Teacher Education Curriculum Supplement
for Pre-Service Teacher Candidates Expecting to Work in Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Programs

Elke Karan and Diane Morren, SIL International (Sept. 2013)

Introduction

Quality education is predominantly dependent on the quality of its teachers.[1] Quality training must therefore be assured by teacher education institutions and other training programs sanctioned by the Ministry of Education. However, most teacher education programs and their curriculum were designed with mainstream, not ethnic minority classrooms in mind.

This paper will present what needs to be *added* to a core curriculum to equip teachers to teach effectively in mother tongue-based multilingual (MTB-MLE) programs which use a non-dominant language as a language of instruction (i.e. the first language [L1] of the children) during the primary grades.[2] The paper will also briefly comment on the need for quality standards for teacher educators.

This paper assumes two things:

a. That a quality teacher education program is already in place for those assigned to teach in the dominant languages.
b. That the reader is familiar with MLE research results and is already convinced that MTB-MLE Programs have significant benefits for school children who did not grow up speaking the dominant language(s).

If the existing teacher education program is not of good quality, it will need to be strengthened. A guideline appended to this paper provides a list of essential topics to be covered in the core curriculum. If the topics listed are not covered in the core curriculum, they need to be added. For instance, all teacher candidates ought to study

a. learning theories—the facts, their implications, and their classroom application for effective teaching; and
b. pupil-centered instruction and active learning, including what these look like practically in a classroom in contrast to teacher-centered instruction.

If, for any reason some of the topics listed cannot be included in the curriculum for all teachers, they absolutely need to be covered in the training of MTB-MLE teachers.

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[1] See Hattie (2003), ATEE (2006), Snoek et al. (2010), for discussions on this issue.
[2] Suggested general common core curriculum components are listed in the appendix.

The curriculum supplement for the MLE elective needs to additionally cover the following topics specific to the needs of MTB-MLE programs:

- national language policies
- MTB-MLE research results and learning theories as rationale behind MTB-MLE
- using L1 reading and writing as a teaching tool
- cultural diversity and sensitivity to diversity issues
- second language acquisition theory
- teaching L 1 and L2 as subjects versus their use as languages of instruction
- evaluating MTB-MLE pupils.

These topics can be incorporated into pre-service and in-service training already in place. The following are discussions of the rationale behind including these topics and of expected learning outcomes, along with suggestions for training.

1. Language policies of the country and MTB-MLE research results

If a teacher training institution has committed to train teachers for MTB-MLE programs, we assume that supportive national policies are in place. Teacher candidates need to be familiar with these national language policies. They need to know that they "have official permission" to make use of non-dominant languages in the classroom. Although advocacy may have happened on the international and national level and some educators may know about the benefits of MTB-MLE, this information may not have trickled down to the mid and lower education level personnel and the general population.

Teacher candidates need to be able to relate various learning theories to MTB-MLE and recognize how crucial the L1 is to pupil learning success. They need to be familiar with some case studies and the proven benefits of MTB-MLE for children who did not grow up speaking the dominant language(s). That knowledge will add to their personal motivation and enthusiasm for the prospect of teaching in a MTB-MLE program. It will also equip them to defend MTB-MLE, if and when they encounter critics.

After training, teacher candidates will demonstrate the following attitudes:

- Confidence and enthusiasm toward the use of the L1 in education.
- Desire to help children learn by building on their L1 foundation.
- Willingness to promote positive attitudes toward non-dominant languages and to advocate for MTB-MLE education.

Each candidate should have acquired the following competencies:

- Competency 1—Discusses National Language Policies, their implications and applications.
- Competency 2—Presents the benefits of MTB-MLE, citing some case studies.
- Competency 3—Explains the benefits of MTB-MLE based on learning theories.

Suggested training content, activities and platforms for evaluation

- Presentation and discussion of the national policies and practices. (Examination of official statutes relating to education language policies; comparison and contrast with other nations' policies—where they fit in on a continuum from least restrictive to most restrictive.)
- If possible, a demonstration of a lesson in a language the candidates don't know; discussion of their experience. Discussion of their own schooling experiences.
- Presentation of MTB-MLE research results. (Examination of some case studies and pupil performance results; discussion of implications in the local context.)
- Review of learning theories; discussion of implications for the choice of language of instruction and the benefits of active learning.
- Round-table discussions/simulations (candidates participate in simulated advocacy activities such as radio programs, debates, parent-teacher conferences, informal discussions, etc.)

2. Building language competence in the non-dominant language of instruction[3]

Since teacher candidates were schooled in a language other than the L1, and much of teacher training is usually done in a dominant national language or an international language of wider communication, a program must be designed that will give MTB-MLE teacher candidates time to work on strengthening their L1 competence and confidence. During their training, teacher candidates will study and become proficient in reading, spelling, writing in a variety of different genres, and in the use of academic terms in their L1. Work should be done individually and in small groups of trainees with the same L1. Candidates must become intimately acquainted with the L1 material to be used and feel confident with the reading and writing methodology to be used for literacy acquisition in the L1.

After their training, teacher candidates will demonstrate the following attitudes:

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[3] It is assumed that teacher candidates know the local L1 well and therefore have a good foundation upon which to build. If this is not the case, or if teacher candidates are not placed in areas where their own L1 is used in the classroom, candidates will need to be trained in how to work in partnership with a paraprofessional teaching assistant who does know the local L1.

- Motivation to communicate clearly in the L1 and to continue to strengthen their pedagogical skills in the L1.
- Confidence in using existing L1 materials and literacy methods to be employed.
- Enthusiasm for creating an L1 print environment and creating new texts in the L1.
- Desire to build and maintain good relationships with the L1 speaking community, drawing upon their language resources, such as story tellers and poets.

Each candidate should have acquired the following competencies:

- Competency 1—Comprehends and speaks the L1 using vocabulary and grammar correctly, including academic terms necessary to communicate concepts to their pupils.
- Competency 2—Uses the L1 to talk about topics that require abstract language.
- Competency 3—Uses the L1 orthography correctly when writing.
- Competency 4—Writes neatly on paper and the chalkboard, including symbols that are unique to the L1.
- Competency 5—Writes what others say; that is, is able to take dictation from L1-speaking pupils, for example, a story about a shared experience.
- Competency 6—Applies L1 literacy methodologies effectively for maximum pupil benefit.
- Competency 7—Uses and creates interesting age-appropriate oral and written L1 texts, such as stories, action songs, skits, poems, procedures, news items, and descriptions.
- Competency 8—Reads a range of L1 texts aloud, fluently, expressively and with comprehension (story books, experience stories, and previously published L1 literature, if available).
- Competency 9—Formulates comprehension and reflection questions which require various levels of thinking (that is, analysis, evaluation, creativity as well as recall, understanding and application).

Suggested training content, activities and platforms for evaluation

- Instruction in the L1 orthography; practice spelling and practice writing of various texts in notebooks, at the blackboard, and in the use of teaching support material.
- Discovery of the L1: grammar, orthography, technical vocabulary.
- Oral reading of L1 texts.
- Demonstrations and practice teaching using the L1 as language of instruction (reading and writing instruction as well as content lessons).
- Development of classroom materials/visuals.
- Writing in the L1 in small groups–giving and receiving feedback from peers, as well as the instructor. (This is commonly known as *conference writing*.)

- Practice formulating reflective questions based on various texts.
- Assignments requiring the integration of local art forms for teaching.
- Discussions on how to involve the local community as a resource.

3. Recognizing and planning for cultural differences

The teacher education program needs to include a study of how the non-dominant cultures of the anticipated pupils differ from each other and from the culture of the majority. Teacher educators need to provide strategies for organizing course units around relevant cultural themes. Teacher candidates will need to recognize the major cultural differences and understand the process of adapting standard curriculum for the local situation. Teacher candidates then work individually as well as in groups with other individuals of the same culture or subculture. In addition, they need opportunities to work with individuals representing other cultures or subcultures.

After their training, teacher candidates will demonstrate the following attitudes:

- Appreciation of the local culture as well as of the various cultures represented in the nation and a desire to foster good attitudes toward them in others.
- A desire to learn about cultural differences, and to teach about them.
- Courage to adapt standard curriculum for the local context to teach appreciation and respect for diversity.

Each candidate should have acquired the following competencies:

- Competency 1—Is willing and able to adapt the national curriculum so it is appropriate for the local context, while achieving stated national curriculum learning outcomes.
- Competency 2—Recognizes cultural differences in community and family structures and in community occupations, roles and economic activities, and has the curriculum reflect these differences, allowing pupils to discuss them in culturally appropriate ways.
- Competency 3—Recognizes different ways of classifying aspects of nature, and how this is reflected in language (divisions of plants, animals, foods, color terms, etc.) and incorporates these classification systems into the curriculum, allowing pupils to discuss them in culturally appropriate ways.
- Competency 4—Recognizes differences of material culture, such as tools, building styles and materials, etc. and assures proper treatment and understanding of these in the curriculum.
- Competency 5—Recognizes differences of local traditions, practices, dances, religious beliefs, and assures proper treatment and understanding of these in the curriculum, as

well as fosters respect for other traditions and belief systems and those who hold to these.

- Competency 6—Recognizes local resources of the arts and demonstrates how community people and material resources can be used in the classroom in the study of music, drama, dance and manual arts.

Suggested training content, activities and platforms for evaluation

- Demonstrations and discussions of certain songs, drama, and other art forms.
- Guest speakers; community visitors.
- Examinations of cultural roles, norms; what is offensive, what is considered pleasing and useful, etc.
- Classification of colors; discussion of emotive positive and negative reactions to various colors.
- Discussions, *show-and-tell* activities with various tools, implements and other material cultural items.
- Small group interviews; presentations on aspects of one's own culture; of someone else's culture.
- Practice in adapting national curriculum guideline statements for the local context.

4. **Familiarity with and application of theories and good practices relating to second language acquisition.**

The teacher education program needs to expose teacher candidates to the theories of how languages are learned, especially in a classroom setting and the practical implications of these theories. Teacher candidates need to learn about various methods of language learning/teaching such as *Total Physical Response*, the *Communicative Approach* to language learning and how to effectively use *Interactional Classroom Activities*.

Teacher candidates need to recognize that many of their future pupils will begin school with little or no understanding of the official school language (the L2 in MTB MLE programs). They need to understand that the L1 is the foundation on which all learning is acquired. They need to know why moving in "small steps" works best to build their pupils' confidence in understanding and speaking the L2. Teacher candidates need to recognize and apply good strategies for developing L2 speaking and listening vocabulary, which are essential for successful L2 literacy.

After their training, teacher candidates will demonstrate the following attitudes:

- Patience demonstrated with pupils who are learning the L2, recognizing individual differences in language learning rates and abilities.
- Willingness to affirm pupils in their language learning progress, whether large or small.
- Willingness to focus on developing pupils' oral L2 skills as a foundation before beginning L2 literacy.
- Willingness to divorce themselves from ineffective practices and be creative, trying new approaches to help make lessons understandable and vocabulary accessible.

Each candidate should have acquired the following competencies:

- Competency 1—Uses meaningful, communicative situations to facilitate effective language learning of pupils in both L1 and L2.
- Competency 2—Develops a good L2 listening and speaking vocabulary in pupils, recognizing it as an essential pre-condition for successful L2 literacy.
- Competency 3—Strengthens the pupils' L1 literacy foundation and builds upon that for L2 literacy.
- Competency 4—Designs and uses quality second language acquisition activities and learning tasks which are in line with good second language acquisition theories and practices.
- Competency 5—Designs meaningful, challenging activities that help pupils gain confidence in using the L2 for communication and for life-long learning.
- Competency 6—Uses the same theories and practices to help pupils gain fluency in additional languages that are part of the school curriculum.

Suggested training content, activities and platforms for evaluation

- Personal accounts of good and bad schooling experiences.
- Discussions of *bridging*, comprehensible input and transfer of skills and knowledge.
- *Scaffolding* and the variety of ways this can occur.
- *Total Physical Response*, and demonstrations how this can be done in crowded classrooms.
- Skits contrasting teacher-centered L2 instruction and pupil-centered instruction.
- Demonstrations and practice-teaching of pupil-centered oral L2 teaching, beginning, intermediate, and more advanced levels.
- Demonstration and practice teaching using L2 arts, such as songs, poetry, drama, etc.
- Comparison of L1 and L2 writing systems to discover what will transfer automatically and what aspects will need special attention.
- Demonstrations and practice teaching of pupil-centered L2 literacy lessons, including lesson planning, using existing materials, developing additional supporting material, etc.
- Practice teaching of various L2 literacy lessons with instructor and peer feedback.

- Designing and playing games that teach language and provide opportunities to practice communicating in the L2.

5. Familiarity with and application of theories and good practices relating to using L1 and L2 as languages of instruction

Teacher candidates need to know how to use the L1 as a bridge to subject matter content in L2. They need to understand the importance of keeping *language learning* and *concept learning* separate in early primary grades. They need to be able to plan lessons and provide lesson material in a comprehensible way, i.e. at the level of language that pupils can cope with, providing adequate and appropriate *scaffolding* so pupils will find lessons challenging but not frustrating. They need to know how to lower the *affective filter* in the classroom in order to provide a less threatening learning environment, how to motivate pupils to participate, and how to appropriately correct various kinds of errors.

After their training, teacher candidates will demonstrate the following attitudes:

- Enthusiasm for all languages in the curriculum.
- Desire to make language learning enjoyable throughout the curriculum
- Desire to adopt a view of correction as a teaching tool rather than a tool of humiliation.
- Commitment to helping pupils learn, rather than merely teaching lessons.

Candidates should have acquired the following competencies:

- Competency 1—Is able to separate learning goals for language learning and for concept learning when planning and teaching L2 lessons.
- Competency 2—Fosters pupil learning, using both languages in meaningful and comprehensible ways, in order to help pupils learn grade-level concepts and skills in all subjects.
- Competency 3—Keeps languages separate for different purposes, i.e. avoids code mixing or code switching, and "easy speak," to help pupils advance in their language skills.
- Competency 4—Incorporates language learning into content subjects in middle and higher primary grades using "L1-L2-L1"[4] approaches for teaching math, science, and other content subjects.

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[4] *L1-L2-L1* teaching relates to teaching an academic content lesson in the L1 first. When the concepts have been understood in the L1, the technical L2 vocabulary for that lesson is taught and explained and the lesson is "retaught" in the L2 so that concepts can be understood and discussed in either language. The last part is review in the L1 to assure the lesson is well understood.

- Competency 5— Makes use of scaffolding strategies, such as visuals, group activities, rephrasing, comparing and contrasting, and translation.

Suggested training content, activities and platforms for evaluation

- Based on various content lessons, assembling vocabulary lists and formulating general language learning objectives.
- Imaginary and actual outings with dual teaching objectives.
- Practice of rephrasing academic content statements in a variety of ways.
- Practice teaching a content lesson in L1, then re-teaching it in the L2.
- Practice teaching of content lessons with dual objectives: content and vocabulary acquisition, followed by instructor and peer feedback.
- Modeling and practice of specific scaffolding strategies.
- Design of games, visuals, songs, and other classroom supports which aid in teaching the L2.
- Creation of a print-rich environment in two languages, or more, if appropriate.

6. Evaluating MTB-MLE pupils

Teacher candidates need to know how to keep relevant records for pupil evaluation. They need to be familiar with a variety of simple evaluation approaches to track learning progress, including a portfolio for each pupil. Therefore the training program needs to review different evaluation instruments, their purposes, and different formats for assessing listening, speaking, reading and writing, enabling teacher candidates to make appropriate choices. Teachers need to know how to use learner evaluations and how to help struggling pupils based on the findings.

After their training, teacher candidates will demonstrate the following attitudes:

- Value pupil evaluations as indicators of strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum or their own teaching, as well as an estimate of the pupils' learning achievements.
- Commitment to provide extra help as needed.
- Commitment to evaluating pupil learning in innovative ways, not only in the traditional, teacher-centered way.
- Recognize the importance of testing pupils in the language of instruction of the subject being tested.

Candidates should have acquired the following competencies:

- Competency 1—Evaluates or tests pupils in the language in which the pupils are taught that particular subject, and do this consistently.

- Competency 2—Designs different evaluation instruments appropriate for the intended purpose and appropriate for the local context.
- Competency 3—Evaluates causes of struggling pupils and provides solutions to help them succeed.
- Competency 4—Keeps good records and safeguards these to make evaluation of the MTB-MLE program possible.

Suggested training content, activities and platforms for evaluation

- Simulations to diagnose pupils' reading problems and applying appropriate remedies.
- Transforming yes/no questions into questions which stimulate higher levels of comprehension on a specific topic.
- Displaying sample pupil portfolios.
- Developing good test questions based on L1 and L2 content lessons.
- Discussion of how to evaluate pupils without raising their anxiety level, including pupil peer evaluations, self-evaluations, etc.
- Games/activities that allow evaluation in non-test mode.
- Teacher trainers model the instructional practices that are being taught: i.e. group work, conferencing, self and peer evaluation, etc.
- Visit real pre-primary and primary classrooms and have candidates write positive evaluative comments about pupils and propose appropriate remedial classroom instruction.

Conclusion and comments on teacher educators

Snoek et al. (2010:33) state that "The quality of teachers has a larger impact on the learning of pupils than the quality of the curriculum, the teaching methods, the school building or the role of the parents." An Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE) policy paper (2006:4) states that "changes in society are leading to new expectations of the role of education, which in turn is leading to new demands on the quality and competence of teachers. Thus, there is an increased need to be more explicit in describing teacher quality."

Although those papers address education issues in Europe, they pertain to quality education worldwide. The introduction of MTB-MLE into schools will definitely put additional expectations on teachers. It is therefore necessary to equip teachers who are expected to teach in such programs to be able to do so successfully.

This paper has outlined some training components that need to be added to standard teacher education core curriculum in order to equip teachers to teach effectively in an MTB-MLE program. It has spelled out what teacher trainee attitude and skill outcomes should be and has suggested some training activities. The paper has not, however, spelled out what a *complete* quality teacher education curriculum should entail. Instead, it has presumed that a quality teacher education program is already in place. This cannot be taken for granted, however, especially in parts of the world where MTB-MLE may be needed the most.

The quality of the current teacher education programs will need to be evaluated. Teacher educators responsible for training new teachers will only pass on the attitudes, knowledge and skills that they themselves possess. Upgrading the professional quality of teacher educators may be the first required step to help ensure the quality of future teachers.

Quality standards are needed for teacher educators:

> "teacher educators carry a heavy responsibility, as the quality of teacher educators affects not only the quality of teacher education and the learning of the student teachers, but also the attractiveness and the quality of the teaching profession and therefore the quality of the education that is provided to pupils." (ATEE 2006:8)

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in a report on teacher training and retention (2005:108, cited in Snoek et al. 2010:42), relates a common problem: "teacher educators have difficulty in giving their teaching a practical focus…" This results in teacher trainees having "difficulty in seeing how what they learn in different subjects is linked to what they need to know in a practical, teaching situation" thus creating "a gap between theory and practice in teacher education."

There is one solution: Theory must not be given priority. Teacher education must be practical. Hearing lectures in the L2 about how to teach in the L1 will not equip teachers to do what they need to do. Theory needs to be taught, but its application must be demonstrated for the teacher candidates in a practical way. A high percentage of class time for teacher education must be spent in teacher candidate-centered activities, not in teacher educator-centered activities. When skilled teacher educators model active learning and teaching through group activities, simulations, and practice teaching with feedback, teacher candidates will be equipped for effective MTB-MLE.

MTB-MLE can only be as effective as its teachers. And this will greatly depend on the quality of their training.

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Additional Suggested Reading:

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Appendix:

Primary School Teacher Education Curriculum:
Common Core Components Regardless of Language of Instruction

- Characteristics of good teachers
- The teacher-pupil relationship; ethics; gender issues
- Understanding children; developmental theory (Piaget), learning styles
- Understanding the learning process: schema theory (Anderson); social learning theory (Bandura); socio-cultural learning theory (Vygotsky)
- Classroom management
- Effective teaching: student-centered, activity-based learning
- Curriculum standards and learning outcomes
- Paper work; Lesson plans
- Respecting and Managing diversity
- Use of the blackboard; use of available technologies
- Creation and use of visuals and other teaching aids
- Teaching Reading (pre-reading; reading theories and methodologies; how to use the primer/reader and/or other resources)
- Teaching Writing (letter formation; spelling; emergent writing; composition; editing)
- Teaching Arithmetic (activity approach, object manipulation, vocabulary, exercises; how to use the text book and the environment to teach)
- Teaching geography and civics
- Teaching science
- Teaching health
- Teaching L2 language: vocabulary, expression, grammar, composition; the difference between everyday language and academic language
- Music, games and art in education
- Pupil evaluation; Evaluation tools for various subjects and levels
- Relating to Parents
- Relating to other teachers, school administrators and supervisors
- The school yard: recess, latrines
- Safety, health, and First Aid
- Professional growth