Exploring Translanguaging in PYP and MYP

H-Farm International School Venice

H-FARM

Research Collaboration Team

PYP

Iliana Gutierrez, PYP Coordinator

Mallory Kinlaw, PYP Team Lead, Year 3 ELS Teacher

Angela Villanti, Early Years Teacher

Romy Bottrill, Year 1 ELS Teacher

Elena Grasso, Year 2 ELS Teacher

Lauren Irwin, Year 4 ELS Teacher

Marjorie Muchayi, Year 5 ELS Teacher

MYP

Jana Pridalova, EAL Coordinator

Caroline Hamilton, MYP Team Lead, Head of English

Candice Fulgenzi, EAL Teacher

Maria Gruzinova, EAL Teacher

Jelena Ribar, EAL Teacher

Claudia Lamberti, EAL Teacher

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Research Questions

What translanguaging practices are currently being used across PYP and MYP?

Can a fortnightly newsletter successfully support staff to empower students to use their first languages intentionally?
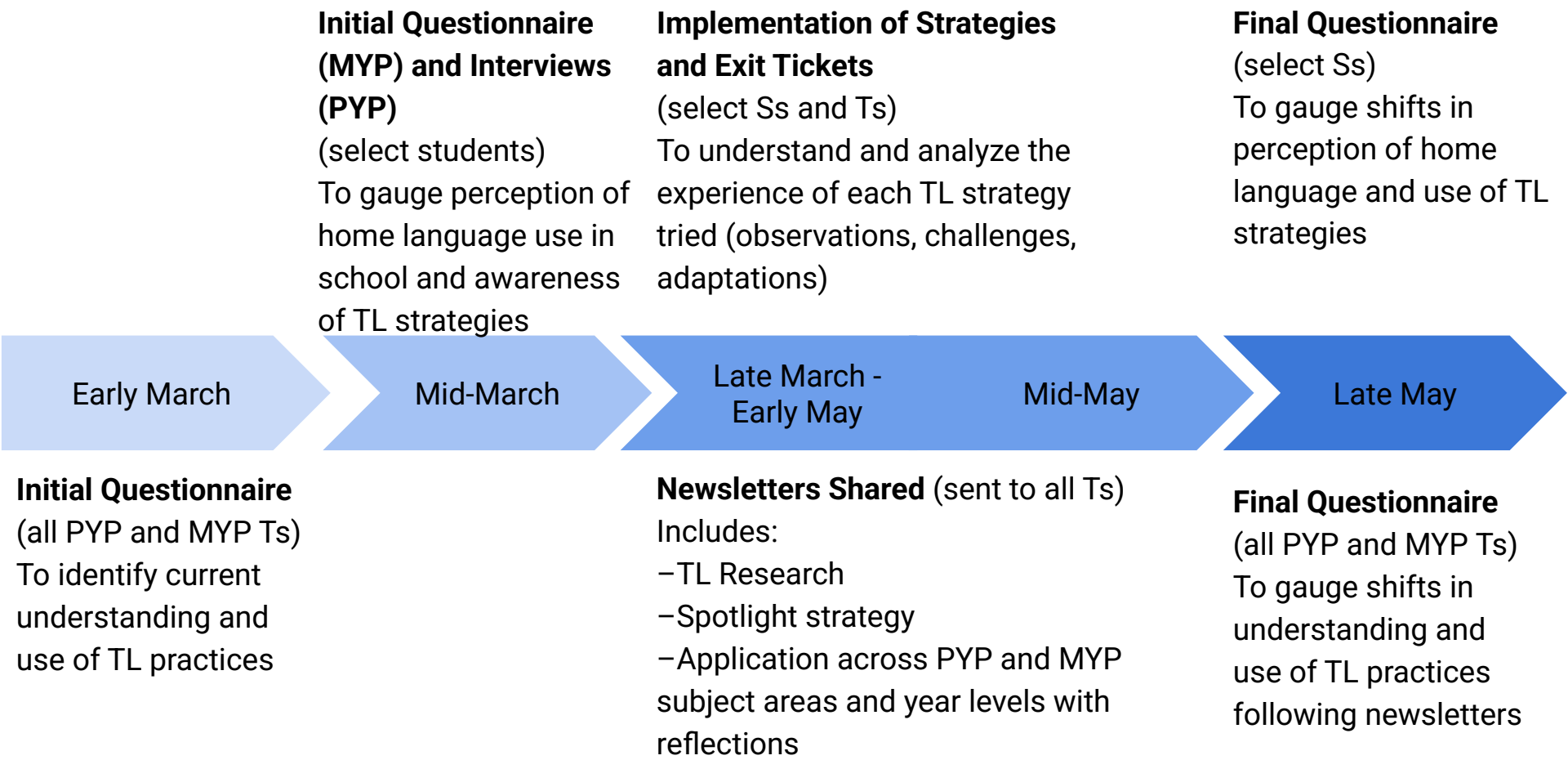
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Literature Review

A range of articles were reviewed to support the team's understanding of the following areas:

- Benefits of multilingualism
- Translanguaging pedagogy: strategies, benefits and challenges

Key findings were incorporated as rationale in newsletters shared with teachers.

A link to [Padlet](#) with research summaries can be found here.

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Methodology

Initial Questionnaire (MYP) and Interviews (PYP)
(select students)
To gauge perception of home language use in school and awareness of TL strategies

Implementation of Strategies and Exit Tickets
(select Ss and Ts)
To understand and analyze the experience of each TL strategy tried (observations, challenges, adaptations)

Final Questionnaire
(select Ss)
To gauge shifts in perception of home language and use of TL strategies

Early March	Mid-March	Late March - Early May	Mid-May	Late May

Initial Questionnaire
(all PYP and MYP Ts)
To identify current understanding and use of TL practices

Newsletters Shared (sent to all Ts)
Includes:
−TL Research
−Spotlight strategy
−Application across PYP and MYP subject areas and year levels with reflections

Final Questionnaire
(all PYP and MYP Ts)
To gauge shifts in understanding and use of TL practices following newsletters

Methodology: Pre and Post-Survey Materials

STUDENT PRE/POST SURVEYS

[PYP and MYP Survey Questions](#)
- PYP: Interviews administered 1:1 with select students by the English Language Specialist and recorded
- MYP: Surveys administered to all MYP students via Google Form

TEACHER PRE/POST SURVEYS

[Whole Staff Survey Questions](#)
- Surveys administered during staff meetings via Google Form

Methodology: Analyzing Pre-Surveys

INITIAL DATA ANALYSIS

- Teacher responses from pre-survey regarding perceived challenges and potential benefits are analyzed.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Overcoming Challenges newsletter is compiled and shared with all staff to launch upcoming newsletters.

TRANSLANGUAGING FAQ
YOUR QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Your responses to our Translanguaging (TL) survey helped us to uncover current perceptions and perceived challenges that will help us as we move forward in sharing meaningful and practical TL strategies in the classroom.

Frequently Asked Questions

If we are committed to English language development at H-Farm, isn't it counterproductive for students to spend time in class speaking in their home language?
- Another key commitment at H-Farm is to develop deep thinkers. When English language learners are restricted to thinking and communicating only in English, we also restrict the depth of their thinking. By allowing students moments to activate thinking in their HL, new English language and concepts are more likely to build from this initial connection-making.

How can I ensure that using the home language (HL) doesn't interfere with their learning in the target language (English)?
- Structure translanguaging intentionally by setting specific objectives for when and how HL supports learning. During the lesson, clearly communicate language expectations at each stage. TL objectives for each stage of the lesson (Social Studies) could look like this:
    → Students will activate prior knowledge in their HL by finding 3 key facts about an ancient civilisation.
    → Students will consolidate their understanding orally in HL before transitioning to English. (Share your 3 facts with a partner in your HL. You will each then share 1 fact with the class in English.)
- Keep students accountable for using English. When designing the lesson, teachers consider how they might prompt students to apply what they discussed in their HL into English output (e.g. after a discussion in HL, students must explain their findings in English to a classmate who does not speak their HL). Further examples are provided in the following question response.

What if I don't speak the students' home languages? How will I keep them accountable or be able to address any misconceptions?
- When teachers are designing lessons, they should still consider how they would like students to share their understanding in English (as would be the case even without translanguaging practices in place). Best practices will benefit *all students* (including monolingual English speakers). These might include:
    → Using time limits and tools such as visual aids, diagrams, charts, and graphic organizers to help students make connections between concepts. This will help them engage with the content regardless of their home language proficiency.
    → Providing various sentence stems for students to choose from and respond to
    → Setting clear expectations about what constitutes a comprehensive response

How can I ensure students don't just rely on their home language for everything?
- You can encourage students to use their home language as a tool for understanding, but require them to express their final thoughts and summaries in the target language. Make clear expectations about when and how students will be using their HL.

Overcoming Challenges

I have many different home languages represented in my class. Doesn't the burden fall on the teacher to translate everything from English to their home language?
- The translanguaging strategies we are spotlighting will illustrate how translanguaging goes beyond merely translating ideas into English. The strategies themselves will benefit all students by providing them time to activate their prior knowledge on a topic in a structured way.
- That said, translation tools can help students make the transition to English a bit easier without you needing to prepare everything in advance:
    → Provide access to online translation tools and glossaries
    → Use peer support where more proficient students in the HL and English can assist others in comprehension.
    → Encourage students to keep a personalized bilingual glossary that they build over time related to the subject (these words will come from your minilessons and the TL strategies).
- Some advance preparation is consistent with general best practices and may be needed as part of standard differentiation practices we should all strive to include:
    → Translate lesson prompts so students have a clear idea of what to do in the lesson
    → Pre-identify key English vocabulary pertinent to the lesson (in some cases, visuals may help).

How can I manage students with varying levels of proficiency in their home language?
- Pair students with higher proficiency in their home language with those who may have less proficiency. These peer interactions can allow students to discuss concepts in their home language, and the more proficient peers can assist others in making connections to the target language.
- Encourage discussions in their home language during tuning and review stages.
- When discussing the topic in English, focus on building academic vocabulary and explaining key terms in English. You can give students opportunities to rephrase key ideas from the target language back into their home language to ensure understanding.

DIG DEEPER: "Translanguaging: How to Use Students' Own Languages to Enhance Learning"

Methodology: Implementing Newsletters and Exit Tickets

NEWSLETTERS

- English Language Specialists (ELS) implement "spotlight strategy" with students.
- Following implementation, ELS teachers reflected on the strategy:
  - How did this strategy impact students' expression of their ideas?
  - Did you notice any unexpected benefits or challenges when implementing this strategy? Please explain.
  - Would you use this strategy again? Why or why not?
- Strategy + research, classroom applications and reflections compiled and shared to all staff via newsletter

Newsletter 1: Developing Oracy

Spotlight Strategy:
Think-Pair-Prepare-Share
This translanguaging thinking routine is helpful for EXPLORING COMPLEXITY. By allowing students an opportunity to think and discuss in their home language, students can activate their initial thinking. Students then prepare and share in English (the target language).

Editable Graphic Organizer

DEVELOPING ORACY
TRANSLANGUAGING NEWSLETTER #1

WHAT EXACTLY IS TRANSLANGUAGING?
Translanguaging (TL) is the **strategic use of multiple languages** in the classroom to **enhance learning, encourage deeper thinking,** and **affirm students' linguistic identities**. It allows students to use their full linguistic repertoire to process and express ideas, rather than keeping languages separate.

WHY DOES TRANSLANGUAGING MATTER?

Inclusive learning environment
Translanguaging created an inclusive space where students' diverse linguistic backgrounds were valued and respected.

Improved language proficiency
Translanguaging supported the development of students' proficiency in multiple languages, contributing to their overall language competence.

Academic engagement
Students demonstrated increased engagement and participation when allowed to use their home languages, leading to enhanced academic performance.

Chaika (2023)

TRANSLANGUAGING IN PRACTICE
Spotlight Strategy

THINK - PAIR - PREPARE - SHARE

WHAT IS IT?
This translanguaging thinking routine is helpful for **EXPLORING COMPLEXITY**. By allowing students an opportunity to think and discuss in their home language, students can activate their initial thinking. Students then prepare and share in English (the target language).

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

THINK	PAIR	PREPARE	SHARE
Reflect on ideas in any language	Partner with someone to discuss ideas	Review discussions and take notes in English	Present ideas to the class in English

RESOURCE: EDITABLE GRAPHIC ORGANIZER
Strategy adapted from Huckle (2022)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

What if the student does not have a language partner?
• Provide students with 'silent thinking time' in their home language. Instead of pairing up, students can record themselves explaining concepts in their home language (this can later be used for self-reflection and translation practice). If done in a whole class scenario, English-only speaking students can pair up together.

What if the student has very limited English?
• Encourage the use of apps like Google Translate, SayHi, or online bilingual dictionaries to help students translate key vocabulary and simple phrases to English.
• Pair up the student with one whose English language proficiency is stronger.

What if the student has two home languages?
• Provide students with the option of selecting their preferred language.
• Encourage students to choose the language that allows them to partner up.

How can I adapt this strategy for young learners?
• THINK/PAIR: All students should be given the opportunity to express their ideas verbally in their preferred language.
• PREPARE: Students may draw and/or label their ideas. Teachers can circulate during this time to discuss with students in English and provide key vocabulary in English that relate to students' thinking.
• SHARE: Students may share their drawings with others, using any language they know, along with support from their teacher. The teacher may write key vocabulary pertinent to the topic with a sketch for all students to refer to over time.

TL IN THE CLASSROOM: APPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

YEAR 5: TUNING INTO EXHIBITION
Task: Formulate five questions related to the topic students intend to explore further.
Observations:
• Ss demonstrated increased confidence and enthusiasm in articulating their ideas.
• Thought processes appeared more coherent, which was evident in the improved quality of their writing.
Challenges:
• Lack of German speakers in the class, apart from one student. Consequently, the pair-based component of this strategy could not be implemented. However, additional time was provided to this student to reflect and identify suitable words in the target language.
-Margie Muchayi, ELS Teacher

YEAR 4: SCIENCE
Observations:
• Interestingly, most of the Italian HL students wanted to do the thinking, writing and sharing in English. They were not keen to do it in Italian as they felt convinced that they could express themselves better in English. This could have been because the topic was one that they had studied and been introduced to in English at school. It would be interesting to try the same activity with another topic (e.g. family) where knowledge is already ingrained in their home language. The Chinese and Russian HL students chose to write in their home language.
Would you use this strategy again? Why or why not?:
• Yes, it could be useful when introducing new topics, for example as a pre-assessment of knowledge at the start of a unit.
-Lauren Irwin, ELS Teacher

YEAR 2: ENGINEERING
Task:
Students generated a list of various materials found in buildings and structures, identifying the names of materials and brainstorming their functions. Some materials were easily identified in Italian rather than English. The functions of materials were harder to identify as a concept. Explanations occurred in English and Italian.
-Elena Grasso, ELS Teacher

MYP 3C: SCIENCE
Observations:
"Most of the students were engaged and active in the lesson and came up with some interesting ideas. This will allow me to speed up the program a bit. However, the students who weren't Italian and had to work on their own felt left out."
-Nikolas Thun, Science Teacher

THINK	PAIR	PREPARE	SHARE

1) Think about your answer to the question "How does the atmosphere support the life on Earth?"
1) Pair up with your classmate and collect some ideas using your mother language
1) Work together and prepare to share your ideas in English
1) Share your ideas with the rest of the class using English

*Key takeaway: English-speaking students can also partner up and activate thinking in their HL (English). This will activate their prior knowledge as they think about what they already know about Earth's atmosphere.

MYP 3: MATH
"I think [the approach] had some impact on how students expressed their ideas. I could see students were confident discussing concepts in their home language first (mostly Italian). Just one challenge: ensuring that students stayed focused on mathematical reasoning rather than casual conversation. Would definitely do this again but with more targeted questions to keep discussions on track."
-Matthaios Prokos, Math Teacher

MYP 3: HISTORY
"Students processed the content in their home language first and the interactions helped them to understand and elaborate ideas. My class has one home language different from all the others, so I thought the task would be a challenge for [that student] but I noticed that, even with 'alone' thinking time, they were engaged and contributed to the English discussion."
-Simone Fracas, History Teacher

MYP 4B: CHEM, BIO, PHYSICS
"This strategy had an interesting impact on students' expression of their ideas. More than a matter of conceptual understanding, they were particularly proud to have me hear their language, especially non-Italian speakers (whom I later asked to speak in their native language). While doing something different from the usual routine made them happier, many actually found it more challenging than reading directly in English, as they are more accustomed to it."
-Marta Bellio, Science Teacher

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Newsletter 2: Receptive Skills

Spotlight Strategy:

[Preview-View-Review](#)

This translanguaging thinking routine assists students in BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE on a given topic by accessing the content through exploration in their home language before engaging with it in the target language (English). It promotes DEEPER COMPREHENSION and bilingual development.

RECEPTIVE SKILLS
TRANSLANGUAGING NEWSLETTER #2

WHAT IS PLANNED TRANSLANGUAGING?
Planned translanguaging in the classroom is an **intentional design of lessons that incorporate students' home languages alongside the target language to enhance learning**. This pedagogical approach leverages students' entire linguistic repertoire, allowing them to engage with content more deeply by scaffolding content and/or language.

> "Once we reject the idea that languages should or even can be kept separate, we then open our classroom doors to translanguaging pedagogies that enable students to use all of their languages to help them as they learn. When students have a wealth of knowledge and understanding in their other languages, we need to tap into those rich resources."
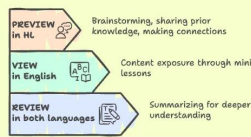>
> (Huckle 2021)

Spotlight Strategy
TRANSLANGUAGING IN PRACTICE
PREVIEW-VIEW-REVIEW

WHAT IS IT?
A structured translanguaging strategy that assists students in **BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE** on a given topic by accessing the content through exploration in their home language before engaging with it in the target language (English). It promotes **DEEPER COMPREHENSION** and bilingual development.

PREVIEW in HL	Brainstorming, sharing prior knowledge, making connections
VIEW in English	Content exposure through mini lessons
REVIEW in both languages	Summarizing for deeper understanding

WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE IN CLASS?

PREVIEW	VIEW	REVIEW
–activates prior knowledge–	–exposure to content in target language–	–encourages synthesis of concepts across languages–
Options could include: • Peer discussion in HL (6-10 minutes) • Provide a specific prompt, image, or question for students to discuss in their HL (especially helpful for younger years) • Discussion in HL with family members prior to starting a topic/unit • Know-Want to Know-Learned (KWL chart) • Students read texts/listen to audio/watch clips in HL about topics they are about to study in English	Consider this the "mini-lesson" or teaching portion of your lesson: • Students are presented with the content in English through a mini lesson, audio or video clip, reading a text, read aloud etc., making connections to the preview Ask students to share what they know so far. Build on their ideas by introducing key information, supporting with language tools such as: • Using pre-selected visuals with key vocabulary • Support whole class discussions with graphic organizers such as T-Charts, mind maps, etc.	• Students consolidate the new information they've learned in English with their partner in their HL. Students then synthesize their new learning in English. Possibilities could include: ○ Providing optional sentence stems that students can choose from ("I used to think...now I think...") (One new concept I have...) (A connection I can make is...) ○ Create "exit tickets" with a specific prompt ○ Hold a small group/whole class discussion and record key ideas on chart paper and used as a display in class.

USE IN SCIENCE
Ask Ss to complete a mind map sharing what they know about a specific topic (including key vocabulary) in their home language.

Ss then read a specific text in English (with a bilingual glossary for key terminology). Ss add new learning to their mind map in English and/or HL.

They complete an exit ticket finishing the statement: "I used to think...now I think..."

USE IN MATH
At the start of a geometry unit, the teacher shares an abstract painting filled with various shapes. In HL partners, Ss identify as many geometric properties (shapes, angles, etc.)

As a class, Ss share what they have found in English. The teacher has prepared key English vocab. Minilesson continues in English by the teacher.

To close the lesson, Ss view a new image and identify new key properties in English and/or HL.

USE IN SOCIAL STUDIES
Ss are exploring the characteristics of ancient civilisations. They do a quick 'pre-search' in their HL and take notes (10-15 minutes) and share 3 interesting facts with HL partner.

Teacher provides Ss with a text or video in English; Ss complete a guided note-taking sheet (e.g., graphic organizer, guiding questions). Class discussion follows.

Ss summarise (paragraph/sentence form with sentence frames provided).

TL IN THE CLASSROOM: APPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

RECEPTION ROCKETS (5 YEAR OLDS)
This routine was adapted to our five-year-old learners who best express their ideas orally and pictorially and are just starting to develop their written skills. This routine helped Ss connect their inquiry explorations of the outdoors and to focus us towards developing scientific and reading concepts.

PREVIEW: Ss took pictures of the garden. In small groups, they shared their favorite photos and analyzed similarities and differences in their HL.

VIEW: T led a mini lesson on Ss' most common noticings (ants). We read an information text on ants and, using images, highlighted key vocabulary such as, head, thorax, antennae in both English and Italian.

REVIEW: Ss selected 5 photos from the class to create an iMovie and orally and visually recorded a sentence in English. Over the course of the week, Ss were able to review new vocabulary and improve their pronunciation.

-Angela Villanti, Homeroom Teacher (HRT) and Eleni Tsokou, Learning Assistant

YEAR 1: UNIT OF INQUIRY
As teachers of young learners, we sometimes need to adapt language that will suit Ss' needs. We asked ourselves how we could preserve the kind of thinking that Preview-View-Review engaged Ss in, but by using a routine with clear questions to help support student thinking. This KWL chart helped our students do this.

Observations:
While many enjoyed using their home language to share ideas, most preferred to write their notes in English, using their writing skills to record what they knew about schools in the past and what they wanted to find out.

Challenges: Some Ss are still developing their writing skills. They were encouraged to share their ideas through drawings when writing proved challenging. As HL levels varied, Ss collaborated to figure out new words in their home language to teach their partner and other children. At times, Ts asked Ss to explain their drawings or writing and took notes to help interpret their meanings.

-Romy Bottrill, ELS Teacher with HRT Daniela Anastacio and Andrea Montero

YEAR 3: EARTH SCIENCE
1) Guiding question (How do natural forces shape the earth's surface?) presented on board in all HLs. Moving freely around the room, Ss share and collect ideas with at least three other students in any language they choose.

2) Ss move to their assigned tables, share the ideas they've collected with the group and collate their thinking using a simple mind map (with the question at the center) as a table.

VIEW: 3) Mini lesson (multimedia clip on weathering and erosion) is presented in English. Students take notes individually in whatever language they choose.

REVIEW: 4) Students share their notes with their table, assimilating new learning with prior knowledge as a team. Graphic organizers are amended to reflect new understandings.

Extension 1 - Focus: Changes in Thinking
Ss record their thinking in two different colors (e.g., pencil during the preview stage, pen in the review stage). After seeing how their thinking has changed, they are ready to articulate this using a sentence frame ("I used to think... Now I think...").

Extension 2 - Focus: Concept Formation
Ss review their notes and, as a team, create a big idea that answers the original question. Each group feeds back their big idea to the class and a shared, comprehensive understanding is created.

-Mallory Kinlaw, ELS Teacher with HRT Flika Carvalho and Maria Hamblin

MYP 1: SCIENCE
PREVIEW
Ss were given a short reading resource on FORCES in their HL. Some made notes, others discussed in HL.

VIEW
Ss were given a short frontal lesson. Concepts and principles were explained by the teacher.

REVIEW
Ss made notes in English and in their HL. Students included keywords in both languages and wrote definitions with diagrams.

Observations:
Ss were well engaged throughout the activity. They read the texts, highlighting important information. In pairs, they discussed what they had read and decided collaboratively what notes to write in English, following the classroom explanation. This process helped reinforce comprehension before moving to English.

Benefits:
Overall, the strategy worked effectively, allowing students to think and process information in both their HL and English, supporting deeper understanding and confidence in using scientific vocabulary.

-EAL Specialist Maria Gruzinova with Angelica Benvenuto, Science Teacher

MYP 3: MATH
PREVIEW
Ss translated key words in HL and researched in HL the concepts *parallel* and *perpendicular* using Google and AI. Some made notes, others discussed in HL.

VIEW
T explained parallel and perpendicular lines and elaborated on their applications. Ss listened and asked questions in English.

REVIEW
Ss made notes in English and in HL. Ss were then asked to discuss connections between information learned in step 2 and step 1, adding ideas to notes in other language.

Challenges:
Some Ss initially lacked the mathematical vocabulary in their home language and needed support developing this. Over time, Ss were switching between languages and proudly shared aspects of home culture with the teacher.

Benefits:
The Review stage was useful for reinforcing learning. Students were encouraged to return to their notes in HL and make adjustments and additions (in either language). While this happened, they explained their problem-solving strategies and findings using both their HL and English, which not only deepened their conceptual understanding but also allowed them to support each other across languages.

-EAL Specialist Caroline Hamilton with Matthaios Prokos, Math Teacher

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Newsletter 3: Building Vocabulary

Spotlight Strategy:
[Frayer Model + Adaptations](#)
The Frayer Model is a graphic organiser adapted here to include translanguaging. It scaffolds students' understanding of new English vocabulary while broadening their academic vocabulary in their home languages.

[Editable Graphic Organizer](#)

BUILDING VOCABULARY
TRANSLANGUAGING NEWSLETTER #3

"Although terms critical to subject-matter knowledge might be infrequently used in general language, they are necessary to understanding academic content. These terms should be a critical aspect of vocabulary instruction."
-Robert Marzano

WHAT IS TIERED VOCABULARY?

Effective vocabulary teaching begins with recognising which words require explicit instruction. Beck & McKeown categorise vocabulary into three tiers.

Tier 3 — T3 words are content specific words that are not frequently used and are best learned when needed for certain subjects: *nocturnal, amphibians, habitat*

Tier 2 — T2 words are common words used by mature language users & found less frequently in conversation but moreso in text: *examine, authority, complex.*

Tier 1 — T1 words are used in everyday conversations & are easily learned: *eat, happy, go.*

TRANSLANGUAGING IN PRACTICE
FRAYER MODEL

WHAT IS IT?
The Frayer Model is a graphic organiser adapted here to include translanguaging. It scaffolds students' understanding of **new English vocabulary** while **broadening their academic vocabulary** in their home languages.

Typical Frayer Model:
Definition	Characteristics
Word	
Examples	Non-Examples

Each section can be completed in both English and the HL, depending on student needs and language proficiency.
There is no single way to use the Frayer Model. Here is one adaptable format:

Adapted Example:
Definition and Synonyms *(in student-friendly English and/or HL)*	Visual Representation or Symbol
Word + Translation	
Sentence Using the Word *(in student-friendly English and/or HL)*	Examples & Non-Examples *(in student-friendly English and/or HL. Support can include visual cues)*

*Editable graphic organizers can be found here

J. McTighe notes that visualising vocabulary "engages students in a productive struggle", requiring them to convert abstract concepts into mental images or symbols, and then providing explanations. This is even more effective when supported by translanguaging.

What might this look like in class?
The Frayer Model can be used flexibly across different lesson phases to build conceptual understanding - in both English and students' home languages (HL).

BEFORE THE LESSON
Pre-teach Vocabulary
Model filling in the Frayer model for one word:
1. Add a **student-friendly definition** in English.
2. Discuss characteristics in **English**, then allow Ss to use **all of their languages** to explore meaning (e.g., translations and synonyms)
3. Model a few examples and non-examples.
4. Ss pair up to brainstorm other examples/non-examples (English + HL).

Ss **complete their own organiser** for 1 or 2 new terms, possibly in HL pairs (depending on age and HL literacy).

Tip: Let Ss talk in their HL to unpack meanings – it strengthens connections to new concepts.

DURING THE LESSON
Consolidate understanding after exposure to content (**text, video, discussion**).

Use the model as a collaborative activity. Students revisit and update their Frayer models with new insights.

In multilingual groups, students:
- Review definitions
- Add new examples or refine non-examples
- Create context-specific sentences (e.g. using the term in historical analysis)

AFTER THE LESSON
Reflect and Make Connections
Check for student understanding.
- Review organisers to spot misconceptions or gaps. Use strong student-generated examples/non-examples in class discussion.
- Peer review: Ss exchange organisers and offer feedback in English or HL.
- Ss add key vocab to:
  - Personal language portfolios
  - Class multilingual word walls (for future reference)

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES
How can we support Ss who struggle with pronunciation or literacy in their HL?
- Use Google Translate's audio feature, allowing Ss, especially emergent bilinguals or non-literate learners, to hear accurate pronunciation in their HL.
- Use images for examples and non-examples; Ss can then talk about these pictures in both English and HL.

How should multiple HL in one class be managed effectively?
- Translations should be done for all represented languages, consistently colour-coding languages throughout the academic year for clarity and ease of reference.

How can we monitor vocab comprehension across multiple languages?
- Use formative assessments, peer-assessments, and group reflections, allowing Ss to demonstrate understanding in both English and their HL.

TL IN THE CLASSROOM: APPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

YEAR 1
Context:
- Ss have been exploring the environment and various habitats. The initial focus was oceans, selected as a key topic for discussion. Ss used Google Earth on their iPads to explore and identify different oceans around the world. Working in pairs, they were encouraged to **communicate in the language of their choice**.
- After exploring the oceans, Ss were guided to record their findings using a Frayer model. They were asked to identify and record non-examples **through discussion, writing, and drawing**.
- Ss were then asked to collaboratively develop **a definition** of oceans and **create a visual representation** to support their understanding.

Reflection:
- Ss communicated in the language of their choice. They collaboratively translated their ideas into English and represented them through writing or illustrations.
- Ultimately, the majority of students chose to write their ideas in English. This may be attributed to the current emphasis on English writing in class, which has helped many children feel more confident and secure using the language.

– Romy Bottrill, ELS Teacher with HRT Daniela Anastacio and Andrea Montero

YEAR 2: MATHS
Context:
Ss explored the word 'balance' as it is relevant across multiple subjects and connects to at least two UoI. The definition was **introduced in English** with **examples from different contexts**, followed by a **discussion** on the word's **origin, synonyms, and comparisons** with similar terms in other languages. Students were given time to **discuss in their home languages to deepen understanding**, and then the Frayer Model was explained and used to help them organize their knowledge of the word.

Reflection:
- Students showed passion and curiosity, especially during the exploration of the *word balance* in different languages and its connection to equilibrium.
- Allowing them to use HL enriched the conversation and **resulted in some students expressing complex thinking** that is not yet accessible to them in English.

Challenges:
Those who could not find a partner who spoke their HL completed the activity in English, which made the task less engaging for them. Year 2 students still need regular exposure and practice with activities such as group brainstorming and the integration of HL to feel confident and produce meaningful results. They also require adequate time to process and articulate their thoughts in writing.

– Elena Grasso, ELS Teacher with HRT Luna Dessi

YEAR 3
Context:
Ss explored the idea of what makes a source reliable.

Provocation: Do aliens exist?
In pairs, Ss shared to whom/what they would turn for the truth. Ts circulated and noted responses the board. Some pairs did this in their HL, most discussed in English.

Viewing: Chicken Little Game / Engagement: Trust It or Toss It
Ss gave thumbs up or thumbs down to show which sources (e.g. family doctor, big bad wolf, the internet) they would trust or rely upon and which they would not. They justified their thinking verbally in English.

Vocabulary Building: Semantic map
Ss used the phrase rely upon to infer the meaning of reliable. The class created a semantic map using all the languages they had available. This helped students discover similarities between languages while simultaneously building vocabulary in English and Italian.

Transfer
Students completed Frayer models independently.

MYP 4: SCIENCE
Context and Observations:
- We chose to increase the number of words to focus on (total of 10) selected from the actual reading they would have to do for the Unit.
- Students seemed engaged and interested in the activity. They enjoyed the different components of the adapted Frayer Model. However, 10 was ambitious.

Reflection:
Would you use this strategy again? Why or why not?
Yes, I would use this strategy again, but selectively. It is a useful tool for reinforcing vocabulary and ensuring comprehension, especially in mixed-language classrooms. However, because it takes more time, I would plan to use it at specific points in the unit where in-depth understanding is needed.

– Candice Fulgenzi, EAL Specialist with Marta Bello, Science teacher

Student Comments:
Personally, I think that studying in two languages definitely helps you improve your mastery in both languages. This is because you are able to use both languages to remember and to put in your own words the contents of the work, helping you to memorize things in your own personal and special way. I found this very helpful, in fact sometimes, I take my notes both in italian and english!

I think that learning new vocabulary words in my home language is much easier since I can concentrate more and learn faster.
Also I think that a way to learn vocabulary in a easier way is to see a picture that shows the word as a drawing so that is described much better.

I think learning new vocabulary words through the use of my home language, Italian, improves my understanding of the topic and makes it easier for me to remember words or concepts. Eventhough sometimes I find myself thinking in english and most of the time learning in english, repeating topics I don't understand in italian works better for me.

References
Beck, Isabel L, et al. *Bringing Words to Life, Second Edition : Robust Vocabulary Instruction.* Guilford Publications, Incorporated, 2013.
Cummins, Jim. *Language, Power, and Pedagogy : Bilingual Children in the Crossfire.* Clevedon England ; Buffalo N.Y., Multilingual Matters, 2000.
Marzano, Robert. *Teaching Basic, Advanced, and Academic Vocabulary : A Comprehensive Framework for Elementary Instruction.* Editorial: Bloomington : Marzano Resources, 2020.
McTighe, Jay, and Harvey F Silver. *Teaching for Deeper Learning : Tools to Engage Students in Meaning Making.* Alexandria, Va, Ascd, 2020.

Pre/Post Newsletter **Teacher** Findings

Pre-Newsletter: Familiarity with Translanguaging

At the start of the study, approximately **one quarter of teachers** in the PYP and MYP **were not very familiar** or **not familiar at all** with translanguaging as a pedagogical approach.

How familiar are you with translanguaging as a pedagogical approach?

61 responses

- 🔵 Very familiar
- 🔴 Somewhat familiar
- 🟠 Neutral
- 🟢 Not very familiar
- 🟣 Not familiar at all

14.8%

47.5%

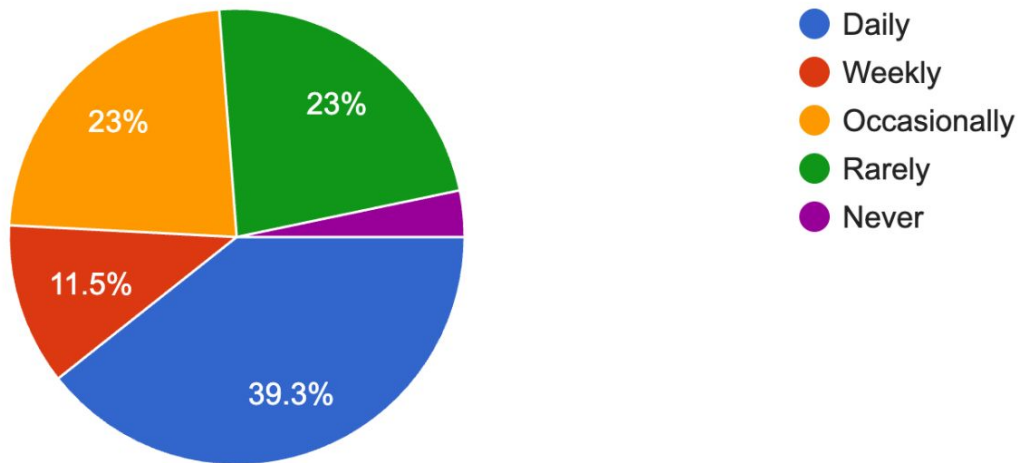13.1%

16.4%

8.2%

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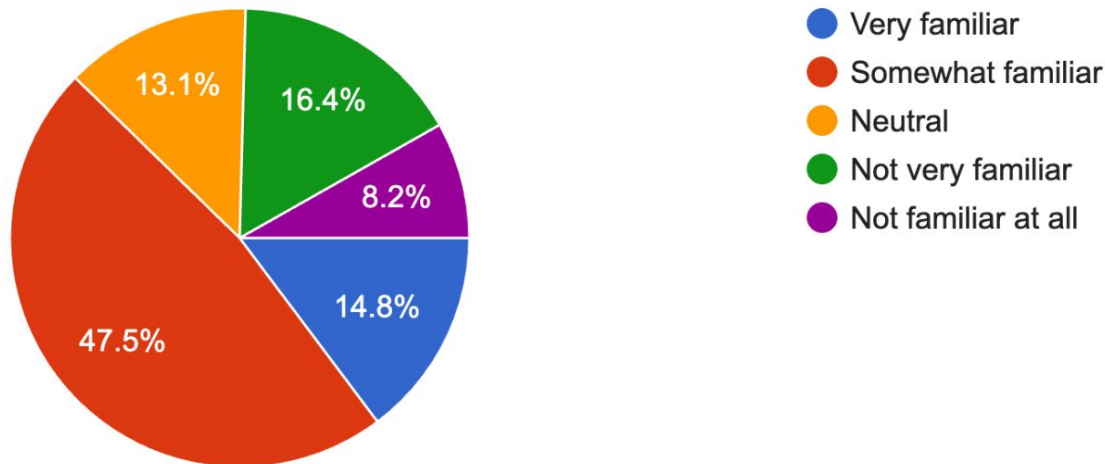
Pre-Newsletter: Use of Home Language in Teaching

At the start of the study, about **one quarter of teachers** in the PYP and MYP **rarely** or **never** incorporated students' home languages in teaching.

How often do you intentionally incorporate students' home languages in your teaching?
61 responses

Post-Newsletter: Impact on Practice

Open-ended, self-reported responses regarding the impact of the newsletter on practice revealed several important themes:

1. More Strategic Use of Home Languages

Teachers began deliberately incorporating students' first languages into instruction, rather than allowing them only informally.

2. Increased Reflection and Intentionality

Educators became more mindful and critical about how and when they apply translanguaging practices.

3. Adoption of Specific Strategies

Teachers implemented concrete methods shared in the newsletter, such as vocabulary tools and structured models.

4. Shifting Mindsets About Language Use

Beliefs around multilingualism shifted, leading to less emphasis on English-only approaches and more inclusive practices.

5. Varied Levels of Implementation

Not all teachers changed their practice—some cited time, relevance, or access as barriers.

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Post-Newsletter: Attitude towards Translanguaging support

A large majority of teachers were overwhelmingly in favor of continuing TL support.

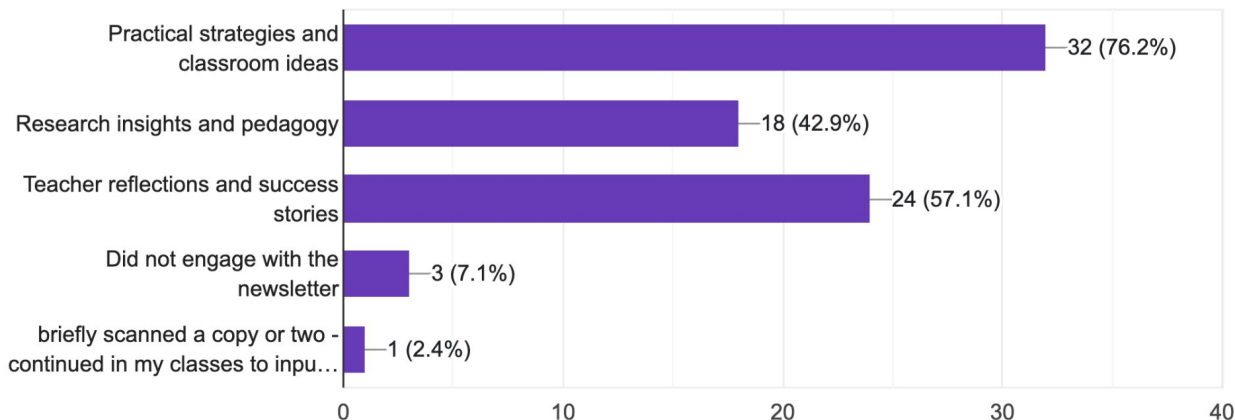Would you recommend continuing a translanguaging support newsletter for staff?

42 responses

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
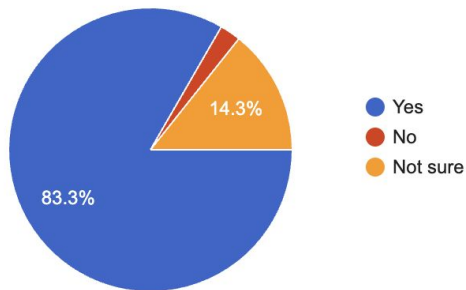
Which aspects of the newsletter were most useful? (Select all that apply.)

42 responses

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Pre/Post Newsletter **Student** Findings

PYP Pre-and Post Newsletter: Student Perspectives

Domain	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention
Language Use	Passive, reactive (code-switching for gaps)	Intentional, strategic (to communicate, collaborate, and learn)
Perception of L1	Valued at home, not always seen as helpful at school	Valued as a **resource in the classroom** and for helping others
Agency	Some pride in being multilingual, but not much classroom application	Increased sense of **control and ownership** over language use
Peer Interaction	Minimal mention of helping peers	Actively using translanguaging to support classmates and social connection
Metalinguistic Awareness	Some awareness of cross-linguistic transfer	More explicit, **reflective thinking** about how and why they use their languages
Emotional Impact	Confusion, occasional shame or guilt (e.g., fear of language loss)	More **confidence**, though some social discomfort still lingers

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MYP Pre-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

The majority of students <u>use their HL everyday</u> at school

How often do you use your home language(s) to help you learn at school?

73 responses

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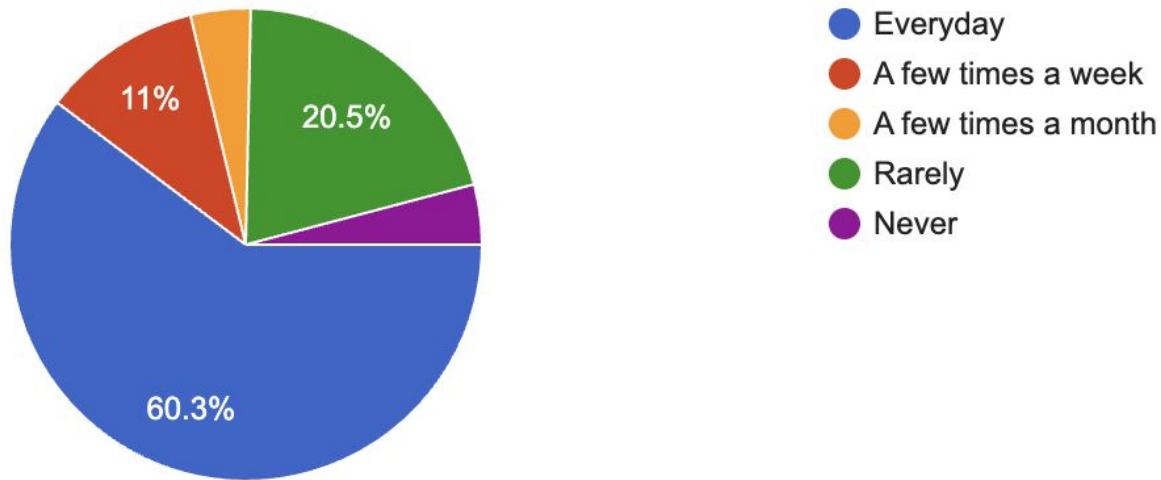
MYP Pre-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

Specific ways students use their home language to aid learning:

Translating and clarifying vocabulary → Many students translate difficult terms or sentences into their L1 to ensure understanding.

Drafting notes in L1 → Students mentioned writing "notes or drafts" in L1 before finalizing answers in English.

Peer and family discussion → Students discuss homework or class topics with friends or family in their home language (at home to parent in L1 or with bilingual classmates during study.)

Reading and researching in L1 → Some use media or textbooks in their home language to supplement learning.

Thinking in L1 → Many report "thinking through ideas" in their native language even when the lesson is in English. Then later express them in the target language.
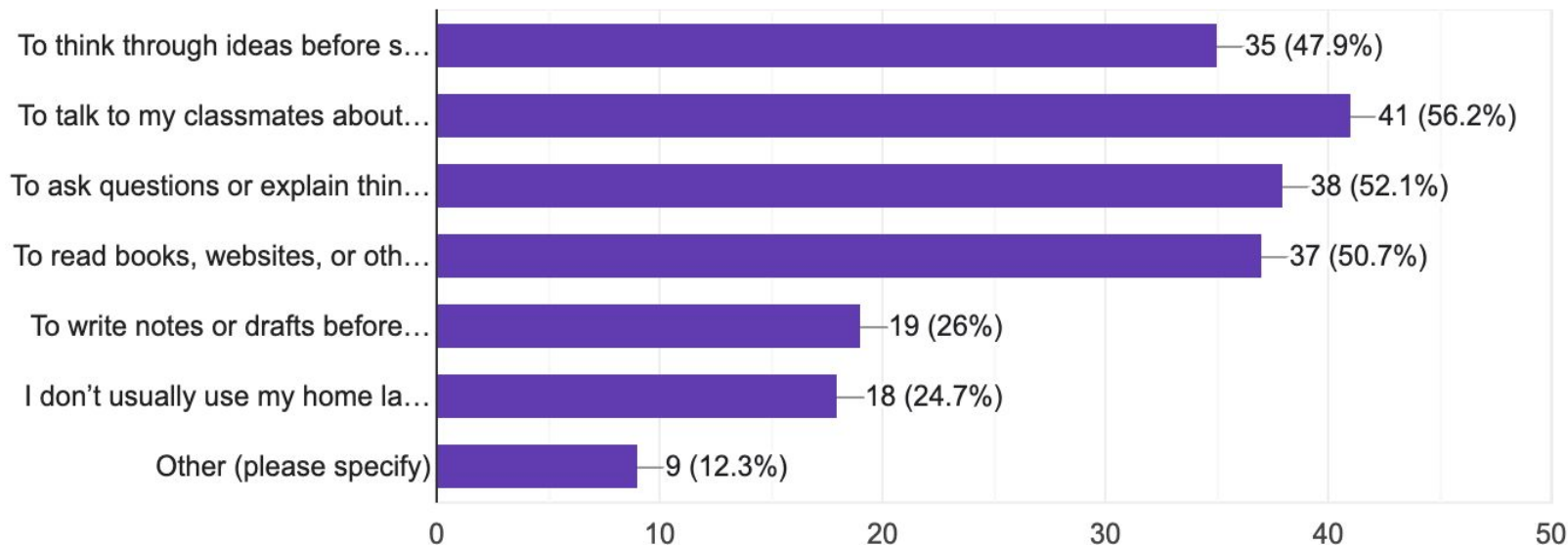
Using supportive teachers' L1 → When a teacher shares a home language, students take that opportunity to use L1.

MYP Pre-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

For our students HL is <u>a communication tool</u> first and a learning tool second

In what ways do you use your home language(s) when learning? (Select all that apply)

73 responses

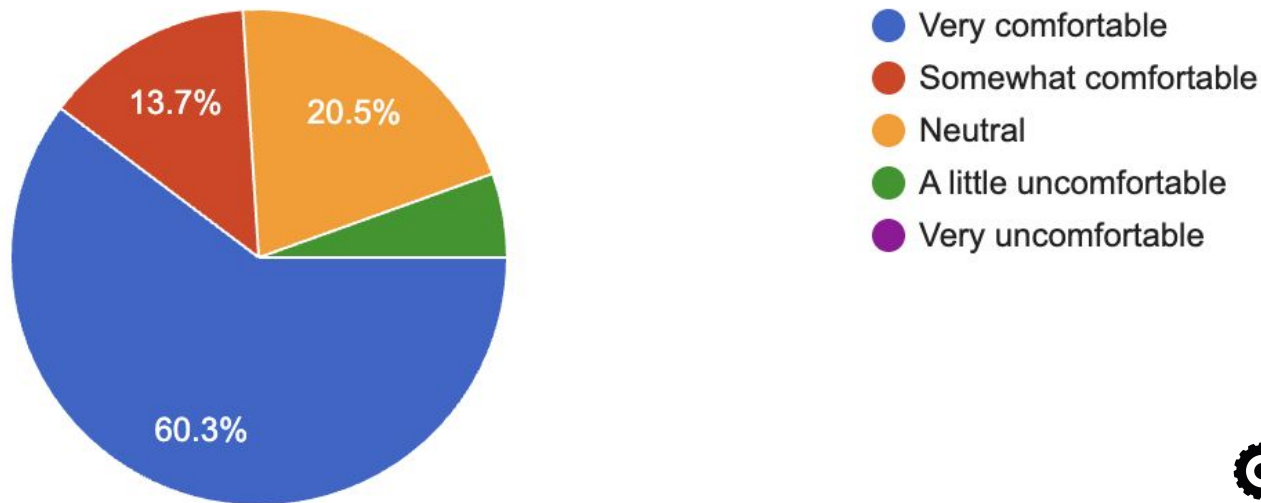| Category	Count (Percentage)
To think through ideas before s…	35 (47.9%)
To talk to my classmates about…	41 (56.2%)
To ask questions or explain thin…	38 (52.1%)
To read books, websites, or oth…	37 (50.7%)
To write notes or drafts before…	19 (26%)
I don't usually use my home la…	18 (24.7%)
Other (please specify)	9 (12.3%)

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MYP Pre-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

The majority of <u>students are comfortable using their HL</u> at school

How do you feel when you use your home language at school?

73 responses

Legend:
- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neutral
- A little uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable

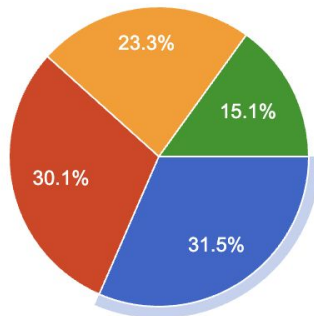Pie chart values: 60.3%, 13.7%, 20.5%

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MYP Pre-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

HL is valued but not actively encouraged at school

Do you feel that your home language is valued at school?

73 responses

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- Not really
- Not at all

23.3%
15.1%
30.1%
31.5%

How often does your teacher encourage you to use your home language(s) in learning?

73 responses
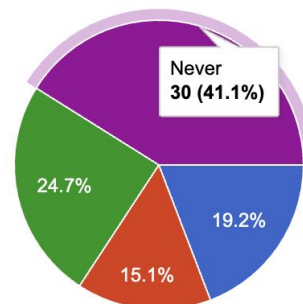
- Everyday
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely
- Never

Never
30 (41.1%)
24.7%
19.2%
15.1%

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MYP Post-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

1. Emotional Response to Using HL in Class

- Positive responses: Many students reported feeling "comfortable," "included," or "normal" when given the opportunity to use their HL. A few described the experience as "fun," "helpful," and even "inspiring."

- Neutral or indifferent: Several students, particularly bilingual or fluent English users, indicated they felt "no different" or that it "didn't change anything" because they already use both languages fluidly.

- Negative responses: A minority found it "uncomfortable," "confusing," or "not helpful," especially when translating disrupted their learning flow in English or when they were already confident English users.

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MYP Post-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

2. How HL Supported Learning

- Concept clarification: Many students said that using their HL helped them better understand vocabulary, structure ideas faster, and feel more confident expressing themselves—especially during research or complex tasks.

- Little or no benefit: Bilingual students or those stronger in English noted that HL use made little difference to their understanding, and a few felt it was actually confusing to switch between languages.

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MYP Post-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

3. Challenges Noted

- Translation difficulty: Some students found switching between HL and English slowed them down or made it harder to retain content in English.

- Grammar and vocabulary gaps: A few students, especially those who don't regularly use their HL in academic settings, felt their skills in the HL were weaker, especially for formal grammar or writing.

- Identity and preference: A small number expressed a clear preference for using English in academic settings, either due to habit or comfort.

MYP Post-Newsletter: Students and Translanguaging in the Classroom

4. Interest in Using HL More Often

- Yes: Many students supported more HL integration, citing benefits such as easier comprehension, deeper cultural connection, vocabulary development, and a more inclusive classroom environment.

- No or Maybe: Others felt that English should remain the dominant classroom language or were content with current HL use. A few requested more structured or purposeful opportunities, suggesting HL is most helpful after foundational concepts are introduced.

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Reflection and Next Steps

Whole-School Next Step Suggestions

Implementing Structural Change:

- Develop **whole-school CPD** to build **systematic and collaborative approach to TL**
- With Pedagogical Leadership Team, **revisit whole-school language policy** to reflect/include approach to translanguaging.
- **Collaborative Planning**: consider partnerships or once-monthly "think tanks" with others who are implementing translanguaging strategies in similar content areas and/or with similar ages (including cross PYP-MYP) to brainstorm ideas at the start of each unit, share successes and challenges, etc.
- Commit to manageable timeline for **continuing newsletters** (e.g., quarterly, in conjunction with collaborative planning opportunities)

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Whole-School Next Step Suggestions

In the Classroom:

- Provide **targeted HL support during concept introduction or review**.
- Offer **flexible and optional HL use**, respecting bilingual learners' preferences.
- Consider structured activities where HL is used for **brainstorming, clarification, and peer explanation**, especially before transitioning into English output tasks.
- Address student concerns around confusion by setting clear expectations and **scaffolding translation and code-switching activities**.
- Build upon this approach at the start of the next school year. Include translanguaging strategies in **learning-to-learn conversations** with students from the start.

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