,500 words. All references and notes should follow the specifications described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th edition, and must be placed at the end of the article. Please include the title of the article, your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, institution, a short biography as well as pictures.

Manuscripts can be submitted, preferably by email, to:

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mille379@umn.edu
Editor, ACIE Newsletter

Postal address:
Kimerly Miller
ACIE Newsletter
695 Lincoln Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105

Submission Deadlines

May 15	*November issue*
August 15	*February issue*
November 15	*May issue*

ACIE NEWSLETTER/MAY 2009

Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition

University of Minnesota
140 University International Center
331 17th Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414 USA

The American Council on Immersion Education (ACIE) is an organizational network for individuals interested in immersion education—teachers, administrators, teacher educators, researchers, and parents.

Conceived by immersion teachers in Minnesota and funded in part by the National Language Resource Center (NLRC) in the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota, ACIE aims to facilitate communication among immersion teachers and others interested in immersion education.

Please help expand the network by sending in your membership (new or renewal) today!

ACIE Membership Application—Join Today!

❒ *New individual membership—$25*
❒ *New institutional membership—$200*
❒ *Renewal of individual membership—$25*
❒ *Renewal of institutional membership—$200*

Individual members receive three issues of the ACIE Newsletter and $25 off a summer institute.

Institutional memberships include 20 copies of three issues of the ACIE Newsletter and five coupons for a $50 discount on a summer institute.

Name _____

Current title or grade level you teach _____ *Language* _____

School or affiliation name and address _____

_____

_____

Home address _____

_____

Indicate preferred mailing address ❒ *home* ❒ *school*

Work phone (____) _____ *Home phone* (____) _____

Work fax (____) _____ *Home fax* (____) _____

E-mail address _____

Years in the teaching profession _____ *Years in immersion teaching* _____

Mail your check—payable to the University of Minnesota—and this form to: ACIE, Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota, 140 UIC, 331 17th Ave SE., Minneapolis, MN 55414

The October 2008 Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond conference was organized around four themes that transcend program models, languages of instruction, grade levels and sociopolitical contexts: Immersion Pedagogy, Culture and Identity, Policy and Advocacy, and Program Design and Evaluation. Each plenary speaker was chosen based on expertise in one of those areas, and an immersion practitioner was invited to review the plenary address for this conference issue. In addition to the four plenary speakers, we include a review of the keynote address which opened the conference.

Keynote Address – Myriam Met, National Foreign Language Center, University of Maryland

Immersion Education: Intercultural Competence for Tomorrow's Global Citizens

Reviewed by Iran Amin, Foreign Language Instructional Specialist, Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, MD

Myriam Met
National Foreign Language Center, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA

"Great things we have accomplished." Thus, Dr. Myriam Met, a visionary and utmost authority in foreign language education, began her keynote address at the opening session of "Pathways to Bilingualism and Beyond," the language immersion conference sponsored by CARLA and CAL in St. Paul, Minnesota, on October 16, 2008. Who better than Dr. Met could energize a crowd of over 600 immersion educators from across the world, gathered for this unique opportunity to learn the latest on immersion and to network with colleagues? As seen in the following highlights of her address, Dr. Met eloquently painted a picture of current immersion education that both lauds its achievements and acknowledges the challenges still facing educators.

In highlighting achievements, Dr. Met told participants that immersion has passed the stage of being a magic wand. Today, it is widely considered as the most effective method of instruction to develop language proficiency. In addition, it allows students to be successful in content areas and to gain English language skills that equal or surpass those of their non-immersion peers. The growth of immersion education in the United States, which began with one program in California in 1971, attests to the success of immersion. Today, there are over 800 immersion programs across the country that include one-way foreign language immersion, two- way bilingual immersion, and indigenous immersion. Since "good teachers make good programs," this success is a tribute to the immersion practitioners for their dedication to bilingual education and their commitment to quality instruction. These successes, however, have not come easily.

In Dr. Met's words, "Teaching is hard work. Immersion is even harder!" Teaching in immersion settings is complex and demanding. On the one hand, as students progress through the grades, teachers have to make an increasingly abstract curriculum concrete and comprehensible; and on the other hand, they have to plan carefully to ensure both students' content attainment and language growth. In general, immersion students' listening and reading proficiency in the target language surpasses the quality of their speaking and writing. This gap between comprehension and

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> *"...what you do matters. Tomorrow's global citizens are sitting in our classrooms today!"*
>
> *-Mimi Met*

production widens as students advance through the elementary years of their education. In order to close the gap and to equip students with the more sophisticated language required for working with advanced instructional materials in the content areas, intentional and purposeful planning for language growth, similar to planning for content instruction, is needed. However, Dr. Met reminded the audience that more explicit grammar and vocabulary instruction does not mean decontextualized instruction. The focus must be on language growth through the content curriculum framework. Furthermore, the diversity of learners in immersion programs requires that immersion teachers differentiate instruction in terms of both the content and the language in order to meet the needs of all students.

As for challenges, Dr. Met pointed out that after almost four decades of immersion experience in the U.S. critical issues remain: teacher recruitment and retention, teacher burn out, scarcity of systematic professional development, time for collaboration with colleagues, dearth of instructional materials, and lack of sufficient research to support some of the premises of immersion education. For instance, more research is needed to provide additional evidence that students with learning difficulties benefit from immersion, and, until this occurs, decisions about their placement should be made on a case-by-case basis. The lack of adequate research is felt also in the area of second language (L2) development. Although the need for deliberate focus on L2 development is clear, educators are still uncertain how best to balance functions, grammar, academic vocabulary, and literacy. Dr. Met indicated a number of other important questions that still need exploration, discussion, research, and answers: How to interconnect content, language, and culture? How to teach immersion students to acquire intercultural competence and to be acceptable outsiders within the target culture? How to choose instructional materials that best suit immersion? How to embed literacy in content in non-European languages such as Arabic and Chinese? How to create a community of students and teachers within the same school while preserving language and program integrity? Considering time constraints, how to explore further the relation between the vocabulary size in a student's first language (L1) and academics and literacy in L2? How to use L1 research and practices to enhance L2 acquisition? How to determine how much L2 is enough to ensure progress beyond elementary years?

Dr. Met's remarks on the state of immersion at the dawn of the 21st century were both uplifting and provocative. It is true that as the world moves closer to an interconnected and multicultural community of nations, immersion teachers find themselves at the forefront of the road to multilingualism. This journey cannot be undertaken in isolation. Regardless of their program models, teachers should work together and "become a community of learners," Dr. Met indicated. Collaboration and exchange of materials and expertise are crucial, because there is neither enough research to answer the questions nor a

well-defined, research-based L2 curriculum to provide educators with the best practices to develop students' language skills and intercultural competency.

Dr. Met reminded us that as educators we may not have enough time or enough tools, but that we must do all we can because "what you do matters. Tomorrow's global citizens are sitting in our classrooms today!"

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Immersion Pedagogy Theme - Roy Lyster, McGill University

This theme addressed both theoretical and practical questions related to first and second language development and use in a variety of content-based and immersion settings.

Counterbalancing Form-Focused and Content-Based Instruction in Immersion Pedagogy

Reviewed by Maureen Curran-Dorsano, Teacher, Normandale French Immersion School, Edina, MN

At the 2004 Pathways to Bilingualism Conference, my colleague, Isabelle Punchard, charmingly introduced Dr. Roy Lyster as "our favorite paleontologist of fossilized errors." Judging by the audience's reaction to the first plenary session, "Counterbalancing Form-Focused and Content-Based Instruction in Immersion Pedagogy," the epithet still holds true today.

Dr. Lyster's well-known research on fossilized errors and corrective feedback did surface during the session, but it was part of a bigger picture referred to as the "counterbalanced approach" to instruction. While the inclusion of dual, and often competing, instructional objectives is nothing new in immersion pedagogy, Dr. Lyster offered a fresh and convincing "how-to" approach to balancing – or, rather, counterbalancing - content mastery and language proficiency. His three-step framework includes instructional input, student output and classroom interaction.

Instructional input is both content-based and form-focused. Using content objectives as the basis of instruction, teachers use a variety of strategies to make second language (L2) input comprehensible: speaking more slowly, repeating, paraphrasing, using visuals and gestures. But they must also focus on language growth and do this by drawing students' attention to linguistic features of the oral and written input. Conference participants were treated to a number of examples of what second language acquisition researchers call Noticing and Awareness activities, and we began to understand what counterbalancing language and content was all about.

The second component of the counterbalanced approach is student output. Working again from both content-based and form-focused

Roy Lyster
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

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instructional objectives, teachers engage students in hands-on, authentic and purposeful learning opportunities. Following the counterbalance principle, students are not only required to use content-related vocabulary, but are pushed to use the language forms that are often misused or not used at all. It might be as simple as practicing correct gender with content vocabulary words, or as complex as using the conditional form when making scientific predictions. Planning for and eliciting student output is one of our greatest challenges, as it demands careful scaffolding, monitoring and corrective feedback.

The third element of the counterbalanced approach to instruction is classroom interaction. Here, much of Lyster's work on corrective feedback comes into play. Teachers use a variety of corrective prompts – clarification requests, repetition, metalinguistic clues and elicitation – to draw students' attention to their language usage and to lead them to self-repair. By making this negotiation of meaning an integral part of the content-based lesson, teachers call students' awareness to their language without sacrificing mastery of content .

While the whole of the counterbalanced approach may appear overwhelming, the parts seem very doable. Dr. Lyster provided an array of examples to illustrate his instructional model, and participants appreciated the real-life applications that accompanied the theoretical framework. Also appreciated were Dr. Lyster's sense of humor and winning personality, making the first plenary of the conference an unequivocal success.

William H. Wilson and Kauanoe Kamana
University of Hawai'i at Hilo
Hawai'i, USA

Culture and Identity Theme - Kauanoe Kamana and Bill Wilson, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Within this theme, immersion educators explored how teacher and learner identities are constructed in the immersion context, examined issues of social justice and equity in the larger political arena, and provided practical measures that practitioners and administrators can implement at the program and classroom levels.

Integrating Identity and Culture in Hawaiian Immersion

Reviewed by Cantemaza (Neil McKay), Dakota Language Instructor and M.A. candidate in Second Languages and Cultures Education, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota

> *"Ethnic identity is twin-skin to linguistic identity—I am my language."*
> *(Flores and Yudice, 1990, p. 73)*

For the Hawaiian language and other indigenous languages of the U.S., language immersion is primarily about reclaiming the culture and identity of the indigenous people and restoring what was taken

by the U.S. government and churches in their efforts to assimilate and 'civilize' indigenous people through colonization. For many indigenous groups whose languages are on life support, there are two questions at this point in time. The first is "How do we bring back our cultural identity through language?" which has been answered with, "We raise a generation of speakers." The second is "How do we best do that?" and the answer is immersion education. The Hawaiians, along with the Maori of New Zealand, have shown us how they have answered these questions. This was the focus of the plenary session on the theme of Culture and Identity by William H. (Pila) Wilson and Kauanoe Kamana, two pioneers of the Hawaiian language revitalization movement. Hawaiian immersion, or Hawaiian-medium education (both terms being used throughout the presentation) is one method of Hawaiian decolonization. By having decolonization an integral part of Hawaiian language teaching and learning, the Hawaiian way of life is taught and role modeled from a Hawaiian point of reference rather than a Euro-American perspective. The Hawaiians are a kinship-based society and through Hawaiian-medium schooling immersion educators reclaim the kinship system that forms the foundation of Hawaiian identity.

Wilson and Kamana gave an overview of the history of the Hawaiian-medium program that they have created at the P-12 charter school, Ke Kula 'O Nawahiokalani'opu'u (Nawahi in short) and allowed us a peek into the school's academics and underlying philosophy. At Nawahi all faculty and staff use Hawaiian exclusively with students and each other in all contexts (both on the school campus and off). The program begins with an infant/toddler program at Nawahi's Punana Leo preschool, which is linked to the K-12 program. All instruction occurs through the medium of Hawaiian in the P-12 program, and English is not introduced until grade 5, and only then as a separate subject matter—English is never used to teach other school subjects. Infused throughout the curriculum is a strong cultural base with components of Hawaiian worldview serving as the driving force behind curricular decision-making. For example, students solve mathematical word problems involving Hawaiian fish species and explore social studies topics like the Civil Rights movement in the U.S. within the context of its impact on Native Hawaiians. Activities like cultivating in traditional Hawaiian gardens and opening and closing each school day with a gathering of the whole school community for chants and songs were mentioned as methods to reclaim Hawaiian culture and identity.

Wilson and Kamana discussed the effects that the Nawahi program has had on teachers and learners. The teachers have had an opportunity to see their hard work transformed into a new generation of fluent speakers. The learners have had the opportunity to grow up and know what it means to be Hawaiian having been taught with a Hawaiian worldview and the Hawaiian language as the vehicle. The whole indigenous language teaching and learning experience

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transcends school walls and incorporates a focus on the identity of the people themselves and their community. Families are learning, speaking and teaching Hawaiian at home as well. Most parents are not native speakers of Hawaiian but are now raising native speakers! For indigenous immersion educators everywhere, the Hawaiians are modeling what can be achieved both in an immersion education program as well as in the community; they are indeed doing their part to raise a generation of speakers. Wilson and Kamana ended with a profound thought that sums up the larger connection of the individual not only to their language and their relationship to fellow teachers and students, but to their environment and place in creation on Earth as well. The goal of Hawaiian-medium education is to achieve a place and time "when our lands and people are cared for by the values of our ancestors."

> *Our languages mean much. They encompass whole linguistic solar systems of spiritual expression, whole galaxies that express universal human values like love, generosity and belonging, and whole universes of references that enable us to cope with an everchanging world. Because our elders are moving on, it is up to us to help strengthen our languages. When one elder journeys to the spirit world, a whole Smithsonian Institution's worth of information goes with him or her. We have to retain that information in our languages, and that is why language immersion is so vitally important. (Littlebear, n.d.)*

Philip Hoare
Hong Kong Institute of Education
Hong Kong, China

Policy and Advocacy Theme - Philip Hoare, Hong Kong Institute of Education

This theme included critical and analytical perspectives on language education policy and planning, legislative mandates, standards, the socially situated nature of language and learning, and ways to advocate as immersion practitioners.

Context and Constraints: Immersion in Hong Kong and Mainland China

Reviewed by Michael Bostwick, Executive Director, Bilingual & Immersion Programs, Katoh Schools, Numazu, Shizuoka, Japan

The plenary offered by Professor Hoare of the Hong Kong Institute of Education was a fascinating account of how two cities – Hong Kong and Xian, China - are coping with a surge of additive bilingual schooling. Like immersion educators in other countries, English immersion educators in these two cities struggle with creating programs that 1) meet the prevailing language needs of their communities within the social, political and governmental constraints placed on schools, and 2) meet the second language proficiency needs of the students that are based on best practices regarding content-based language learning. These two needs don't always line up. Ultimately, many programs are developed to suit the context

and perceived needs of the community but don't appear to be based on what we believe are sound pedagogical practices in immersion education. In Asia, immersion programs may be shaped by social or political pressures that place more emphasis on meeting the norms and expectations of the community rather than on sound immersion principles.

In Hong Kong, English immersion at the secondary level is widespread with approximately 25% of all secondary students in a late immersion program. English enjoys a high status in Hong Kong, and many of the bilingual schools are typically viewed as prestigious or elite. However, in order to ensure success on high stakes tests, switching from instruction in English to instruction in Chinese to expedite learning is common practice. Moreover, teachers receive very little training in immersion pedagogy, and teacher-fronted methods frequently dominates teachers' instructional options. Due to perceived time constraints, students also have very limited opportunities to focus on language and rarely produce more that one- or two-word utterances in most classrooms.

The economic opening in China has unleashed a rapid growth of bilingual schools throughout the country. Technically speaking, all Chinese students must study in Chinese. Yet, some schools appear to find ways to evade the full enforcement of this law. Professor Hoare profiled a school where success for students is based on content knowledge and assessments, but success for teachers is measured by how well the school believes the students are learning English. Most of the content in these "immersion" classes was either previously taught in Chinese or cognitively very undemanding, with the focus being on language learning not content mastery.

It was clear from the presentation that schools make pragmatic adaptations to the complex circumstances within which they must operate and that these circumstances also impose constraints on how immersion models are implemented. Contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of these programs with those in North America provides insights into the factors that impact the success of immersion programs. Primary among these insights is that in order for immersion programs to achieve their full potential teachers must maintain a focus on both content and language. Teachers need to understand the role that language plays in learning subject content—that learning a subject requires learning a language—and that this also requires creating situations for the students to focus on language. Teachers must also understand that rich, cognitively challenging content provides students with the opportunities to engage in language that is more sophisticated and complex, thereby pushing their language skills to higher levels.

As Professor Hoare suggested, we can broaden our knowledge and understanding of immersion if we examine programs in different contexts around the world (not just look at immersion in North

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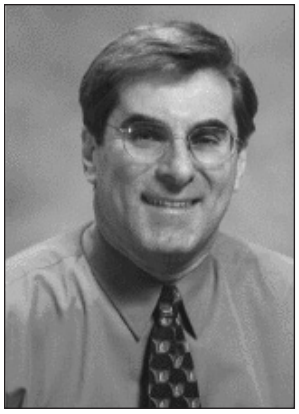
America or Europe). Such an exchange of ideas and experiences will serve two functions: to help educators better understand and incorporate best practices more effectively into their immersion programs; and to broaden our view of what actually constitutes effective immersion pedagogical practice.



Fred Genesee
McGill University
Montreal, Canada

Program Design and Evaluation Theme - Fred Genesee, McGill University

This theme comprised particular immersion program models, professional preparation and development, program leadership, and other internal and external challenges pertaining to program design, implementation, growth, and evaluation.

Learning to Read in a Second Language

Reviewed by Donna Gouin, French Immersion Coordinator, Sligo Creek Elementary School, Silver Spring, MD

For those of us in the immersion field, Dr. Fred Genesee is legendary for his extensive research on the many forms of bilingual education for all students, whether they are majority or minority language students. In this plenary session, Dr. Genesee spoke about "Learning to Read in a Second Language." His session began with a summary of general reading outcomes in immersion, but the main topic he addressed was a current research study that he is conducting with colleagues. This research has great immediate importance for immersion practitioners because it looks into reading outcomes for a specific group of learners in early immersion programs, those who are at-risk and/or struggling.

In summarizing the research Genesee reported that:

- when comparing similar groups of Canadian French immersion students, in general, native speakers of English in early total immersion programs did as well as native speakers of French in French reading decoding and comprehension skills, and did better than non-immersion students in French reading decoding and comprehension skills;
- although socio-economic disadvantage and low levels of general intellectual ability put children at risk for low achievement in any school program, such students are not at greater risk in U.S. and Canadian immersion programs than their peers in an English language program.

Genesee then spoke to the need for immersion researchers and practitioners to address certain gaps in what we know about particular groups of students, specifically those who are struggling or at-risk readers. Early identification and early intervention for these students might mean the difference between success and struggle, especially since these are students who frequently leave immersion programs.

The current research that Dr. Genesee then presented, based on the dissertation of one of his doctoral students, Caroline Erdos,

is the "Study of Individual Differences in Immersion," (Erdos, Genesee,Savage and Haigh). This study does indeed address this group of at-risk, struggling students, and was motivated by four questions:

1. Is risk for reading difficulties different from risk for language learning difficulties? In order to provide support for struggling students, intervention support personnel need to distinguish between students who have clinical learning disabilities, those that are slow language learners for various reasons, and those whose language skills are not well developed.
2. Can we use first language indices to predict second language outcomes and disabilities? There is evidence of cross-linguistic "transfer" in domains related to academic language and reading for a variety of alphabetic languages.
3. How early in schooling can a student's first language (L1) be used to predict second language (L2) outcomes? The answer to this question is important because there is evidence that early reading intervention reduces rates of later reading disabilities.
4. Are predictors of word reading difficulties the same as predictors of reading comprehension difficulties? The answer to this question is also important because there is evidence of greater improvement when intervention is designed to respond to a student's specific difficulties.

In this longitudinal study, conducted in three phases over the last four years, student participants were in grades K, 1 and 2, and were chosen from both typically developing and potentially at-risk monolingual or English-dominant students in early total French immersion programs in Montreal. The students were given oral and written language and literacy assessments that were predictive of at-risk outcomes in L1 students.

Genesee described the different parts of the research and study, and followed this description with a summary and implications of the work. Most important for practitioners of immersion are:

- Although many students are at risk for both reading and language difficulties, it is important to identify those that are at risk for one, the other, or both in order to be effective and efficient in providing intervention;
- L1 predictors provide reasonable identification of students who might have reading difficulties in the L2 later on;
- Identification of risk for reading difficulty can be done as early as fall in kindergarten, but improves if done in spring of kindergarten;
- Risk for decoding ability and comprehension development entail different difficulties, and intervention should be designed to target both, since both are needed to ensure success in reading;
- Being in an immersion program does not cause difficulties in language and literacy; research shows that rates of reading and

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language difficulty in immersion are very similar to those reported for students in L1 programs;

- Interventions that work for at-risk students in L1 programs will also be effective for immersion students, with the intervention provider taking into account the fact that the student is learning through a second language.;

After his session, Genesee answered questions from participants:

- He was asked if he thought that similar outcomes would be found with students in a Chinese immersion program. He mentioned that he thought that there would be similar correlations, perhaps to different degrees, in programs with dissimilar languages (e.g., alphabetic vs. logographic).
- Another question asked his advice about interventions with a kindergarten student who did not know letter names in the L1. He counseled that if the student was in a total immersion program, intervention should probably be in the language of instruction (L2); if the student is in a 50-50 program, interventions should be in English during the English part of the day, in the partner (two-way immersion) or target (one-way immersion) language during that part of the day.
- Another participant wanted to know the name of the instrument used in the study to test first graders French receptive language skills. He mentioned that there is an early Canadian version of the Peabody test that was used.

Genesee's plenary session certainly was inspirational for immersion practitioners and advocates. It is energizing to hear that the work we do in immersion programs with love, dedication and passion does not harm our students, and, indeed, can help them achieve success that matches or exceeds that of peers in all French and all English programs. It is also encouraging to know that researchers in Canada are addressing those questions that have long plagued immersion practitioners, including, in particular: how can we help struggling immersion students?

There are some questions, however, that this immersion practitioner still has. Although the importance for this type of early identification of possible language and/or reading difficulties is indisputable, what is less clear is how to provide it in school districts that have dwindling resources for human resources and materials? How do we find the time to give more time-consuming individual assessments in school districts that ask teachers to implement academically rigorous programs, even in kindergarten, and to assess progress in these programs many times a year? How can immersion practitioners get special educators and administrators to understand that literacy success for all students, not just immersion students, depends not only on decoding in the early grades, but on developing general language growth so that reading

comprehension in the upper grades does not stall? And, for immersion advocates who have been in the field since early days, how do we balance the idea of using L1 to facilitate L2 reading development without compromising the immersion philosophy, and without confusing students who are already experiencing reading or language difficulties? One can hope that, by the next international immersion conference, Genesee, other researchers and, indeed, immersion practitioners may help answer some of these questions.

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Selected Readings

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