### <u>Articles</u>

More than a second language: Leadership structure and pedagogic strategies in an Australian International Baccalaureate PYP additional language program.

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#### Abstract

Good second language classrooms in international schools are vehicles for fostering intercultural understandings as well as learning an additional language. This paper emanates from a study into the teaching of second languages undertaken across six countries in International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program schools. A range of languages, IB regions and language teaching approaches were investigated. This paper reports on the Australian case study. Three structural and pedagogic strategies that contribute to teaching a second language and fostering intercultural understandings are identified, including; school leadership, inquiry and concept based learning, and the inclusion of the school community. The findings highlight the compliance role of the IB Programme Standards and Practices for leadership, governance and management. It offers successful leadership and pedagogic strategies that may be useful for other schools engaged in teaching second languages as a means to nurturing intercultural understanding.

**Keywords**: School leadership; language teachers; intercultural understandings; International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program; second languages.

#### Introduction

The teaching and learning of second languages in schools has been the source of much debate and investigation (Coyle et al., 2010; Grimshaw, 2015; Pennycook, 1994a; Tokuhama & Espinosa, 2008). The contested nature of language acquisition and second language teaching/learning practices coupled with organisational structures in schools that isolate language teachers from their mainstream primary school colleagues (Van Vooren et al, 2013) are challenges facing many international schools. This paper highlights the role of leadership and pedagogic strategies to support the teaching of an additional (second) language and in so doing overcome possible isolation of second language teachers. It emanates from an





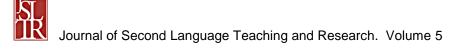
international study across six countries exploring the teaching of additional language in IB Primary Years Program (PYP) schools. The international study involved a team of researchers who conducted a case study of additional language teaching within their home countries. The schools were selected to include a range of languages and international regions spanning Australia, Asia, Europe and the Americas.

The Australian case study is representative of the study as a whole. Although relevant to international schools globally, the findings are timely for the Australian context as it embeds language within its new national curriculum and schools struggle with the notion of 'compulsory' additional language programs. The paper focuses on three structural and pedagogic strategies that contribute to the teaching of an additional language in a large independent metropolitan IBPYP school. The paper investigates: (1) School leadership to facilitate policy development and the teaching of an additional language; (2) Teaching an additional language through inquiry and concept based learning; and (3) Integrating additional language throughout the school's curriculum and community to foster intercultural understandings. The paper purports that good additional language classrooms teach more than language and that leadership is a key factor in fostering the success of language programs and intercultural understandings in IBPYP schools.

#### Overview

From the age of seven all students in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program have the opportunity to learn more than one language (ibo.org). The IB acknowledges mother-tongue language is crucial for both cognitive development and personal identity. The IB identifies language as an essential vehicle for inquiry and the construction of meaning. It also expects all PYP teachers to be *teachers of language*. These IB motherhood statements have implications for classroom practice, particularly the challenges that exist for teachers of second/additional languages. The IB has recently commissioned a range of reports and research initiatives to address these concerns (Caputo, 2014; IBO, 2008, 2009b; Van Vooren et al, 2013) including the international study from which this case study is drawn.

In response to the aforementioned international research, the International Baccalaureate has added two new workshops to their suite of professional learning offerings entitled 'Inquiry and the Additional Language Teacher' and 'Bilingual and Multilingual teaching and learning'. The development of these additional workshops reflects the organisations commitment to research and development in the area (IBO, 2015). The workshops were designed to inform and drive



future language teaching practices in international school settings.

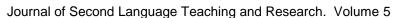
The main challenges facing second language teachers in IBPYP schools revealed in recent research (Caputo, 2014; IBO, 2009b; Van Vooren et al 2013) relate to ALTs inability to engage with inquiry based learning strategies found embedded in IBPYP programs. Caputo (2014) suggests that additional language teachers rely on: prescribed pre-planned approaches; traditional didactic methods; product-focused approaches. In addition, they are often hesitant with IB nomenclature; limited academic discussion in the field; and may not see the value of constructivist approach learning or inquiry based learning. Van Vooren et al (2013) highlight the importance of school leadership and organisational structures for second language teaching and intercultural understandings. It also highlights the effectiveness of mainstream teachers who become additional language teachers within a PYP context that is underpinned by the belief that 'all teachers are teachers of language'.

This paper will explore these challenges through a set of research questions targeting policy processes (Ball, 1994) involved in implementing additional language teaching in IBPYP schools. The structure of this paper is in six sections, it begins with a brief explanation of the IB philosophy and program followed by a brief rationale focussing on additional language teaching (ALT) in Australia. The research methodology, research questions and methods are introduced and the context of the Australian case study school is described. The findings are presented as a case sketch against the research questions highlighting additional language teaching scenario, school leadership and the development of intercultural understandings. Finally, the paper proffers the successful strategies and aspects of them that may be useful for other schools engaged in teaching additional language as a means of creating intercultural understanding.

# IB philosophy, program and research into teaching additional language.

The teaching of additional language as described in the IB program denotes 'languages undertaken by all students within a school with the purpose of creating intercultural understanding' (IB, 2015). In an IB setting, languages are referred to as either Language A: language of instruction or Language B: an additional language/s. This paper is focussed on Language B.

The IB organisation delivers an educational program that is transnational and follows a transdisciplinary structured inquiry curriculum.





The essence of the IBPYP is structured inquiry into big (central) ideas that transcend discipline boundaries and are essential to student life. Students are expected to acquire disciplinary knowledge and skills through inquiring into various authentic transdisciplinary issues and problems. (Van Vooren, Chun Lai, Ledger, Villaverde & Steffen, 2012, p.9)

Of particular relevance to this paper, is that within this transnational, transdisciplinary and structured inquiry and concept driven curriculum framework, the IB Standards and Practice (2011) offers language as a vehicle of instruction wherein all teachers are teachers of language. This, of course, has implications for teaching of additional language in IBPYP schools. It affects the role of the Additional Language Teachers (ALTs) as well as the role of teachers who have not previously taught additional language. A heightened awareness of knowing and understanding issues surrounding English as a second language is implied within an IB context.

Prior to the above-mentioned international study, the matter of additional language teaching across a diverse range of IBPYP settings and languages had received little research (Davis & Fisk, 2006; Huculak, 2011; Van Vooren et al, 2013). In scoping the research, the IB organisation and international research team focused on case studies to reveal the perceptions of the key policy makers and implementers of additional language programs. These included school Principals, PYP Coordinators, Additional Language Teachers (ALTs) and parents. The study will have further significance when the perceptions of regular (non ALT) teachers and student performance data are attained and considered.

#### Why additional language teaching is currently a matter of interest in Australia

The high emphasis that previous Australian governments' has placed on teaching additional language in schools (e.g. Whitlam in the 1970s, Hawke in the 1990s and Rudd in 2009) has recently been resurrected by the current Australian government's languages curricula (2014). Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) CEO, Rob Randall, said that 'the opportunity for Australian children to learn a language in addition to English from a young age will give them an edge in the future when they participate in our linguistically and culturally diverse world' (AFMTLA, 2014). The Australian Curriculum: Languages policy recognises that language learning is for all students in Australian schools, with individual students bringing their own linguistic and cultural background to their learning, whether this is English or the target language or various combinations of languages. However, the gap between policy and practice is of concern in Australia. In one



state 135 out of 516 primary schools have dropped language programs and less than 6% of students undertake a language at year 12 level (2014). Yet, the former Prime Minister Tony Abbot reputedly vowed to increase this number to 40% within a decade (WA News, 2014)

This current initiative reflects the fast changing demographics of the Australian community, particularly in relation to countries of origin. Although there are larger numbers of people born in the UK, New Zealand and China, persons born in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have had the highest rate of growth in Australia's population over the last 10 years. See Figure 1 below from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2013).

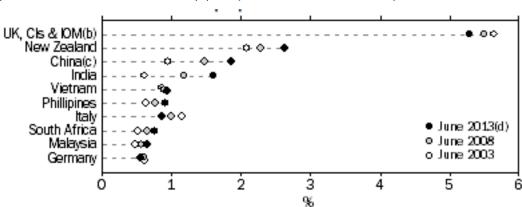


Figure 1 COUNTRY OF BIRTH (a) Proportion of Australia's Population

- a) Based on the top 10 countries of birth (excluding Australia) at 30 June 2013.
- b) United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man
- c) Excludes SARs and Taiwan
- d) Estimates for 1992-2011 are recasted and estimates from June quarter 2012 onwards are preliminary

Given this scenario and the strong likelihood of the need for increased Additional Language Teachers in Australia, it is timely to research and seek improvements in policy and practice being applied to the task. Particularly when 94% of the Australian teaching workforce is monolingual (Mayer et al, 2013).

## The Australian case study

The case study is reported in three parts: the case study school, the case study research methods and the additional language program in action.

#### The case study school

The Australian case study school was a private Anglican school with a staff population of 28 and student population of 1000 ranging from Kindergarten to Year 12 (K-12). The school was considered a low tier independent school primarily because it has a relatively low annual fee



of \$3,400 for K- 6 students. Established on the outskirts of a capital city in 1989, it was authorised to teach the IBPYP in 2012, and was among a small number of independent schools in the State that was IB authorised. Overall, the school enjoyed a relatively stable student and staff population with a student retention rate of 92% and a staff retention rate of 89%. However, it is interesting to note that the school demographics had changed since its inception, moving from a monolingual community to a more diverse multicultural community, drawing students from Sudan, Italy, South Africa and Germany.

The school prides itself on being a 'whole school' rather than a school with sub-schools. The whole school approach is driven by the Principal and the PYP coordinator and supported by a pedagogically strong ALT responsible for the Japanese program offered in K-6. The school has had a long commitment to teaching Japanese with a team of three Language B teachers across the whole school. The Principal described the language department as being, "very small with very experienced, high quality teachers". The school actively promotes an age-distributed workforce by employing graduate teachers as well as experienced teachers for vacancies. Staff attended IBPYP category one workshops as well as category two specialist workshops.

The school is founded upon a Christian philosophy and promotes itself as being a school with 'a heart and a soul' and a 'strong sense of community'. The home webpage states, 'A global education teaches our kids to dream big'. This is reflected in the school mission statement, 'We help our students discover their passion and direction in life and make a positive contribution to the world'.

## Research method for this case study

Current literature identifies a list of factors that could potentially affect schools and teachers' implementation of IBPYP structured inquiry in additional language teaching. The factors and issues outlined previously (Caputo, 2014; IBO, 2009b; and Van Vooren et al, 2013) inform our investigation into the sociocultural realities of teaching additional languages in different IBPYP schools around the world. In this instance the focus is on the school's policy development for Additional Language Teachers (ALTs) and the roles, philosophies and strategies of the leadership group charged with this responsibility.

This is a qualitative research study whose data were derived from a case study method (Yin, 2006). It examines a 'case' within its 'real life' context (p.111). The international study focused on the lived experiences of local level policy actors and how they made meaning of IBPYP



additional language. The Australian case study is one of multiple sites across six countries. The review of policies and practices related to additional languages is framed by a 'policy trajectory' approach to policy analysis. The 'policy trajectory' was originally conceived by Ball (1994), and further developed by Vidovich (2007; 2013); Ledger, Vidovich and O'Donoghue (2015); Rizvi and Lingard (2010), amongst others, for empirical research. Ball (1994) outlined five 'contexts' of the policy process: policy influences (where key factors triggering the new policy are identified); policy text production (the characteristics of texts and how they are produced); and practices/effects (policy enactment within institutions which may involve considerable transformation from the original policy intent); policy outcomes (longer term effects relating to equity and social justice); and political strategies (adopted to overcome inequalities). In the analysis of additional language teachers, the latter two 'contexts' have been conflated under the context of longer term outcomes as both are related to issues of social justice (see Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The conceptualisation of policy adopted here is one that rejects a linear process but rather highlights dynamic interrelationships and interconnectivity throughout the entire process of policy production and enactment of teaching additional languages in IBPYP schools. The following research questions are based on Balls (1994a) policy trajectory. These questions guide the data collection and analysis.

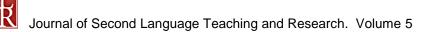
- 1. What are the additional language programs, policies and shaping forces within the schools? (influences)
- How did leadership respond to the influences on the additional language program? (policy texts & practices)
- 3. What are the additional language teaching practices? and
  - 2.1 What are the factors that influenced the ALT practices? (practices)
- 4. How does the school use the IB Language Scope and Sequence process? (practices)
- 5. What are the challenges and solutions of integrating additional language in the IB program of inquiry? (outcomes)
- 6. What is the perceived impact of the PYP additional language program on teachers and students? (outcomes)

In order to respond to these questions, the research process was divided methodologically into four phases:

Phase 1 - Initiating themes through literature review and focus groups:

Case study interviews were developed based on themes that emerged from the original research questions, the focus group outcomes, and the literature review.

Phase 2 - Conducting data collection at case study schools:



Interviews with the school and school community were carried out. Document data such as website information, school policy documents, and unit of inquiry planners were collected and classroom observations and walkthroughs were conducted to triangulate the interview data and provide further insights into the phenomena.

Phase 3 - Qualitative analysis and writing the final report:

The coding of the data collected at each site and the cross case analysis highlights convergence and challenges related to the teaching and learning of additional language in PYP schools.

Phase 4 - Additional language student survey:

This survey was created from the findings and recommendations of the final report and intended to seek information from students to add to this study. The language survey models will serve as a tool for the IB for further research.

Readers should note that, as with all single case, case studies the findings are bound to the context of the particular site. Therefore any of the successful strategies that other schools might consider adopting should be carefully matched against the relevant contextual features of that school.

### **Selection of participants**

Participating Schools. The school was one selected from a purposeful sampling of six schools across the three IB regions of Asia Pacific (IBAP), the Americas (IBA) and Africa, Europe and the Middle East (IBAEM). A total of six cases were conducted comparable across and between regions. The schools were selected to maximize heterogeneity and provide diversity among the schools with choices of additional language being English, Spanish, German, Japanese, and Chinese. English was used in all schools in some method of instruction including as the primary language of instruction, as one of two dual languages or as an additional language. The schools also presented students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, private and public schools, local and non-local structures and with varying levels of experience with the PYP. The Australian case involved the teaching of Japanese as an additional language – which contributed to the diverse range of languages in the international study, and, its accessibility for the Australian member of the research team.

Participants. The participants were selected on the basis of holding key roles in additional language teaching within the PYP including: principal; PYP coordinator; and ALTs. The ALTs represent a range of birth countries, languages spoken, and teaching expertise. The parents were selected on the basis of representing a cross-section of the community, sufficiently involved and engaged with the school's activities to be able to give informed views and



prepared to give their time to interviews.

## Data collection and analysis

Data collection and analysis centred on identifying structural and pedagogic strategies that contribute to the teaching of a second language in an IBPYP school setting. The core elements of the IB Programme Standards and Practices (2011) were used to frame the analysis. The analysis critiqued the philosophy, organisation and curriculum processes that existed within the selected school setting.

The local data were collected via four methods, namely:

- Document analysis of the IB Programme Standards and Practices (2011), the school's PYP policy documents, curriculum materials, relevant school records, and Australian government policy concerning additional language teaching.
- 2. A literature review centred on current additional language practices and processes for implementing educational interventions.
- 3. Interviews with key stakeholders in the early stage of implementation. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and de-identified.
- 4. School visits by the researcher to observe the school context, artefacts and the ALT in action.

All data were analysed via a coding system relating to the six research questions. Data from documents, interviews and observations outlined above were triangulated to achieve internally validated evidence against the IB Standards and Practices. And finally, the evidence was examined to ascertain how successful strategies identified might assist other schools that teach additional language and/or integrated inquiry based learning.

The findings from the Australian case study are reported against the research questions and highlight the three elements of the *IB Program Standards*, namely; philosophy, organisation and curriculum. Challenges and solutions are identified at each level of implementation.

## **Findings**

# 1. Additional language program, policy and shaping forces

English is the medium of instruction for the school (Language A) and the additional language is Japanese (Language B). The ALT had been teaching Japanese at the school prior to becoming an IBPYP candidate school. The additional language program consisted of one hour of language instruction each week. With the adoption of PYP an additional 30-minute



language class specifically linked to each level was introduced. During this additional contact time the language teacher co-taught with the class teacher integrating Japanese language and cultural knowledge into the classroom Unit of Inquiry.

## Development of the policy document

The additional language policy and teaching practices at the school were shaped by the requirements of the IBPYP Programme Standards and Practices (IB, 2011), the changing nature of its student population, and ALT. New policy documents were developed and implemented so as to comply with the IB authorisation process. The IBPYP Language Scope and Sequence process informed the development of the Japanese program. The school policy supported the ongoing professional development of staff so that a deeper understanding of the PYP philosophy, pedagogy and practices were well understood and embedded in everyday practice.

The PYP additional language teacher was a key player in the rewriting of the whole school language program including English and Japanese. And she was also the key author of the additional language policy document. She described her aspirations for the document as, "We want the English teachers, classroom English teachers and the additional language teachers speaking the same language in regard planning, teaching and assessing language – whether it be English, ESL or Japanese" (ALT).

## Influence of key partnering bodies and the community

Since the school was established, it had held a commitment to the Anglican Commission, Government Education services, and more recently, the International Baccalaureate. The value the school places on the additional language is reflected in the school community. The school policy leaders saw Japanese as an integral part of the curriculum. The community supported the choice of Japanese. One parent commented,

"It is so relevant, I have been learning more about our close neighbour now, my children want to teach me about Japan. Forget Europe. Asia is where the future lies" (Parent1).

There was however concern that the school needed to address the recent changing demographics particularly in regard the increase in students who have English as an additional language.

"We don't have the facilities to offer children the extra support in their own languages. Economically, we need to reflect on whether we should be teaching two languages or increasing our ESL program" (Parent2).



## Choice of Language Program

The school has offered Japanese as Language B and English as language A since its inception. However, the changing demographics of the student population continue to put pressure on the school to differentiate their additional language instruction and assessment. Although the language policy at the school was considered to be strong, the PYP Coordinator clarified, "It is strong in terms of English teaching, namely the first language and it is strong in terms of Language B but is severely lacking in mother tongue, due partly to budget restrictions for ESL". Parents have the opportunity to give feedback about the programs at the school in the form of a survey in Years 6 and 12, the Principal expressed concern, "We actually don't go out to seek feedback specifically on the language program… I don't know in what way they would impact decisions in terms of curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning, that is really for us to decide (P). Moreover he added, "We could actually reflect on whether we are teaching the right language or if we should be teaching more than one, particularly more English as a Second Language to meet the needs of our community".

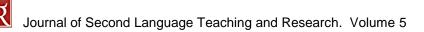
The quality of the ALT was considered to be the most influential factor in the choice of the additional language program at this site. The Principal expressed, "She is not only the best language teacher we have here, but she is probably one of the best PYP teachers we have, full stop. She is so professional, so good, so open-minded - it has made it easier for language to develop. The students, the staff and the parents admire and respect her and subsequently the Japanese language program". To add to this accolade, the PYP Coordinator described the PYP Japanese teacher as being:

"... well regarded state-wide, not just within IB schools. She has been vice President of the language association and is undertaking her doctorate in this field. A lot of the success of the program can be accredited to the strength of the PYP Japanese teacher" (PYPC).

In addition, one of the parents stated that "she is amazing, she is at every function, she is right there to guide the children, she encourages them to teacher their parents. Now I find myself keen to learn because they are so motivated. I have learned about Buddhism, Shintoism and lots of cultural stuff that I knew nothing about – and it's from my children" (Parent 1).

## Challenging influences within the school

Initially, the Principal had been concerned about the attitude of some specialist teachers and



the impact it had on other teachers and on the collaborative planning.

"Many specialists don't find the PYP easy. A lot of specialists simply say – 'you don't know because you don't teach my subject'. Yet as an experienced educator I beg to differ. When I look back at specialists and what they do, they usually are inquiry based anyway. For example Music and Art are all about exploration and investigation. I think some specialists, become precious about their subject believing it is more special than everyone else's subject".

He considered that employment of PYP experienced staff impacted the additional language program in the school.

"We still don't get experienced PYP people coming to our school probably due to our geographical location. This puts us in a position of always having to induct, train and manage new staff. We are looking at how we can best cater for this. More recently we have found new graduates who are experienced with PYP and they have been great".

The principal supported the ALTs with ongoing incentives such as professional development and resources in order to retain her at the school. She was often used to induct new specialist staff.

### 2. The leadership response to the influences on the additional language program

Various measures were taken at the school and individual teacher levels to address issues that commonly face ALTs and specialist teachers in IB contexts. The school level strategies focused on developing policies, targeting finances and directing resources into the program. These strategies were employed to develop teachers' knowledge and skills through collaborative planning opportunities, professional learning experiences and professional support. The school was in the process of developing a new language policy, "...which we will put additional language and first language as well as mother tongue and literacy into, but that's going to be probably a long process, quite a long term project, we want it to be significant" (PYPC).

Most obviously, the school leadership team had acknowledged the ALT's ability and passion in developing an inquiry based, interdisciplinary curriculum through language. Another way that they supported her was through resource allocation. She was provided a year exchange to Japan, wherein she developed a sister school partnership resulting in exchange students coming to the school annually. They produce a PYP Japanese reference book for students and parents introducing fundamental language features of Japanese as well as the essential elements of the PYP.



As a leadership strategy, supporting a 'champion teacher' to this extent obviously comes at a considerable risk. The risk the school faced was the dilemma of possibly losing the ALT due to her recent marriage and her intention to have a child. To address this risk the leadership team considered a succession plan, in which the ALT was training up possible candidates. In postscript it can be reported that the leadership strategy did succeed. ALT had a child and the replacement teacher had been trained sufficiently to continue the program successfully for a full year before ALT resumed her role. In many ways, the principal's policy decisions reflected Hargreaves & Fink (2006) Seven principles of sustainable leadership; depth (it matters), endurance (it lasts), breadth (it spreads), justice (it does not harm), diversity (it promotes diversity and cohesion), resourcefulness (it conserves expenditure), conservation (honours the past in creating the future), thus guaranteeing continuation and expansion of the program.

## 3. Additional language teaching practices

The ALT valued integrated language teaching highly, as did she, the mechanics of learning/teaching a second language. Funding support for Japanese was strong. She prized the quality of the learning experience, placing emphasis on providing authentic learning activities and a supportive learning environment that enables each student to experience success, including the use of technologies outlined by Xu, et.al., (2008). She limited textbooks to reading material, activities and homework.

She reflected on her approach to teaching as:

"I think back on my own experience as a student - that is, only learning from a textbook - meant that when I first went to Japan as an adult I couldn't really communicate. I like the students to have more of an authentic experience with the language. I like my classroom to be a supportive environment where the students feel like they can achieve success no matter what level that they are working at. My language class is just as important an experience for the students as other subjects and the IB supports this notion".

The ALT embraced the PYP core elements in her planning, teaching and assessment. And she considered her general primary school teaching training as a key reason as to why she can implement the PYP with confidence in her language classrooms. She commented, "I do notice that language specific teachers tend to find it more difficult to grasp the pedagogical underpinnings of PYP".



The additional language teacher went on to explain her involvement in collaborative planning for Units of Inquiry, "In other schools classroom teachers don't include the ALT in the PYP collaborative planning sessions, because the ALTs usually provide relief whilst the classroom teachers plan together. This model continues to isolate the ALT".

Her desire to be included into the collaborative planning sessions, along with the recommendation from an IB pre-authorisation visit, triggered policy action by the Principal and PYP Coordinator. Timetables were established so that administration covered specific year group classes whilst the specialists worked with the home-teachers, planning their next Unit of Inquiry (UOI). The process was reportedly well received and the Principal noted good outcomes, "I believe the specialist teachers including the ALT have had a shift in their beliefs and teaching practices in regard planning for inquiry". These challenges resonate with those highlighted by Songer et.al., (2002).

The PYP Coordinator also pointed out that this was quite challenging:

"To get to the conceptual side, when you are developing different writing scripts and different vocabulary, which is superficial level learning I think, is quite a challenge. But to get those deeper understandings is important. You have to create the context. The ALT spends a lot of time developing an understanding of Japan and Japanese language".

Nonetheless, the ALT believed that the PYP excited the students about learning and empowered them to inquire and find information for themselves highlighting the importance of assessment and differentiation (Miles & Ainscow, 2011). Hence it was no surprise that differentiated groups and a range of work stations catering for autonomous learners were observed in her classroom. She explained her differentiated and integrated assessment procedure:

"I start with my assessment grid and then I also have a working document where I have put all of the inquiries and the relevant lines of inquiry or concepts. And then my teaching aims and relevant assessment outcomes are placed underneath so that everything is linked. It is a great way to integrate and highlights the transdisciplinary nature of the PYP language program".

This procedure is a trial and was still considered to be a work in progress whilst the school was embarking on a whole school approach to differentiation whereby the traditional 'extension' program was being remodelled into a more classroom-based approach. The PYP coordinator



### explained:

"It [the extension program] used to be a pull-out system which the parents loved because it labelled the child. They haven't enjoyed the fact that the children are not being pulled out and getting a nice letter but what we are trying to do is create a much better culture of differentiation and extension within the classroom. Then what we do is provide opportunities to engage in external competitions to show their skills".

With the new whole school approach to differentiation, ALT was also working on introducing formative assessment strategies, "I hadn't really considered formative assessment before PYP, it is another thing that I have gained from working in the IB program. I have started to give the students pre-tests so that I can make sure that they are working towards the right target "(ALT).

However, the ALT was concerned about the school's reporting system, specifically the recent decision to move to a language report that has no comments. She explained:

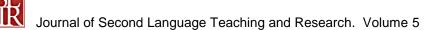
"The new report has a descriptor of what has been covered, areas that they have focused on and how the children have achieved. I understand the concern if you are writing comments on 480 students but it is the same amount of writing as anyone else would do".

At the school level, teachers differentiated the homework they assigned to the students and in addition a gifted and talented program was offered in all subject areas, including language. All stakeholders were impressed by the children's desire to be involved. The Principal reported one parent's comment:

"My children would love to go to the gifted and talented program everyday with the ALT. They learn so much language, they are excited and want to learn more about Japan. Their interest and enthusiasm broadens our horizons, we are planning a ski trip to Japan and for a family that have never been out of Australia that is a huge decision. It has also opened up opportunities for them as language learners".

The ALT used various approaches to improve the additional language program at the site, she:

- became connected to the regional language teachers' association and network
- continued her studies by enrolling in a Doctoral degree to research dyslexic students studying Japanese
- won a grant to produce a language teaching resource book specific to the school
- set up a gifted and talented after school language class for children, and,



• set up a sister school partnership and student exchange program with the Japanese school that she completed a 12 month teaching exchange with.

Moreover, the PYP Coordinator highlighted that the language program was instrumental in changing the mono-cultural nature of the school, "At this school the kids fully get the Japanese perspective which gives us a second culture in the school".

# 2.1 Factors that influence additional language teaching practices

The views expressed by key policy makers concurred that additional language teaching practices at this school were directly linked to the quality of the ALT, namely the teacher beliefs, philosophy and pedagogical practices. Additional language teaching also appeared to be influenced by the organisational structures and leadership support within the school, the school policies, classroom teachers, student cohorts and parents. Each of these factors is described as follows.

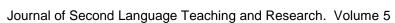
Teacher beliefs, philosophy and pedagogical practices. The value that this school placed on good language teaching was evident. The ALT was identified as a high achiever, and, as mentioned earlier, she was involved in the regional network of PYP language teachers. The Principal and the PYP coordinator both commented on the value and problems related to networking. "Unfortunately we are such a small network and if there were five other ALT type teachers like ours it would be fine. Only one sees language the way she does" (PYPC). Both the Principal and the PYP commented on the strength of the ALT's background experience as a primary classroom teacher. The ALT commented on this:

"There is some significance in coming from the point of view of a classroom teacher because I think I see the whole picture and not just my subject area. Some other ALTs don't seem to see where they fit in the PYP, they worry about teaching certain topics of content and it gets in the way of letting language fit with what the students are learning."

Although professional development is available to ALTs, the ALT at this school stated, "I don't think we have too much support as an ALT from the IB. I went to the Languages course in Hong Kong and not many ALTs actually worked with the Units of Inquiry. I think there almost needs to be a separate professional learning course for Language B Teachers".

#### Structural organisation and support from the school leadership team

Due to the school's recent authorisation, the PYP policy documents, organisational structures, curriculum planning, teaching and assessment were clearly visible. School policy documents





and expectations were well articulated but some were more developed than others. School resources, timetabling and support were structured around developing a Japanese culture within the school. For example, the school had:

- 1. Allocated extra language time for each class, including an extra 30 minute language/cultural component.
- 2. Changed the timetable to cater for specialists, including ALT, to be involved in one and a half hours of collaborative planning sessions per week, which amounted to one and a half hours per month with each year level teaching group.
- 3. Provided professional development opportunities on PYP for the teachers and the parents.
- 4. Featured the transition from PYP to Middle Years Program (MYP) in the whole school policy.

The latter of the above initiatives included an annual PYP additional language exhibition, after which, the Year 6s have time with middle school additional language teachers. According to one of the parents, "The enthusiasm after the exhibition from the teacher was amazing and meeting the high school teacher last night... she is Japanese and the show was just beautiful... and the opportunities it is going to open for them!" (Parent2).

**Student diversity**. The changing demographics at the school impacted on the additional language teaching practices in a range of ways. In response, the ALT started to give students pre-tests to ensure that they would be working towards their appropriate target. This diagnostic approach to the teaching, planning and assessment cycle was evident across other subject areas. In addition, this school catered for diversity by offering access to a gifted and talented program and a language support group.

In her desire to learn, the ALT is currently researching the possible link between children with dyslexia and learning a second language. In her 12 years of teaching she has noticed anecdotally that children with dyslexia perform very well with Japanese scripted language.

Parental expectations. The parent demographics represented an emerging mid-level socioeconomic community with an increase in the number of professional families and families migrating from South Africa, the UK and Sudan. The Principal had some structures in place to support the range of parents, "We get them involved in as much as we can. We run workshops and try to keep them informed. We do workshops for new families each year and a workshop for Year Six families for the exhibition. We have a PYP newsletter each term and everything produced is written in terms of the IB".



The parents appeared to appreciate the authentic learning activities in the additional language program. This was evident in the year before this study when the ALT wrote and launched her language book with a grant from an external funding body. The book launch was considered by the principal and parents interviewed to be the most well attended function in the history of the school. The ALT teacher was overwhelmed, the PYP coordinator and Principal simply stated it was testament to the respect the community has for the teacher and the Japanese program. The ALT stated that she believes, ..."the parents have been a lot more excited and supportive of Japanese since we started PYP. They believe the PYP made language more relevant than other languages".

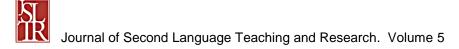
## 4. The use of the Language Scope and Sequence process

Being well steeped in IB Programme Standards and Practices, the additional language policy leadership group were all in agreement that the language acquisition process related to all languages. They agreed that all subject areas were treated as being equal. Therefore, the school's process of developing a language Scope and Sequence involved the ALT, English teachers, ESL teachers and home-room teachers framing the Scope and Sequence document for English and ALT within the demands of the Australian national curriculum, a process they consider to be a work in progress.

The school had a strong working relationship with the local university language lecturers. The administrative staff worked with the university on a range of levels for professional development, professional discussion as well as access to resources. The online language acquisition resource FLOTE (Norris, 2008) was mentioned in the interviews as well as an article by Nag & Snowling (2012, p.9) that highlights foundation language skills as being broadly similar across writing systems – Arabic, Canada, Chinese, English. This reference supports the IBPYP Language Scope and Sequence document. It compares phonological skills, orthographic knowledge, sound-symbol mappings, vocabulary knowledge and grammar knowledge.

Whilst the whole school strategy is to consolidate the additional language program, the current challenge for the school is to integrate ESL, additional language and English as multilayered comparable programs that inform and support each other. The PYP coordinator was delighted to announce:

"We are going to work on our scope and sequence this year for English to bring together ESL, additional language and English. We are a PYP school and as such language is



language and we are all teachers of language in the same way we should all teach inquiry, concepts, skills, attitudes, knowledge and action" (PYPC).

## 5. Challenges and solutions of integrating ALT within an IB program of inquiry

Due to the recency of the school's authorisation as an IBPYP, the whole staff and community were focused on the IB Programme Standards and Practices throughout the duration of this study. The response from all interviewees was that language is valued at the school. This did not only refer to additional language, it was expressed as, ... "learning through language and utilizing language to gain information, express information and communicate information. It is just the basic cement that brings it all together" (PYPC). The focus on language was apparent in documentation, planning, teaching and assessment.

Integrating the additional language into the Units of Inquiry was likely made easier for ALT because she was experienced with concept and inquiry based learning. In addition to her contribution to the year level collaborative planning sessions, the ALT provided teachers with posters for each of the concepts in both English and Japanese. "She drives the conceptual side of PYP more than any of the other teachers and has become a leader of the specialist team" (PYPC).

All interviewees in the study highlighted the importance of the transdisciplinary program of inquiry as the essence of IBPYP. However, the ALT explained that it was not always easy to implement, "It can be difficult to go through the inquiry cycle without speaking English ... some concepts are too difficult for the students to learn in an immersion Japanese class. It depends on the inquiry".

The interviewees felt well versed and confident with the PYP elements of inquiry, concepts, knowledge and skills. However there were six main practical, logistical and professional learning challenges to integrating the additional language into the program of inquiry.

## Challenges

The six main challenges to integrating the additional language into the program of inquiry are outlined below and resonate with integrating languages into non IB curriculum (Venvill et. al.,2009).



The structural organisation of collaborative planning sessions was initially a serious problem because it resulted in the ALT only getting 5-10 minutes a week with each year group. Collaborative planning was done in school staff meeting time when teachers worked in year groups. With ALT having eight year groups, she had to move quickly from one group to another, allowing for little engagement or input. The same applied for the other specialist teachers.

The tendency for the specialist teachers, including ALT, to experience isolation was a finding of the international study, regardless of the school size. This was reflected in this case study school. The Principal commented, "They just see themselves differently and this can often isolate themselves further", the findings resonate with those of Murtagh & Frances (2012). The ALT commented that it was important to make connections with language networks outside of the school.

Achieving the right balance between the transdisciplinary learning and the learning of knowledge and skills in discrete subjects was a concern for the Principal who said that his concerns also represented the parent view of PYP inquiry:

"It is the balance between transdisciplinary learning and discrete skills. There is still the danger of going too far down the discrete skills path because that is where an ALT usually feels more comfortable, particularly when they are not used to the PYP. Or they can go too far down the inquiry path and not do the basics. I am not against inquiry but sometimes when teachers make meaning of inquiry they forget to do the basic language requirements. I say, if they can't read they can't do inquiry."

The difference of student proficiency levels in the additional language. This issue was exacerbated by class sizes of 30 and the changing school demographics. Large class sizes made it difficult for additional language classes of one and a half hours a week to effectively work through the inquiry process. In addition, an influx of non-ESL students, presented new challenges for the school.

For the most part the Principal and the PYP Coordinator considered this to be an issue rather than a challenge due partly to the diagnostic assessment trial initiated by the ALT. A parent highlighted the issue of differences in proficiency potentially holding some students back when new students came to the school:

"My older child did repeat some things when we had new kids coming in, like learning characters and the basics you need to repeat so that they can communicate" (Parent2).

The ALT explained, "Our classrooms can be quite diverse. I am looking at student assessment types that have to be levelled so that students have different targets".

The difference in teachers' understandings of inquiry learning was considered by the additional language leadership group to be the biggest level of challenge. At this school there was diversity in PYP experience. The PYP Coordinator thought that some teachers had difficulties understanding inquiry, "They simply go through the inquiry steps and can't see the transdisciplinary nature of it". She added, "Some became obsessed, thinking everything is inquiry and forgot the basics". She believed that her role as PYP Coordinator carried a considerable responsibility in monitoring and managing this diversity.

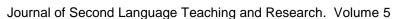
The levels of difference between home teachers' knowledge, and ALT's knowledge of IB was also an issue. The ALT was the most experienced PYP teacher and was well versed and experienced with inquiry, concept driven curriculum, differentiation and transdisciplinary perspectives. "She has a better understanding of PYP, inquiry and concepts than anyone else and has driven concepts through the school "(PYPC).

Yet, even the ALT pointed out that students' language proficiency made it hard to do inquiry in the additional language: "When you are learning a second language it can be difficult to go through the inquiry cycle without speaking English. Sometimes when you get really involved in the UOI it is very difficult not to speak English to communicate some of the knowledge".

The Principal clarified his concern about achieving the balance between transdisciplinary inquiry and learning discrete knowledge and skills by highlighting that the issue was with the teachers' interpretation of the PYP transdisciplinary inquiry, "I would be surprised in any school starting the PYP journey that this issue isn't a big dilemma for them. Until you have those arguments ... I was never under any illusion that the IB expected anything different, it is the way teachers implement it".

## The difference in parents' understandings of inquiry learning

As mentioned earlier, the school community has an increasing number of professional families who have migrated to Australia from varying countries. And this contributes to differing understandings of learning and of inquiry based learning in schools. The following two quotes from different parent represent the range of views:





'I have come from what I would like to say is a traditionally old school. It has been quite different and it has been a struggle at times. I have been up to the school and challenged them and chatted to the teachers about how it fits. I think the school is learning at the same time as I am. That's where I am glad we have a national curriculum so that I can monitor things myself and

'My daughter did an inquiry on how people learn – visually, auditory and some of that I had never heard of before... now I look at it and I go, yeah, when you want to teach people how to do things you have got to teach differently, it isn't easy.

## Strategies to redress these Challenges

To redress the structural organisation problem of collaborative planning sessions, the Principal and Deputy restructured the timetable and provided relief for one-year level for one and a half hours per week to allow specialist teachers and the ALT to contribute in the teachers' collaborative planning sessions. It was this new model of collaborative planning sessions, partly instigated by the IB pre-authorisation and authorisation feedback to support the PYP additional language, that became the vehicle for ALT's influence in driving the integrated inquiry process.

To redress the tendency for the specialist teachers, including ALT, to experience isolation, there were differing strategies. The above-mentioned collaborative planning sessions appeared to make immediate and significant progress in redressing isolation. In addition all teachers were encouraged and resourced to attend additional language professional learning events within the district and the state. At the international level, ALT was sent on a teacher exchange program to Japan and thereafter set up a sister school relationship with the Japanese school she worked in. Furthermore, the school resourced technology enabled all teachers to link with the sister school and also with the IB centre and schools across the globe.

To redress achieving the right balance between the transdisciplinary learning and the learning of knowledge and skills in discrete subjects, the main strategy was to acknowledge the ALT's strength in concept planning with transdisciplinary inquiry and to ask her to guide the home-room teachers and other specialists in this area. The ALT used collaborative planning sessions and co-teaching with home-class teachers as strategies to embed practice. In this respect as well, the new model for collaborative planning session, that



included all specialists, the year level teaching group, the PYP coordinator and the ALT, was proving beneficial. It was these monthly meetings that directed the UOI, and in the process professional learning took place for all teachers. However, whilst the Principal did acknowledge that improvement had been made in this area, all three of the additional language leadership group believe that it would take further time for the transition in achieving the balance to be completed.

To redress the difference in student proficiency levels in the additional language the school employed the strategy of differentiated learning and assessment, described earlier, in class and in homework. In addition, by changing the extension program to classroom-based program that integrated with the class UOI, this enabled all students to be working on the same inquiry and at their respective levels of knowledge and skills.

To redress the difference in teachers' understandings of inquiry learning several initiatives were undertaken and some of them doubled up to redress other challenges outlined above. The strategies of ALT contributing to the collaborative planning for the UOIs and, her co-teaching in classrooms, were very important. Other initiatives that supported the process included financial support to access professional development at a local, national and international level, the development of a sister school in Japan including an exchange program with students, as well as access to technology that linked the teachers with the 'global world of IB'.

To redress the difference in parents' understanding of inquiry learning, the school implemented a number of strategies within an approach to build capacity and support for the program within the whole community. Specifically, they offered parent workshops each term, published a PYP newsletter once a month, ran one event per term to highlight the PYP, held a Year Six exhibition workshop each year for parents, ran coffee mornings twice a term and ensured that all correspondence and awards had the PYP embedded in them. The Japanese journal was used as a window to display each childs personal journal of Japanese language development through the inquiry process.

## 6. The perceived impact of the PYP program on teachers and students

The stakeholders in this study perceived that the additional language PYP program had made an impact on the teachers and students by:

changing the teachers' beliefs and practices



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- successfully introducing collaborative planning that included the specialist teachers in a more meaningful and productive way that made for higher quality inquiry
- · increasing the school's focus on differentiated teaching and assessment, and
- increasing intercultural understanding.

According to the Principal, the teachers expressed that teaching in the PYP program had changed their beliefs and practices but he pointed out that it was not an easy or quick process. He commented about the challenge for teachers to balance the demands of discreet and inquiry-based teaching methods. The PYP coordinator discussed the issue of ongoing skills development for teachers and the support needed to embed the PYP as regular teaching practice.

The school increased its focus on differentiated learning and assessment. The ALT modelled a diagnostic based approach to inquiry for differentiated learning and assessment implemented in the collaborative planning process, and through extending the gifted and talented program to include all subjects.

Moreover, through integrating the additional language learning into the Units of Inquiry and through the numerous extra activities and events instigated by the ALT, the school was increasing its intercultural understanding. One of the telling comments came from a monolingual parent at the end of her interview as she described how her children's love of language and all things Japanese is impacting on the family:

"We are turning Japanese... my children have opened my eyes to another culture and linked what we like to Japan. My husband breeds fish and the children told him about how the Japanese are trialling an aquarium to breed whale sharks. We researched it and found it was close to a ski field and now we are booking our first flight out of Australia to Japan" (Parent2).

The school has supported the ALT to take a leadership role to promote transdisciplinary inquiry-based learning and help make meaning of Japanese language and culture. And for this reason the school has a high profile within the IB region.

The school will continue with its IBPYP Language B - Japanese program whilst the IB will consider the findings and implications of the international report, to which this case study has contributed. For the purpose of this paper, the findings refer to successful strategies applied within this case study school.

### Discussion: Successful strategies and aspects useful for other schools

This report on the case study represents one IBPYP Primary schools' approach to teaching an additional language and integrating it through a trans-disciplinary inquiry-based learning approach across the entire school curriculum. This process was made possible by three enablers: the particular leadership approach to supporting the teaching of the additional language; the additional language teacher's approach to additional language teaching and to leading her colleagues; and the approach to engaging the school community in fostering intercultural understanding. These three enablers are elucidated below and serve as discussion points for future research and policy practices.

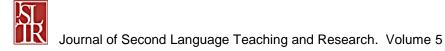
# The particular leadership approach to supporting the teaching of the additional language

- 1. Set up the necessary mission, policies and procedures to qualify as an IB PYP school
- 2. Allocate resources to implement these particular policies, specifically funds for: teaching materials, production of policy documents, access to the IB website, staff to undertake professional learning, the community newspaper, the Japanese teaching book, community events, ALT's international teaching exchange, and hosting Japanese exchange students.
- Identify an appropriately skilled leader amongst the teaching staff, appoint her as a key driver for integrating the additional language in structured, trans-disciplinary inquirybased learning
- 4. Provide unfailing and strong support to develop and extend the additional language program within the PYP
- 5. Implement a risk management strategy by beginning succession planning to cover for any possibility of the ALT leaving the school.

These issues resonate with Lee et.al's (2011) findings on leadership challenges in international schools.

# The ALT's approach to additional language teaching and to leading her colleagues

- 1. Devise and implement authentic learning activities and assessment tasks.
- 2. Teach via structured inquiry using the IB 'inquiry cycle' to explore topics from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including Japanese.
- 3. Engage fully with the home teachers in one year level collaborative planning sessions per month, teaching her colleagues to plan and implement cross-disciplinary inquiry



- 4. Lead the Scope and Sequence planning activities in all subjects of the curriculum during the collaborative planning sessions, and
- 5. Lead and engage in PYP inquiry learning and Japanese learning activities and event in the wider school community.

# The approach to engaging the school community in fostering intercultural understanding

- 1. Shared responsibility for planning and implementing additional language program
- 2. Visible Leadership Support –publicly recognised, presence and officiating for ceremonies etc.
- 3. Sustainable practices and resource commitment
- 4. Continual promotion of intercultural events and understandings in students, teachers and families in the community.

Although, as yet there are no actual student performance data or responses from the other teachers in the school, the school has embarked on initiatives that the parent representatives believe to be producing exceptional intercultural outcomes for the additional language and PYP programs.

Finally, contributors to this case study expressed hope that the sharing of their personal experiences would be useful in informing the IB and other primary schools on future policy, processes and procedures related to teaching additional language. They saw the research project as a real life "*inquiry process*" (Short, 2001) and an opportunity to impact global policy decisions.

#### Conclusion

Language teachers in Australia will be celebrating the recent emphasis on teaching additional language in schools, however educational change is not without its challenges (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Policy, practices and outcomes related to teaching additional languages differ, they reflect the philosophy, organisation and curriculum approaches of school leaders and classroom teachers. The findings from this Australian based research project reveals approaches and enablers that support the claim that good additional language classrooms teach more than language, and in so doing are representative of the findings across all six case study countries. The enablers relate to the particular leadership approach that supports the teaching of an additional language, the additional language teacher's approach to teaching, and the approaches used to engage the school community in fostering intercultural understandings. The strategies identified in this study and



synthesised in the discussion above may be useful in other PYP leaders, additional language classrooms and teachers around the globe.

#### **Biodata**

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