



Strategies to promote second language learning in the classroom

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and

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Introduction

- Research into the area of second language learning (S. Roy).
- Strategies for promoting your second language program (S. Eaton).

The Language Research Centre (LRC)

- Provides leadership in research into:
 - language learning and teaching
 - the effective use of technologies
 - policy-making
- It is a central point of contact on language research between the University of Calgary and the world.

Key people

- **Director, Nicholas G. Žekulin**
- **Associate Director, Sylvie Roy**
- **Project Coordinator, Sarah Eaton**
- **Psycholinguistics Lab, John Archibald**
- **Development Centre, Ted Ma**
- **Receptionist, Olga Rylova**

Vision and mission

- To be Canada's foremost Research Centre for the understanding and enhancement of second language learning.
- To develop and distribute leading-edge material and strategies for enhancing second language education and thus create a more articulate, literate, multicultural and internationally effective citizenry.

Main areas of research focus

- Psycholinguistics
- L2 Pedagogy
- Technology and L2 Pedagogy
- Interconnection of language and culture in L2 learning

ACCESS Projects

Alberta Education distributed funding for the LRC to extend and enhance second language learning across the province. Activities at the LRC include:

- 1) Teacher training and professional development. A double degree B.A. (French) and B.Ed. (Education) was revived and accepted.
- 2) Research on the development of pedagogical and curricular material. Two language departments in the Faculties of Humanities and Education have discussed new courses in second language;

ACCESS projects (continued)

- 3) Programme development: University courses in high schools will be delivered in high schools in Calgary;
- 4) Research Support has been given for Graduate students;
- 5) Community outreach. This project is significant for the success and implementation of revised second language requirements in Alberta.

A Review of the Literature on Second Language Learning

**Prepared by The Language Research Centre
(LRC) of the University of Calgary:**

- Dr. John Archibald (Principal Investigator)
- Dr. Sylvie Roy (Principal Investigator)

- Sandra Harmel (Research Associate)
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Literature review objectives

- ☞ **I.** The Effect of the Second Language (L2) on the First Language (L1)
- ☞ **II.** The Role of Content Instruction in Offering a Second Language (L2)
- ☞ **III.** The Effects of Second-language (L2) Learning on Students with Special Needs
- ☞ **IV.** The effects of learning a third Language (L3) on students for whom English is a second language (L2)

Challenges

- Learning a second language for 95 hours per year for six years will not lead to functional bilingualism and fluency in the second language. Expectations must be realistic.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunity to practice the language skills they learn in the classroom.

I. The Effect of the Second Language (L2) on the First Language (L1)

- Exposure to a second language can have these benefits:
 - (1) enhance the complexity of first-language syntax used
 - (2) enhance language use skills (narrative strategies, reading and writing literacy skills in the first language, vocabulary scores)
 - (3) enhance non-linguistic skills (divergent thinking; metalinguistic skills; attitudes toward others; mathematics scores and skills).

I. The Effect of the Second Language (L2) on the First Language (L1) (cont'd)

- Acquiring knowledge in a second language does not impede the ability to access that knowledge in the first language.
- Negative effects of the second language on the first language (such as accented first language speech or loss of access to first-language knowledge) will not occur under the Languages Initiative.

II. The Role of Content Instruction in Offering a Second Language (L2)

- Numerous models of content-based language programs exist, each illustrating a different balance between content-area and second-language learning outcomes. **Student second-language proficiency levels, the nature of the content material and the amount of time devoted to the program all need to be considered in choosing an appropriate model for any given context.**

II. The Role of Content Instruction in Offering a Second Language (L2) (cont'd)

- Students in time-intensive content-based language teaching (CBLT) programs, such as French immersion, are typically able to master complex content material effectively, despite less than native-like proficiency in the language of instruction
- In programs where students have limited second-language proficiency and less time is devoted to second-language learning, the concrete and highly-contextualized content found in content-based language teaching programs is the most effective method of teaching.

II. The Role of Content Instruction in Offering a Second Language (L2) (cont'd)

- ☛ In terms of language learning, content-based language teaching is a time-efficient and effective.
- ☛ The development of second-language grammatical accuracy needs to be explicitly promoted in content-based language teaching classrooms.
- ☛ Ultimately, one of the main benefits of content-based language teaching is its ability to encourage students to make connections between second-language study and the outside world. This, in turn, can increase motivation and reinforce learning across the curriculum.

III. The Effects of Second-language (L2) Learning on Students with Special Needs

- There is a great deal of research that looks at the difference between students who are culturally and linguistically diverse versus those with disabilities.
- A second body of research focuses on how to assess students with special needs in second-language classrooms.
- A third body of research focuses on how to teach students with disabilities. Some research suggests adapting the second-language teaching by focusing on the analytical method of teaching the language. However, much of this research does not have an empirical basis.

III. The Effects of second-language (L2) learning on students with special needs (cont'd)


- A fourth body of research explores a more cognitive framework. This research looks at how bilingual students with special needs perform word recognition tasks compared to monolingual students; how students with dyslexia perform in second language learning; language impairment in bilingual and monolingual students; and the connection between learning disabilities in first-language and second-language learning.

III. The Effects of second-language (L2) learning on students with special needs (cont'd)


- In sum, all of this research looks at how to assess students in second-language classrooms; how to teach students with special needs in second-language classrooms; and problems related to specific concerns such as dyslexia, etc.

IV. The effects of learning a third Language (L3) on students for whom English is a second language (L2)

- The acquisition of a third language is a common occurrence around the world. Five types of trilinguals have been established, with most being bilinguals who acquire a third language.
- Although Canada is not officially a trilingual community, the number of trilinguals in Canada and in Canadian schools is growing.



IV. The effects of learning a third Language (L3) on students for whom English is a second language (L2) (cont'd)

- Students for whom English is a second language will become trilinguals if they take another language course.
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IV. The effects of learning a third Language (L3) on students for whom English is a second language (L2) (cont'd)

- Learning a third language is aided by proficiency in the first language, and acquired skills can be transferred among the languages spoken. Students for whom English is a second language may benefit from third-language acquisition, depending on the model of instruction.

Re-framing the benefits of learning a language

- When we re-frame the benefits, expressing them in new ways to different stake holders, we move from research to promotion of language programs.

From research to practice...

We have shown you a brief synopsis of what the literature has revealed about second language programs.

But the question remains, how will teachers and administrators deal with this new mandatory requirement?

Answer: It will have to be promoted... in other words, "marketed".

Marketing school programs

“The word ‘marketing’ used to be a negative concept to educators.

Not anymore...

School marketing has been transformed into an essential management function.”

- Linda Vining ^[1]

^[1] Vining, Linda. *Marketing Matters in Schools*. Carlingford, Australia. Centre for Marketing Schools. 2000, p. 7.

School marketing includes...


- ☞ Awareness raising and education
- ☞ Showing students, parents and others the benefits of the programs
- ☞ Public relations
- ☞ Cultivating a school image
- ☞ Creating a positive feeling about the schools with students, teachers and others

School marketing does not mean...

- Giving up traditional values
- Trading education for big business



Presenting your language program to the public

- School leaders need to get the ball rolling
(Don't wait for your superiors or subordinates to do it for you.)
 - Be (infectiously, but genuinely) positive
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Be the first to start the dialogue

- ☞ Make it natural
- ☞ Start incorporating the message about language learning into the messages you send out every day:
 - announcements
 - staff meetings
- ☞ When you act positive about language learning (in a natural way) then others will do the same. (“Rah, rah!” is not always the most effective.)



Excellent ideas from the Tool Kit

These ideas are great because they don't take much time or money:

- ☞ Phone hold messages promoting language learning.
 - ☞ Use the free newsletter articles provided.
 - ☞ Hold a parent-information meeting.
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More practical ideas for teachers

These take more resources (time and energy),
but could be worth it:

- Use champions – Someone well-known in the community or alumni
- Organize a Language Learning Week
- Organize “key pal” projects at your school

Champions

- Choose someone well-known in the community or alumni
- Establish specific goals (e.g. speak at an information night, write a blurb for your web site, visit classes.)
- Incorporate personal contact with parents and teachers – The more people can connect with the champion, the more they'll be inspired.

Language learning week

- Establish a team to work with you (including an energetic coordinator).
- Pick your dates.
- Establish what needs to be done.
- Choose who will do what (include helpers)
- Figure out a timeline

Language learning week: A few helpful hints...

- Remember to include food, music and multi-media.
- Creating community – This is opportunity for all the language teachers at the school to work together.
- Make the most of the marketing opportunity – invite local media to the school during that week.

Tips for a successful language learning week

- ☛ Make it fun!
 - Games
 - Jokes
 - Cultural do's and taboo's
- ☛ Include friendly competitions (spelling bees, poster competitions, etc.)
- ☛ Remember the prizes! (Hint: Appoint an "Awards coordinator" to solicit prizes.)

The new pen pals - "Key pals"

Benefits

- ✓ Authentic language experience
- ✓ First-hand learning
- ✓ Students make new friends
- ✓ Exposure to the target culture (especially useful in rural areas.)
- ✓ Students get excited about it and end up promoting it themselves

Requirements for “key pal” projects

- ☞ Coordination by teacher.
- ☞ Computer resources.
- ☞ Classroom time to explain and monitor.
- ☞ Explanations on why this is relevant and useful.
- ☞ Student activities incorporating reflection.

Key pal Resources

☛ **Epals.com** <http://www.epals.com/esearch/?st=ps&less=1>

☛ **“Initiate a language exchange project for your students”**

<http://www.tandem-schools.com/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=59>

☛ **“An Account of a Pilot Key Pal Project for Korean Children”**

<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Choi-KeyPals/>

Bolster the image of your language program

- Activities that get students involved and excited will improve the stale image of language classes where students had to stand up, conjugate a verb and sit down once it was finished.

Promoting languages from “the bottom-up”

- Remember how the metric system was marketed by the federal government? How about recycling awareness? Young people learned first and educated their parents on the topic. We can use the same strategies to market languages in Alberta.

Get students interested

- Language learning week
- Key pal program
- Work with teachers to include “contact assignments”
- Showcase students’ language-related work
- Have a “language student of the week”

Students – the key to marketing

When students are interested, they get excited about what they're doing.

- When they get excited about languages, they'll promote the program for you – without realizing that's what they're doing.
- The more you preach, the more they'll pull away. The more fun it is, the more they'll be attracted to it.

Conclusion - Make languages relevant to your students' lives

They need to see that it is relevant to their lives now (not just a vague reference to the fact that language learning may help them get a job later.)

- Make new friends through key pals (Using technology is a great way to get kids interested.)
- Go for the "Cool factor" - Show them which of their idols speak more than one language. (e.g. J. Lo) or are teaching their children another



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