



mlrc

Multilingual Learning Research Center



MLRC Action Research Capstone Project 2025-2026



Lindsey Baldwin, Katherine Barnett,
Bilegtuya Bat-Ochir, Carolina Boettner, Leah
Bossom, Andrea Casali, Selby
Collison-Piokliang, Laurie Corso, Alan Cox,
Juliana de Zavalia, Elianne Verón

Deprivatizing Our Practice: The Influence of Peer Observations on Translanguaging Strategies at The American School of Asunción

The American School of Asunción

Team Members: Lindsey Baldwin, Katherine Barnett, Bilegtuya Bat-Ochir, Carolina Boettner, Leah Bossom, Andrea Casali, Selby Collison-Piokliang, Laurie Corso, Alan Cox, Juliana de Zavalía, Elianne Verón

What is the effect of teacher peer observations on teachers' use of translanguaging strategies?

- Translanguaging is both a natural linguistic practice and a pedagogical approach that supports multilingual learners academically, linguistically, and socially-emotionally.
- Pedagogical translanguaging validates students' linguistic identities, scaffolds understanding across languages, and supports content learning.
- Research links translanguaging to increased student confidence, participation, vocabulary development, and academic achievement.
- Key barriers to implementation include monolingual school ideologies, limited teacher preparation, and insufficient professional development.
- Teachers often need concrete models and sustained support to effectively implement translanguaging practices.
- Research suggests translanguaging is most effective when supported through coordinated, school-wide efforts.

- Collaboration is a central framework for supporting multilingual learners and integrating language and content instruction.
- Collaborative models include co-teaching, peer coaching, peer observation, and shared planning.
- Co-teaching allows classroom and language specialists to jointly support multilingual learners through integrated instruction.
- Effective collaboration depends on shared responsibility, communication, trust, leadership support, and dedicated planning time.
- Collaboration serves as job-embedded professional development by embedding learning within authentic classroom practice.

- Peer observation and coaching promote reflection, strategy-sharing, and exposure to effective instructional practices.
- Research suggests teachers improve their instructional effectiveness through collaboration with experienced or high-performing peers.
- Collaborative inquiry can shift teacher beliefs, helping educators view multilingualism as an asset rather than a deficit.
- Overall, the literature suggests that collaborative professional learning may strengthen teachers' implementation of translanguaging strategies through modeling, reflection, and shared professional dialogue.

Methodology: *Research Site & Participants*

Our research project involved elementary and high school teachers at the American School of Asunción.

K4 – 12th grade teachers were invited to volunteer for peer observation cycles focused on translanguageing strategies.

The invitation to participate was sent through our Director of Teaching and Learning. Volunteers signed up directly through the Director of Teaching and Learning and were paired with members of the research team for peer observations.

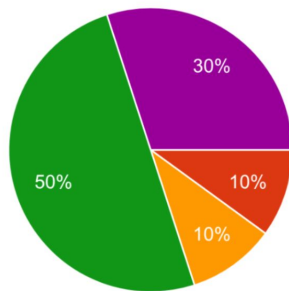
Seven teachers volunteered: two high school teachers and five elementary school teachers. Six of these participants were paired with a research team member for peer observations.

Peer Observations

- Each pair completed four peer observations, with each participant observing the other twice. Before the observations, pairs met to discuss the observation process. During the observations, observers recorded qualitative notes on both spontaneous and planned translanguaging practices. Guiding questions were used to support note-taking.
- After each observation, participants held debrief sessions to reflect on the lesson. The debrief discussions followed suggested discussion topics. At the end of the observation cycle, participants completed a post-observation survey that included both quantitative (multiple-choice) and qualitative (free-response) questions.

How comfortable did you feel implementing translanguaging strategies in your class before participating in peer observations?

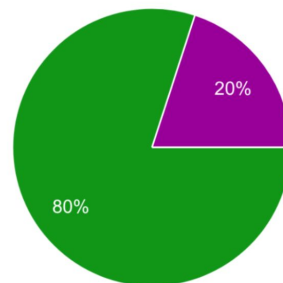
10 responses



- Very Uncomfortable (I still feel hesitant or unsure how to start.)
- Somewhat Uncomfortable (I understand the concept but struggle with execution.)
- Neutral/Developing (I can do it with a plan, but it doesn't feel natural yet.)
- Comfortable (I feel confident integrating these into most lessons.)
- Very Comfortable (It is a seamless part of my teaching practice.)

After our observation sessions, how comfortable do you feel implementing translanguaging strategies in class?

10 responses



- Very Uncomfortable (I still feel hesitant or unsure how to start.)
- Somewhat Uncomfortable (I understand the concept but struggle with execution.)
- Neutral/Developing (I can do it with a plan, but it doesn't feel natural yet.)
- Comfortable (I feel confident integrating these into most lessons.)
- Very Comfortable (It is a seamless part of my teaching practice.)

- 17 out of 24 Observations = 71% of planned observations were completed
- 16 out of 24 Observations = 67% of debrief conversations happened and were recorded
- 9 out of 12 Post-Observation Surveys = 75% of surveys were completed
- 78% of participants said that they felt “comfortable” or “very comfortable” about implementing translanguaging strategies in their classroom BEFORE the peer observations
- 22% of participants stated feeling “neutral/developing” or “somewhat uncomfortable” about implementing translanguaging strategies in their classroom BEFORE the peer observations

- 0% of participants stated feeling “neutral/developing” or “somewhat uncomfortable” about implementing translanguaging strategies in their classroom AFTER the peer observations
- 100% of participants reported feeling “comfortable or very comfortable” AFTER the peer observations.
- 100% of the participants said that this was a positive experience
- 100% of participants said that they would like to do more peer observations and learning in the future
- Strategies that were used the most: multilingual word walls/anchor charts, cognate awareness activities, translating, and using L1 to process ideas.

Conclusion #1: Teachers Valued This Opportunity

All respondents valued learning from colleagues and 100% expressed interest in continuing peer observations.

Participants strongly supported a “teachers teaching teachers” model of professional learning.

They emphasized the need for flexibility due to time constraints; fixed pairs were not always effective, and small groups were often preferred.

As volunteers (“first responders”), participants were already highly motivated.

Overall, peer observation was seen as increasing accountability and strengthening the use of effective practices, with a need for clearer structure (protocols, pre-observation prep, and focused goals).

Conclusion #1: Teachers Valued This Opportunity

Strategies that were used the most: multilingual word walls/anchor charts, translating, using L1 to process ideas.

17 out of 24 Observations = 71% of planned observations were completed

16 out of 24 Observations = 67% of debrief conversations happened and were recorded

75% of participants said that they felt “comfortable or very comfortable” BEFORE the peer observations.

100% of participants said that they felt “comfortable or very comfortable” AFTER the peer observations.

100% of the participants said that this was a positive experience

100% of participants said that they would like to do more peer observations and learning in the future

Conclusion #2: Increased Comfort & Refined Understanding

Overall comfort with translanguageing increased from 75% to 100% (“comfortable/very comfortable”) after the observation cycle.

“Very comfortable” decreased from 25% to 12%, suggesting a possible recalibration of understanding rather than reduced confidence.

Observations prompted reflection on what counts as translanguageing, with some participants asking foundational questions (e.g., “What exactly is translanguageing?”).

Vocabulary strategies (word walls, cognates, morphology) were the most accessible entry point across classrooms, with variation by grade level and language of instruction.

Findings point to the need for clearer shared definitions, a school-wide language policy, and continued targeted professional development.

Conclusion #3: Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations related to scale, structure, and participation. The **sample size was small**, and participation was limited to volunteers, which introduces potential selection bias.

Time constraints and scheduling challenges also affected implementation. Not all participants were able to complete the full cycle of four observations and debriefs, largely due to limited common planning time.

There was also **variation in participants' prior understanding of translanguaging** and a lack of shared clarity within the school context (e.g., bilingual vs. biliterate goals). This points to broader ambiguity around language expectations at ASA.

These limitations suggest the **need for more intentional structures** moving forward, including protected planning and debrief time, clearer protocols, and potentially the development of a school-wide language policy.

Conclusion #3: Limitations & Next Steps

While this study aimed to examine the **impact of peer observation cycles on the use of translanguaging strategies, it did not fully capture or measure that impact.** This will be an important focus for future cycles of research.

Further research is needed in several key areas: the development of a school-wide language policy; and deeper exploration of how professional learning translates into sustained classroom practice, building on last year's findings around "transfer to practice," which suggested the need for continued training and conceptual clarity.

Future studies should also examine the impact of peer observation and reflective coaching cycles on student learning and achievement, not just teacher perceptions and comfort.

Moving forward, this work may develop into a more structured peer visits/peer observations pilot program to **determine whether peer observation cycles actually increase consistent use of translanguaging strategies in classrooms**

- and in turn -

whether increased use of translanguaging strategies leads to improved student learning and achievement, which is the ultimate goal of this work.

Our findings matter to our school because **our staff has a lot of knowledge and expertise in the area of multilingual learning, but we want to use more of it in our daily practice.**

- and -

Our findings matter to the field of education because **peer observations might help bridge the gap between teacher knowledge and classroom practice.**

Thank you MLRC Team
for pulling us together
(again!) to do this
amazing work with you.

**Our team is better for
it...our staff is better for
it...and most
importantly...our
students are better for
it!**

You are changing the
world...all the way down
here in Paraguay! We
cannot wait to see you in
the fall of 2026!

