

Pacific Update
5-6 July 2018, Suva

Please can we talk about language and literacy?

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Celebrating the Pacific, Shaping its Future

Children learn best when they understand

Aged 5, we have mastered L1 fluently

We know roughly 2,000-3,000 words in L1

Basic conversational fluency in L2 takes 2 years

Cognitive academic language proficiency takes 5-7 years

School 'English-only' rules have no impact on achievement

(Alidou, 2009; Baker, 2011; Bamgbose, 2005; Biemiller, 2009; Collier, 1995; Cummins, 1979, 1981a, 1981b, 1984, 2000; Gibbons, 1993; Heugh, 2011; Lotherington, 1996; Ouane & Glanz, 2011; Thomas & Collier, 2002; UNESCO, 2016)



Multilingual education research

Quantitative studies

- 6-8 years in L1 gives good results
- Leads to better learning
- Leads to better L2 proficiency

(Alidou, 2009; Baker, 2011; Bamgbose, 2005; Ouane & Glanz, 2011; Thomas & Collier, 2002; UNESCO, 2011, 2016)

Qualitative studies

- Participation is better in L1
- More L1 usually means more L2
- The 'English' in English-only classrooms is limited

(Probyn, 2015; Tamtam, 2015; Willans, 2011, 2014; Willans et al. forthcoming)

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The teachers do the language work. The students do the content work.

Children who learn to read in L2 struggle

Begin to decode meaning accurately in Year 4

Start to become fluent readers in Year 5

Can understand 30-40% of material by Year 6

(Walter, 2007, 2013; Walter & Davis, 2005; Walter & Dekker, 2007; Walter & Trammell, 2010)

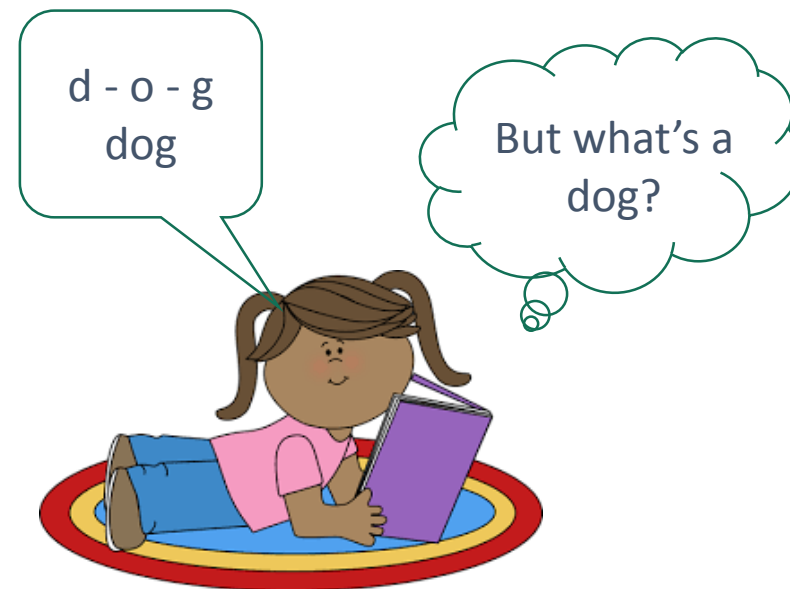
Aiming for:

Speed of 150 words/min (aloud) or 250 words/min (silent)

Ability to read 98% words in grade-level text

Ability to understand 90% words in grade-level text

(Barr et al., 2002; Collier, 1995; Hammer et al, 2014; Treptow et al, 2007)



L2 acquisition is slightly different from L1 acquisition

Required ingredients for L2 learning

- Fluent input
- Required output
- Authentic interaction
- Motivation
- Explicit language focus

(Krashen, 1985; Long, 1996; Ortega, 2009; Schmidt, 1995; Swain, 1985)

Immersion education (L2 only)

- High levels of fluency
- Low levels of accuracy
- Fossilised errors

(Deverell, 1989; Elley & Thompson, 1978; Long, 1996; Pica, 1983; Schmidt, 1995; Swain, 1985)

We know all this ... Time to rethink things

Five specific needs:

1. Incentivise fluent English speakers to enter the teaching profession
2. Overhaul teacher training programmes
3. Separate the literature and language components of school 'English'
4. Replace the syllabus, approaches and materials used for ESL
5. Support the use of multiple languages across the curriculum

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