



UiO : **Center for Multilingualism in Society across the Lifespan**
University of Oslo

Effective practices in teaching of and education in minority languages

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Established by
the Research Council
of Norway

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National language only – what happened?



National language only – what happened?

- Language shift
- Unemployment
- Higher incident of violence
- Shorter life expectancy
- School results – lower range
 - Exception: schools with education in Sámi
- ‘National language only’ – always about other things than language



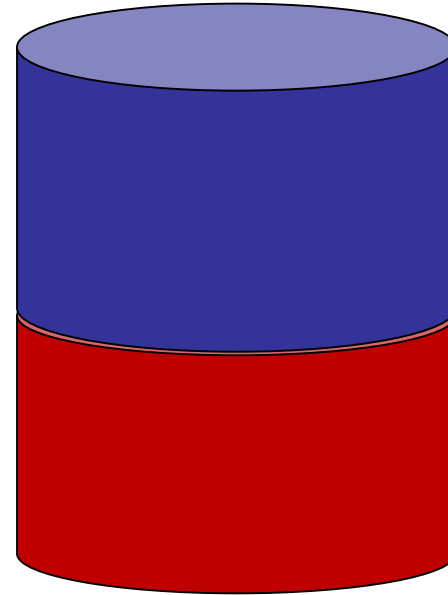
Multilingualism - misconceptions



- Monolingualism – most common
- Bilinguals – seen as the sum of two monolinguals
- Container metaphor
- Not enough 'room' for the second language

→ Holistic view of multilingualism

- We use our languages for different purposes



Languages support each other

- Our languages are interdependent
- Concepts and literacy skills in home language - transferred to school language and vice-versa
- We learn concepts and acquire knowledge through all our languages
- BUT – best through languages we know well



Myth: Minority languages slow learning of other languages

- Does not delay language acquisition in young children
- Does not slow cognitive development
- Bilingual children follow similar acquisition patterns as monolingual children



Myth: Minority languages slow progress in school

- Speaking a minority language does not slow learning
- Not mastering language of instruction can slow learning
- BUT: speaking a minority language does not impede acquisition of language of instruction



- Don't 'water down' instruction for language learners
- Don't completely separate them from the instructional mainstream for many years
- Don't dump them into the mainstream unassisted until they are ready to successfully compete with native speakers
- Provide opportunities for parents to assist their children using the parents' first language

Thomas and Collier 1997: School Effectiveness for Language Minority Students. 700 000 US student records

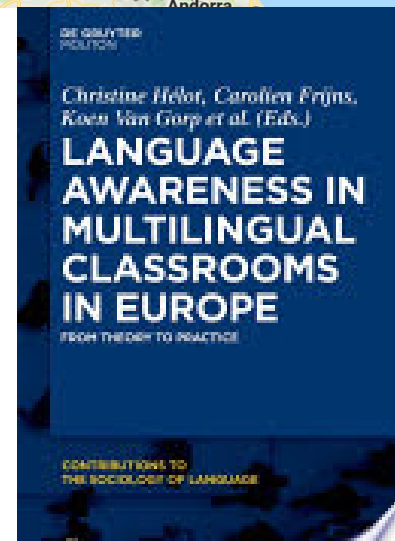


- Improve the sociocultural context of schooling for all of your students → additive bilingual environment
- Transitional bilingual education → more long-term programmes (enhances concept learning)
- Strengthen links between school and family



The Didenheim Language Awareness Project

- School project: languages and cultures present in the local area
- Parents invited to lead class activities
- Wide range of activities: geography, life histories, bilingual story books etc.
- Different sound systems, alphabets and words
- Meta-linguistic awareness
- Teachers – more supportive of language learners
- More parent involvement



Multilingual education

- Multilingual education is, at its best:
 1. multilingual - uses and values more than one language in teaching and learning
 2. intercultural - recognizes and values understanding and dialogue across different lived experiences and cultural worldviews
 3. starting point: the knowledge students bring to the classroom and moving toward their participation as full and indispensable actors in society – locally, nationally, and globally. (Hornberger 2009)