A flower blooms in mongat (una flor brota en mongat): an exemplary trilingual program
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A flower blooms in mongat (Una flor brota en mongat):
An exemplary trilingual program

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Abstract:

Schools throughout the world teach in several languages, but few reach the level of linguistic proficiency of Hamelin-Laie International School in Mongat, Barcelona, Spain. This school begins instruction in English, Catalan, and Spanish and at grade one, adds a fourth language as a World Language. Factors that impact the success of this school were studied, including: The commitment to language learning is evident in all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers highly proficient in the language and culture of instruction provide constant attention to the development of oracy and literacy in all languages. External international examinations reflect high expectations for language proficiency. The student body encompasses infants to baccalaureate level. A very well developed review process enables educators to continually refine and expand the effectiveness of the program to create a developmental progression of social, emotional, linguistic and academic growth from birth to university that is truly remarkable. All of these factors encapsulated within an interactive, hands-on, meaningful curriculum that fosters development of higher order/global thinking are the hallmarks of the Hamelin-Laie International School. The success of the program is owing to many factors, the greatest of which is that the students are not learning languages but using languages to learn.

Key Words:
Multilingual Language Acquisition
Trilingual Education
Developmental Multilingual Curriculum
Content and Language Integrated Learning
Theoretical Framework Regarding Language Acquisition:

People who acquire more than one language do not acquire them as separate entities within the brain (Aronin and O’Laoire, 2004). Instead each language influences and enhances the others to form an interdependent network of language understanding and use. While language learners are able to focus on a single language during a communication encounter, the existence of code switching across languages attests to the influence of one language on another. There is evidence (Garcia 2009, Cenoz, Hufelsen, and Jessner 2001) to suggest that learning more than two languages facilitates subsequent language acquisition, as the learner has an expanded notion of the linguistic, cultural, social aspects of how languages work and how similar or different they are from one another.

Several factors (Henn-Reinke, 2012) impact the level to which each language is developed, including the motivation of the learner and his/her attitude toward language learning; opportunities for regular and sustained use; the formal/informal nature of language development; age of acquisition; culture and language similarity; and identity. Learning more than two languages is very complex in that greater mental agility is required of the user in terms of both cognitive flexibility in analyzing lexical and grammatical similarities and differences across languages and the ability to navigate a variety of socio-cultural contexts. In so doing, multilinguals become more and more adept at applying what they know of each language and culture to inform their understanding of oral and literacy language skills in other languages, resulting in the formation of generalizations and exceptions that continuously inform their ongoing language development.

Introduction

Schools throughout the world offer multilingual opportunities for their students with varying levels of success. A distinction between teaching languages and using languages to learn may be a critical factor in the level of language proficiency that students achieve in each of the target languages. Programs that take the latter approach must design a broader use of language throughout the curriculum. Students are not merely learning the vocabulary, syntax, and grammar of each language; they must also
express content understanding and application in each of the languages, which automatically broadens the scope of both receptive and expressive language use.

The most successful integration of language and content will proceed from a rich and authentic curriculum that develops concepts through interactive and meaningful learning experiences in each of the languages and cultures. The continual refinement and expansion of both linguistic and academic competencies across the grade levels ensures that students achieve at the highest possible levels and are prepared to use their skills upon completion of the program. Internal and external assessments provide feedback to educators and parents, which in turn serve as a catalyst to continually improve and refine the curriculum.

Hamelin-Laie International School is a shining example of what an exemplary multilingual/multicultural program looks like. This conclusion follows extensive beginning/end of year observations and interviews with teachers and administrators. The following discussion attempts to reveal the design and implementation that undergirds the school’s success.

Hamelin-Laie International School

Perched on a steep hillside overlooking the Mediterranean Sea sits Hamelin Laie International School, a truly exceptional example of trilingual education. The school, which was founded in 1989, is located in Mongat, just outside Barcelona, Spain. The student body of about 900 students, which extends from infant education through baccalaureate level, develops literacy skills in Catalan, Castellano, and English. In their first year of primaria (age 6), students add a fourth language as a world language.

This private international school run by Grupo Sas, is definitely a family affair with Sra. P. Sas as president and her daughter, Sonia Sas as the Director General. Another daughter serves as the financial director and yet another as the coordinator of the infant program. Grupo Sas leaves nothing to chance in the educational experience of its students.

The newly opened, state of the art, Hamelin Laie International School Mongat campus houses all grade levels in one enormous building. A separate residence “Six Lemon World” (www.sixlemonworld.com) has been completed for international students enrolled in the baccalaureate program. Three distinct wings separate the preschool,
primary, and secondary/baccalaureate classrooms. Dedication to the performing and fine arts is evident in the dance, music, and art facilities in the school. All students play an instrument and showcase their progress in assemblies and presentations, with the older students participating in a program that focuses on music from the Big Band era. The school puts on elaborate drama and dance presentations and the walls are lined with student artwork.

The Hamelin-Laie International School recognizes that academic excellence alone does not provide a complete education nor does it prepare students to take their places as leaders and contributors in society. Development of the whole child includes ethical education that supports students in developing open and tolerant minds, learning to be good team workers, and solving conflicts through dialogue in a multicultural society. The school prides itself on its international faculty and student body, which hale from 28 different national backgrounds.

**Language Program**

Since its inception Hamelin Laie has been recognized for its expertise in trilingual education. Students in the infant program begin with an interactive English immersion program, and 45 minutes per day of instruction in Catalan and Castellano. This is predicated upon the opportunity to maximize infant and toddler disposition toward learning and discovery. English continues as the main language in the primary grades. Formal literacy development in all three languages (English, Spanish, and Catalan) begins at age 5 with more intensive study of grammar, reading comprehension, and written expression expanded with each succeeding year.

In the Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO) grades, (approximately ages 12-16) English, Spanish, and Catalan are the target languages for content area subjects. “English continues as the most prevalent language in our curriculum in order to ensure genuine trilingual ability” (hamelinlaie.com. Languages, pg. 1). Subjects continue to be offered in the three languages for students who choose to work toward completion of the baccalaureate program.

All teachers are fluent speakers of the language(s) in which they teach and most are native speakers. Teachers stay 100% in the language of instruction throughout the school day. To ensure that the appropriate amount of time is given to each language and
that students are instructed by fluent speakers in each language, teachers move from
classroom to classroom depending on the language of instruction in the early grades and
students exchange classrooms at the ESO and baccalaureate levels. In the early grades,
students are encouraged to express themselves as fully as possible in each of the
languages and by the later grades students complete all work in the target language.

A priority for the school from age three is the development of high-level
communication skills in all languages. This is accomplished through a broad range of
opportunities, including “theatre productions, public project presentations, debates,
speaking during assembly, announcements on the school radio” (hamelinlaie.com
Innovative Education, pg.1).

**Curriculum, Methodology and Pedagogy**

The program at Hamelin-Laie seems to gather steam as it proceeds through the
grade levels. Many learning techniques and expectations are put into practice at an early
age and are built upon throughout the students’ experience in the school. The emergent
levels of the program are very gentle, focus on the interests of the students, and engage
them in hands-on and interactive learning. As they proceed through the grade levels, the
students are prepared to engage in learning experiences that require high levels of critical
thinking skills through research and project-based learning. The school website states,
“All of our students are investigators” and this is indeed evident throughout the school.
A strong emphasis is placed on application of understanding through a wide variety of
learning experiences that continually refine listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
in each of the languages.

Students use a wide range of learning tools, including the latest technology. The
state-of-the-art school building is designed with a wide variety of learning and meeting
spaces, including technology labs, that enable the students to explore topics as fully as
possible. Ongoing professional development for teachers is offered to ensure that they
are able to adopt the latest technologies into their teaching.

The interconnection between language and content is apparent in every class
session of every day. Regardless of the content area or the language of instruction, a
focus on expanding the vocabulary, sentence structure and discourse levels of that
language will be found. For example, Rosa is an English teacher from Argentina, who
clearly demonstrated her understanding of the importance of integrating content and language. In a study of animals, they did not merely learn the names of animals, but worked on classification skills to sort animals as wild or domestic and herbivores or carnivores and also studied animal products. They read books, had conversations, completed worksheets, and played interactive games to develop both language and content skills.

A unique aspect of this school is a conscious search to discover the individual talent of each student. This effort highlights the emphasis on the development of the whole child, i.e., physical, emotional, linguistic and academic. As a result of being an international school, multicultural understanding and appreciation are tightly woven across the curriculum, as students from around the world interact with one another. Emotional, ethical, and values education is explicitly taught to guide students in understanding “the world they live in and the people they share it with” while developing self-confidence in themselves and in the ability to resolve conflicts through dialogue. As a part of this goal, students participate in exchange programs throughout Europe and North America. Dance, art, music, theatre, and athletics are active components of the curriculum and are integrated with academic themes. Conscious efforts have been made to integrate each of these elements into the curriculum as integral components of each child’s total development.

As mentioned above, high-level outcomes are established for student achievement. Linguistic and academic progress are closely linked across all content areas. Similar to the WIDA Standards (WIDA, 2012), that are used extensively in the United States, attention is given to language development at the vocabulary, sentence, and discourse levels. A great deal of attention is focused on the development of critical thinking skills and use of academic language. Discourse level of language is enhanced through an active, hands-on curriculum where students are continually challenged with an authentic and meaningful curriculum. Because content and language are tightly interwoven, content area subjects are taught in a particular language in addition to literacy instruction in each of the languages. For example, mathematics is taught in Catalan, science in English, and social studies in Castellano. This alignment ensures rigorous academic and linguistic study in each language. Much of the curriculum is
project-based and students are engaged in interactive and hands-on learning as they explore concepts together and develop the language necessary to express understanding and share their learning.

Hamelin-Laie has attracted a very international faculty and student body, reflecting a wide range of cultural experiences and worldviews. Diversity is appreciated and respected within the school and provides unlimited opportunities for students to expand their understanding of the world and to learn cultural understanding, acceptance, and tolerance of differences from one another.

**Program Philosophy and Design**

Although Hamelin-Laie International School is blessed with many resources, the effective design of its program is what makes it an exemplar of a successful trilingual program. Language learning is a foundational focus of the program, as noted in the vision statement of the school (hamelinlaie.com Languages). Due to this emphasis and a developmental language-learning curriculum that focuses on language learning for communication, students reach high levels of proficiency in each of their languages. All curricular, personnel, and sociocultural decisions revolve around the ongoing development of communication skills and cultural understanding across several languages. The curriculum is continually refined to ensure that students are making significant progress in language proficiency across the grade levels.

The program at Hamelin-Laie Internacional expands from preschool through the International Baccalaureate level and reflects a developmental progression across the grade levels. This allows for strong collaboration across the program and ensures both vertical and horizontal continuity across the 17-year age span represented in the school. Undergirding expectations for language proficiency is the understanding that students can learn in several languages simultaneously. Guided by fluent speakers of the language, toddlers in the nursería level are immersed in English with minimal curriculum focus in Catalan and Castellano. As they progress through the years, the amount of time spent learning in each of the languages is adjusted to ensure proficiency by the end of the Hamelin-Laie experience.

**Program Review and Assessment**
One of the hallmarks of the Hamelin-Laie International School, and certainly one of the pillars of its success, is the continual review process that has been put into place. Although students far exceed regional and national standards, educators are not content to stop there. Teachers at the various levels (pre-escolar, primaria, secundaria), review student progress at frequent intervals and determine areas in which the children demonstrate strong progress and areas that need strengthening. They are very creative and courageous in their approach to curriculum revision, at times moving away from commercial programs and creating their own programs and materials. They review the strength of the program across the various grade levels to ensure that the level of rigor is appropriate and that students move seamlessly from one level to the next.

The language curriculum of the school is under continual review and expansion to ensure that students reach the communication goals set for each language. One particularly instructive example of this process involved the evaluation of student progress in English. Not satisfied with the ability of their students to communicate fully in English after participation in a heavily grammar-based commercial program designed for students studying English-as-a World Language, a switch was made to a program designed for native English speakers. Educators and administrators soon recognized that this program was too challenging, as students did not have the experiential and cultural background for the content. Therefore, they worked together to design their own program and materials that were sufficiently rigorous but scaffolded to best meet the backgrounds and needs of their particular students.

An interview with Bob, the coordinator of the English curriculum at Hamelin-Laie, revealed a great deal about the process that is undertaken to continually review and enhance the level of English proficiency achieved by students. The school had engaged in what they term the “English Project”, an extensive review of the current English curriculum and the exploration of how to improve the integration of content and English language across the grade levels. A challenge faced in this review was the fact that there weren’t enough native English speakers in the school to serve as role models. This posed a linguistic challenge for the ESL students in that they achieved high levels of proficiency in English literacy, but did not arrive at the oracy level of native speakers of English.
In this sense, the students at Hamelin-Laie were not typical ESL students. Due to the immersion nature of a program that is integrated with content, they outgrew the traditional commercial curricula, but were not quite ready for the materials used in English speaking schools. Therefore, the goal became a search for materials that would better suit the level of students in the program, but that would also include appropriate materials to prepare students for the external Cambridge English Exams.

A very interesting aspect of this review was that educators determined that children’s/young adult literature would form the base for the enhancement of the English curriculum, which again reflected a serious focus on the integration of content and language. Oracy would be developed through discussions and activities related to literature. Writing would be structured to encourage students to focus on content as the primary objective and the form of the language as secondary. This would assist in a more authentic acquisition of language through immersion. Students read 6 novels per year and all of the writing, listening, analysis, and discussion would stem from the literature.

The overarching objective of English classes would be the learning of values and the study of global issues, again placing the emphasis on the use of language to reach content goals. Students would need to be carefully supported across the grade levels to develop this approach. The Hamelin-Laie Primaria 1-4 plan (ages 6-10) would, therefore, include a heavy emphasis on phonics, basic comprehension, and writing. In Primaria 5-6, it was anticipated that students would have the developmental maturity to focus more fully on ESL grammar and by the end of Primaria 6; students would be prepared to complete the A2 Exam for the Cambridge Primary Certification.

Another example of program evaluation and enhancement comes from changes made to the early literacy component of grapho-phonics. Director Sonia Sas discussed the route the school had taken in designing an emergent reading program for their beginning students. They had noted that although students could read with great fluency using a traditional syllabic introduction to initial literacy, their comprehension was not very strong, with scores that reflected 100% reading fluency and 25% comprehension. The primary educators at this level set about designing their own whole word approach to reading with a strong emphasis on comprehension. In addition, they designed their own reading materials that encompassed both literacy and content area objectives.
Comprehension and early reading improved markedly and when students were later introduced to the syllabic principle, they mastered it very quickly and fully, resulting in scores of 75% in reading and 75% in comprehension. Director Sas noted that the students quickly noted patterns and could use them as a strategy in gaining meaning from print.

Vignette 1 reflects an interview with Director Sonia Sas regarding the underpinnings of the literacy program.

**Vignette 1: Language as a Primary Focus (translated from Spanish)**

**Interview with Director Sonia Sas**

In Spain everything comes from the reading/writing connections. Everything springs from reading. Students read a lot and they enjoy reading about the whole world. Children are required to read in each language at least three times per week: with 3 days each in Castellano and Catalan, 4 days in English and 2 free reading choice opportunities. They change strategies they use based on the type of text they are reading. They engage in oral activities, as they discuss the plot and then write about what they have read.

For example, if the students are reading about legends, they will then write a legend. Each trimester they are required to write a “librito” with text and pictures using a different genre: A recent project involved describing steps in a process. They work with peers in their classrooms to edit and revise their writing.

The educators noted that students at early stages of literacy development are not ready for grammar as it relates to reading. In 4th year of primary, they begin to focus more fully on grammar and application and have a solid grammar foundation by the end of primaria 6 (age 10).

**Implementation**

The following section is interspersed with vignettes across the grade levels to provide a flavor for the developmental nature of the curriculum and how languages and content are developed.

**Vignette 2: Hands-on, Interactive Learning**

**Pre-escolar: Carmen**

Carmen noted that with so many international students who don’t speak Castellano, it makes learning experiences more challenging for teachers and they must include many visuals and interactive learning experiences. In a visit to the classroom, students were studying concepts related to the food pyramid in English, including healthy habits, exercise, cooking and food groups. Students
made representations of healthy meals with clay, painting, or drawing. In their notebooks they traced key vocabulary words. They also wrote their own food-related words, such as ingredients to make a pizza.

In another lesson, students explored the concept of living and nonliving. They practiced key vocabulary (reproduce, breathe, grow) related to living objects and identified living/nonliving pictures from word cards. Students had many opportunities to discuss the characteristics of living and nonliving objects to ensure that they had internalized the concept. Students created a poster with drawings of a tree, plants, and fish to reflect living elements; and water, rocks, a door and a hat to reflect nonliving objects.

Several Renoir, Gaudi, and Van Gogh prints were displayed about the classroom, linking art and language within the curriculum and reflecting the emphasis on art appreciation. After students studied the Renoir prints, they noted that in his lawn party scenes, many of his subjects wore hats with bright flowers. Students made their own hats with bright flowers to further explore the artist’s craft.

In each of these learning activities students used oral English to describe their work and to analyze what they had learned.

The belief in the language learning ability of children is clearly evident at Primaria 1 (first grade equivalent), when in addition to studying in three languages, the students begin a fourth language as a world language. They may select French, German, or Mandarin Chinese as the fourth language. An observation in a French class revealed that the class was conducted completely in French. Students reviewed the weather, body parts, recited simple poems, and participated in movement and listening comprehension games. In addition to the languages used during the school day, many students at Hamelin-Laie International speak one or more additional languages at home or in their communities.

One six year-old girl certainly demonstrated the language learning ability of young children. Her mother spoke Japanese, her father Italian, and she was learning in English/Spanish/Catalan at school and adding on French as a World language. She spoke one language for each of her six years. Because she had become very adept at learning new languages she was able to explain in Spanish the legend surrounding the upcoming Sant Jordi (St. George patron saint of Catalonia) celebration. She related that Sant Jordi killed the dragon and rescued the princess. Roses then grew on the spot where the dragon
had been slain. Famous writers Shakespeare and Cervantes died on the same day. She was able to relay all of this information after watching and discussing a video in class.

Vignette 3: Social + Academic Language

Primaria 1: Mr. Paul

Mr. Paul begins the day with some written exercises that focus on social language, as they complete entries in their “emotions diary”. Sentence frames “Today is ____. The weather is ____. I am feeling ___ because _____.” provide supports for students. They continued with phonics-based spelling.

Today they read a new version of The 3 Pigs, using picture clues, TPR, slow reading and paraphrasing as scaffolds to comprehension. The children delighted in saying the repeating lines together and enjoyed reading the story more than once.

A list of books to be read at each grade level is selected by the teachers and learning activities that focus on development of both language and literacy are designed. The Primaria 1 students read a novel, write about a favorite part, and orally explain why they selected this particular scene. This is a good example of how the curriculum at Hamelin-Laie continually transcends the literal aspect of content and provides opportunities for students to develop and expand critical thinking skills. At this grade level, students have 2-3 classes each day in Catalan or Castellano and the rest of the day in English.

Discussions with teachers of Primaria 4 students revealed a linguistic challenge that they face. Many of the students speak Catalan fluently, but find the complex written form of the language quite challenging. Therefore, the instructors made efforts to focus quite intensively on writing in Catalan. In a visit to a Catalan literacy class, the students used their reading response notebooks as references as they engaged in lively discussions about their reading. Posing questions and challenging classmates’ responses sharpened the connections they made to the text and the nuances of the author’s message. Following discussion of the readings, the teacher reviewed key points on the digital board and later led students in exercises to clarify vocabulary and language structure from the text. Students then worked independently to jot opinions about the reading in their notebooks to prepare for a debate that would take place in the following days.
Newcomers to the country had their own personalized workbooks and received individualized instruction from the teacher.

Care is taken to create a community of learners who work together and show respect for one another within the school. Assemblies are scheduled regularly for students to come together to recognize one another’s accomplishments and to grow as a school family. At one assembly of primary students various students were presented with research awards. Each of the students provided the objectives of their work and explained the results of their research in one or more of the 3 languages. The assembly congratulated both the students and teachers on the completed projects. Following the presentations, students in the audience asked questions, which was a great opportunity to practice both listening and speaking skills.

Issues arising from the international composition of the school community are addressed very directly. In one student assembly Director Sas spoke about the multicultural environment of the school and the need to treat students from other cultures with great respect. She had noted that several students were addressing or referring to students from China as “el chino” or “eh, chino” and asked them to think about how that would make them feel. Rather than just scolding the students, Sonia guided them to think more fully about their school family and entreated students to call one another by their names rather than their country of origin. “Merecen respeto, son orgullosos de sus experiencias” (They deserve respect, they are proud of their experiences.) She extended this concept to guiding students to be respectful of everyone and not call one another names like “shorty” or “fatty” or “skinny”. Sonia ended by reminding students that we learn so much more when we have students from all around the world as part of our school community.

Vignette 4: Literacy/Critical Thinking

Mireya (5B): Literacy Class, Castellano

Students are expected to read class novels at home and then come prepared to discuss what they’ve read and do activities around them in the classroom. Approximately every two weeks the students in Mireya’s class complete a novel in Castellano and then switch to two weeks of reading a novel in Catalan.

The class had been studying the impact of media and stereotyping in Spanish. After viewing a brief video clip, they gave a number of examples of advertising
slogans they hear every day; “Nike: Just Do It” and “Red Bull – te da alas” (it gives you wings). In their workbooks they improved on sample advertising messages and then created their own announcement about the book they were reading, applying what they’d learned about imaging and messaging. This is yet another example of how the curriculum is structured to focus on equipping students with critical thinking skills that relate directly to their own lives.

Vignette 5: Integration of Literacy and Language

Liz: Literacy Class, English

Liz began her English literacy class with some direct instruction of grammar, i.e., a review of modal verbs (can, could, may, might, would, should, will, ought to, must) and their function in the English language (permission, obligation, advice, probability).

Liz: Can you say, “You must your smock?” Can you say, “You must to wear your smock.”? This is common error for speakers of Castellano and Catalan. Don’t put “to” between modal verb and verb directly after

Students: [make connections to Spanish verbs]

Liz: To make modal verbs negative simply add “not”. Give me examples:

Student: I don’t watch TV at 8:00
Liz: I don’t watch TV after 8:00p.m.
Student: I shouldn’t watch TV after 8:00p.m.

The students were very engaged throughout the lesson because the teacher is lively and the lesson is fun/fast-paced. It was noteworthy that the teacher engaged students in a translanguaging activity that analyzed similarities and differences between English and Castellano language structure, verbs in this case. She reviewed the concept of modal verbs to conclude this portion of the lesson. Liz stayed completely in English, but at this level students spoke to one another mostly in Catalan.

The class is reading: The Suitcase Kid (2010) by Jacqueline Wilson, which is a grade level English text. Students worked in pairs to complete a “Dear Diary, jumbled events” worksheet to sequence events in the order in which they occurred in the book. Students reviewed the plot as a class and the teacher read some excerpts from the text before the students started working independently. This led to lively disagreements and provided the teacher with the opportunity to review how inference was used in the text. This exercise gave students great opportunities to orally discuss content as a class and with their partners.

While students worked in pairs two recently arrived students from China returned from a tutoring session. They worked independently on alternate English assignments the teacher had prepared for them.
Student Research/Project Learning:

The focus on student research highlights the emphasis on application of integrated content and language across the curriculum. In visits to various research and study labs located throughout the complex, students worked diligently on a variety of projects, using the technology and the workspaces to create their products. Students research in groups, create a visual/power point, and present their work to an audience, such as other classes, parents, etc. Research efforts begin in Primaria 3 and are completed in one of the three main languages of the curriculum.

Vignette 6: Science + The Language of Science

Silvia: Primaria 5

In a science class, taught completely in English, students made presentations on units on matter, energy, and machines. The same presentation assessment form as used in other classes was used here, creating a familiarity with the expectations of the rubric. Students completed peer assessments as the various groups presented.

A group of students presented their research on the evolution of machines. They began with a brief demonstration of simple machines, followed by sharing images of old and new models of a sewing machine. They’d also made a simple machine (sun clock) and contrasted that with a watch. The students presented an analysis of the effects of simple machines on everyday life and shared research they’d done on future machines. They concluded by discussing why they’d chosen this project. The accompanying PowerPoint had very few spelling or grammar errors and the emphasis was on analysis and evaluation of findings, which focused on higher-level language use.

Vignette 7: Research and Analysis

Bea: Primaria 6 Conflicts in Contemporary Times

A Primaria 6 class was studying Conflicts in Contemporary Times and presented their findings to me during a visit. Students completed both self- and peer-assessments surrounding the presentations, providing valuable feedback and reflection (See Figures 1 and 2). One group presented a PowerPoint entitled, “Could we avoid these conflicts?” Their use of English was very fluid with very accurate pronunciation. Few language errors were noted and those that occurred were generally quickly self-corrected. Student presentation skills were quite polished and they spoke without using notes or looking at the slides. The descriptions of information were detailed and their conclusion (some conflicts can be avoided and others cannot) was logically drawn from the findings. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session, which required students to use language needed to form opinions, make assumptions, and clarify evidence.
A second group presented a power point entitled “War vs. Peace”. They began with a review of several more recent wars, as well as the role of organizations such as the League of Nations, the European Union, and the World Trade Organization in conflicts. They explained how membership in these organizations impacted East/West conflicts and concluded with their opinions about how such organizations have impacted war around the world. Bea gave each group feedback on content, language, and presentation. The session concluded with a discussion of their metacognitive understanding of how they were progressing in developing their skills in analysis.

Perusing the bulletin boards that line the hallways at Hamelin-Laie also revealed much about the level of learning that takes place in this school. In the Primaria 4 hallway there are very large posters that reflect analyses of books they have read in English. The Primaria 6 bulletin boards were plastered with history research projects, including the Hapsburg Wars, Bourbon Family Tree, Before and After the French Revolution, Painters of the Hapsburg Kings, Monarchy in Modern and Contemporary Periods, and Society in the Modern Age.

**Secundaria/International Baccalaureate**

The Hamelin Laie International Schol has the distinct advantage of a program that begins with the “guardería” and proceeds through the “bachillerato”, enabling students to spend 17 years in the same school. The coordination from infancy through the international baccalaureate is very carefully designed to monitor student academic, linguistic, social, and emotional growth across the age levels.

The teachers ensure that each of the courses at the secondary levels is more than just the language, but that each also focuses on the development of literacy understanding and appreciation. Students have three hours of literature and reinforcement each week. Teachers select texts that match the language level of the students. For example, in 4th ESO (age 16), students read *The Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954), which they found quite challenging, as it was the original version and not the ESL adapted version.

**Vignette 8: Secondary Science**

**10C: Mr. Alexander – Natural Science (English)**

**Objective**: importance of distinguishing processes of living things

A Power Point reviewed the processes of living organisms: a) ability to respond to stimuli; b) ability to reproduce; c) ability to grow and develop; d)
ability to take resources from environment and convert to energy; e) how living organisms adapt to their environment.

Students carried on a lively discussion of how living organisms use the strategy of “escape” to survive and Mr. Alexander challenged them to relate this strategy to the concept of “adaptation”. In this class students were only allowed to speak in English throughout the class session.

Students completed textbook exercises in pairs on their tablets, discussing and responding to one another’s comments. Mr. Alexander worked individually with students, explaining and asking questions and the class then reviewed their work together. He had students read their responses and explain why they answered as they did, which fostered the development of critical thinking. They also interpreted a graph related to the topic and answered questions. Mr. Alexander ended the class by reviewing and discussing the main point, “organism are always trying to adapt”.

Vignette 9: Secondary English – Analysis of Plot

Isabel: English – 2-C

Isabel stresses the importance placed on creating autonomous learners who come to see themselves as lifelong learners. This is a theme that runs throughout the curriculum at Hamelin-Laie International School.

Students were reading and discussing Macbeth. They eagerly volunteered to take parts in reading a section of the play. The teacher stopped occasionally to ask questions: Where are they? What are they going to do? What are the plot points? What does “prematurely” mean? The students all read quite fluently and demonstrated quite good accents in English.

A lively discussion followed that reflected critical thinking about the play. They argued about how Lady Macbeth died and then reviewed the three prophecies, what they meant, and how they were able to interpret them. Comprehension of the plot was further reinforced by viewing of a brief video of this section of the play. Students were very animated in verifying or refining their original interpretations. A creative assignment led them to write tweets, hash tags, and Instagrams related to Macbeth, such as: -@gentlewoman (Queen is dead) or a tweet might read: OMG OMG the queen is dead.

Students spend the final 2 years in the International Baccalaureate preparing for C2 Level (Certificate of Proficiency in English). This level is not required for certification, but Hamelin students stand out in their performance on this assessment. Students complete three language courses: English language and literature, Cambridge
English, and oral English. As part of the oracy course students participate in several public presentations that provide opportunities for them to refine debate, IT literacy, and multi-media skills. IB teacher, Elaine, works with students to prepare for this Cambridge assessment and students flock to her class. She indicated that the baccalaureate is the most difficult part of the curriculum to plan, due to a lack of materials. However, by spring 60% of her students had already passed the rigorous international examinations.

Literature and current affairs have proven to be ideal for the secondary, as it enables them to explore moral and political issues at a more in-depth level. They complete a study of English theatre in semester one and create and produce a theatre production in semester two. All of these experiences are designed to make the classes more interactive and language rich.

Another challenge for the baccalaureate program is that there is a great deal of variability among the students, as many students come from other schools and do not have the same level of preparation as the students from Hamelin-Laie. Students from around the world stay at the Six Lemon World residence while completing their baccalaureate studies.

**Assessment Process**

Hamelin-Laie International School has developed a very comprehensive and rigorous assessment process that is an integral part of the curriculum. Both academic and linguistic progress is closely monitored and objectives are clearly established that reflect expectations at each grade level. Students continually self-assess their own work and provide feedback to their classmates in peer assessments. Teacher feedback is constant and immediate, providing students with concrete evidence of their strengths and suggestions for improvement. Reflections on learning and goal-setting are also integral parts of the learning process.

The school has established an impressive agenda of linguistic and academic external assessments as well. Students sit for Cambridge Tests of English (www.cambridgeenglish.org/examsandtests/) beginning at an early age and continue with these exams across the grade levels. Since the development of English proficiency holds such a primary focus in the program, results on the Cambridge exams serve as strong indicators of individual student progress. In addition to the national and provincial
assessments of Castellano and Catalan language and content, students may also complete international certificate exams in German, Mandarin, or French. All of these assessments provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in each of the languages.

Discussion:

A number of factors impact the success of the Hamelin-Laie International School that may serve as examples for other multilingual schools (Henn-Reinke, 2012). The commitment to language learning is evident in all aspects of the curriculum and operation of the school. Everything from the mission statement to the implementation of the curriculum reflects the emphasis on language learning. Teachers highly proficient in the language and culture of instruction are employed at every level to ensure that students are surrounded by proficient language models. The student population at this school is becoming increasingly international, especially in relation to the number of native speakers of English, which has had a positive influence on enhancing oracy skills in that language. External international examinations of language development in English and German, Mandarin Chinese, or French are used as indicators of linguistic proficiency and reflect high expectations for language proficiency. The student body of the school, now housed in a state of the art facility, encompasses infants to students completing an International Baccalaureate program, providing an enriched, comprehensive linguistic and academic experience. The inclusion of early childhood through post-secondary students enables educators to conduct both horizontal and vertical reviews of their program and to establish a developmental progression of social, emotional, linguistic and academic growth from birth to university that is truly remarkable. A very well developed review process has been created to continually refine and expand the effectiveness of the program. All of these factors encapsulated within an interactive, hands-on, meaningful curriculum that fosters the development of higher order/global thinking are the hallmarks of the Hamelin-Laie International School.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the program at Hamelin-Laie International School in Mongat, Barcelona, Spain highlights the intersection of two very critical concepts in the acquisition of languages in a school setting. First, the human brain has enormous
capacity for learning languages and second, an effective multilingual program will be comprehensive and dynamic in nature.

In her observations of learning in young children, Marie Montessori (infomontessori.com/language/introduction.htm) observed how effortlessly and completely children acquired a first language by engaging in an authentic manner with their environment and the people who surrounded them. Although school is never such a completely organic setting for learning, Hamelin has managed to create an environment that provides a rich continuum of learning opportunities that enhance both linguistic and academic success. By creating a birth to baccalaureate curriculum students have multiple opportunities to develop and refine their language skills over a long period of time. The emphasis on the integration of social, emotional, linguistic, cultural and academic competence focuses on the whole child and helps ensure that each individual child feels supported and has the tools to be successful and take risks with learning.

The comprehensive and dynamic nature of the program at Hamelin-Laie is a significant part of what make this a successful trilingual endeavor. The commitment to language learning permeates all linguistic and academic decisions made by educators at the school. Teachers highly proficient in the languages in which they teach ensure that students have authentic language models in developing oracy and literacy in all languages. The language assessment plan and accompanying review process are rigorous and comprehensive and enable educators to continually refine and expand the effectiveness of the program. The dynamic nature of this review process strives to understand and capitalize on the linguistic learning capacity of children and endeavors to create learning experiences that unlock this potential. The success of the program is owing to many factors, the greatest of which is that the students are not merely learning languages but using languages to learn. The program at Hamelin-Laie International School is successful and serves as an excellent example of a sound framework for trilingual educational programs.
References


Author Statement

Kathryn Henn-Reinke began her career as an elementary Spanish/English bilingual, elementary teacher. She is professor emerita from the ESL/bilingual program at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh where she was co-director of several federal grants for the licensing of ESL/bilingual teachers. She earned a Bachelor’s degree in Spanish, a Master's degree in Reading, and a Ph.D. in Urban Education from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research interests include intervention and instruction with bilingual learners, development of biliteracy, and trilingual education.
Public Interest Statement

This article presents a thorough description of an interesting multilingual curriculum and its implementation in a school in Mongat, Barcelona, Spain. It serves as a framework that other schools interested in trilingual education may wish to emulate. The achievement of this school in terms of its success in improving students’ multilingual language proficiency is impressive and inspiring. The author attributes such success to several salient, maybe also unique, factors encapsulated in the curriculum, including the commitment to language learning, teachers’ high proficiency in the instructional language, a student cohort ranging from infants to baccalaureate level, and a comprehensive assessment process, among others. Rich vignettes enhance these aspects. Multilingual education researchers/practitioners, as well as parents and community members interested in this topic will find this article useful with regard to effective multilingual curriculum design and implementation that aims at the improvement of students’ multilingual proficiency.
Looking at the chart and assess your work and your classmates’ work. Give yourself and the others a mark from 1 to 10 for each of the following aspects.

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>You are</th>
<th>Classmate 1</th>
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<td>Oral presentation</td>
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Pg. 2

Why did you choose this topic for research? What questions did you have?
What have you learnt after doing your research (that you didn’t know before)?
What difficulties did you have with your group?
Did you like this project? Why (not)?
Any more comments?
Listen to the presentations of your classmates and give your opinion about them. You must consider the following points:

- **Content** (did they include all the information?)
- **Interest** (was the presentation interesting or boring?)
- **Research** (did they find out the information they needed for the project?)
- **Explanation** (did they explain the content well? Were they nervous?).

Give them a mark (it can be a group mark or an individual one).

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