

2012 Dual Language and Immersion Education Researcher Convocation

PANEL: IMMERSION PEDAGOGY AND CLASSROOM INTERACTION

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Immersion pedagogy #1-2

- Exposure to a target language through subject-matter instruction enables students to develop comprehension skills and communicative abilities that far exceed those attained by students studying the target language as a subject.
- It remains unclear whether the advantage derives simply from a greater amount of exposure to the target language or from the cognitive benefits of target language exposure specifically through subject-matter instruction.

Immersion pedagogy #3

- ◉ Use of the target language to deliver subject-matter instruction is limited in the range of language forms and functions to which it exposes students:
 - this is one of the reasons that immersion students do not attain higher levels of proficiency, especially in terms of grammatical accuracy, lexical variety, and sociolinguistic competence

Immersion pedagogy #4-5

- Immersion pedagogy needs to integrate a greater focus on language:
 - the high levels of oral and written proficiency underlying the academic literacy required for school success are not attainable through only incidental references to language
- The integration of language and content is challenging for teachers:
 - needs to be systematically addressed through pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development

Immersion pedagogy #6

- Proposals for integrating language and content:
 - encourage meta-talk and languaging during content-based collaborative tasks
 - counterbalance form-focused and content-based instruction in ways that shift attention between form and meaning
 - convey subject matter through knowledge relationships actualized in language forms made explicit by teachers
 - emphasize how linguistic features construe particular kinds of meanings in discipline-specific ways

Immersion pedagogy #7

- Students make linguistic gains when engaged in form-focused instruction that includes:
 - noticing activities
 - awareness activities
 - practice with feedback
- Meta-talk tasks provide opportunities for language learning to take place.

Classroom interaction #8-9

- Teacher-student interaction promotes language development through questions and feedback that teachers use to provide scaffolding they need in order to understand, participate, and learn language and content
- Display questions check comprehension and verify content mastery, but students benefit from more from questions requesting elaboration, justification, explanation, or exemplification.

Classroom interaction #10

○ Corrective feedback:

- Recasts facilitate the delivery of subject matter and provide helpful scaffolding to learners when target forms are beyond their abilities
- Prompts are effective for targeting specific language features such as grammatical gender

○ Students benefit from a range of feedback.

○ Immersion classroom discourse patterns vary according to specific instructional settings:

- most learner repair followed recasts in Japanese immersion classrooms and prompts in French immersion classrooms

Classroom interaction #11-12

- Use of the L2 among peers in 1-way immersion seems to peak around grades 4-5.
- Students in 2-way immersion, regardless of language background, show an overall preference for English with peers.
- Native speakers of the higher-status language in 2-way classrooms may dominate classroom discourse and negatively impact classroom conversational dynamics.

Classroom interaction #12-13

- In 2-way immersion, teachers' expectations can play a role in determining their students' language choices.
- Teachers can create opportunities for more equitable talk patterns among minority language and majority language students.
- Teachers can explicitly teach students the strategies they will need for collaborating and learning language from one another.

Research questions #1-5

- How feasible and effective is focusing on language during subject-matter instruction?
- What skills do teachers need to integrate language and content instruction?
- Can discipline-specific language be identified in ways to help teachers integrate language and content?
- How can form-focused instruction be adapted to accommodate learner needs in 2-way contexts?
- Do observed differences in corrective feedback patterns across immersion contexts differentially affect target language development?

Questions #6-8

- How can L1 be used effectively to benefit L2 learning and what role does student L2 proficiency play in this?
- What is the role of languaging (e.g., collaborative dialogue, private speech) in developing content knowledge and awareness of its links with language?
- What are the most effective types of:
 - collaborative tasks that create optimal conditions for using the non-dominant language in peer interaction?
 - instructional practices that integrate two languages in ways that enhance biliteracy development?

Questions #9-11

- Have curricula been developed to teach culture? If so, what are the effects and, if not, what can be done to remedy the situation?
- To what extent and in what ways is immersion pedagogy driven by culture? What is the effect of culture-based pedagogy on students' identity development, language development, and academic achievement?
- What assessment tools can we use in immersion that will move students' language and content learning forward while at the same time satisfying external evaluation requirements?