

MLRC

Action Research

Sustaining co-planning in a highly multilingual international school.

Instructional Design & Organizational
Conditions



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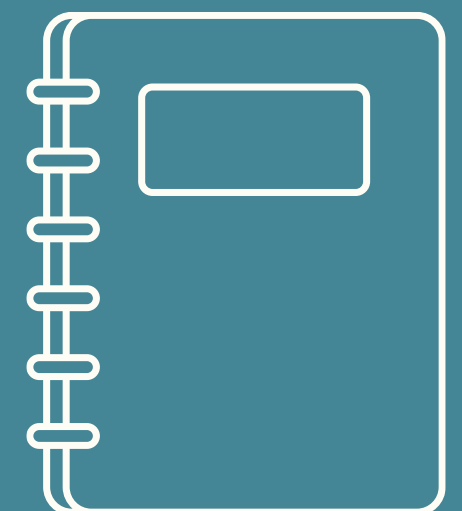
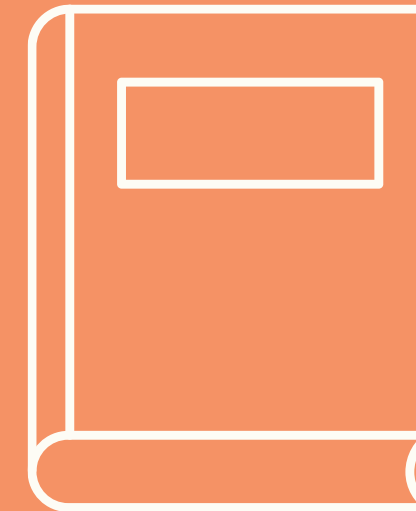


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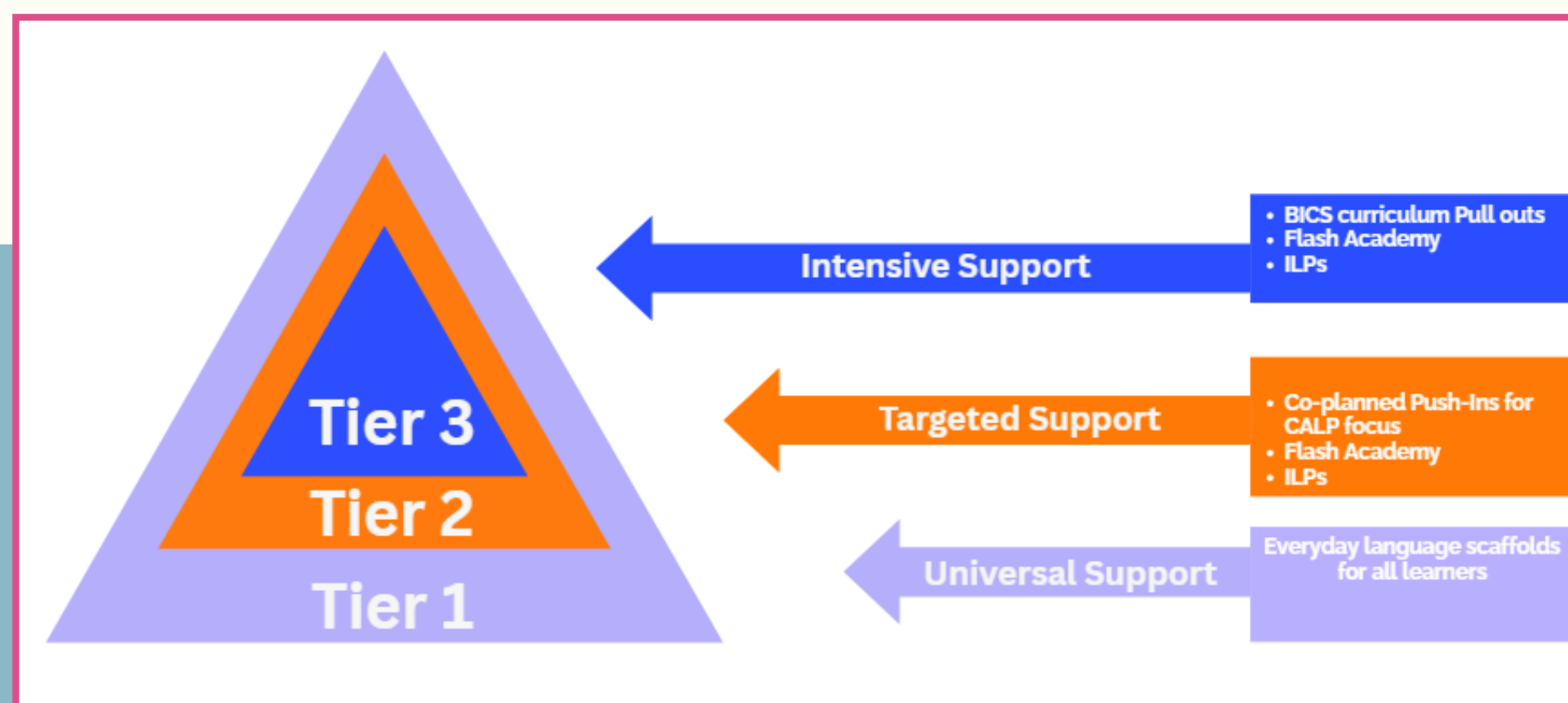
01

Introduction & Context

Introduction & Context

Westlink International School is a highly multilingual international school where English is the MLOE. Approximately 99% of students speak a language other than English and students enter the school with a wide range of proficiency levels, from beginner to near-native speaker.

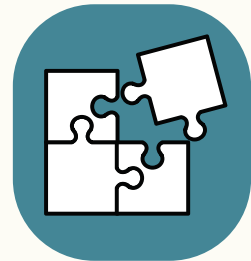
The school is in the process of implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support to ensure all students can access the curriculum. The foundation of an MTSS is Tier 1 universal support, where effective instructional design to support language learning and learner access is key. As part of the iSP group, all teachers in the school have access to high quality online learning via the learning hub to support their skills development in this area. Alongside this, collaborative working practices such as co-planning are developing to merge content and language learning across the school. Collaboration is the focus of this research.



A focus on collaboration



A focus on collaboration was chosen because language specialists and subject/homeroom teachers working together is key to the success of a multi-tiered system of support.



Classroom teachers and language specialists bring different expertise, but this is not always fully connected in day-to-day teaching.



Collaboration between teachers is known to be important, but how collaboration translates into classroom practice is unclear.



02

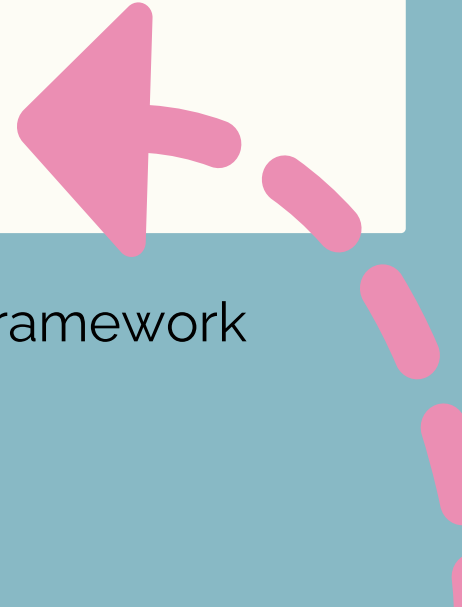
Research Question



Research Question

This study examines the conditions that support sustained collaboration between language specialists and classroom teachers:

What instructional design features and organizational conditions are necessary to sustain effective co-planning between language specialists and classroom teachers to improve multilingual learners' access to high-impact learning in a highly multilingual international school?



*Note: 'High Impact Learning' here is a term defined by iSP's Learning First framework

Evolution of the research question

The study originally began with the question:

How does co-planning between classroom teachers and EAL practitioners affect multilingual learners' access to high-impact learning experiences as defined by the ISP Learning First framework?

However, changes within the school alongside initial findings from the literature review suggested that the first challenge was not measuring the impact of co-planning but understanding how it can be sustained in practice.

As a result, the research focus shifted from measuring impact to identifying the instructional and organizational conditions required to sustain effective co-planning. This shift allowed the study to focus on the structural factors that enable multilingual learner access, rather than assuming collaboration was already consistently established.



Why Co-Planning Matters

Co-planning has clear potential to improve access to learning, but sustaining it is difficult in practice. In international school contexts, staff turnover, changing roles, and ongoing organizational shifts can disrupt collaborative routines. While intentions are often strong, consistency is harder to maintain over time.

When these structures weaken, support can drift towards a compensatory model. In practice, the role of the Language Specialist can drift towards primarily providing direct, in-class assistance to the most high-needs students, rather than shaping the design of instruction. Whilst this function can be a part of a co-planning and co-teaching role, if the role is unable to move beyond into true partnership, impact is limited. The underlying language demands of lessons may remain unaddressed, support can become reactive rather than preventative, and ultimately the success of the collaboration depends more on individual relationships than on shared systems.

Over time, this creates a risk that co-planning becomes inconsistent and difficult to sustain. To understand how co-planning can be sustained, it is necessary to examine the conditions that enable it to function as intended. This study therefore focuses on the gap between the intended model and what is enacted in practice and explores the factors that contribute to that gap.

03

Literature Review

Literature Review: Framing the Study

We read:

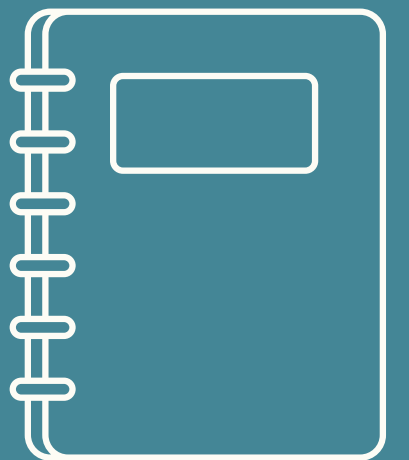
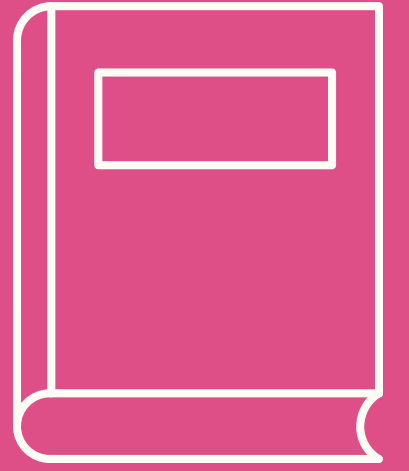
- Work on multilingual learners and academic language to understand what supports access to classroom learning.
- Research on collaboration and co-planning to explore how language and subject expertise can work together.
- Studies on instructional design and school structures to examine what makes these approaches sustainable in practice
- This review also considers the conditions required for collaboration to function effectively in practice



Multilingual Learner Access and Academic Language

Key points from the research:

- Multilingual learners must develop academic language alongside disciplinary knowledge in order to participate fully in classroom learning.
- Academic language enables learners to explain ideas and reasoning, interpret complex texts and participate in disciplinary discussions
- Academic language also allows a learner to demonstrate understanding of content, something that risks being missed by teachers who mistake a language gap for a gap in understanding.
- Research suggests that language development is most effective when it occurs within meaningful academic learning contexts rather than in isolation.
- Effective classrooms therefore integrate language development with disciplinary learning through scaffolded participation in academic tasks.



References:

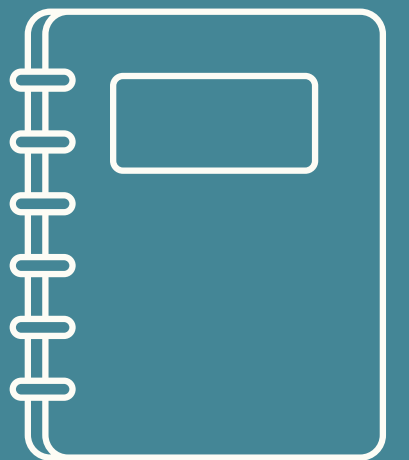
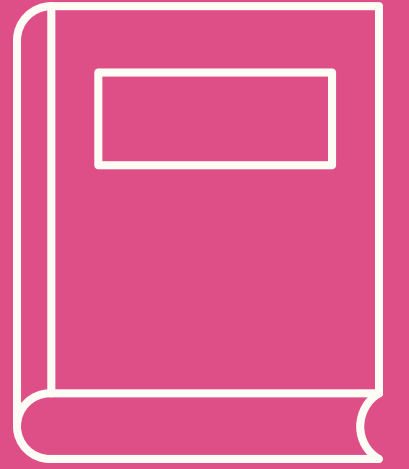
Cummins (2000); Gibbons (2015); Walqui & van Lier (2010); Goldenberg (2008); August & Shanahan (2006)

Collaboration and Instructional Intensification

Key points from the research:

- Many school systems organize multilingual learner support through layered instructional models, where language expertise complements classroom teaching.
- Within these systems classroom teachers lead disciplinary instruction whilst language specialists contribute expertise in language development. Thus, collaborative planning supports integration of language and content
- Research suggests that effective models rely on collaboration between content and language specialists to design instruction that supports multilingual learners.
- Where collaboration is limited, language support may become reactive and focused on individual learners rather than shaping classroom instruction.
- This places increased importance on the quality of Tier 1 classroom instruction, where language and content are integrated

References: DeVoss (2023); Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie (2007); Whiting (2017)



Co-Planning as a Mechanism for Language–Content Integration

Key points from research:

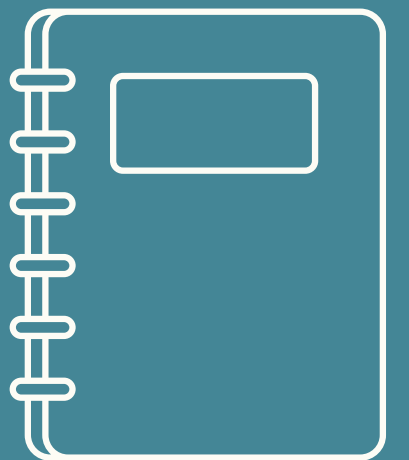
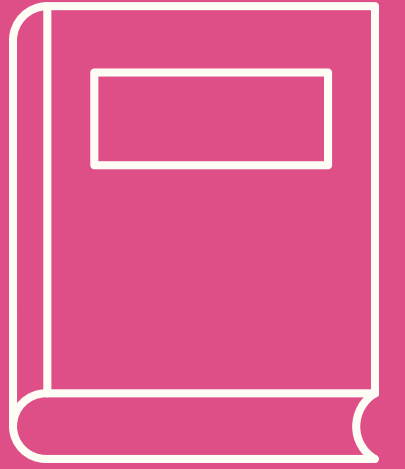
Co-planning is frequently identified as the key mechanism that enables teachers to integrate content expertise and language expertise.

Through collaborative planning, teachers can:

- identify potential language barriers in upcoming lessons
- design scaffolds to support participation in disciplinary tasks
- anticipate linguistic demands of academic activities
- align language objectives with learning goals

However, co-planning is dependent on organizational conditions and the capacity of language specialists to contribute meaningfully to instructional design.

References: Ní Ríordáin & Neville (2021); Scruggs et al. (2007); Atobatele et al. (2024)



Features for successful lessons and successful collaboration.

The research suggested these instructional features were key to supporting access for MLLs:

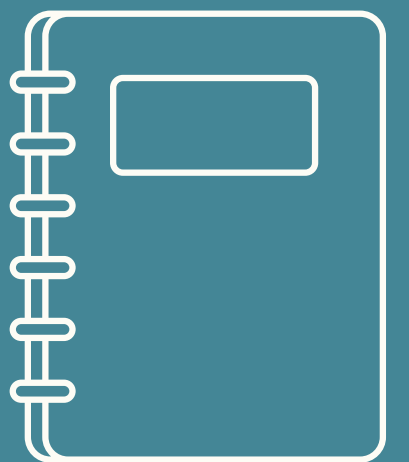
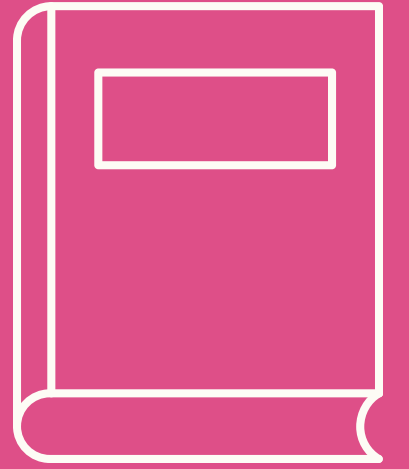
1. Explicit teaching of academic language
2. Scaffolding of disciplinary discourse (*how each subject uses language to explain and discuss ideas*).
3. Structured opportunities for student talk.
4. Modelling and guided practice.
5. Cognitive demand not reduced, but supported.

The aim is to enable multilingual learners to engage in challenging learning while developing language proficiency. Co-planning can achieve this, but to be successful, the following collaboration design features should be met:

1. Structured planning conversations (note-taking templates, planning documents etc.)
2. Clearly established goals: *what students should learn, what success looks like and how student will get there.*
3. Clarity around teacher roles and responsibilities.
4. Shared responsibility for student learning.

Where collaborative structures are well established, teachers are more likely to integrate language support within mainstream instruction.

References: Gibbons (2015); Hammond (2015); Walqui & van Lier (2010); Theobald et al. (2020) Scruggs et al. (2007); Simmons & Magiera (2007); Howard & Potts (2009)

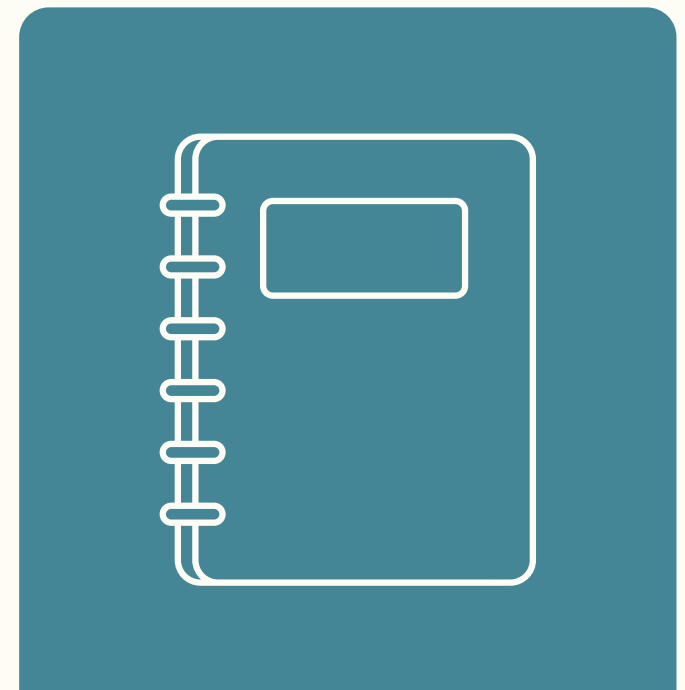
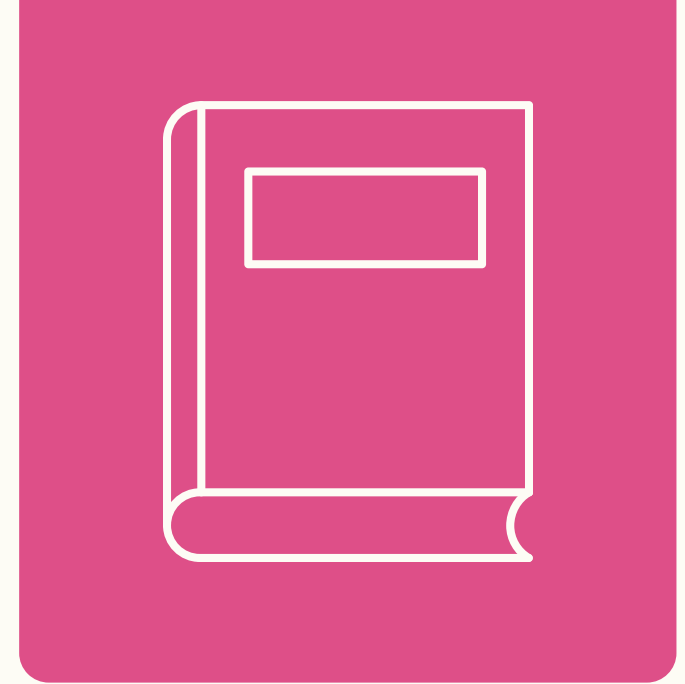


Organizational conditions & structural constraints

The research shows that strong collaboration design features alone are not enough to sustain effective collaboration. This must be paired with the following organizational conditions:

- Scheduled planning time
- Leadership support and collaboration
- Opportunities for professional learning

Without these structures, collaborative practices such as co-planning are difficult to sustain and prone to collapse.



References: Rönn-Liljenfeldt et al. (2024); Scruggs et al. (2007); Spencer (2021)

The literature also showed that several structural challenges can limit the effectiveness of collaborative models. Common limitations include:

1. Language specialists working across multiple grades or subjects.
2. Language specialist being unable to maintain sufficient classroom presence.
3. Unclear professional roles or shared/split roles
4. Competing timetable demands.

These features may lead to language specialists being unable to function as instructional partners, particularly when time and classroom presence are restricted.

References: Whiting (2017); Bauler & Kang (2020); Spencer (2021)

Literature summary: What the research suggests

Across the literature, several themes emerge:

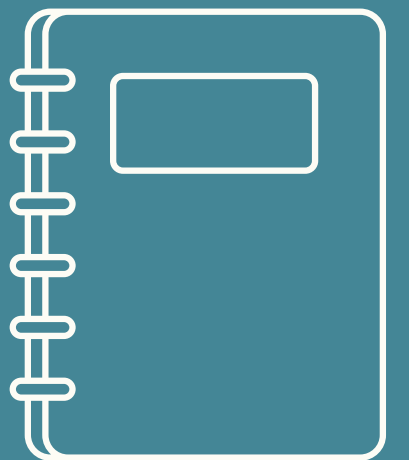
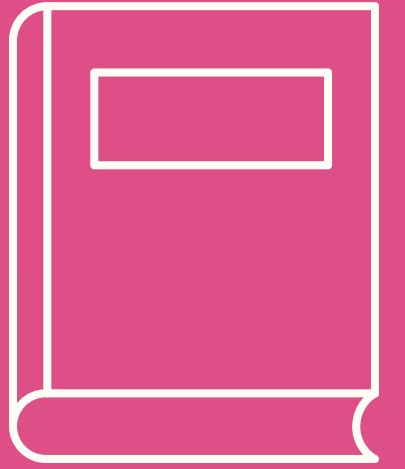
- 1. Language and Content must be integrated:** MLLs develop academic language most effectively when it is embedded within disciplinary learning.
- 2. Instructional Design shapes access:** The way lessons are planned and delivered determines whether MLLS can participate in cognitively demanding tasks.
- 3. Co-planning enables expertise integration but depends on the availability of specialist expertise** and opportunities for sustained collaboration.
- 4. Organizational conditions influence sustainability:** Protected planning time, realistic scheduling, role clarity and leadership support are all necessary for collaborative structure to be maintained. These conditions also influence whether language specialists can function as instructional partners within classrooms.

The research gap:

The existing research highlights the importance of collaboration and language responsive instruction. However, several gaps remain:

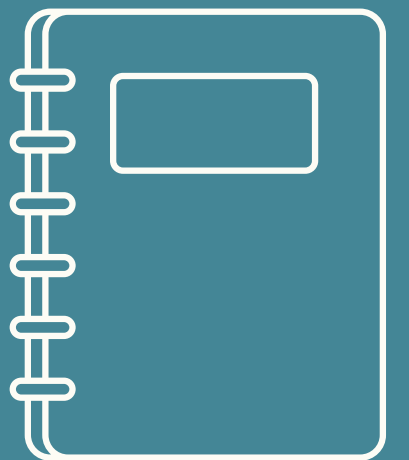
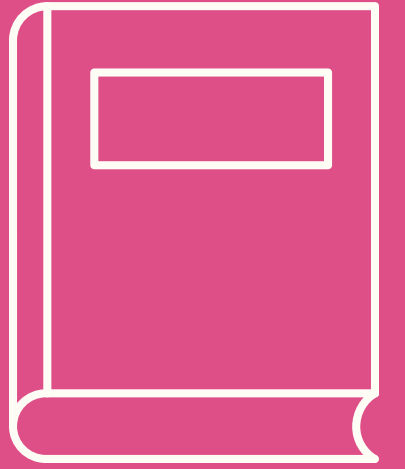
- limited research linking co-planning structures to multilingual learner access to disciplinary learning
- limited research examining real time classroom evidence of access.
- limited research conducted in highly multilingual international school contexts.

This study aims to contribute to that research gap.



References:

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04

Methodology

Methodology

Focus of Inquiry:

- How co-planning is enacted in practice.
- Conditions that enable or constrain co-planning.
- Impact on instructional design for multilingual learners.

Context

- Highly multilingual international school.
- Grades 1-9.
- EAL specialists working through co-planning and push-in support.

Research Approach:

- Practitioner inquiry within a whole-school EAL programme
- Focus on co-planning as a model of instructional improvement
- Multiple sources, majority Qualitative

Unit of Analysis:

Co-planning as a system of practice across:

- planning meetings
- classroom enactment
- organizational structures

Indicators of 'access to high impact learning':

Presence of:

- explicit language scaffolds
- structured student talk
- alignment between task and language support

How did we research?

Data Sources

- Co-planning meetings (notes, planning artefacts)
- Lesson observations (language scaffolds, roles, interaction)
- Teacher perspectives (surveys)
- Programme documentation (timetables, deployment, CPD materials)

Data Collection Process

- Collected over a 3-month span from January to March (*approx. 33% of academic year*)
- Real-time capture during co-planning cycles & classroom implementation
- Notes recorded during coaching and planning.

Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis across data sources.
- Patterns identified in organizational conditions & instructional design features.
- Comparison between intended model & enacted practice.
- Cross-referenced with meetings, observations, documentation.



05

Findings

Teacher Perceptions: (*Baseline Survey*)

In January, all PYP and MYP subject/homeroom teachers were asked to complete a initial survey to understand their attitudes to and perceptions of collaboration and co-planning.

The results showed that:

- Co-planning is valued by teachers and seen as beneficial for student learning.
- Most teachers report rare or inconsistent co-planning with EAL specialists.
- When it occurs, co-planning is typically informal, resource-focused and lacks a clear structure.
- Key barriers identified were time and workload, lack of shared planning time and unclear expectations.
- Teachers identified that effective co-planning requires timetabled planning time, clear structure and purpose and practical strategies.

13. What would most enable effective co-planning in your context? (choose up to 5)



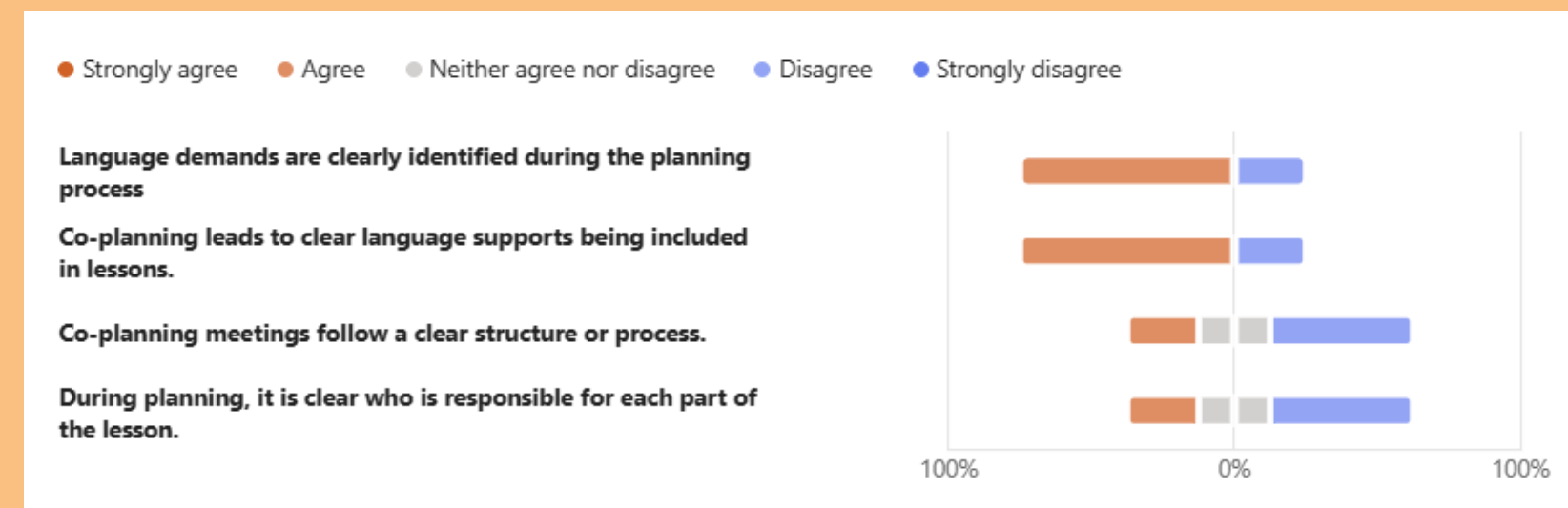
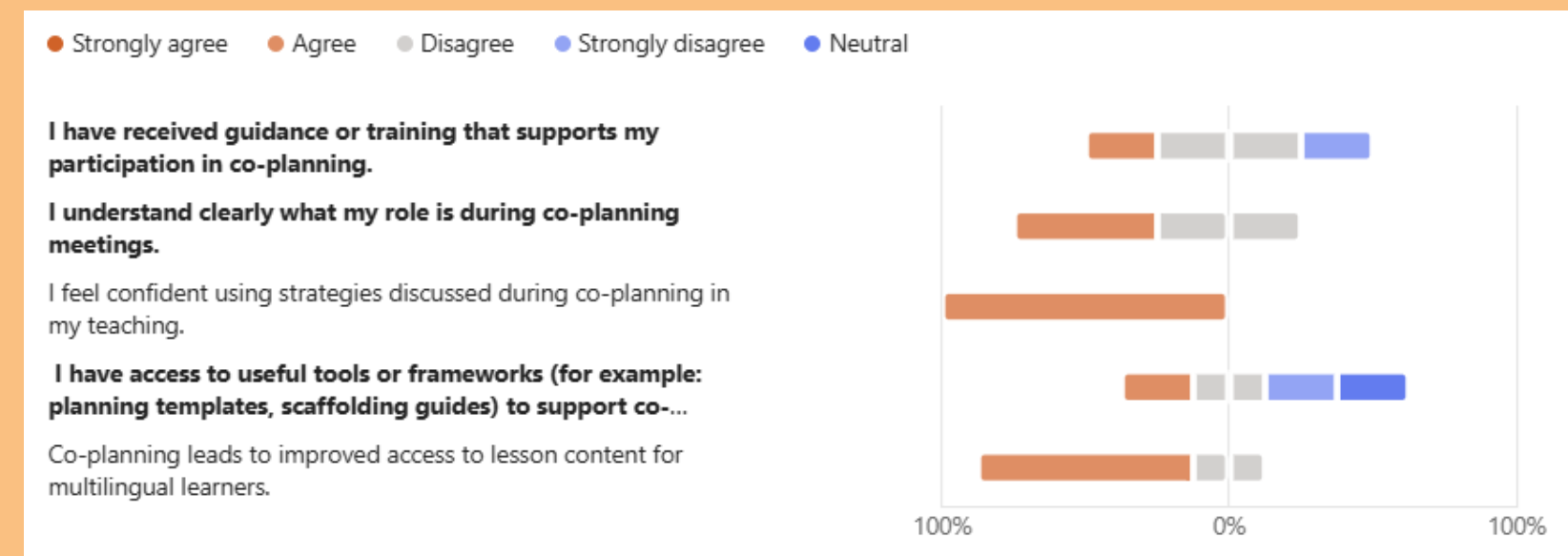
14. What currently gets in the way of co-planning most? (choose up to 5)



Teacher Perceptions: *(Follow-up survey)*

In March, all PYP and MYP subject/homeroom teachers who had been directly involved in co-planning (science teachers in MYP, UOI lead planners in PYP) were asked to complete a survey reflecting upon their experiences with co-planning.

- Teachers reported active participation in co-planning, particularly identifying language demands & adapting lesson tasks.
- Co-planning most often focused on creating additional resources & supporting specific multilingual learners rather than full lesson design.
- There was limited evidence of role clarity & shared responsibility during lessons.
- Teachers identified ongoing needs for clearer expectations, defined roles & consistent structures



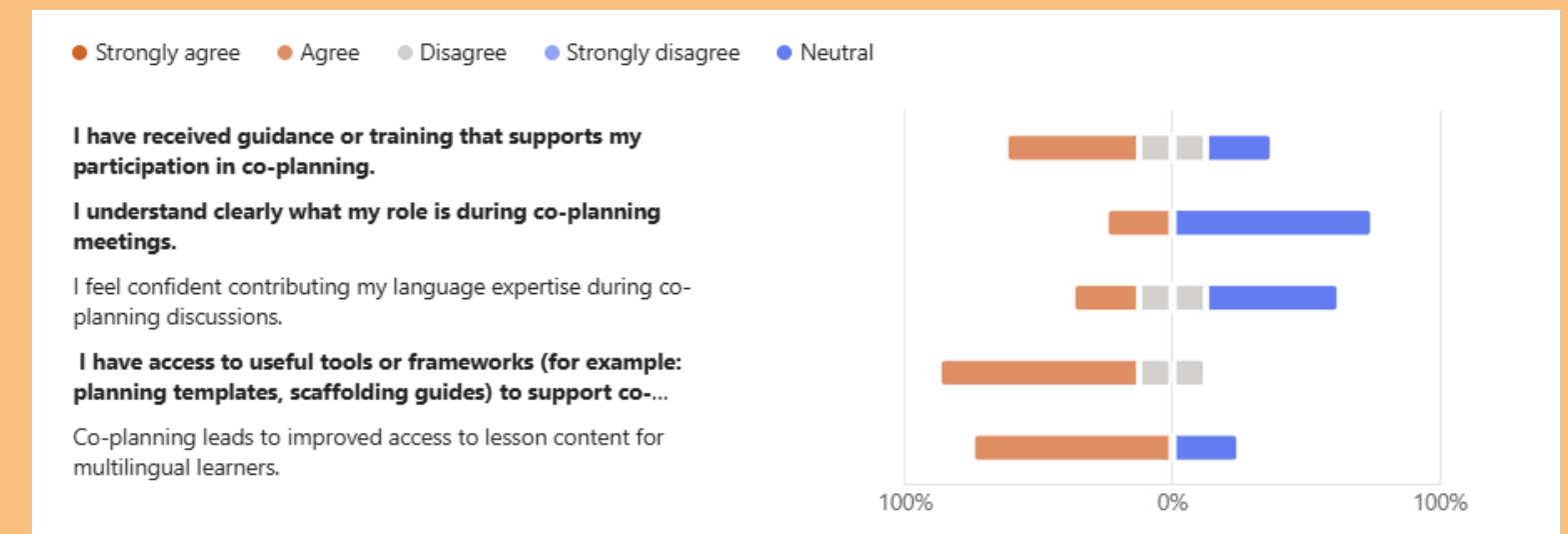
EAL Teacher Insights – (Follow-up survey)

In March, all teachers who had participated in co-planning in the role of a language support specialist were asked to complete a survey reflecting upon their experiences with co-planning.

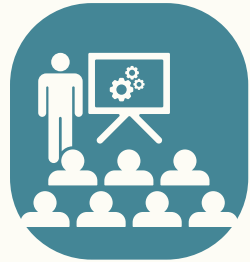
- Language specialists reported mixed levels of participation in co-planning meetings.
- They felt that co-planning time is limited and does not allow for development of resources, or preparation of scaffolds.
- There was limited clarity around roles during lessons & allocation of teaching responsibilities.
- They felt that support was not always targeted or aligned to specific language demands
- Opportunities for small-group instruction & structured differentiation were not consistently planned
- Reflection and feedback cycles were not embedded.

“Planning for differentiation together works most effectively from my perspective, especially in inclusive or co-teach in classrooms. Teachers should design lessons that meet diverse student needs from the start, identifying who needs support, who is ready for extension, and multiple ways of learning within the same lesson.”

Language Specialist (Anonymized)



The perception gap



Classroom teachers reported:

- active participation
- contributing ideas
- generally positive



Language specialists reported::

- participation varies
- sometimes observing
- roles unclear

The responses suggest a gap in perception between classroom teachers and EAL specialists. Classroom teachers appear to view co-planning as active and collaborative, while EAL teachers describe it as inconsistent and, at times, passive. This suggests a mismatch in how co-planning is experienced, particularly in relation to participation, role clarity and shared responsibility.

One possible explanation is that classroom teachers and EAL specialists may have different expectations of what effective co-planning should produce, although this would require further investigation. Another possibility is that some responses may reflect what participants felt was expected, rather than the full complexity of their experience; however, this remains conjecture.

What can be taken from the responses is that a perception gap exists, and that identifying its cause would be useful for strengthening future practice. When considered alongside the literature review, this gap appears to link back to key features of effective collaboration, particularly the need for clearly established goals and greater clarity around teacher roles and responsibilities.



Co-Planning Structure & Intended Model

The below summarizes the structures and design conditions set for co-planning in both the MYP and PYP

CPD & Instructional Model (*Intended Practice*)

Whole-staff CPD introduced a tiered model (Tier 1–3) with emphasis on:

- Tier 1 first: every teacher responsible for language support. An 'everyday Multilingualism Toolkit' was shared with all.
- CLIL approach: integrating content + language objectives
- Push-in as a partnership of different areas of expertise.

The expectation was set that Language Specialists would act as instructional partners, not assistants.

Teachers were guided to use language objectives alongside content, sentence frames, visuals, structured talk, explicit vocabulary and scaffolding routines.

Planning meeting guidance and co-teaching menu provided to all staff.

Timetabled Structure

- One weekly co-planning meeting per science teacher (MYP) or grade-level UOI planning lead (PYP)
- Target: minimum 2 supported lessons per class per week
- Model designed to increase consistency of support, reduce fragmentation across teachers & align planning with in-class delivery

PUSH-IN EAL SUPPORT PLANNING MEETING GUIDANCE

Set goals

- **Class Teacher:** What's the **content objective**? What do students need to know/do?
- **EALP:** What is the **language objective** and what additional language demands are linked to this? (*key vocabulary, sentence structures, tricky instructions, participation routines*)

Identify Challenges

- **Which parts of the lesson might be hardest for multilingual learners?** (e.g., *heavy text, abstract concept, group discussion*).
- **What scaffolds would make this accessible?** (*word banks, sentence frames, oral rehearsal etc.*)

Plan Supports

- **Materials:** visuals, frames, wordlists
- **Language Prep:** pre-teach, highlight tricky phrases
- **Speaking Structures:** pair talk, Kagan, oral rehearsal
- **Instructional Support:** model, chunk steps, ICQs/CCQs

Decide Roles (*Menu*)

- **Starter** (Before lesson): preview materials, suggest language
- **Main** (During lesson): small group lead, station teach
- **Dessert** (After lesson): co-assess content vs language

Reflect & Next Steps

- How will we reflect after the lesson?
- What data/observations will we each bring back (misconceptions)

These guidelines for co-planning and teaching were shared with the primary cohort at the start of the co-planning trial.

CO-TEACHING MENU

How can an EALP help in a push-in?

SET MENU:
Plan to include at least one Main + one from Starter or Dessert.
Each role should connect back to the identified language objective.
Add sides as needed.

Starters (Before Lesson)

- **Preview lesson & materials** to flag hidden language demands.
- **Create materials** such as visuals, word lists, or graphic organisers.
- **Suggest a language objective** for the lesson/unit

Main Course (During Lesson)

- **Parallel support:** one models sentence frames while the other delivers content.
- **Small group lead:** EALP works with a group to rehearse, retell, or write.
- **Language monitor:** jot down useful student language and errors for feedback.
- **Instructional support:** while teacher explains, EALP models instructions visually/writes them on the board
- **Station/rotation teaching:** divide class into two teacher-led groups (e.g., one does vocabulary prep, the other does content task).

Side Dishes (On-the-spot language support)

- Recasting student language
- Micro sentence frames in the moment
- Prompting target vocabulary
- Quick bilingual glossary / translation check
- Expanding student talk
- ICQs/CCQs
- Oral rehearsal
- Spot-check comprehension with visuals or gestures
- Rephrasing the teacher's question
- Providing quick feedback

Dessert (After Lesson)

- **Joint reflection:** what language did students use/struggle with?
- **Co-assess:** one scores content, the other scores language

Timetable & Co-Planning Analysis (MYP)

Purpose

To understand how EAL support and co-planning were structured in practice across the study period

Timetable Analysis (Jan–April)

EAL teachers supported an average of 7–9 classes per week across multiple year groups

Classes received an average of 1.6 EAL-supported lessons per week (approximately 30–35% of total science lessons)

EAL teachers' time was distributed across:

- 50–65% teaching their own classes
- 25–35% in-class EAL support
- 5–15% planning / free time

Co-Planning Structure

Co-planning was scheduled as 1 meeting per week per science teacher

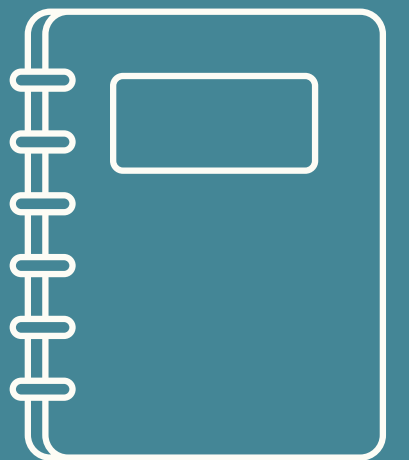
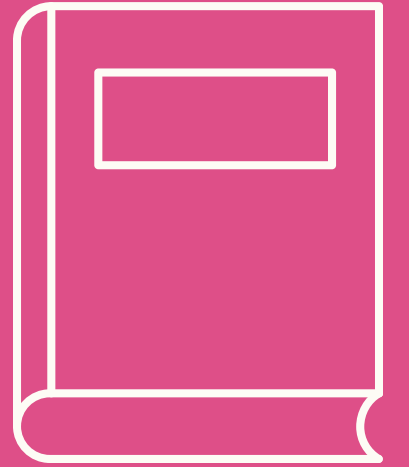
EAL teachers were expected to

- work consistently with one science teacher
- attend multiple co-planning meetings
- share planning time where possible

Analytical Focus

When analyzing the timetables we looked at:

- Distribution of EAL support across classes
- Frequency of in-class support
- Allocation of teacher time
- Consistency and sustainability of co-planning structures



Data Source – Timetable & Co-Planning Analysis (*PYP*)

Purpose: To understand how EAL support and co-planning were structured in practice across the study period

Timetable Analysis (Jan–April)

- EAL practitioners supported an average of 6–10 classes per week across multiple year groups
- Classes received an average of 2-3 EAL-supported push-in sessions per week.(approx. 7- 10% of total learning time)
- EAL practitioners' time was distributed across:
 - 40% Tier 2 push-in
 - 40% Tier 3 pull-out
 - 10% personal planning / meetings

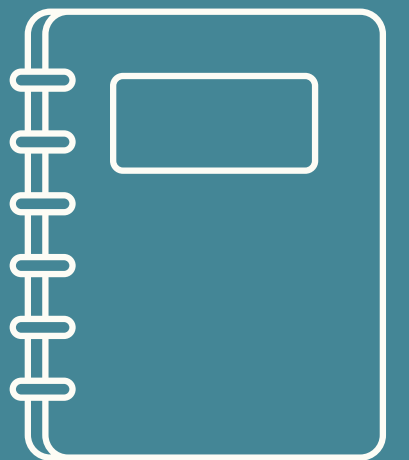
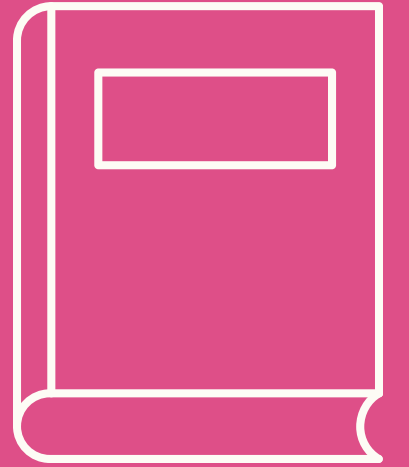
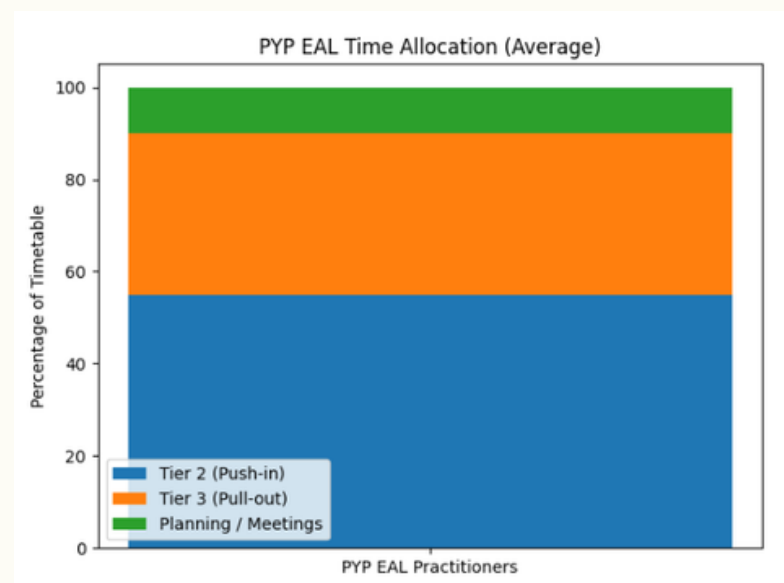
Co-Planning Structure (Term 2)

Co-planning was scheduled as 1 meeting per week per grade level

Meetings involved UOI lead teacher, EAL practitioner & ML lead.

EAL practitioners were expected to

- support identified classes consistently
- attend weekly co-planning meetings
- align support with upcoming UOI lessons



Co-Planning Meetings (Observed Practice)

Data source: Co-planning meeting notes taken during research period

Limitation: meeting notes were not recorded consistently.

Evidence from the co-planning meeting notes show that meetings focused primarily on:

- general lesson direction
- overview of tasks

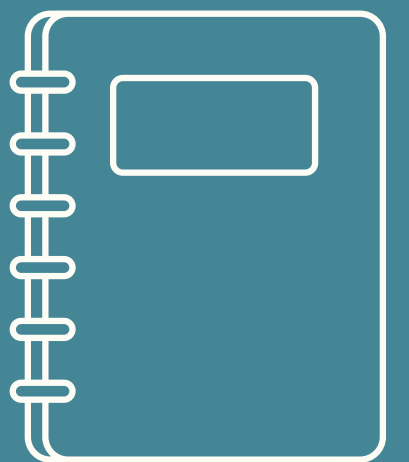
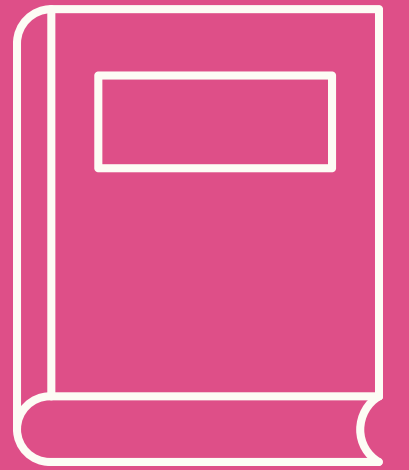
There was limited evidence of:

- planning specific lessons
- identifying language demands
- agreeing instructional strategies

Roles were not consistently defined:

- classroom teacher role unclear
- EAL practitioner role unclear
- Few changes to lesson plans were agreed during meetings

Some co-planning meeting did result in follow-up emails from subject specialists (most notably in MYP science) with further information about a whole unit or specific lesson. The absence of meeting notes in itself is a factor for consideration for this study, as clear and structured meetings were one of the factors identified as important in the literature review.



Planning Outputs

Data source: Lesson materials and lesson observation notes

Limitation: Connected lesson materials were not recorded consistently, a low % of impacted lessons had lesson observations recorded..

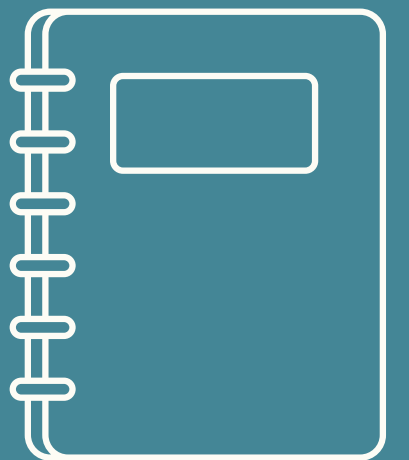
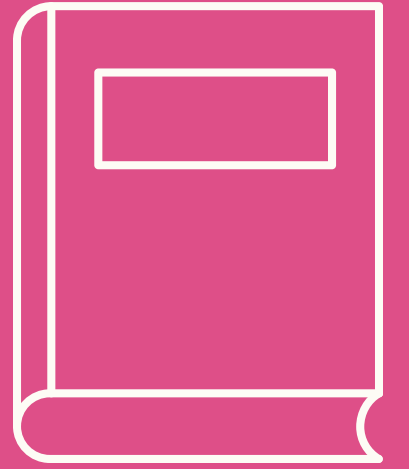
Evidence from planning outputs show that:

- Lesson tasks often required explanation, reasoning & extended language use.
- Language support was not pre-planned or was delivered in-the-moment.
- Language specialist often focused on individual support for high-need learners.
- Student participation was limited with oral responses dominated by higher proficiency learners.
- Most support provided by language specialist was in the form of additional physical resources such as word banks, adapted worksheets.

Minimal impact upon lesson design or delivery was recorded.

**Example of Adaptation and Impact*

- In one observed lesson the EAL practitioner introduced a structured task that made explicit ideas & supported discussion. The result was increased student participation & more multilingual learners contributing. However, this support was introduced outside of the co-planning process via direct adaptation of lessons materials on the day of the lesson.



The enactment gap

Intended model:

Structured co-planning, explicit language objectives, defined roles and integrated scaffolds.



Observed practice:

Inconsistent planning, unclear roles, limited instructional outputs and support that was often reactive rather than embedded in lesson design.

The evidence shows a gap between the school's intended model for co-planning and what was consistently enacted in practice. This gap appears to be linked to several enabling conditions that were not yet secure. Planning time and classroom time were fragmented, which limited language specialists' ability to build sustained partnerships with teachers or develop a deep understanding of students' needs within each class. Staffing changes and timetable adjustments further widened the gap between the intended and enacted model.

Co-planning time was also scheduled within teachers' existing free periods or personal planning time, rather than as protected collaborative planning time. This made meetings vulnerable to cover demands and created a perceived inequity, as not all teachers were required to use planning time in this way. As a result, some teachers were reluctant to attend full meetings or wanted to keep them brief, limiting the depth of planning.

A further constraint was the limited availability and use of lesson materials. Lesson plans and resources were often not available in advance, so discussion remained general or language specialists were expected to create additional scaffolds independently afterwards. Where materials were available, the focus often remained on extra resources rather than adapting lesson design or delivery. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this may require a stronger shared understanding of CLIL and a culture where lesson adaptation is viewed as normal professional refinement rather than an evaluation of teacher quality. This should be investigated further in the next phase.

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Discussion

What Enables Effective Co- Planning?

Organizational Conditions:

1. Protected planning time
2. Stable timetabling,
3. Consistent teacher partnerships
4. Time in class to develop an understanding of student needs and the direction of learning.

Shared understanding:

1. Agreement about the purpose of co-planning.
2. Agreement on the role of the Language Specialist.
3. Agreement that revision/adaptation of lesson materials and structures is the norm.
4. Shared understanding of the relationship between language and content.

Instructional design:

Effective co-planning produces:

- clear language objectives
- identified language demands
- planned scaffolds
- aligned tasks and supports
- defined roles

This requires structure in the form of a **co-planning template** or notes to ensure that collaborative meetings stay on track

Outcomes are visible:

- Tangible lesson adaptations
- Visible scaffolds in classroom practice.
- Co-planning meetings end with clear next steps and actions.

Accountability and reflection:

- Follow-up after lessons
- Shared evaluation of impact
- Continual reflection & refinement

Without this there is no cumulative improvement in practice and models risk collapse if conditions such as staffing and timetables change.

Co-planning is often positioned as a key mechanism for improving multilingual learner access. However, findings suggest it is dependent on prior conditions, including effective organizational condition, strong universal instruction & clearly defined specialist roles. Without these, co-planning remains limited in its impact

Conclusion

Core Finding:

Co-planning effectiveness is shaped by the interaction between organizational conditions, instructional design & specialist capacity.

Co-planning is not effective simply because it is scheduled. Its impact depends on the alignment of organizational conditions, instructional design routines, and specialist capacity. In this study, the intended model was clearly established; however, several enabling conditions were not yet consistently secure. Variability in planning time, specialist deployment, role clarity, shared collaborative structures, and access to lesson materials appeared to limit the consistency with which co-planning translated into embedded language supports, explicit scaffolds, and clearly defined classroom roles.

The literature suggests that explicit scaffolds can increase multilingual learner participation, and this was reflected in observed practice when structured supports were introduced. However, during this implementation phase, the school was not yet consistently able to embed these supports systematically through the co-planning process itself."



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Reflections about research

Research Reflections

Undertaking this action research has been a valuable professional learning experience. One of the most energizing parts of the process was the literature review. Reading about the work of other practitioners and researchers, including the challenges they encountered and the conditions that supported success, helped me to situate our school's work within a wider evidence base. It was also invigorating to identify what research suggests is effective practice, and to consider how this could inform my own role in driving multilingual learner support forward at Westlink. At the same time, the research process was challenging. Practitioner inquiry can quickly become a rabbit hole, particularly when working with data that is partly based on perceptions, experiences and professional opinion. Each data source opened up additional questions about teacher understanding, organizational structures, role clarity, specialist capacity and the conditions needed for sustainable change. This made the research more complex, but also more useful, because it highlighted that co-planning is not a simple intervention. It is a system of practice shaped by many interacting factors.

A further challenge was my own position within the research. As Head of Multilingualism, I was inextricably linked to the process I was investigating. I was not an external observer; I was part of the design, implementation and interpretation of the co-planning model. This meant I needed to be mindful of maintaining professional distance and avoiding the assumption that my own experiences or perceptions were the same as the evidence. Throughout the process, I tried to cross-reference survey responses, timetable data, meeting notes, lesson observations and planning outputs in order to keep the findings grounded in the data rather than in personal interpretation alone.

For future research, I would like to strengthen the evidence base by increasing the amount of non-opinion-based data. This could include more systematic lesson observations, more consistent collection of planning artefacts, before-and-after examples of lesson adaptations, student participation data, and samples of student work linked to specific co-planned scaffolds. This would allow future findings to be more secure and would make it easier to evaluate not only whether co-planning is happening, but whether it is changing classroom practice and improving multilingual learners' access to learning

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Looking forwards



Implications for Practice

The findings suggest that the next phase should focus on strengthening the conditions that allow co-planning to function as shared instructional design. This means moving beyond scheduling meetings and ensuring that co-planning has protected time, clear expectations, shared routines, access to lesson materials and a culture in which adapting lesson design is understood as normal professional refinement.



Next steps

The next phase should focus on strengthening the conditions that allow co-planning to function as shared instructional design as follows:

- 1. Protect co-planning time :** Schedule co-planning as protected collaborative planning time, not within existing free periods. This would reduce vulnerability to cover and address perceived inequity.
- 2. Stabilize specialist deployment:** Priorities fewer, more sustained partnerships so language specialists can understand student needs, curriculum demands and teacher routines.
- 3. Clarify roles and expectations:** Define shared responsibilities before, during and after lessons, including expectations for lesson adaptation and co-teaching roles.
- 4. Share materials in advance:** Require lesson plans and resources before meetings so discussion can focus on adapting lesson design, not general planning or later resource production.
- 5. Use a shared planning routine:** Structure meetings around content objectives, language demands, barriers, scaffolds, adult roles and agreed next steps.
- 6. Reframe co-planning as instructional design:** Shift from producing extra resources to adapting how content is delivered, modelled, sequenced and practiced.
- 7. Strengthen Tier 1 routines:** Build shared practice around explicit vocabulary, modelling, sentence frames, structured talk, visual scaffolds and guided practice.
- 8. Embed reflection cycles :** Use short post-lesson reviews to evaluate whether planned supports improved access and participation.