Effective practices in MLE teacher education and important directions for future MLE sustainability

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5th International Conference on Language and Education: Sustainable Development Through Multilingual Education 19-21 October 2016 Bangkok, Thailand
Contents of this presentation

- The need for appropriate support for MLE teachers
- Temporary efforts and risks
- Structural challenges
- Moving toward sustainable MLE
Often, MLE teachers:

- Are (officially) under-qualified and underpaid
- Work in under-resourced schools in rural, remote contexts
- Lack a career category

MLE teachers are needed/expected to:

- Teach L1 literacy, oral Lx, bilingual content (unfamiliar methods)
- Bridge home & school language/culture gaps
- Advocate for MLE

(Benson 2004)
### Temporary “foot in the door” strategies for training MLE teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFORTS</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>RISKS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Pedagogical secondary school” for indigenous girls (Bolivia)</td>
<td>From L1/C1 community Grads ready to teach MLE in own communities (and stay)</td>
<td>Parallel to inservice TT in MLE (different qualifs)</td>
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<td>Inservice for qualified Ts <em>not</em> L1/C1 community (for Baka in Cameroon, Hmong in Vietnam)</td>
<td>Ts become more aware of learners’ needs Some Ts able to integrate effectively</td>
<td>More symbolic than strategic “A little” L1/C1 is not enough to teach L1 literacy and content</td>
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<td>Tailored training for community Ts (Cambodia)</td>
<td>Ts and learners share L1/C1 Trainings are immediately applicable</td>
<td>Need for recognized qualifs, salary scale &amp; career path</td>
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<td>Preservice course in MLE “Bantu linguistics” for all Ts (Mozambique)</td>
<td>All trainees exposed to L1 literacy and MLE Foundational course</td>
<td>Not enough MLE methods Trainers lack capacity</td>
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**NOTE:** One generation of MLE graduates creates the next generation of fully qualified MLE teachers!
Ethiopia:

• 1994 Language-in-ed policy: 8 years L1 medium (Amharic + English as subjects)
• Teachers were trained within regions at TTCs using L1s and photocopied L1 materials
• Around 2008, World Bank “teacher professionalization” advice moved TT to universities (English medium, generic training)
Ethiopia study of policy implementation
(Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh 2012)

1. Regions with 8 years of L1 medium have highest achievement in all subjects
2. Decentralized system allows appropriate L1s to be used

Risks:
- Teacher “professionalization” makes training IRRELEVANT to needs
- Backwash from English assessment
Maldives:

• Divehi is sole L1 and was MoI
• Gradual shift during 2000s to English as MoI following practice in capital, Male’
• Apparently due to negative backwash from exam system
Maldives: Negative backwash of exams

Cambridge exams (A-level) gr 12
Teacher education MoI English
→
Cambridge exams (O-level) gr 10
→
Secondary MoI English (low results)
→
Primary MoI English (low achievement)
→
Pressure in preprimary to teach 3 alphabets, speak and write “correct” English
From experimentation to implementation: Reliance on inservice – needs to shift to preservice

Mozambique
20 L1s + Portuguese

Cambodia
5 L1s + Khmer
From experimentation to implementation:
Reliance on inservice – needs to shift to preservice

Vietnam
Hmong, J’rai, Khmer + Vietnamese

Cameroon
Baka + French
Moving toward sustainable MLE

Preservice teacher training

Options:
MLE for all
MLE as a specialization

Important:
At least part of training in L1
Do teachers have:

➢ appropriate levels of oral proficiency in the L1 of their students?
➢ appropriate levels of written literacy in the L1 of their students?
➢ pedagogical and content-specific vocabulary in the L1?
➢ methods for teaching L1 literacy?
➢ methods for using L1 as Mol?
➢ deep familiarity with cultural traditions associated with speakers of the L1?
➢ appropriate levels of oral proficiency in the Lx to teach it as a language?
➢ appropriate levels of written literacy in the Lx to teach it as a language?
➢ appropriate L2/foreign language methods for teaching the Lx?
➢ strategies to promote transfer of literacy skills between the L1 and the Lx?

(Benson 2016)
Moving toward sustainable MLE

**ACTION RESEARCH**: Original plan in Vietnam (never implemented) was for Action Research by stakeholders at all levels—could still be done.
Regional training of trainers in MLE (PRAESA at Univ. of Cape Town, South Africa): MLE implementers came to 5-week course with certificate OR (with research study in home country) option for post-grad diploma.
Ministry of Education database on each teacher that includes:

- Teacher’s language skills (assessed or self-reported): oral expression, reading, writing
- Teaching experience (MLE, non-MLE)
- Formal education
- Preservice training
- Inservice training

Teacher portfolios for training, professional development, placement and promotion
References