



LANGUAGE TEACHING AND PROGRAM AT KATIVIK ILISARNILIRINIQ:

**STATE OF
THE DEBATE**

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ESSENTIALS

This section sets out some legal and administrative landmarks that are essential to navigate through the debate.

THE JAMES BAY AND NORTHERN QUEBEC AGREEMENT (JBNAQ)

When interviewed 20 years after the JBNAQ agreement signature, Johnny Williams was probably right to say, “I feel that educational aspects coming from the [James Bay and Northern Quebec] Agreement have had the most positive impact on the Inuit. When education was controlled by the federal day school system, students were not even allowed to speak their own Inuktitut language.” – Johnny Williams, Inukjuak (*Makivik News*, 1995).

Section 17.0.59 of the JBNAQ states: “The teaching languages shall be Inuktitut and with respect to the other languages, in accordance with the present practice in the territory. The Kativik School Board will pursue as an objective the use of French as a language of instruction so that pupils graduating from its schools will, in the future, be capable of continuing their studies in a French school, college or university elsewhere in Québec, if they so desire. After consultation with the parents’ committee, and having regard to the requirements of subsequent education, the commissioners shall determine the rate of introduction of French and English as teaching languages.”



Signing of the JBNAQ, via Nunatsiaq News, https://nunatsiaq.com/stories/article/65674montreal_inuit_plan_jbnqa_day_feast/.

This section clarifies three things:

- KI has Inuktitut as a language of instruction; the other two are French and English.
- Considerable effort must be made to prepare students for French postsecondary studies.
- The way these languages are introduced at KI is up to the Council of Commissioners (CC), after consultation with the education committees.



Taqralik Magazine, September–November 1977 (Front Cover) – <https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2165404>.

THE CHARTER OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

The drafting of the JBNQA reflected Nunavik’s battle against the proposed Bill 101, *Charter of the French Language*, which was being enacted at the same time. We can now read in Bill 101:

Notwithstanding sections 72 to 86, in the schools under the jurisdiction of the Cree School Board or the Kativik School Board, according to the Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons (chapter I 14), the languages of instruction shall be Cree and Inuktitut, respectively, and the other languages of instruction in use in the Cree and Inuit communities in Québec on the date of the signing of the Agreement indicated in section 1 of the Act approving the Agreement concerning James Bay and Northern Québec (chapter C 67), namely, 11 November 1975.

The Cree School Board and the Kativik School Board shall pursue as an objective the use of French as a language of instruction so that pupils graduating from their schools will in future be capable of continuing their studies in a French school, college or university elsewhere in Québec, if they so desire.

After consultation with the school committees, in the case of the Cree, and with the parents’ committees, in the case of the Inuit, the commissioners shall determine the rate of introduction of French and English as languages of instruction.

With the assistance of the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, the Cree School Board and the Kativik School Board shall take the necessary measures to have sections 72 to 86 apply to children whose parents are not Cree or Inuit. For the purposes of the second paragraph of section 79, a reference to the Education Act is a reference to section 450 of the Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons. (section 88)

In short, Bill 101 reaffirms the JBNQA but also underscores KI’s responsibility to accommodate non-Inuit students. To do so, the school board provides learning material and a tutoring program, and has worked with external school boards and education service providers (see section 450 of the *Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons*).

With Bill 96 (now Act 14), new additions were introduced to the *Charter of the French Language* in 2021. KI's two main concerns are as follows:

- The three compulsory courses in French to obtain a college diploma in Quebec (not including courses in the language arts, second language or physical education), and the French uniform examination.
- The quota of students registered in an English institution.

On the first topic, the ministry suggested new provisions to sections 88.0.2 and 88.0.17 that would enter into force on 1 January 2024.

“An institution that gives college instruction in English shall nevertheless ensure that every student registered in a program of studies leading to a Diploma of College Studies successfully completes, before such a diploma is issued to the student, at least three courses given in French, excluding language of instruction courses, second-language courses and physical education courses. *The institution may allow a student declared eligible to receive instruction in English in accordance with Division I to replace the three courses given in French by three French courses, in which case those French courses shall be in addition to the second-language courses*” (section 88.0.2).

Also, the uniform exam would not be compulsory for those student (88.0.17.).

As a reminder, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (KI), Cree School Board (CSB) and Conseil en Éducation des Premières Nations (CEPN)—so, all the Indigenous organizations in Quebec—have asked for those French courses to be replaced by First Nations language courses.

BASIC SCHOOL REGULATION

Successful discussions with the ministry took place in KI's first years (KI Progress Report for 1978–1985). Adapting certain administrative practices at the ministry's sanctions department was especially pressing for the new school board, because, even though Inuktitut was formally recognized as KI's language of instruction, the ministry's certification system was not ready. Those adjustments were essential for KI students to receive a Quebec Secondary School Diploma (SSD), like any other student in the province. More precisely, Quebec's *Basic School Regulation* summarizes the number of hours per subject per year (time allocation) in the Quebec Education Program. Here is an example of the way this information is presented for Secondary Cycle 1. Each of these courses must be included in the student schedule, with the appropriate number of hours per year, so it can be linked to a specific course code. For students to receive their diploma, each course code must be marked as successful. However, Inuktitut was not listed here, so adjustments needed to happen. The ministry issued a language of instruction equivalent course code specific to KI.

KI DISCUSSION ON THE INTRODUCTION OF FRENCH AND ENGLISH

Discussions on language teaching and learning have been central at KI since the beginning. Already in 1977, a commissioner reported quite accurately the debate that goes on today:

Decision to be made about the right time to start a second language. Advantage of using Inuktitut only during the first levels which children receive through grounding in their own language but delay in starting second language can mean students who go on to advanced study [...] can take as much as two years longer. [...] It is possible to introduce second language in Grade 1, young children can learn languages with greater ease. [...] starting second language early may mean children view school as something outside of their own experiences.

Over the years, the debate has continued to rage, as shown by these quotes taken from different KI CC meetings between 1977 and 1990:

“People seems [*sic*]” to be split. Some want student [*sic*] to start school in the second language, other want Inuktitut used as the language of instruction to the fullest extent.”

“A greater problem seems to be a student switching to second languages before learning either one well.”

“Commissioners want less Inuktitut taught so people can get better in second language.”

NUNAVIK SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATION (1985)

In 1985, just seven years after KI was created, the Nunavik Symposium on Education took place. The main topic of discussion was the same: plurilingual teaching and learning. And, some baseline observations were made, which later led to a broader discussion:

- The importance of parents, community and other organizations for Inuktitut to prevail;
- Students asking for more challenging Inuktitut lessons in upper grades;
- Lack of postsecondary facilities in Inuktitut;
- Curriculum development marked by a narrow-minded workbook philosophy and slow educational material production.

NUNAVIK EDUCATION TASK FORCE (1989 TO 1992)

The above observations led to the creation of the Nunavik Education Task Force, which was officially instituted in 1989, and given the mandate to develop a policy and an action plan toward fluency in Inuktitut, English and French.

As early as 1990, after massive consultations with the community and teachers, some partial conclusions were presented at the Makivik AGM by the Task Force:

- Culture loss can happen even when learning Inuktitut takes place, especially as its teaching depends mainly on southern methods and materials. Teaching Inuktitut should not only involve language teaching but also a way of life (Inuit teachers, teachers' roundtable).
- Inuktitut teachers need more support from their community, and the Qallunaat teachers need more interaction with the community in general. School facilities should be used to meet and discuss the community's challenges with everyone, including students and teachers (Jobie Weetaluktuk).
- It is clear that the Task Force cannot properly carry out its mandate without active participation from everyone in Nunavik. The community needs to come together to imagine a form of education that will really serve Nunavik (Silatunirmut report).

The Task Force was struggling with its mandate and came to the conclusion that, to develop a policy and action plan, they could not merely respond to the needs expressed by Nunavimmiut, but also needed to start reviewing the language program in place.

The review of the French and English programs revealed discrepancies between the programs, the teachers' guides, the activities suggested through the material and the exams. Another interesting note was that French and English first-language standards were then being used, not L2s (which is no longer the case). The review also led to global advice for teachers: foster verbal communication by the students using authentic situations. Note that the findings were worse for the French program than for the English one.

As for Inuktitut, the program review mainly brought to light that the teachers' current strategies were those used by non-Inuit teachers, which were no longer recognized as best practices and were rather less efficient for developing complete proficiency (e.g., students could read by decoding but did not understand).

These studies also showed that none of the Kllanguage programs at that time were led by a clear global approach. The programs were described as isolated from one another and from the child's world and interests. "Elders know this is not the way it should be and they have been telling us all along that the way a child learns the language is by being involved with real things." In other words, we knew that a more authentic way of teaching needed to happen (Silatunirmut report).

On this topic, the Task Force formulated objectives to direct language programs at KI and make them consistent. It clarified that the programs must preserve and develop the first language, and support the gradual acquisition of skills in all three languages, as well as transcultural skills. Research was not yet talking about translingual skills (as we will see in the next section on the research on plurilingual teaching and learning), but

the close link between language and identity (culture) was already clear and asserted.

The work done by the Task Force on the programs also brought the team to make this conclusion:

The typical school system organization is set up to deliver programs, not to develop them. The skills required for instructional design and materials production are specialized and very time consuming, not something teacher or pedagogical counselor should be able to do. Though they must participate, it requires a global vision and direction. Program development in Inuktitut, French and English is a team effort that must include consultants from universities, pedagogical counselors, elders, and the teachers in the field. Repeated cycles of development, experimentation, and evaluation are needed to produce programs and teaching materials which will meet the needs of our students."

Here are some of their final report recommendations, which KI also adopted (KI Response to the Nunavik Education Task Force, 1993).

#61 The instructional program must be truly bilingual.

#62 English and French first-language students should be encouraged to take Inuktitut courses, as should second-language teachers.

#65 Workshops should be organized at the community level to explain and demonstrate language teaching philosophies and programs.

#68 Start second-language instruction as early as possible, but maintain most of the early teaching in Inuktitut.

With regard to this last recommendation, an assertion kept driving the discussion about language teaching during the Nunavik Education Task Force mandate. It was summarized in the Silatunirmut report (1992) at the time: "It is generally agreed that a solid base in one's first language helps second-language learning. A solid base in one's first language is produced by language experience in the home and in the community—school is only one factor."

In fact, even Jim Cummins, when asked his opinion about Grade 3, at the 1985 Symposium, said this: "The second language can be safely introduced in the third grade. However, the system which seems to work best is to continue teaching some subjects in the first language until grade six" (Anne Vick-Wesgate, 2022, p. 111).

When talking about this era in her book, *Nunavik Inuit-controlled Education in Arctic Quebec*, 2002, Anne Vick-Wesgate also summarizes this assertion: "[Kativik School Board] (KSB) administrators and specialists in language retention and acquisition believed that early elementary instruction must be in the mother tongue to build the child's first language and a greater ability to transfer more easily to second language" (2002, 1988).

We will come back to this assertion in the next section (Research) and talk more deeply about the work of Don Taylor, Stephen Wright and Jim Cummins.

INUKTITUURNIUP SATURTAUGASUARNINGA PROJECT AND ITS ILLIRIJAVUT REPORT (2012)

Led by Avataq, the Inuktituurniup Saturtaugasuarninga Project focused on Inuktitut. Its report (2012) stressed again the need to enhance the quality of the Inuktitut curriculum: standards, pedagogical approach, training and material.

Aside from this recommendation, others, which do not specifically concern KI, were given as examples. They emphasize the importance of the following:

- Elders' involvement in the effort to foster teaching Inuktitut;
- Teaching Inuktitut to non-Inuit;
- Creating more training and postsecondary education opportunities in Inuktitut;
- Promoting Inuktitut literacy;
- Creating an Inuktitut Language Authority;
- Creating regional and local cultural centres and committees.

PARNASIMAUTIK (2015)

In 2012, Makvik initiated a series of consultations, under the name Parnasimautik. The Parnasimautik report (2015) reinforced the conclusions of the Inuktituurniup Saturtaugasuarninga Project. It also underscored the importance of rethinking education, to bring it in line with Nunavik needs and so its pedagogical approach reflects Inuit core values.

The report's education section starts with the words, "a nation cannot survive without education [...] a system which must promote pride and self-esteem," followed by a call for a "culturally responsive as well as academically responsible curriculum (as per the provincial guidelines)."

QUEBEC OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT: FOR QUALITY EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN NUNAVIK THAT RESPECT INUIT CULTURE (2018)

This call for more culturally responsive schools was reflected in the 2018 Quebec Ombudsman's report, *For Quality Educational Services in Nunavik That Respect Inuit Culture*.

The Québec Ombudsman recognizes the will of the Inuit to promote and develop their language as a vehicle for culture, unity and fulfilment. It is important [for the MEQ] to take stock of this finding and to have the same vision of the following school board objectives:

- promote the use of Inuktitut as the primary language in Nunavik;
- maintain and strengthen the use of Inuktitut in all activities related to education and promotion of the cultural heritage of Inuit;
- ensure mastery of Inuktitut, while incorporating other languages of instruction. (section 35)

In other words, the Quebec Ombudsman urged the ministry to follow the commissioners' vision. It also asked both parties to sit down to set a clear plan, timelines and objectives on this matter.

While these proposed courses of action are promising, the fact remains that the situation calls for quick and effective solutions for young people, as much for their motivation and language proficiency as for their desire and ability to remain in school, so that school is a place where they can succeed. To develop and ensure the implementation of solutions within reasonable time frames, there must be solid communication and close cooperation between Kativik School Board and the Department [ministry]. Clear objectives and a precise time frame must also be defined. Collaboration between the Department and the school board must aim to offer Inuit students educational services that meet their expectations and that are culturally adapted. (section 53)

The Ombudsman's report covers many other aspects of quality education in Nunavik, such as access to postsecondary studies, teacher and student absenteeism, the school calendar, students with special needs, and more, which won't be covered here.

KI 2018 EDUCATION COUNCIL

In the context of the Ombudsman's Report and to better set its objectives after regaining access to secondary school diplomas for Nunavik students in the aftermath of the Attestation of Studies crisis, KI consulted the Nunavik Education Committees from all 14 communities at the 2018 Education Council. Four bilingual models were presented for discussion, summarizing bilingual education programs around the world, and more specifically in Indigenous settings.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION MODELS

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. HERITAGE</p> <p>Aim is to expand L1. All or most instruction done in L1. L2 mainly taught as a subject.</p> <p>Limit: Need postsecondary options in L1.</p> | <p>2. MAINTENANCE</p> <p>Goal is maintaining L1 while adding L2, but not expanding L1 into new functions. Education is in L1 and L2 (both as subject and means of teaching). L2 is dominant.</p> <p>Limit: does not develop academic proficiency of L1.</p> |
| <p>3. TRANSITIONAL</p> <p>L1 is used mainly as a bridge to learning L2. L2 is dominant by the end of primary.</p> <p>Limit: It leads to subtractive bilingualism (losing of the first language) and school disengagement.</p> | <p>4. ENRICHMENT/DUAL/TRANSLINGUISTIC (many names)</p> <p>Goal is to succeed in all languages taught. Education in L1 and L2. Model goes from 10:90 to 50:50 (% of time dedicated to L1 or L2) with different progressions depending on the context and clientele.</p> |

Definitions: L1 is used for first language and L2 is used for second language. (Tulloch, 2018)

The Education Council then asked that KI mainly look at ways for its language program to embody the heritage (no. 1) and/or the enrichment/dual/translinguistic models (no. 4).

KI EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS (AUDIT) (2019–2021)

To better set its objectives based on the outcome of the 2018 Education Council, KI mandated researchers affiliated with the *Chaire-réseau de recherche sur la jeunesse du Québec* to conduct an evaluation (audit) of its French and English programs. The main objectives were as follows:

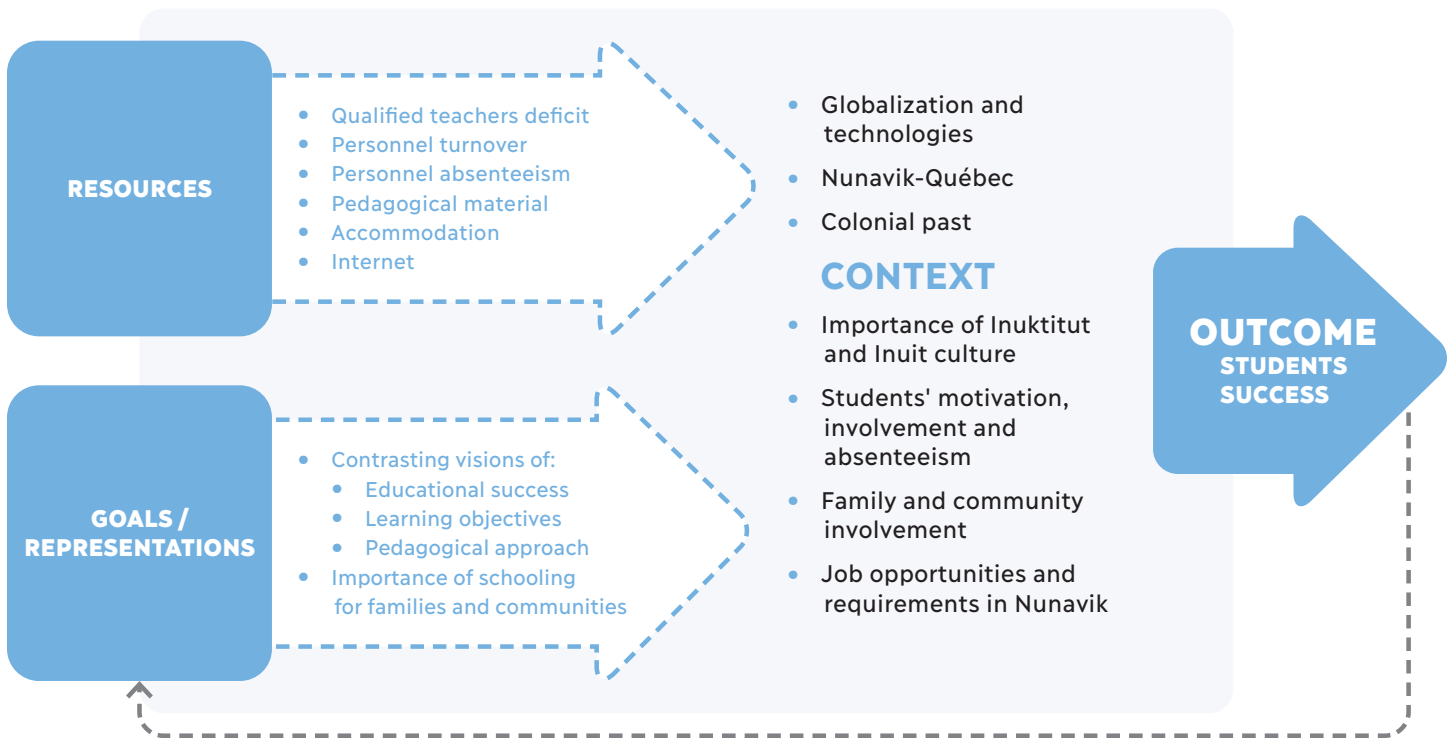
- Review formal KI curriculums and programs and compare them to the Québec Education Program;
- Review learning assessment methods leading to certification and compare to Quebec;
- Document implementation of KI curriculums in various communities and compare to Quebec.

This evaluation provided KI with a detailed overview of the current situation:

- KI French and English program expectations are below those for the L2 basic program in the rest of the province.
- French and English L2 programs (not only at KI) don't properly prepare students for postsecondary.
- The transition between lower and upper grades is abrupt, especially in terms of language of instruction.
- There is no real consistency between programs, no clear unified pedagogical approach, no logic between one progression of learning and the other, and there is no fostering of skills transfer from one subject to another, or from one language to another.
- Teacher training is limited and needed.
- KI's "real" curriculum is under a lot of pressure



CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION



RESEARCH ON PLURILINGUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

Still with a view to better setting its objectives and action plan, in response to the 2018 Education Council's request, KI launched an internal discussion and compiled a literature review of research on the topic of plurilingual teaching and learning.

THE TRANSFER OF SKILLS FROM ONE LANGUAGE TO ANOTHER

Seminal work on this topic in Nunavik is the research by Don Taylor and Stephen Wright. These two researchers have made an immense contribution to the region. They assessed children in Nunavik: some who were taught only in English, and some who were taught in Inuktitut first and then in English (switching in Grade 3). In an interview (October 2022), Stephen Wright summarized the achievements of their research, accomplished with the support of Nunavimmiut and collaborators:

1. Set aside the (now totally outdated and outrageous) deficit assumption, by using culturally and linguistically relevant IQ assessments.
2. Clearly demonstrated the impact of first-language teaching at school on students' self-esteem and motivation.

3. Demonstrated that two languages can be learned at the same time, as long as both are taught long enough (at least 6 to 7 years). Indeed, the students from both groups were up to par in English when they reached grade 9.
4. Demonstrated that a strong academic base in the first language predicts success in the second. In the Inuktitut-English group, students who succeeded in Inuktitut in the first years succeeded in English better than those with poor results in Inuktitut in the first years.
5. Denounced the abrupt transition at KI between teaching in Inuktitut and teaching in a second language

As we saw earlier, the fourth point has been included in many reports and discussions. Even in the ITK 2008 Initiative on Inuit Education report we read that, "Bilingual education research has demonstrated that those who are educated in their first language, and then add a second one will come out bilingual in both languages."

HOWEVER, THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT LEARNING BOTH LANGUAGES AT ONCE WOULD LEAD TO THE OPPOSITE.

In fact, in a 2006 article, Taylor and Qumaaluk reaffirmed the Taylor and Wright's results: "Using a longitudinal analysis, we found that the transfer of language skills is

not bidirectional. That is, transfer appears to proceed from the first language to the second language, but not the reverse. Skill in a second language in Grade 3 was not predictive of Inuktitut skills in later years.” They also add that, “This may be because students were not instructed in a second language in the early grades, meaning that they had not reached the higher level of academic proficiency in this language that is necessary for transfer to occur.” Taylor and Qumaaluk also point out that if language skills don’t appear to transfer from the second language to the first, it might also be because, from Grades 4 to 9, Inuktitut was only taught as a subject, not used as a means of teaching. Thus, students were solely able to maintain their skills without progressing further.

It is important to note that the question of how the introduction of the second language could negatively impact the first language has NOT been studied by Taylor.

Nevertheless, other studies involving the transition from the first language to a second one at school have observed some impacts on the first language that

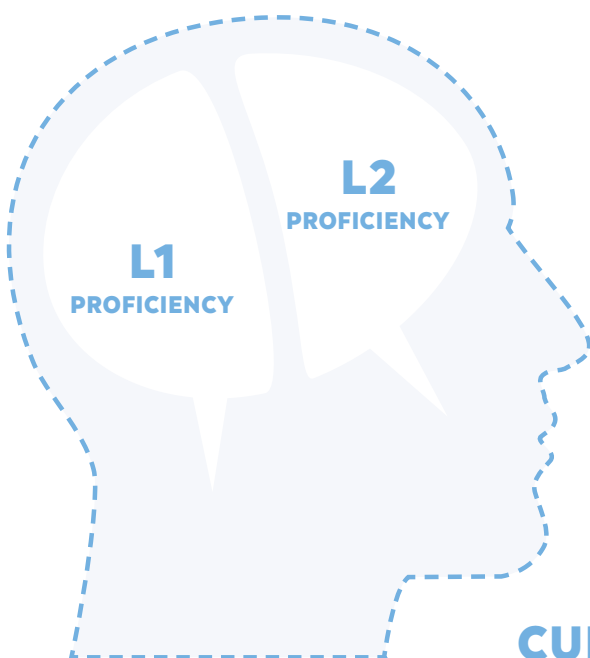
may appear negative: change in pronunciation, word permutation, etc. Indeed, children learning many languages at once often seem to have a language pathology related to their pronunciation, vocabulary or sentence creation not being up to par, compared to monolingual students.

For a long time, these results led bilingual education experts to conclude that the teaching of multiple languages should be done in a compartmentalized manner. Until the early 2000s, most educators thought that teaching a second language was detrimental to the first language. That is to say that a bilingual person was perceived as being two monolingual persons.

The research conducted since the early 2000s has totally changed this perception and our understanding of bilingualism.

LANGUAGE INTERCONNECTION & INTERDEPENDENCE

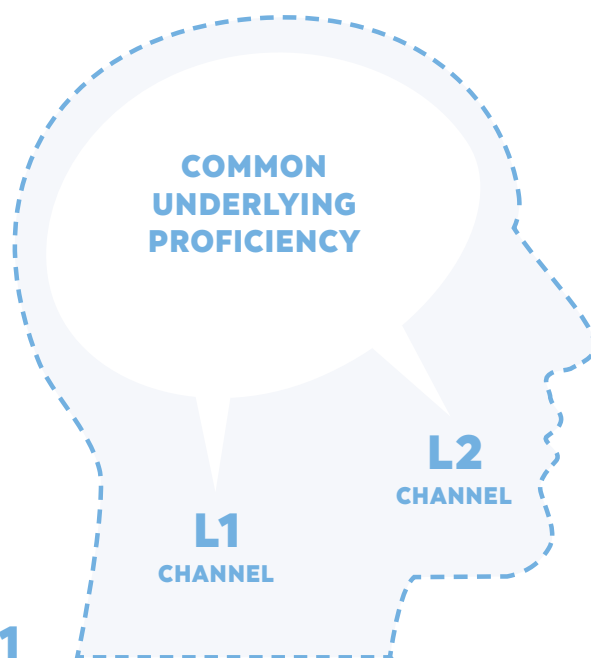
THE SEPARATE UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY (SUP) MODEL OF BILINGUAL PROFICIENCY



CUMMINS 2001

Grosjean (2008) challenges the traditional notion of bilingualism as "two monolinguals in one person"

THE COMMON UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY (CUP) MODEL OF BILINGUAL PROFICIENCY



Multicompetence — An eco-system of mutual interdependence (Cook, 2008)

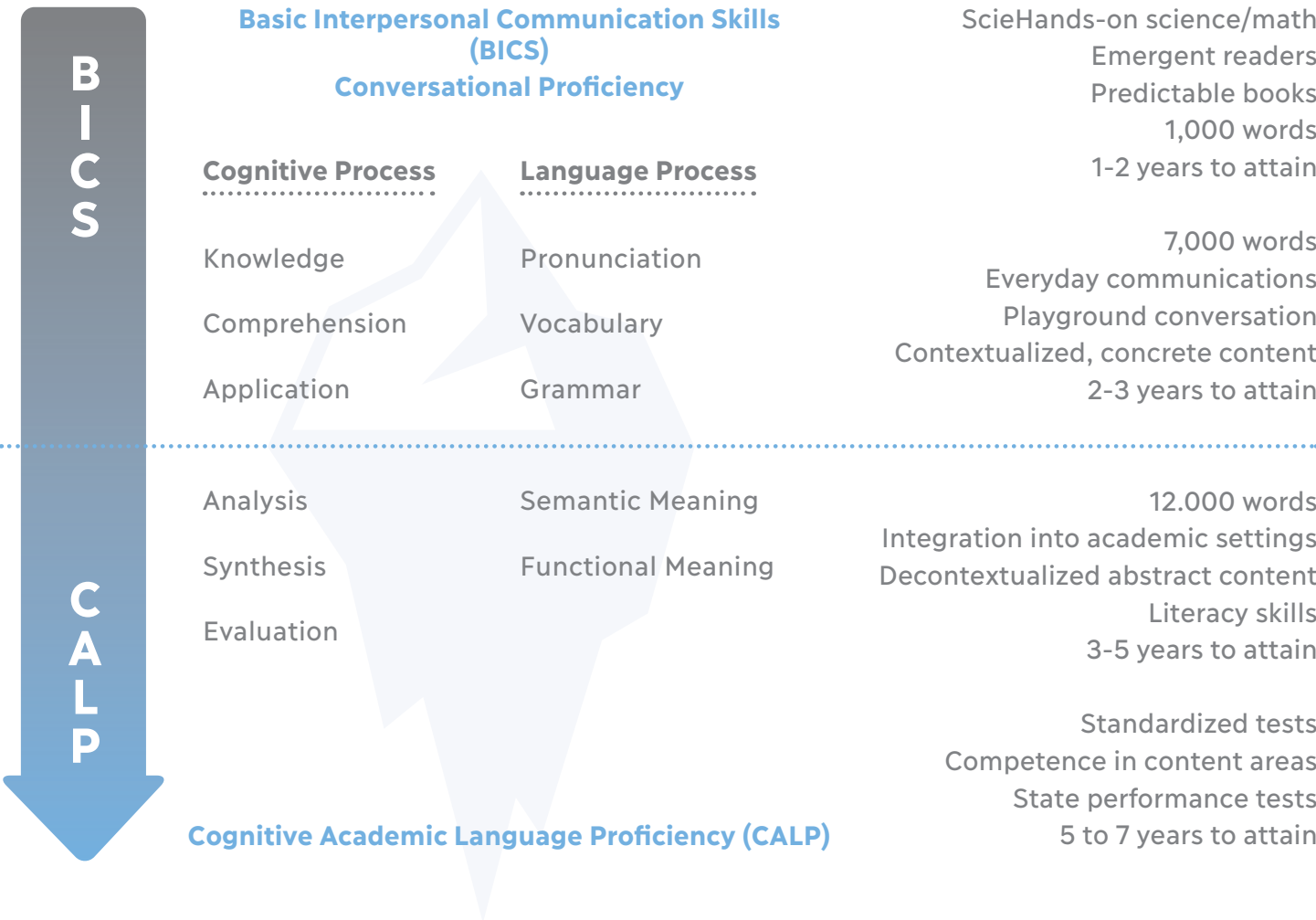
Firstly, it is interesting to note that brain research clearly shows that it is not different parts of our brain that are activated when we speak either one language or another. Rather, it is the entire language section of the brain that is activated.

Secondly, Cummins (the same researcher who was with us at the Nunavik Education Symposium in 1985) played a major role in revolutionizing key bilingual education concepts. Concerned about the impacts of the introduction of a second language on the child’s first language, he conducted a renowned longitudinal research project in the field. And he discovered, a bit like Taylor did while observing Grade 9 students’ results, that the so-called negative impacts on the first language (weak pronunciation, limited vocabulary, etc.) are not permanent. Furthermore, Cummins was able to clarify what happens during that time.

What appears to be a loss in the first language when a second language is introduced is not actually lost. In fact, the child is busy building other skills, and these skills can transfer from one language to another. To illustrate his findings, he used the iceberg metaphor. The brain of a multilanguage learner can be seen as an iceberg with as many tips as the number of languages being learned. What you see at the surface are Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS): pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Those under the surface are the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) skills, which include analysis, synthesis and others, which are transferable from one language to another.

For example, we don’t debate the same way in Inuktitut as in English or French, but our debating skills in one language nourish those in the others. By providing comparison standpoints, the other language can support us to better understand the particularity of our language, that is, it fosters metacognitive skills, which are the most important skills that schools are trying to develop.

SURFACE AND DEEPER LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY – AN ICEBERG MODEL



CONFUSION IN THE EARLY STAGES OF SKILLS TRANSFER THEORY

What led Cummins to his actual theory was that, like Taylor, he saw the influence and transfer of language and literacy skills from the first language to the second. Having a strong CALP capacity in the first language was predictive of second-language learning success.

This underscores a one-way transfer of skills. It also led to many misinterpretations by other researchers following his work. At the time, Cummins formulated what he called the threshold hypothesis, which was for instance used by Taylor and Wright in their 2000 article, "Subtractive Bilingualism and the Survival of the Inuit Language: Heritage Versus Second-Language Education." They wrote:

"In response to the risks associated with the subtraction of heritage language [(first language)], Cummins and Swain (1986) proposed a "threshold hypothesis" and a related principle of "first things first." The threshold hypothesis proposes that to avoid the subtractive effects of second-language instruction, the child must acquire and maintain a threshold level of proficiency in the heritage language [(first language)]. Following from this argument, the principle of "first things first" proposes that effort must be made to ensure that the heritage language [(first language)] is adequately developed before second-language acquisition becomes the focus."

One word in this statement seems to testify to an inaccurate interpretation of Cummins's theory: "before." Indeed, at that time, Cummins' work had been limited to the influence of the first language on the second, not the other way around. This has led to misinterpretations, something Cummins himself has acknowledged and sought to clarify in publications since (one of the latest being the book, *Rethinking the Education of Multilingual Learners*, 2021).

Today, the threshold hypothesis is still accurate, as is the "first things first" principle. However, it must be interpreted from a priority standpoint, not from a chronological one. The first language does need to come first in our objectives when programming language teaching and learning. Cummins argues it is important for teachers and parents to build children's first-language literacy skills and continue to do so as they move up the levels, rather than transitioning them out into a second-language-only program.

In other words, what Cummins wanted to highlight was the importance for the child to continue learning the first language while they are learning the second. First-language literacy skills provide great cognitive support for second-language learning, mainly because they lead to the child's affirmative sense of self and pride. It is also true that skills associated to one language bring clarity in our learning of the other language and vice-versa.

Research has also demonstrated that bilingual students have a more complete language repertoire and skill set than do non-bilingual students (Thomas & Collier, 2019).

So, students can and will probably benefit from learning two languages at the same time. However, Cummins' threshold hypothesis and the "first things first" principle remind us that the first language and first identity are essential. They are the foundation that a child will build on. The first language foundation on which we build second-language acquisition needs to be taken care of, but not only in the early stage of schooling. As the foundation for a strong sense of identity and pride, the first language needs to be fostered at school throughout the entire educational experience, as well as at home and in the community, using the Inuit language and more.

COMMUNITY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND AUTHENTIC INUIT SETTINGS

The direct relation between language, culture and pride has been well documented in research from all over the world (Picardo and al., 2021; Cummins, 2005; Man Chu Lau, 2005; Taylor and Wright, 1995), as well as the work done by Taylor and Wright in Nunavik. Community and parent involvement, as well as authentic settings for teaching, are essential to quality teaching and learning. Don Taylor insisted on this topic in a discussion paper he prepared in 2007 for the National Inuit Education Summit and that formulated some concrete recommendations:

1. The use of Inuktitut in all schools must be promoted as a subject (language arts), as a medium for teaching other subjects and throughout the overall school experience (e.g. visual arts, literacy promotion, extracurricular activities in Inuktitut).
2. Inuktitut must be promoted and used at home and in the community.
3. An Inuit teaching (pedagogical) approach needs to structure teachers' work.
4. Formal education must be made concretely relevant to students; it must refer to the local and global work markets and give students opportunities to move forward (paid internships).
5. A formal survey of parental experiences of and attitudes to school should be undertaken to inform a real partnership between parents and school

STATUS OF LANGUAGES

Research has also taught us to observe power structures in language learning. Inuktitut is fragile. English is not. French in Nunavik also has a specific status. Critical literacy is a learning approach in which students are expected to examine various texts to understand the relationship between language and the power it can

¹ To know more about Cummins' works, you can visit:

1. BICS and CALP: <http://bit.ly/3Udb4ui>

2. Identity and language: <https://bit.ly/3Ke5rro>

3. Transfer of skills: <https://bit.ly/3MkCgW0>

4. Parents and teachers strategies: <https://bit.ly/3nRkXlz>

5. School principals: <https://bit.ly/3Kg96om>

hold. *Taylor and Wright (1989) and Dorais (2001) OR Taylor and Wright (Dorais, 1989)* looked at the status of languages in the eastern Arctic. They found a process of language loss and advancing diglossia (uneven status of languages) between English and Inuktitut. This finding prompted them to argue for decentralization, to bolster community input into education, language, media and culture, as a way to halt diglossia among younger Inuktitut speakers. This finding would probably also support the recommendation by the Inuktituurniup Saturtaugasuarvinga Project for the creation of an Inuktitut language authority.

This type of finding could be taken into consideration when making decisions about time allocation between languages in the KI language programs. English is powerful because it is learned in many settings, including school, home, TV, social media, and others. So, if we are aiming at success in all three languages, this needs to be rebalanced at school. For instance, extracurricular activities could be offered as much as possible in Inuktitut instead of English, Inuktitut would need to be seen on school walls along with French, while English might not need as much visibility.

We now know that a second language can support the learning of the first. We also know that “first things first” doesn’t mean compartmentalizing the teaching of languages, but rather fostering the first language throughout the child’s entire school experience. The ongoing power struggle between languages requires us to be particularly vigilant when considering the amount of teaching time allocated to the dominant language, as children could quickly perceive that learning Inuktitut is useless. It must be made clear to students that success can be achieved in Inuktitut.

One final note: all children need to be able to recognize themselves in the school project, which also means that they need to see their linguistic repertoire acknowledged and recognized. This may seem counterintuitive, but for students who speak mainly English or French to be willing to learn Inuktitut, they also need their culture (even if it seems a blurry one) to be respected and welcomed.

OTHER INFORMATION COMING FROM RESEARCH

- A child who learns a second language early enough won’t have a foreign accent.
- Two languages can be used in one sentence. This is not indicative of “laziness,” but rather is evidence of the person’s proficiency in both languages. It demonstrates their ability to find the right word for the right context, because words, with their cultural background, bring unique meanings.

BILINGUAL MODELS AND CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

By looking into bilingual models, we were hoping to find more straightforward answers to our main question: what model of bilingual education should KI put in place? As mentioned above, in 2018, the Education Council asked KI to look into a heritage model and/or an enrichment/dual/translinguistic one.

HERITAGE MODEL

One question arose about the Heritage program: could Kativik Ilisarniliriniq have a monolingual Inuktitut program? To answer this question, we looked at other regions’ experiences.

GREENLAND: KALLALLISUT

Education in Greenland is perhaps the closest example of what an Inuktitut-only education might look like in Nunavik. Prior to an educational reform in the 2000s, Greenland had a very strong model of Kallallisut-first K-12 education. Children were educated in separate streams based on their first language; with Danish first-language students in a Danish stream; and Kallaallisut first-language students in the Kallaallisut stream, with Danish introduced as a subject no earlier than Grade 2 (Møller, 1988).

An outcome of this model was the strong vitality of Kallallisut, but also increased monolingualism among young Greenlanders (Pedersen, 2009). The model limited opportunities for Kallallisut first-language Greenlanders, because the level of Danish obtained was insufficient for higher education, many jobs and social mobility. In 2009, Greenland implemented a flexible and dynamic trilingual education policy. Schools were mandated to use Kallaallisut, Danish and English as languages of instruction to support academic proficiency in all three languages (Pedersen, 2009).

NEW ZEALAND: MAORI

Two other close examples would be the Maori and Hawaiian total immersion programs, which primarily serve English first-language students learning their Indigenous language as a second language. The Maori total immersion program prohibits the use of English in those educational settings. Maori-only immersion is an option offered alongside bilingual enrichment programs that use both Maori and English as languages of instruction.

Total immersion has been successful for language revitalization but the no-English policy in the Maori total immersion schools is controversial: “The prohibition is controversial in a nation where English is socially and educationally dominant and highly desirable for academic and social advancement; and all the more controversial

considering that the Maori children attending the school arrive as English speakers” (Hornberger, 2006, quoted by the Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010, p. 13). It is with this background that they will continue to build their language repertoire.

Hill (2011) reports that deliberate incorporation of English in Maori schools is important for achieving bilingualism: “Where an English program occupied a significant place in a school’s timetable and was staffed by teachers knowledgeable about the learning needs of bilingual students and how best to attend to these, the result was higher literacy scores and more satisfied students. Planning English language outcomes for Māori-medium students is essential if becoming biliterate is an important aim. This planning must also be long-term, across all 13 years of the students’ education” (p. 719).



UNITED STATES: HAWAIIAN

The Hawaiian total immersion program uses Hawaiian exclusively until Grade 5 or 6, and then English is introduced for an hour a day, with partial immersion continuing until Grade 12. This program has also had success, after addressing these initial struggles:

- 1. Hiring qualified personnel
- 2. Achieving quality curriculums
- 3. Providing appropriate facilities
- 4. Enabling local governance (Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010, p. 13)

Both Maori and Hawaiian immersion graduates have options to continue their postsecondary education in the Indigenous language, including teacher training for the immersion programs specifically.

Those experiences remind us of the importance of having postsecondary options in the language we are aiming to develop.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION MODELS

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>HERITAGE</p> <p>Aim is expanding L1. All or most instruction done in L1. L2 mainly taught as a subject.</p> <p>Limit: Need postsecondary options in L1.</p> | <p>MAINTENANCE</p> <p>Goal is maintaining L1 while adding L2, but not expanding L1 into new functions. Education in L1 and L2 (both as subjects and means of teaching). L2 is dominant.</p> <p>Limit: Does not develop academic proficiency of L1.</p> |
| <p>TRANSITIONAL</p> <p>L1 is used mainly as a bridge to learning L2. L2 is dominant by the end of primary.</p> <p>Limit: It leads to subtractive bilingualism (losing of the first language) and school disengagement.</p> | <p>DUAL/ TRANSLINGUISTIC</p> <p>Goal is to succeed in all languages taught. Education in L1 and L2. Model goes from 10:90 to 50:50 (% of time dedicated to L1 or L2) with different progressions depending on the context and clientele.</p> |

(Tulloch, 2018)

It is also important to recognize each student’s linguistic background, so they feel competent and motivated to take part in school projects.

DUAL/TRANSLINGUISTIC MODEL

To foster Inuktitut, but also English and French, which are essential languages for KI students' success (compulsory courses for certification in Quebec), a dual/translinguistic model seems an interesting option.

So, what should it look like First, note that a dual/translinguistic model is not an enrichment model. An enrichment model would refer to one of the many programs developed for majority-language-speaking students wanting to learn a second language. However, a dual/translinguistic model includes initiatives aimed at teaching several languages, mainly to minority-language-speaking students.

Dual programs usually emerge as programs offering language arts courses for two or more languages, and offering other subject-matter courses in two or more languages. Research suggests that, for such programs in the United States, students' results tend to be higher when more time is devoted to the minoritized language (here, Spanish) in the early years (Lindholm-Leary, 2001). However, research on Yup'ik dual language programs has found that teacher training, experience and efficacy were more important to students' achieved proficiency than was the time allocated to one language versus the other (Henke, 2017).

Different time divisions have been documented (by half-day, day or week)². In addition to language arts courses, some programs were divided so that all core subjects were taught in both languages (except the usual specialist courses: physical education, art, etc.), some specific subjects were taught in one language and others in another language. Particularly where bilingual teachers are available and curriculum and resource materials are available in both languages, strong bilingual and academic outcomes have been recorded.

Program evaluators caution that when dividing time between the two languages, it is important to take into account all of the potential language exposure and learning time in the day, including assemblies, gym, etc. Students should have extracurricular opportunities in both languages. It is also important to make sure the division of time or subjects allows students to develop CALP in both languages.

A benefit of the dual language model is that it works regardless of whether all students come in with one language (e.g. all Inuktitut or all English), with two different languages (e.g. some speak Inuktitut, some speak English) or with a range of proficiencies in both languages (some speak mainly English with some Inuktitut, others mainly Inuktitut with some English).

According to Thomas and Collier (2019), the most important benefits observed across all learners in dual

language programs is increased cognitive development and increased school engagement. English language learners (for example, Spanish first-language students) in dual language programs take until Grade 5 or 6 to close the gap between their English academic language proficiency and that of English first-language learners.³ English first-language students (for example, those learning Spanish as a second language) gain high levels of proficiency in the second language. When a dual language approach is continued through to Grade 12, students of both backgrounds end up surpassing the baseline achievement of English first-language speakers in English-only programs.



² No examples of programs alternating in chunks of time longer than a week were found.

³ Transitional models never close the gap. Because students leave after two to four years, and it takes the full five to six to close the gap, bilingual education that only lasts from kindergarten to Grade 3 does not lead to these same benefits.

UNITED STATES: SPANISH AND ENGLISH (DUAL PROGRAM)

The most clearly documented examples of dual language programs are the Gómez-Gómez model schools teaching Spanish and English in Texas. In this model, math is taught in English, science and social studies are taught in Spanish, and language arts are taught in both languages (after initially separated first-language literacy in kindergarten and Grade 1). Everything else alternates by day (school announcements, assemblies, gym, music, specialist subjects).

Dual programs can also include translanguaging (also called dynamic bilingualism) teaching. Translanguaging refers to a teaching and learning approach in which two (or more) languages are deliberately integrated into a particular learning activity. Teachers observe and tap into the flow of students', families' and communities' bilingual practices, acknowledging and leveraging these to improve students' educational success and bilingual proficiencies (García, Ibarra Johnson & Seltzer 2016). While some bilingual teachers (and effective monolingual teachers of bilingual students) have intuitively made space for multiple languages in their classrooms throughout the history of educating diverse students, translanguaging as a teaching method has increasingly been described, documented and intentionally practised over the past twenty years. It is part of a broader movement toward culturally sustaining pedagogies for diverse learners.

Translanguaging classrooms push back against the common practice of insisting on the strict separation of languages in bilingual learning (whether by time, subject, teacher or otherwise). Leading educational psychologists specializing in bilingual acquisition, such as Jim Cummins, argue that using all of a student's language abilities in all languages during learning is consistent with well-established theories of bilingual language acquisition.

Cummins (2017) refers back to the linguistic interdependence hypothesis and to common underlying proficiency theories, as presented above, which say that anything a child acquires in terms of academic language proficiency in one language will transfer to the other languages, as long as the sociolinguistic and educational context is conducive to this transfer taking place (p. 108). This transfer of language skills can go from first language to second, and from second language to first. The cognitive mapping of languages in a bilingual person's brain is not two separate and distinct systems, but rather a unified system that includes both languages, which the speaker draws on in ways that best meet their communication needs (Cummins, 2017). Therefore, Cummins argues that children learn best when schools teach in ways that draw on this unified system, and teach in support of the transfer between languages. This makes it easier for the learnings acquired in one language to support what is being learned in another, and it facilitates students drawing on everything they know, in all their languages, to acquire academic concepts more effectively. Translanguaging also builds on established theories of effective schools, including building on

students' prior knowledge, welcoming students' and families' cultural knowledge in schools (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022) etc.

Translanguaging was first documented as an educational approach in Wales, where high school teachers were supporting students' learning and use of Welsh and English (Williams, 2000). It has been adopted in other European contexts, including trilingual schools revitalizing Basque alongside teaching students the national language (Spanish) and English (Cenoz & Santos, 2020). It has also been widely documented in classrooms serving ethnic minorities in the United States.

In a translanguaging classroom, one would see and hear evidence of multiple languages throughout the class. Word walls would include words from both languages. Resource areas would include texts in both languages. Specific teaching activities—including assigned texts, the teacher's verbal or visual presentation of material, student discussions and student-submitted assignments—might involve both languages

Translanguaging involves three interrelated processes: stance, design, and shifts (García, Ibarra Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016). Stance refers to teachers positioning themselves as open to working with students anywhere on the continuum of bilingualism and biliteracy, considering bilingualism a resource and not a deficit, and being committed to working together with students, their peers, families and communities to ensure demonstrated learning engagement and success. Design refers to purposefully working with state (provincial/territorial) mandated learning outcomes, identifying texts and activities in both languages that will support the achievement of those outcomes, and creating assessments through which students can perform the outcomes, differentiating between assessment of content, of general language performance and of language-specific performance. Shifts refers to maintaining flexibility in the classroom to seize moments of learning opportunity, or spontaneously adjust design, following the students' lead. Translanguaging classrooms help all students remain in the "zone of proximal development" by increasing scaffolding and support, rather than diminishing expectations and cognitive demand on students.

Translanguaging classrooms contribute to greater content learning. Students are better able to access difficult texts, meet challenging tasks and effectively demonstrate their content learning when they are able to draw on their full language capabilities (as opposed to being told not to use, think in or speak specific languages in specific classrooms) (Cenoz and Gorter, 2022). Students also achieve greater language success. A caveat in translanguaging is that it must emphasize space for minoritized languages. While cognitive processes support bilingual learning, social and economic factors can push students toward the majority language.

DUAL/TRANSLANGUAGING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION PILLARS

State-of-art research on plurilingual teaching and learning is clear: there is no single model. KI needs to carefully build its own in response to its specific sociopolitical, cultural and linguistic context. However, based on the above, some guidelines have arisen. This section presents them, first for curriculum and program development (what we call pedagogical keys), followed by implementation guidelines.

PEDAGOGICAL KEYS

1. Each language needs to be taught for a minimum of 6 to 7 years if not more.
2. A language arts course must be provided for each language.
3. Each language must serve as the means for teaching other subjects, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL) must be considered.
4. Curriculum, programs and school organization must support meaningful learning situations for every student, with special attention for minoritized students (Inuit). This can be done by building on Inuit ways of teaching and learning, authentic settings, community and parent participation, professional orientation activities, etc. Curriculum programs should foster self-identity and a sense of pride, as well as a sense of belonging to school projects. (Learners need to feel proud of who they are, and free of any sense of shame in learning and/or using any language).
5. Students have ample opportunities for authentic language exposure and use (i.e., they have an environment where models of the language are provided and used in real contexts, for meaning-making to achieve real, purposeful communicative purposes).
6. The program must be developed with consistency between the three language programs to foster skill and knowledge transfer.
7. Language and culture awareness activities/games are to be integrated into the programming, to develop students' interest in different languages and their reflex to question the texts and to refer to their complete linguistic repertoire, as well as to demonstrate the school's interest in all languages and to foster children's engagement with print (at home is the key) as soon as possible to build emotional bonds between children and books.

PILLARS FOR CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

1. Commitment to establishing an **effective bilingual school** overall. This would encompass elements such as: proper authorities, policies, linguistic practices in partner organizations, community participation

in the general education project—making it ours (e.g. a community member can teach the class about a specific practice or join outings; community organizations and businesses can welcome students for visits or internships; develop presentations with students about their day-to-day work, celebrate student successes, etc.), and Positive attitude toward the bilingual project.

In contrast, when the community and administrative attitudes toward bilingualism and language minority students are negative, then it is unlikely that language education programs will be implemented unless there are laws requiring their implementation. If language education programs are developed only because they are required, they may receive fewer resources, untrained and inexperienced teachers, and the expectation for success may be minimal. This configuration of factors will tend to result in lower levels of academic achievement and language proficiency on the part of program participants (*Willig, 1985, quoted in Lindholm-Leary, YYYY, p. 47*).

It is essential to affirm and nourish multiple identities and cultures through a climate of plurilingualism and through language and culture awareness activities.

2. **Instructional leadership.** School boards and schools need to create policies, budgets and facilities that allow for and encourage bilingual and translingual practices. Principals and other school leaders can create school-wide awareness of such practices, and school-wide environments in which all languages are used and valued (e.g. announcements, assemblies, school drama productions, displays of student work on walls). Each school needs a person to speak for and about the program, oversee its implementation and ensure professional learning opportunities for the teachers.
3. **Trained personnel** (teachers, leadership in the school board and schools, other school staff, etc.). These individuals need to understand the model, receive pre-service and in-service training in bilingual teaching and, ideally, be proficient in both languages. Teachers do not need to be bilingual to work in a bilingual or translanguaging environment, but they need to be open to and trained in translanguaging. A bilingual teacher has many benefits: they can go with the language shifts in the classroom more naturally, understand the students speaking in either language, speak to them in whichever language is appropriate at the time, explicitly teach both languages and their structures and do firsthand evaluations of language-specific performances/tasks in both languages. Teachers who do not speak both languages can rely on other types of scaffolding and ways of making sense of both languages being spoken in the classroom, e.g. asking students to summarize, in the main language of instruction, a discussion that the group had in another language; using print and online bilingual dictionaries; using translation apps, etc.
4. **Collaboration between staff.** Teachers need to coordinate and have targets at each grade level to ensure that they are developing the cognitive academic language proficiencies and literacy skills

that the students need to go onto the next grade level, in both languages, and in order to foster skill transfer from one language to the other. Collaboration is even more important when teachers are not bilingual.

5. **Expectations for language proficiency** from the community, but also within the school. Teachers and schools need an overarching, across-the-grades linguistic syllabus that guides how they're teaching language and what they're teaching with regard to language throughout the grades.
6. **Curriculum material and supporting resource material** (texts) in different languages, which are appropriately used. Texts are broadly defined and include multimodalities, such as songs, stories, scripts, oral history, speeches, etc. Having texts in both languages may mean different texts on the same subject in different languages, or separate versions of the same text in two different languages (e.g. an Inuktitut version and an English version of a textbook), or both languages incorporated into the same text. In this last case, texts may be side-by-side bilingual, as in versions of some Inuktitut storybooks (e.g. Inhabit Media bilingual editions) or videos where a person gives the same message in one language and then the other; texts may integrate both languages (such as *Una Huna, What is this?* by Susan Aglukark, in which the English version integrates Inuktitut dialogue and terminology for authentic texts; or may be scaffolded texts, primarily in one language, but with subtitles, glossaries or summaries in the other language (for example Inuit documentaries where individuals speak in Inuktitut, English or French, and subtitles are provided in another language).
7. **Proper curriculum and program development and implementation plans, with regular assessments** that appropriately show student progress.

NEXT STEPS

Here are the steps to be taken before curriculum revision occurs.

1. Clarify KI's pathways to success in order to set appropriate language expectations, in line with specific Quebec pathway expectations (regular pathways for a SSD, enriched pathways, work-oriented pathways, etc.).
2. Clarify KI's contextual pedagogical approach to language teaching (Inuit pedagogy, authentic situations, community and parental participation, sense of pride and belonging, translingual and critical literacy principles).
3. Suggest a first, ideal, version of a time allocation guideline (hours, per subject, per year, per language) based on plurilingual teaching and learning, state-of-the-art (research). It would be validated against our human and material resources, and adjusted based on school organization opportunities.
4. Submit the results of the first three steps to the Education Council (February 2023) and to the Council of Commissioners (June 2023) in the form of a revised KI Language of Instruction Policy, for discussion and approval.
5. Once approved, set a curriculum and program development and implementation plan.









THANK YOU