



Translanguaging in
Practice:
Leveraging Linguistic
Assets for Inclusive
International Schools

Welcome!
Please introduce yourself



**In the chat, please share
your school and location**



Today's Webinar:

Action
Research
with the
MLRC

Translan-
guaging

Asociación
Escuelas
Lincoln

The
American
School of
Asunción



Today's Presenters



**Esther
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3rd grade Teacher*



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The MLRC is a research center based at the top-ranked School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



We **collaborate** with scholars and schools around the world with a focus on **equity** and **innovation** to improve outcomes for **multilingual learners**.

Collaborate.

Discover.

Transform.

The MLRC School Network



150+ schools in 60+ countries

A global **research–practice partnership** dedicated to excellence and equity for multilingual learners. We explore challenges and co-create impactful solutions through **access, improvement, action** and **insights**.

Why (not) Research?



- Only **1/3** of teachers regularly engage with research
- Research is either **not accessible** or **not relevant** to practice
- Researchers are often **disconnected** from classrooms

(Walsh et al., 2022)

The MLRC School Network



Access

Research-based tools for professional learning *to build knowledge and skills in teaching MLs*

Improvement

Collaborative inquiry *to identify assets, provide feedback and set school goals for serving MLs*

Action

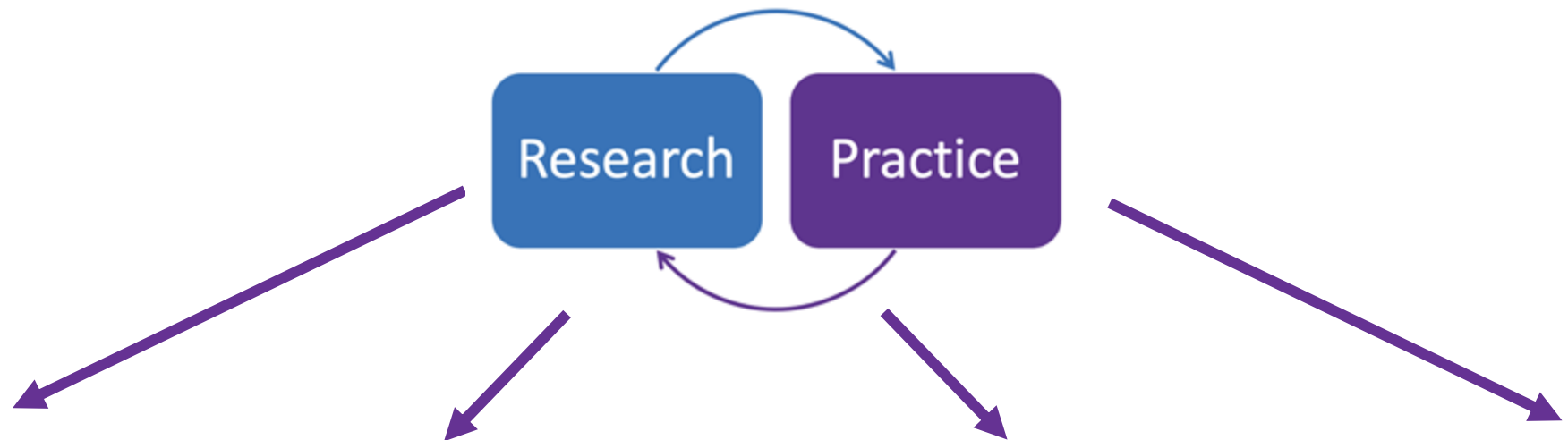
School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*

Insights

Shared investigation across the network *to create new knowledge about teaching MLs*

Action

School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*



Training and support
for action research

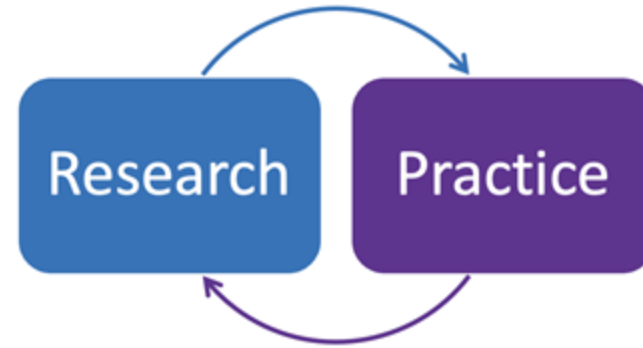
Connections with
global scholars

Capstone report

Support for publishing
& presenting



Action Research



A type of research conducted **by practitioners** within their **own context**, focused on **local innovation** or a specific **problem of practice** and resulting in an **action plan**.



Research Symposium

Learn about research on
teaching MLs

Learn about the process
of doing research

2 Days In Person

+

Monthly Meetups & Coaching calls

Coaching and
support for school-
based action
research projects

4 months Online

**Capstone
Report**

**Publish
or
Present**



Research Question



What intentional co-planning
structures enhance the
instructional quality of co-teaching
in elementary school?

The International School Nido de Águilas

MAY 2025

Final Research Question

How do international schools worldwide support students
needing both English language and learning support?



Research Question



In what ways does the implementation of
translanguaging strategies by middle school
content teachers impact the performance of
multilingual learners?

Research Question

What are the prevailing language
ideologies among SSIS Secondary faculty
and administrators, and what influence do
these ideologies have on instructional
practices and students' access to learning?



Action Research – What is the impact so far?



Action Research as a Tool to Develop Research Self-Efficacy within a Global Research-Practice Partnership

Jon Nordmeyer & Esther Bettney Heidt, PhD

University of Wisconsin - Madison

Introduction & Context

This poster describes action research with educators across a global research-practice partnership (RPP). The Multilingual Learning Research Center (MLRC) School Network supports research in and with international schools to improve outcomes for multilingual learners.



Rationale

Action research, a process with roots in the work of Lewin (1946), is a powerful form of participatory and boundary-crossing inquiry situated in schools and classrooms. Action research uses a cyclical process of systematic inquiry where educators critically examine and evaluate their own practices to effect positive change within their specific context. It involves a series of steps, typically including: identifying a problem or area for improvement, planning an intervention, implementing the plan, systematically collecting and analyzing data, reflecting on the results, and making informed decisions about future actions (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Mills, 2011).

Action research is perceived as accessible and valuable by practitioners. Walsh et al. (2022) found

OPEN

Methodology

This poster represents part of a larger 5-year mixed methods study, Examining Research Activities within the MLRC School Network. For this poster, we focus on two interconnected research questions:

What are the affordances, constraints and outcomes of practitioners engaging with Action Research about multilingual teaching and learning within the context of a global research-practice partnership?

How does engaging with Action Research in different ways in a global RPP support the development of research self-efficacy?

Participants

Currently, 110 individuals are participating in this study who engaged in action research with the MLRC (25 from 2023-2024 cohort & 85 from 2024-2025 cohort).

Data Collection & Analysis

To begin their action research, participants attended the two-day MLRC Research Symposium (RS) by themselves or with a team of colleagues. They engaged with current research about multilingual learners and designed action research projects. Then, they implemented their action research projects at their school, supported through monthly Action Research Hour virtual meetings. Throughout their 4-6 month action research journey, participants were provided with a variety of supports:

- Through the online MLRC Hub, participants could access tools/protocols to develop research understanding and scaffold action research projects.
- MLRC researchers documented and annotated high-quality exemplars of action research projects to recognize excellence and scaffold the work of other teams.

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Preliminary Findings

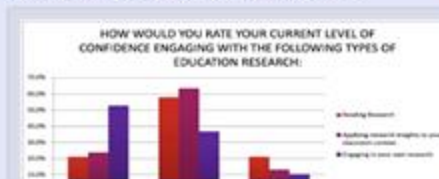
RQ 1: What are the affordances, constraints and outcomes of practitioners engaging with Action Research about multilingual teaching and learning within the context of a global research-practice partnership?

	Affordances	Constraints	Outcomes
Substantive	Researcher-lead Symposium MLRC Hub Action Research Hour MLRC School Network	Time constraints Geographical distance Limited resources Limited support for research	Quality of research Researcher-lead Symposium MLRC Hub Action Research Hour MLRC School Network
Research	Engaged with current and relevant research on teaching and learning Engaged with current and relevant research on teaching and learning Engaged with current and relevant research on teaching and learning	Time constraints Geographical distance Limited resources Limited support for research	Quality of research Researcher-lead Symposium MLRC Hub Action Research Hour MLRC School Network
Research self-efficacy	Engaged with current and relevant research on teaching and learning Engaged with current and relevant research on teaching and learning Engaged with current and relevant research on teaching and learning	Time constraints Geographical distance Limited resources Limited support for research	Quality of research Researcher-lead Symposium MLRC Hub Action Research Hour MLRC School Network

Table 3

RQ 2: How does engaging with Action Research in different ways in a global RPP support the development of research self-efficacy?

An analysis of survey data indicates study participants show the highest levels of confidence in reading research, followed by applying research insights to their classroom and finally, in engaging in their own research, as shown in Graph 1.



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Significance

Initial findings from our study outline key affordances and constraints of action research within a global research-practice partnership. Participants note how engaging with other participants at the Research Symposium and the structured process and support provided by the MLRC were important factors contributing to their success. On the other hand, we note limited evidence of sustained research interactions between participating schools after the Research Symposium and an expressed desire for more individualized research mentoring.

While other studies have identified some of the key affordances and constraints of action research, our study provides new insights into the development of research self-efficacy as international teachers engage in this work: an understudied phenomenon.

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References

- Bettney, E., & Nordmeyer, J. (2021). Global network shifts: Exploring language policies and practices in international schools. *Global Education Review*, 8, 116-137.
- Charalambos, V., Michalinos, Z., & Chamberlain, R. (2004). The Design of Online Learning Communities: Critical Issues. *Educational Media International*, 41(2), 135-143. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/10.1080/09523980410001678>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

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What do participants believe are the **impacts** of engaging in Action Research?

Individual/Team

- Shifts individual teaching practices
- Develops research self-efficacy
- Professionalization of role and growth in capacity to contribute

School

- Contributes to school improvement and evaluation of individual programs
- Informs professional learning opportunities for colleagues
- Supports accreditation processes

External

- Presentations by participants at regional conferences for international school educators

Impact: Action Research



“Research has become more accessible to me. It seemed daunting before this process.”

“I think it absolutely empowered me to...I guess, see myself as a researcher, or potential researcher.”

“My interest is to help understand challenges, new practices in learning and navigate solutions through action research.”

DIG: Dissemination & Implementation Group



- **Next steps** after school-based research
- **Implementation** or **scaling up**
- Feedback and templates for **writing** or **presenting** at regional conferences.

2025-2026 MLRC Research Symposia



Panama City, Panama - November 15-16, 2025



Beijing, China - December 6-7, 2025



Malaga, Spain - January 17-18, 2026



Manila, Philippines - January 24-25, 2026

MLRC Key Research Focus Areas



**Teacher
Collaboration**

Beyond Co-
Teaching



Translanguaging

Multilingualism
for Learning



Inclusive EAL

Multilingualism
x
Neurodiversity

Translanguaging Is...



“The dynamic and fluid use of a student’s [or teachers!] entire linguistic repertoire to communicate and make meaning. This approach is **both a natural practice** for multilingual speakers and a **pedagogical strategy** that values and incorporates students' diverse linguistic backgrounds to enhance learning and identity development” (García & Kleifgen, 2018).



Capstone Project Presentation

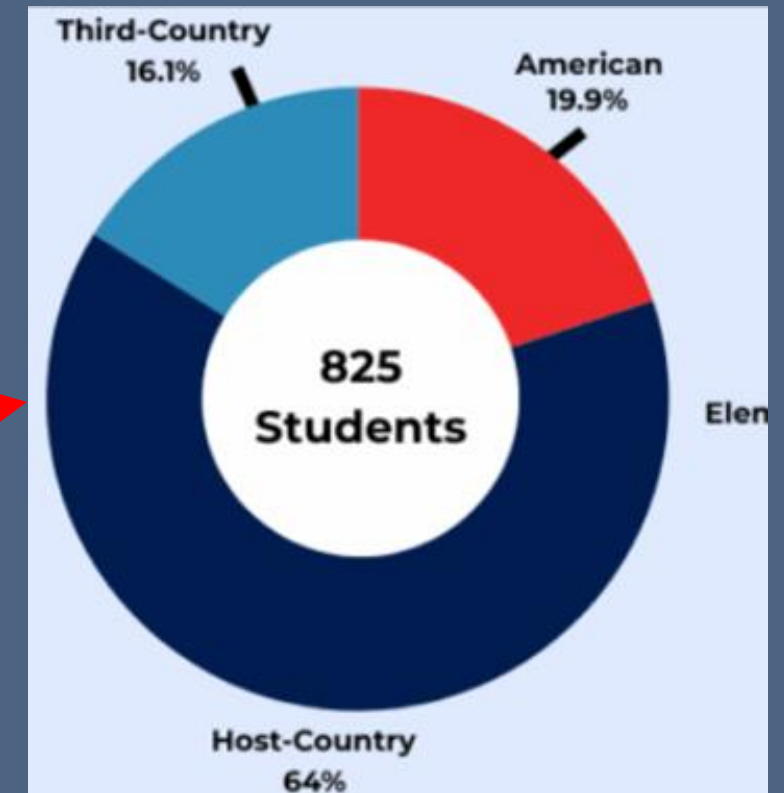
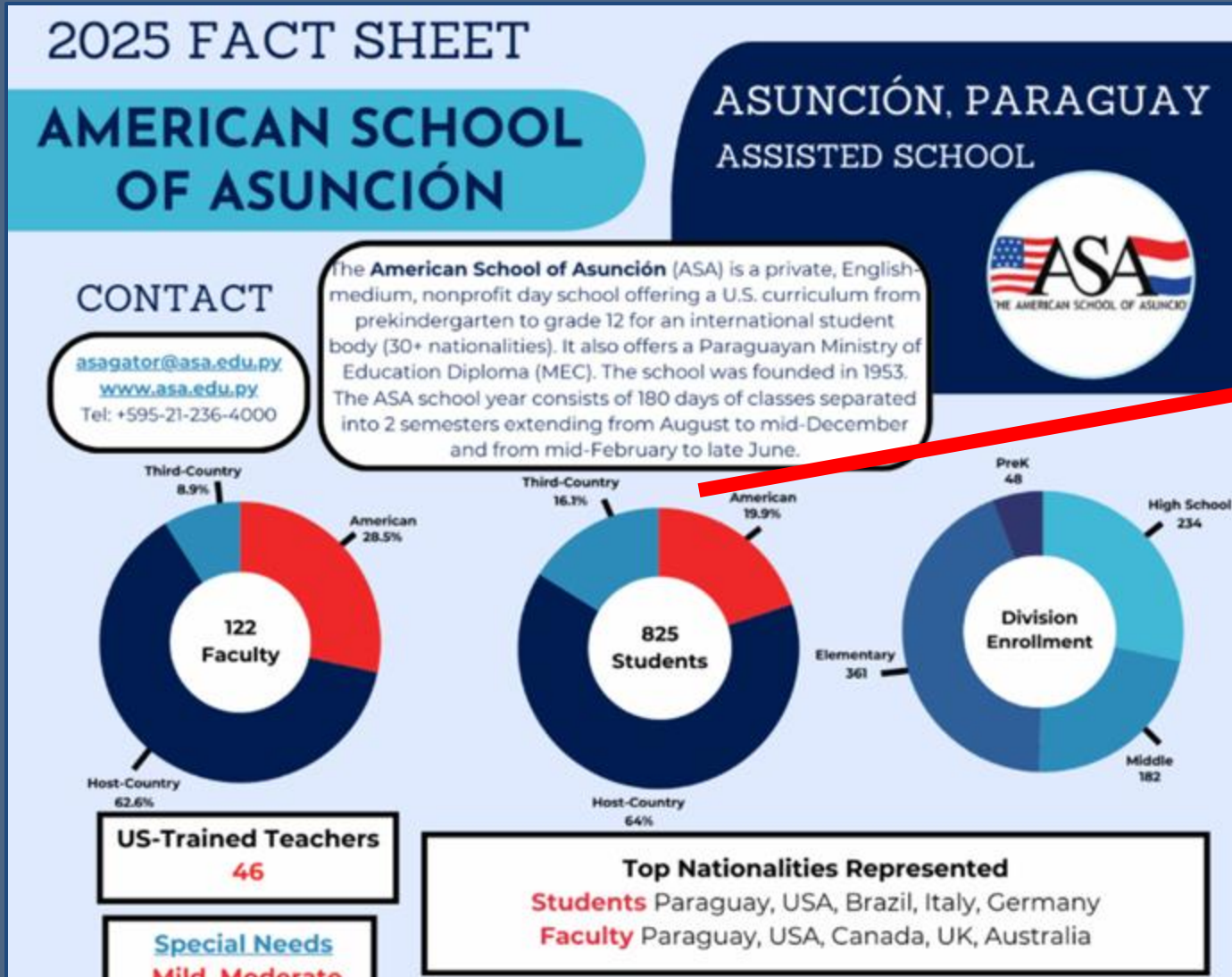
Translanguaging Action Research ASA – The American School of Asunción

Research Question

What is our staff's current understanding and implementation of Translanguaging Pedagogy?

- Importance: Supports multilingual learners
- Grounded in Garcia & Kleifgen (2018): valuing students' full linguistic repertoires

School Profile



From U.S. Department of State. (2025, May 28). *The American School of Asuncion: 2025 Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from U.S. Department of State website.

Methodology

- Staff survey distributed to elementary and secondary
- 50 responses (out of 62 staff)
- Review of written responses and data summaries
- Professional development session on what translanguaging looks like

Survey

- General demographics
- What practices are you currently aware of that support the learning of multilingual students?
- How often do they use ____ (teaching practices)?
- What is your understanding of translanguaging?
- How comfortable are you with integrating multilingual teaching practices into your instruction?

How often do you use the following teaching practices? ★

¿Con cuánta frecuencia utilizas estas prácticas de enseñanza?

	Always / Siempre	Sometimes / A veces	Never / Nunca
Multilingual brainstorming - allow students to discuss in home language first / Lluvia de ideas multilingüe: permite a los alumnos debatir primero en su lengua materna.	☐	☐	☐
Allow students to draft initial writing responses or brainstorm ideas in their home languages before translating them to the target language. / Permiso que los alumnos redacten las respuestas iniciales o realicen una lluvia de ideas en su lengua materna antes de traducirlas a la lengua de enseñanza	☐	☐	☐
Provide opportunities for free writing or prompted writing in the student's home language / Proporcionar oportunidades para la escritura libre o en la lengua materna del alumno.	☐	☐	☐

Key Findings

- Strong knowledge base among staff
- Gap between knowledge and classroom practice
- High level of interest and passion

Action Research as a Model

- Reflection:
 - Survey + PD sessions useful for capacity-building
 - Differentiate by level (elementary vs. secondary)

ASA's Next Steps in the Classrooms

- Easy access points:
 - speaking & writing in first language
 - creating multilingual word walls and scaffolding
 - using idioms across languages
 - encouraging fluid movement between languages
 - incorporating multilingual media

ASA's Next Steps as a School

- Create a system for peer observations
- Ensure transfer to practice with reflection cycles (Joyce & Showers, 1980)
- Anticipate challenges: coaching, accountability
- Support monolingual teachers

Challenges & Barriers

- Stakeholder buy-in (admin, parents)
- Lack of clarity on what translanguaging looks like
- Desire for quick-start lists of strategies
- Policy alignment and mission/vision gaps

Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

- Provide modeling: videos, teacher examples
- Create resource banks for easy adoption
- Build shared language policy
- Address both instructional and community barriers

Conclusion

Key Takeaways:

- Action research can highlight opportunities and barriers.
- Surveys can uncover gaps in and between knowledge and practice
- Moving from knowledge to practice requires support.

Call to Action:

- Find out where your team is – What do they know? What do they do?
- Identify barriers in your school context
- Work collaboratively to remove them
- Ensure students benefit from consistent, research-based practices

Q&A



School Name: Asociación Escuelas Lincoln-Buenos Aires, Argentina

Team Members: Belinda Williams, Rosario Fasce, Rosario Plohn,
Carolina Atlasovich



LINCOLN

Between Languages and Cultures: Exploring the Impact of Translanguaging on Local Staff in International School Environments

Entre lenguas y culturas: explorando el impacto del translenguaje en el personal local de escuelas internacionales

Why did we choose this question? **¿Por qué elegimos esta pregunta?**



What is the impact of translanguaging on local staff in international school environments?

¿Qué impacto tiene el translenguaje en el personal local en las escuelas internacionales?

Marco teórico

Translenguaje como expresión de identidad: El translenguaje reúne lengua, cultura, emociones e ideas, desafiando la visión de los idiomas como sistemas separados y fomentando la inclusión, la creatividad y la justicia social (Creese & Blackledge, 2015).

Identidad fluida y relacional (transpositioning): La identidad se configura a partir de los contextos sociales y de múltiples modos (verbales y no verbales), resiste categorías fijas y se comprende mejor a través de narrativas personales (Wei & Lee, 2024).

Identidad docente y pedagogía: La exposición al translenguaje fortalece la identidad profesional de los docentes, aumenta la confianza y normaliza el multilingüismo como un recurso para una educación equitativa (Wong, 2023).

Tendiendo puentes entre divisiones lingüísticas: El translenguaje aprovecha los repertorios lingüísticos de las personas, al mismo tiempo que reconoce la diferencia entre la fluidez conversacional (BICS) y la competencia en el lenguaje académico (CALP) (Cummins, 2019).

Practica critica al colonialismo y de empoderamiento: El translenguaje desafía las jerarquías lingüísticas y empodera a todos al permitir la integración estratégica de todos los recursos lingüísticos, promoviendo una comunicación auténtica y valorando las prácticas locales. (Di Virgilio, 2020).



Scan for articles and summaries



Methodology

- Team created nine interview questions and invited local staff to participate in a collaborative conversation.
- Local staff (ages 26–45, Spanish L1, 4–12 years at school) were interviewed.
- Open-ended interviews conducted and tasks shared among researchers.
- Data analyzed for themes, quotes, relationship to the research and outliers.
- One foreign hire (Portuguese L1) added for broader perspective.

Questionnaire

1. Do you feel more comfortable communicating in certain languages or contexts? (L1 or L2) — starter
2. How would you describe the culture of bilingualism at Lincoln?
3. Have translanguaging practices helped you connect more meaningfully with students and families? Can you share an example?
4. **Has your ability to speak more than one language been valued as a professional strength? In what situations has it been an asset—or ignored?**
5. **Can you share a time where you felt that your bilingualism was a barrier to success at Lincoln?**
6. Have you ever used your home language(s) to support students' understanding, even if English was the expected language? What was the reaction, if any, from students, colleagues, or leadership?
7. Do you think English holds a special or higher status at Lincoln? How does that impact your role as a local teacher?
8. Have you ever felt that speaking English fluently or “natively” was connected to credibility or authority in your school? How did that affect you?
9. **What do you wish foreign hires could understand about your experience as a bilingual educator at Lincoln?**

Cuestionario

1. ¿Te sentís más cómodo/a comunicándote en ciertos idiomas o contextos? (L1 o L2) — disparador
2. ¿Cómo describirías la cultura del bilingüismo en Lincoln?
3. ¿Las prácticas de translenguaje te han ayudado a conectar de forma más significativa con estudiantes y familias? ¿Podés compartir un ejemplo?
4. **¿Tu habilidad para hablar más de un idioma ha sido valorada como una fortaleza profesional? ¿En qué situaciones fue una ventaja —o fue ignorada?**
5. **¿Podés compartir una situación en la que sentiste que tu bilingüismo fue una barrera para tener éxito en Lincoln?**
6. ¿Alguna vez usaste tu lengua de origen para apoyar la comprensión de los estudiantes, incluso si se esperaba el uso del inglés? ¿Cuál fue la reacción, si hubo alguna, de los estudiantes, colegas o directivos?
7. ¿Pensás que el inglés tiene un estatus especial o superior en Lincoln? ¿Cómo impacta eso en tu rol como docente local?
8. ¿Alguna vez sentiste que hablar inglés con fluidez o “como nativo” estaba relacionado con la credibilidad o la autoridad en tu escuela? ¿Cómo te afectó eso?
9. **¿Qué te gustaría que comprendieran los docentes extranjeros sobre tu experiencia como educador/a bilingüe en Lincoln?**

Categorizing Our Research

Results from our interviews were sorted into 5 categories:

- Translanguaging as a Daily and Emotional Practice
El Translenguaje como práctica cotidiana y emocional
- Language, Identity, and Professional Agency
Lenguaje, Identidad y Autonomía Profesional
- Translanguaging as a Framework for Educational Equity
El Translenguaje Como Marco Para La Equidad Educativa
- Cognitive Fatigue and Unrecognized Emotional Labor
Fatiga Cognitiva y Carga Emocional no Reconocida
- Translanguaging as Strength and Possibility
El Translenguaje Como Fortaleza y Posibilidad



Translanguaging as a Daily and Emotional Practice

- Interviews showed translanguaging is an everyday reality in international schools, shaping interactions with students, colleagues, and families.
- Participants described frequent use of Spanish and English, even when policies favor English-only practices.
- Translanguaging emerges as both pedagogical and emotional, connecting identity, culture, and feelings.
- Using L1 reduces anxiety, builds trust, and supports social-emotional learning.



"In my case, I often see how a single word in a student's mother tongue can achieve what a long explanation in English cannot: calm, understanding, and closeness." (Interview excerpt)

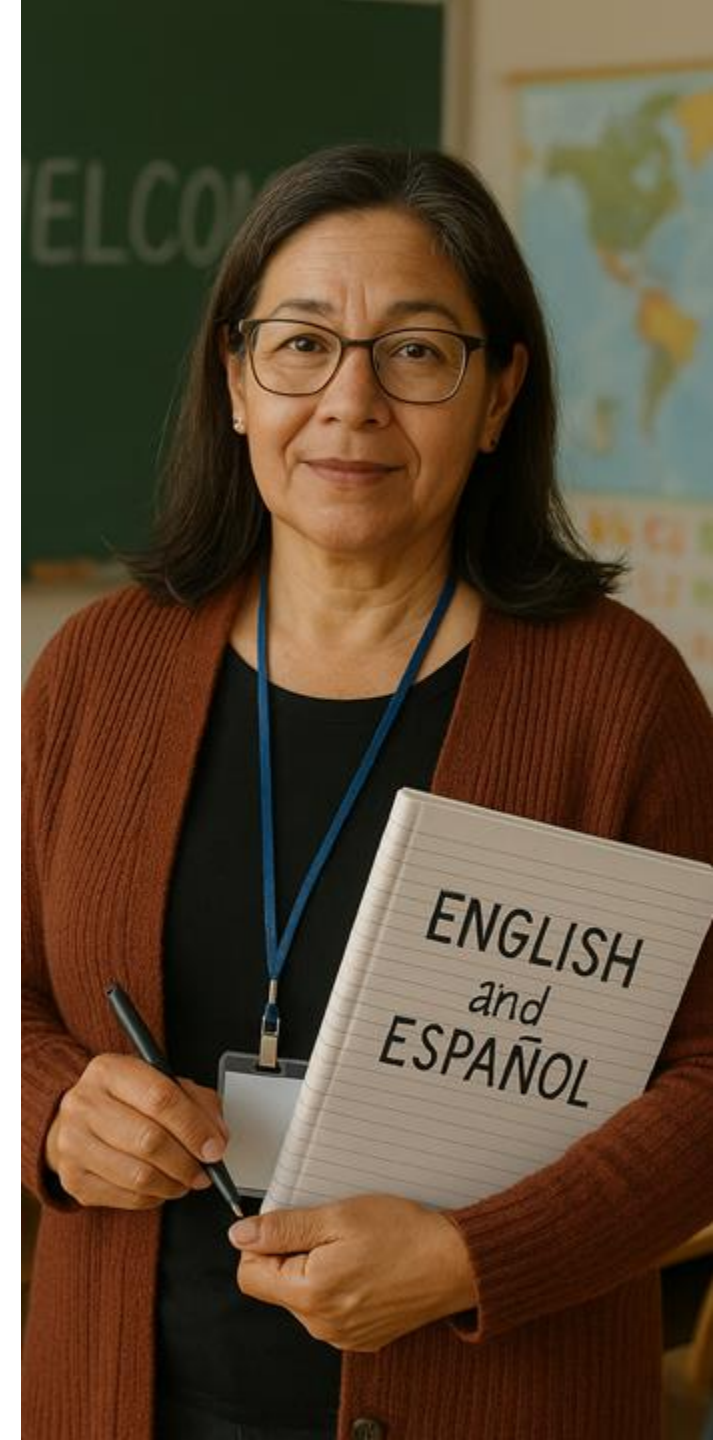


Lenguaje, Identidad y Autonomía Profesional

- Los docentes locales muestran una clara conciencia de su identidad profesional en contextos multilingües.
- Su bilingüismo es esencial, pero a menudo no se reconoce, lo que refuerza las jerarquías lingüísticas (Flores & Rosa, 2015).
- El translenguaje funciona tanto como estrategia pedagógica como herramienta de empoderamiento, afirmando la identidad.
- El trabajo bilingüe de los docentes locales sostiene la vida escolar cotidiana: traduciendo, mediando y construyendo vínculos.



“Cuando una familia y un niño sienten que hablas su idioma... sienten que estás tratando de entenderlos, que los tenés en cuenta y que haces el esfuerzo.” (Extracto de entrevista)



Translanguaging as a Framework for Educational Equity

- Translanguaging in teacher education reshapes professional identity, positioning educators as agents of inclusion.
- Local teachers want expatriate colleagues to value their cultural and linguistic contributions.
- Recognition of accents is tied to epistemic justice and respect for multilingualism.
- “*Tener acento significa valentía...*” (“an accent means courage...”) emphasizes that an accent is not seen as a deficit, but as evidence of resilience and intercultural openness.



“Having an accent implies that you have the ability to speak more than one language.” (Interview excerpt)



Fatiga Cognitiva y Carga Emocional no Reconocida

- Los docentes señalan un agotamiento mental producto de trabajar constantemente en una segunda lengua.
- Este desafío suele pasarse por alto en las instituciones donde predomina el inglés.
- El translanguaging no implica solo habilidades lingüísticas, sino también trabajo emocional y un compromiso ético (Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015).
- Reconocer este esfuerzo invisible es clave para generar equidad y sostenibilidad en las escuelas.



“Enseñar en otro idioma es muy difícil. Muchas veces una se siente mentalmente agotada... A pesar de que lo vengo haciendo hace más de veinte años.” (Extracto de entrevista)



Translanguaging as Strength and Possibility

- Translanguaging is seen as a practice of recognition and possibility, despite some tensions.
- It reaffirms teacher identities in multilingual and multicultural contexts.
- Teachers emphasize that accents need not be hidden or “self-corrected” to belong or teach effectively.
- Bilingualism is framed as a strength rather than a deficiency.
- Teachers note that with diverse student nationalities, translanguaging is essential for building relationships and supporting learning.



“Since we have students from many nationalities, translanguaging becomes a necessity in our teaching practice. It not only helps build relationships but also supports understanding and learning.”(Interview excerpt)



¿Qué te gustaría que los docentes extranjeros entendieran sobre tu experiencia como educador/a bilingüe?

I wish teachers understood that an accent doesn't mean a lack of knowledge. An accent means courage, a willingness to learn other languages, and openness to other cultures.

A veces, al ser este colegio una institución que principalmente se habla inglés, y los expatriados no tener obligatoriamente que cumplir con el requisito de bilingües, no se dan cuenta del valor que nosotros tenemos y de lo importantes que somos para esta comunidad educativa.

Maybe that the credentials of local teachers should be valued just as much as those of expatriates. We locals also have quality training. Not having the same background doesn't mean we are any less.

Cargamos con una mochila más pesada: lidiamos con la incertidumbre y, en muchos aspectos, la prioridad se le da al personal expatriado. Aun así, hoy me siento escuchada. Me gané un lugar, pero fue un proceso largo. Amo mi trabajo y lo valoro mucho y soy consciente de los beneficios que tengo.



So What?

Why does this matter to us and to other international schools?

- Every story is unique.
- Developing collective empathy and awareness to build an ongoing inclusive environment.
- Strengthening professional relationships through the valuing of the whole cultural identity.
- Patience and flexibility and recognizing the effort that goes into communicating in another language.
- Empowering people to feel confident and comfortable communicating in different languages.
- Raising awareness of the challenges and benefits of being a local teacher in an international school.
- Encouraging our teachers to model the power of translanguageing to their students, so that everyone feels empowered and connected in the school.

In breakout rooms, discuss the following questions or share anecdotes:

- Did this resonate with you? Why or why not?
- What will you do or advocate for in your school moving forward?
- Do you have any experiences that relate to what we found? Are you willing to share them?

En las salas de trabajo, conversen sobre las siguientes preguntas o compartan anécdotas:

- ¿Esto te resultó significativo? ¿Por qué sí o por qué no?
- ¿Qué puedes hacer o proponer en tu escuela de ahora en más?
- ¿Tenés alguna experiencia relacionada con lo que encontramos? ¿Estás dispuesto/a a compartirla?



Compartir historias



Sharing Stories



LINCOLN

Q&A

Please feel free to get in touch with us if you'd like to discuss this further.

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The MLRC School Network



Access

Research-based tools for professional learning *to build knowledge and skills in teaching MLs*

Improvement

Collaborative inquiry *to identify assets, provide feedback and set school goals for serving MLs*

Action

School-based action research, implementation and dissemination *to build collective efficacy*

Insights

Shared investigation across schools *to create new knowledge about teaching MLs*

Collaborate.

Discover.

Transform.

How can our school get involved?

- ✓ Join the MLRC School Network
- ✓ Explore the MLRC Online Research Hub
- ✓ Partner with us for School Improvement
- ✓ Send a team to a Research Symposium
- ✓ Present or publish your work!





mlrc

Multilingual Learning
Research Center

Questions?

Thank you!

MLRC@wcer.wisc.edu

