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Teaching and learning L2 in the classroom: It's about time

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Abstract

One of the challenges facing second and foreign language (L2) teachers and learners in primary and secondary school settings is the limited amount of time available. There is disagreement about how to meet this challenge. In this paper we argue against two 'common sense' recommendations for increasing instructional time – start as early as possible and use only the L2 (avoiding the use of the first language (L1)) in the classroom. We propose two better ways to increase the instructional time: provide periods of intensive instruction later in the curriculum and integrate the teaching of language and content. Studies in schools settings around the world have failed to find long-term advantages for an early start or exclusive use of the L2 in the classroom. Nevertheless, many language educators and policy makers continue to adopt these practices, basing their choice on their own intuitions and public opinion rather than on evidence from research.

1. Introduction

Time may be the single best predictor of outcomes in L2 learning in primary and secondary schools. Although it is uncontroversial to say that language learning takes a lot of time, there is considerable disagreement about how to ensure that enough time is available for classroom learning. In this paper we challenge two 'common sense' recommendations that are often implemented in response to the shortage of learning time: (1) start as early as possible and (2) use only L2 in the classroom. Classroom-based research does not support these recommendations, and in this paper we draw on that research to argue that two other responses will be more effective: (1) the provision of periods of intensive instruction and (2) the integration of language and academic content teaching. We conclude by acknowledging the difficulty of changing widely held beliefs or educational policy on the basis of research findings.

2. How much time does it take?

How much time does it actually take to learn a second or foreign language[1] at school? The greatest difficulty in answering this question arises from the fact that 'successful learning' is defined differently in different contexts. In foreign language situations, students typically do their academic studies in their L1, the language they know best, and most of their social life also takes place in that language. Students are often considered successful if they can engage in simple social interactions, get high marks on pencil and paper tests of grammatical knowledge, or understand a news report in a popular

[1]We are aware that some readers will prefer different terminology. However, for purposes of this discussion, we have retained 'second' and 'foreign' language, the terms that are used in many of the studies we will review. Our purpose is to distinguish the learning of a 'second' language that is widely spoken as an official or majority language in the school and/or local community from a 'foreign' language that is not widely spoken outside the classroom or in the local community. We have used 'L2' to refer to both.

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newspaper or television broadcast. In contrast, being successful in a second language learning context typically entails the ability to engage in both social interaction and academic learning tasks at a level that would be appropriate for an L1 speaker of the L2 at the same age. The amount of time that must be invested if learners are to meet the definitions of success in these different contexts is likely to be quite different.

One attempt to estimate how long it takes to reach an 'intermediate' level of proficiency[2] in an instructional setting was carried out by the US Foreign Service Institute (FSI). These estimates were developed in the context of intensive instruction (25 hours per week over six weeks) for adults in classes of no more than six students, most with high aptitude and strong motivation for learning the new language. For these learners, it was estimated that it takes approximately 600 hours of classroom instruction for closely related languages (e.g., English learners of Dutch) and 2,200 hours for distant languages (e.g., English learners of Chinese) plus another three to four hours of directed self-study per day over a period of months.

Conditions such as those that apply to FSI classrooms are far from the reality of most foreign language instruction for school-age students. In schools, considerably fewer hours are available, classes are much larger, and there is greater diversity of learners and abilities. For example, English-speaking students learning a new language in North American primary and secondary schools typically receive only a few hours of language instruction per week, often amounting to between 50 and 200 hours over an entire school year. These numbers are similar for foreign language study in British schools (Mitchell, 2011; Murphy, 2014). Stern (1985) referred to these small amounts of language teaching spread over long periods of time as 'dripfeed' instruction.

Over the years, research in programs that provide limited instructional input has shown that more classroom time leads to more L2 learning (Carroll, 1975; Stern et al., 1976; Unsworth, Persson, Prins, & de Bot, 2015). As we will see, however, this simple linear relationship has not been found in other research on L2 development in programs where learners receive substantial amounts of instructional time. Other factors, including the way learning time is distributed and sustained, the integration of language learning with the learning of other academic content, the presence and the status of the L1 and L2 in the school and community, and the support (or lack of it) for students' L1 play important roles. Nevertheless, getting ENOUGH time for L2 learning is a challenge in most school settings. Therefore, we begin by looking at the most frequently heard recommendation for increasing learning time: start L2 instruction as early as possible.

2.1 Start as early as possible

The recommendation for an early start is based only in part on the quest for more learning hours. It is also motivated by the widely held belief that young children are 'better' at learning languages than older learners. This belief is based on observations of children and adults who, when immersed in the 'natural' L2 environment, experience strikingly different results in terms of ultimate attainment of L2 proficiency.

There is ample evidence that learners who begin to learn an L2 in early childhood, use the language in a variety of communicative settings, and those who continue to use it into adolescence and adulthood are likely to be perceived as no different from monolingual native speakers in terms of their pronunciation (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003) and their use of grammatical morphology (Patkowski, 1980). They have also been found to make more accurate judgments of grammaticality than those who begin L2 learning later (Johnson & Newport, 1989; De Keyser, 2000, 2012). This has often been attributed to the existence of a critical period in human development, a period before puberty when the

[2]Intermediate proficiency defined as: Ability to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics; ability to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence, reports, and technical materials in the individual's special field. This is roughly equivalent to B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference.

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brain is thought to be predisposed for successful language learning. However, other research has revealed that the age at which learners' ability to master the subtleties of L2 grammar begins to decline may be considerably later than this. In a large internet-based study, Hartshorne, Tenenbaum, and Pinker (2018) found that learners who began L2 acquisition in late adolescence often achieved levels of grammatical knowledge that equaled that of those who started at a much earlier age. Such research is important in showing that beginning to learn a new language in adolescence does not prevent learners from achieving very high levels of proficiency.

When researchers investigate how QUICKLY learners acquire proficiency in L2 (rather than their eventual attainment of linguistic intuitions and performance that are indistinguishable from those of monolingual native speakers), older learners have been found to have an advantage over younger learners (see Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979; Muñoz & Singleton, 2011 for reviews of research). Furthermore, since the late 1970s, research has shown that, when it comes to foreign language learning in school settings, an early start does not guarantee a long-term advantage. In one of the earliest studies, Burstall (1975) compared British students learning French as a foreign language at different ages and found no lasting advantages for starting L2 instruction in the early grades when the total amount of time for early learning was relatively limited. In more recent large-scale longitudinal research in Spain, Muñoz (2006) documented the progress of children receiving limited amounts of instruction in English as a foreign language (EFL) over several years in primary and secondary school. These studies have shown that older learners progress faster than younger learners on a variety of measures including pronunciation, oral fluency, vocabulary acquisition, morphological accuracy, and writing. It has also been observed that although younger learners catch up with older learners on oral (but not written) tasks, they do not surpass them over the period of school learning. In contrast to what has been observed in age-related research in non-instructional settings, where children benefit from thousands of hours of language exposure, the older learners in school settings maintain their advantage.

Muñoz (2008) and others have observed that, in order for young children to take advantage of their ability to learn language intuitively, they need massive amounts of language input and opportunities to engage in extensive communicative interactions in the L2, and these are not available in most foreign language contexts. Older learners can use their more advanced cognitive skills and explicit learning abilities to learn more quickly in situations where time for learning is limited and the language input and interaction opportunities are less rich. For example, researchers have compared the L2 development of learners who enter French immersion programs at different times: early learners at kindergarten or grade 1 (about age five or six), mid-immersion learners in grade 5 (about age ten), and late immersion learners in grade 7 (about age twelve). In these studies, learners were tested at different times and after different amounts of instruction. Early immersion learners who were tested at grade 8 had accumulated approximately 4,000 hours of instruction; late immersion learners who were tested at grade 10 had accumulated approximately 1,400 hours of instruction. Evaluations of these learners' French ability indicated that late immersion learners did as well and sometimes better than the early immersion learners on most measures, suggesting that their superior cognitive abilities, literacy skills, and larger L1 vocabulary and grammatical knowledge made them more efficient learners, compensating for less instructional time (Turnbull, Lapkin, Hart, & Swain, 1998).

It seems reasonable to expect that one advantage of an earlier start in classroom learning is that learners will accumulate more instructional time over the school years. Ironically, experience has shown that an early start is not always associated with more hours. Lowering the starting age sometimes means spreading the limited hours out over longer periods, rather than adding hours for language learning (Lightbown, 2008). Even when an early start does result in an increase in instructional time, offering an additional 20 minutes a day three times a week for two or three years does not add up to a substantial amount of time, and the linguistic gains resulting from such small increments of instructional time appear to be extremely limited. This was evident in a study involving 53,000 students, aged 14–15 years, in several European countries (ESLC, 2012) where some of the students had begun learning a first foreign language at age six and an additional language

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later. While students generally did better on the language they had been learning since age six, their proficiency remained limited. As Muñoz and Spada (2019, p. 234) report, 'there was still a sizable number of students who did not reach beyond an A1 level in the first FL for reading (46%), listening comprehension (39%), and writing (33%). While testing experts estimate that 90–100 hours are required to reach an A1 level, some of these students had taken three to eight times more hours extended over many years to reach that level.'

Another important finding regarding the long-term effects of an early start is that proficiency acquired through early exposure can be lost if learning is not sustained. This is true for both L1 (e.g., Wong Fillmore, 2000) and L2 development (e.g., Burling, 1959; Hansen, 1999). Students in French immersion programs who continued to use French for academic study in secondary school maintained and developed proficiency that surpassed that of students who ceased to have extended contact with the language (Turnbull et al., 1998). Pfenninger (2014) found that students with early exposure to a foreign language in Swiss elementary schools did better than those who started later only if their exposure to and instruction in the language continued into adolescence.

To summarize, a variety of research studies suggest that unless it is possible to both substantially increase the time available for foreign language instruction early in the primary school curriculum and maintain opportunities for learning into the adolescent years, starting instruction as early as possible will not substantially improve outcomes. In the case of learners whose L1 is a minority language, an early start will entail a substantial number of additional hours of instruction. However, an early start for L2 instruction may also prevent children from continuing to develop and use their L1 while they are learning the L2 (Swain, 1981). We will now turn to the question of how restricting L1 use in order to accord more time to L2 affects learning outcomes.

2.2 Use only L2 in the classroom

In foreign language classrooms, teachers have been urged to use only the new language and to discourage students from using their L1 during L2 instruction. Because classroom time for foreign language learning is typically very limited, such a policy is motivated by the desire to give students the greatest exposure to the L2. Nevertheless, a strict adherence to such a policy overlooks the well-documented evidence that previously learned languages are always present in the mind of the learner, even when the focus is on the new language (Kroll, Dussias, Bogulski, & Valdes-Kroff, 2012), and a reference to the language(s) students already know can be a useful bridge to understanding both the meaning and the structures of the new language, ultimately saving 'time' and leading to more effective learning (Cook, 2001).

In the context of second language learning by minority language children, it is often asserted that the most effective instruction will be 'English only' (with 'English' representing the majority language or the 'official' language of the school). To be sure, the intention of such a policy is to create the maximum amount of time for learning the L2. However, it is also based on the belief that learning will be most successful if students are discouraged from reverting to L1 when they encounter difficulty in the L2, that using both languages will create confusion for them, and that they should be encouraged to 'think in the L2'. This belief has been challenged by many studies of minority language children showing that when they are able to draw on both their L1 and their growing L2 knowledge, they are less likely to lose out on early opportunities to acquire academic content knowledge and skills, including basic literacy. Furthermore, learners' L1 has been found to be a powerful contributor to their L2 development, reinforcing the view that languages are mutually supportive and that the underlying cognitive skills developed through one language can be accessed in the other (Cummins, 2001). The research on this topic includes large-scale comparison studies of bilingual and English-only programs in the US where the sustained use of learners' L1 has led to achievements in L2 literacy and other academic subjects that are comparable to or better than those of L2 learners in monolingual English-only programs (Collier & Thomas, 2017).

When monolinguals come to school having already spent thousands of hours learning their L1 (which is also the school language), their language knowledge continues to grow rapidly throughout

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their years in school. For this reason, minority language children who are L2 learners must run to catch up with a moving target. In their review of decades of research on the education of English language learners in the US, Collier and Thomas (2017) conclude that to reach age-appropriate achievement across school grades it takes 'an average of 6 years for those who start in kindergarten and receive quality dual-language schooling in both L1 and L2 for a minimum of six years, with at least half of the instructional time in their L1. It takes still longer, seven to ten years or more, if students have not had the opportunity to be schooled in their L1, and many in this situation do not reach grade-level achievement and are often referred to by school personnel as 'long-term English learners'. (Collier & Thomas, 2017, p. 207).

Studies in a variety of contexts have shown that the maintenance and continued development of L1 has a strong positive correlation with the academic success and L2 proficiency of minority language children (Goldenberg, 2008). Furthermore, the regular use of more than one language, if it is sustained throughout life, has been found to have benefits for cognitive performance that extend far beyond success in school (Bialystok, Craik, Klein, & Viswanathan, 2004). Researchers have increasingly emphasized the value of being 'multicompetent' (Cook, 1992) and able to operate successfully in a variety of social, cultural, and intellectual environments, drawing on all one's linguistic resources. As a result, a number of instructional approaches have been developed to encourage L2 learners to continue using their L1. This includes multilingual teaching (Cenoz, 2009; Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012), translanguaging (García, 2009), and plurilingual education (Piccardo, 2013).

While concerns have been raised by teachers (and parents) that using the L1 in the L2 classroom may create confusion for learners and that it will interfere with their L2 learning, research suggests the opposite. Studies that have compared learners' use of L1 in group interaction versus exclusive L2 use have revealed that L1 use leads to improved information sharing and more fluid and efficient interaction. This is thought to free up learners' cognitive resources enabling them to focus on the structural and semantic elements of the L2 (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003). There is also a growing body of research showing that approaches to L2 instruction which incorporate learners' L1 have a positive impact on their multilingual identities and contribute to improved cognitive and linguistic development (García, 2017).

Clearly, the place of learners' L1 varies in different school and community contexts, and it is essential to recognize the inadequacy of general statements about what the role of L1 is or should be. For example, it is extremely challenging to provide opportunities for L1 growth by children from immigrant or minority language groups who have not had educational opportunities in their L1 because of interrupted or inadequate schooling and who have few or no peers who share their L1 in their new school or community. They may arrive with little or no knowledge of the new language but also with no academic L1 experience on which to build their proficiency in the new language. For these learners, it is also challenging to find materials or teachers to support continued L1 growth. At the other end of the spectrum are majority language speakers, e.g., English speakers in Canada or the UK, who are learning an additional language in an instructional program in classes where both their peers and their teachers share the same L1. In this context, the challenge is to keep the L1 from overwhelming the L2 when students' proficiency in the new language limits their ability to use the L2 meaningfully. In the former case, L1 maintenance may depend primarily on encouraging parents to continue using their family language with their children at home and finding creative ways to acknowledge students' L1 abilities in the classroom (Sanchez-Lopez & Young, 2018). In the latter case, the pedagogical benefits of drawing on students' L1 through metalinguistic conversations or in some elements of group work can recognize the value of what students already know while keeping the focus on learning and using the L2 (Ballinger, Lyster, Sterzuk, & Genesee, 2017).

3. Better ideas

In the following sections we look at evidence in support of two alternatives to the 'start as early as possible' and 'exclude learners' L1' approaches, arguing that making the best use of the instructional

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time available for L2 learners involves (1) replacing or augmenting dripfeed teaching with periods of intensive instruction and (2) integrating language and content instruction.

3.1 Provide periods of intensive instruction

When it is not possible to substantially increase the time available for classroom learning, 'compact' or 'intensive' instruction – teaching more intensively over shorter periods of time – has been an effective alternative (Hawkins, 1978). While these innovations often permit a modest increase in the time available for teaching and learning, their main characteristic is that they concentrate the available hours for L2 instruction. For example, a number of schools in Quebec, Canada, experimented with what has come to be called 'intensive English' instruction for French-speaking students (Lightbown & Spada, 1994, 1997). In one model, learners engage in English language activities for four or five hours a day, five days a week, for one half of one school year (five months); in the other half of the school year, they intensively study the other subjects in their curriculum, in French, their L1. In other schools with intensive programs, students have English activities for up to half of each school day for the full ten months of one school year. In both of these models, intensive English is available for only one year, in grade 5 or grade 6, when students are between ten and twelve years of age.

The L2 proficiency of students who have completed an intensive English program has been compared with that of older learners who had been in English classes for 20 to 45 minutes each day for three or four years of primary school and four years of secondary school. Intensive English learners showed sustained advantages on L2 listening and reading comprehension and oral production measures, even after they returned to the regular dripfeed programs in secondary school (Lightbown & Spada, 1991).[3] Similarly positive results have been reported for learners in intensive French programs elsewhere in Canada (Germain, Lightbown, Netten, & Spada, 2004).

The success of intensive instruction in comparison to dripfeed instruction leaves open the question of whether certain concentrations of time are more effective than others. Collins and White (2011) compared programs in Quebec in which students received a similar number of hours of instruction, distributed over either a part of the school year or the entire year. They found that the groups who received the most concentrated instruction made the most progress but the differences were small (See also Collins, Halter, Lightbown, & Spada, 1999). Lapkin, Hart, and Harley (1998) compared the L2 progress of learners in French language programs in Canada with learners who received different degrees of concentrated instruction (e.g. 80 minutes per day over 5 months versus 150 minutes per day over 10 weeks). They observed advantages for learners in the more concentrated classes but only on some measures. The benefits of different levels of intensity/concentration may not be realized until a certain threshold of time is reached. For example, in a review of more than 15 studies comparing learner gains in programs in Europe with different amounts and distributions of time, Muñoz (2014) found no differences between groups until the time surpassed 300 hours. Larson-Hall (2008) investigated the long-term effects of starting age by looking at the English knowledge of Japanese college students with minimal amounts of contact with English. She found that those who had begun learning earlier (at age 9) did better on some measures than those who had started later (age 12 or 13) but that these 'modest benefits' emerged only when learners had accumulated a substantial number of hours of instruction.

For L2 learning at school, the evidence suggests that providing more intensive instruction for older children rather than starting as early as possible and spreading limited amounts of instructional time over a longer period will lead to better outcomes. Nevertheless, educational policy makers continue to make decisions based on a misinterpretation of evidence drawn from both research and experience that report on the success of early bilingual development in home and community environments.

[3]The success of this program has led to much broader implementation of it and also to the provision of 'advanced English' instruction at the secondary school level for students who have been in intensive English in primary school.

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3.2 Integrate the teaching of language and academic subjects

One problem that arises when educators seek to add hours to foreign language instruction is that classroom time is limited for all subjects. From a zero-sum perspective of curriculum planning, time spent teaching L2 is time away from teaching mathematics or history. Many schools around the world have addressed this issue by implementing content-based language teaching (CBLT).[4] CBLT approaches such as immersion, English-medium instruction (EMI), and content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) add time for language learning without taking away time for learning other material (Lightbown, 2014). For example, learners in Canadian French immersion programs receive at least half their academic content instruction in French, (between 12 and 24 hours a week or 500–1,000 hours per year), and they develop significantly higher levels of French language proficiency than children learning French as a subject. Indeed their French language comprehension abilities are considered comparable to those of their peers who are L1 speakers of French. French immersion learners who have had several years of education almost entirely in French do not experience delays or interruptions in the development and use of interpersonal communicative skills in English, their L1. Furthermore, once they begin to receive some of their academic instruction in English, students develop proficiency in academic uses of English that is equivalent to or better than that of their peers who have been educated primarily in English. With respect to their knowledge of curriculum content taught in French (e.g., history and science), their test performance is comparable to that of English L1 students in English-medium schools (Genesee, 1987). Similar outcomes have been reported in other immersion programs (Tedick & Wesely, 2015).

In educational programs where minority language students receive all or most of their instruction in the L2, the amount of time spent in L2 instruction may reach 1,200 hours in a school year. These students arrive at school at different ages, and their success at school depends on their learning the school language. It may be the majority language of the community (e.g., English for a Hmong speaker in a Minneapolis school) or the official language of education (e.g., French for a Hausa speaker in rural Niger). One measure that may be used to define success for these children is the ability to use language in social interactions. In a supportive environment, both children and adolescents typically acquire the ability to use every day oral language within a couple of years. This ability, which Cummins (1979, 2001) labeled Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) allows students to participate in conversations and is often interpreted as evidence of success in L2 learning. However, students must also learn to understand, speak, read, and write the language well enough to use it in order to learn the content of academic subjects. The Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) needed in these contexts involves considerably more vocabulary and different ways of using language than is typically needed for BICS. As noted by Collier and Thomas (2017), CALP can take an average of six years to develop. It may take longer if the L2 learner has had little prior educational experience and opportunity to develop L1 knowledge and skills, especially literacy, and if ongoing education in and through their L1 is not possible.

It is important to emphasize that while CBLT approaches such as CLIL, EMI, and immersion respond to the time limitations for L2 learning in both foreign and second language settings, they have their own challenges. For example, research has shown that many minority language learners submersed in monolingual EMI in North America do not succeed linguistically or academically (Goldenberg, 2008). This is particularly the case with secondary school learners who have not had opportunities to develop CALP through L1 and who do not receive sufficient L2 linguistic support within and outside of school to cope with the demands of the academic language of schooling (Gunderson, 2007). The absence of language instruction that is adapted to the learners' proficiency in the L2 is also typical of some EMI programmes where students are taught as if they are already competent users of English. Similar concerns have been expressed about CBLT programs in foreign-language contexts, where students often experience difficulty coping with the language in content-based materials. Furthermore, in some CLIL programs, problems

[4]This option is not available in Quebec's French-language schools, where laws pertaining to education prohibit the use of a language other than French for teaching any academic content other than a language.

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have arisen when teachers realized that they lacked the specific L2 proficiency needed for teaching academic subjects or for helping students identify and overcome problems they had with the language itself (Banegas, 2012; Morton, 2018). To provide successful subject-matter instruction for L2 students, teachers need training in language and language pedagogy (de Oliveira & Schleppegrell, 2015) as well as the academic content they teach. Schools and school systems need to take account of the fact that learning through L2 is more difficult than learning through L1. However, if proficiency in L2 is a serious goal, the additional effort is worthwhile.

4. Conclusion

We know from experience that research evidence is not enough to change policy makers' or parents' beliefs that an early start or the exclusive use of L2 will lead to the best results in L2 learning. In Quebec, our research showed substantial benefits for intensive English instruction in late primary school, and over the years there were several indications that government policy would be changed, making this innovative program available to most or even all students in Quebec's French language schools. However, each time that option seemed about to be implemented, a change of government would start the conversation over again. Eventually, even though there was no research evidence in Quebec schools to suggest that an earlier start of dripfeed instruction would do anything to improve long-term outcomes, the age of introducing English instruction was lowered to the first year of primary school. Intensive English for students in grade 5 or 6 remained an option for individual schools or school boards that decided to implement it locally. Similarly, a few years ago, we were asked to consult with teachers, teacher educators, and representatives from the Ministry of Education in a Latin American country about a decision to begin dripfeed EFL instruction earlier in the school curriculum (i.e., grade 4 instead of grade 6). Together with our Spanish colleague Carmen Muñoz, we spent two days presenting research findings from Europe and North America, showing the advantages of providing more concentrated instruction to older learners rather than adding years of dripfeed teaching for younger learners in school-based L2 learning where the instructional time is limited. Shortly after our meetings the Ministry of Education decided to begin EFL instruction in grade 4. As Spada (2015) commented, 'even though input from SLA researchers was welcome, it was clearly trumped by other factors – factors that are more political and economic in nature' (p. 75).

We see a similar phenomenon with regard to the role of students' L1. For example, in recent work with educators in West African countries that became independent in the 1960s after having been French or English colonies, parents and teachers are reluctant to include students' L1 in their early education, in spite of the evidence that educating children exclusively in the L2 has been associated with poor outcomes and in spite of the evidence that bilingual education has led to better outcomes (Hovens, 2002; Noyau, 2014). In this case, however, there is some cause for optimism as both national governments and regional economic groups have increasingly embraced – or even mandated – the inclusion of local languages in education based on strong recommendations by educators, researchers, international agencies, and some local communities (UNESCO, 2007).

A further cause for optimism is the increase in the implementation of intensive L2 instruction and content-based instructional programs such as CLIL and immersion, where time for language learning is not only increased but also enriched by the inclusion of academic content in language learning. These successful programs for L2 learning vary in terms of the age at which the more intensive instruction begins and the total number of hours available for L2 learning. However, all take place in contexts where students' L1 development continues to be given importance and support.

Providing 'enough' time for successful L2 learning is difficult in most educational contexts. Educators, parents, and students need to be clear about their definition of successful learning and acknowledge that the limitations of classroom time constrain the types of proficiency that can be achieved. In addition, educators need to see that their most important role is to prepare students to continue learning outside the classroom. They can do this by teaching students how to take advantage of learning opportunities – the community, the library, the internet, or entertainment media.

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Preparing students to keep learning means ensuring that they develop the skills to take responsibility for their own learning and confidence in their ability to be autonomous learners.

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