Leading Learning to Support Bilingual Co-Teaching at Kindergarten Level in the UAE

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Abstract

Teachers in our school work together as equal partners to facilitate learning at KG1 and KG2 level. Arabic-medium teachers and English-medium teachers share a classroom and take responsibility for leading learning and sharing teaching responsibilities in a wide variety of subject areas. It is in essence a strong CLIL model where the children are learning content and language in an integrated manner in both Arabic and English. Varying models of co-teaching have been outlined in the literature and are observed throughout the school but the model being used for teaching literacy is primarily team teaching. Through a cyclical process of observation, reflection, dialogue and formal feedback (in the form of directed and facilitated professional development/ surveys/ circulars/ access to research), the administrative team has sought to support teachers in developing their co-teaching relationship. By engaging with the biliteracy model, we are aiming to enhance the children's skills (particularly speaking skills) in both languages and activate the children's prior knowledge by intentionally weaving literacy outcomes for both languages through the theme. This paper explores some of the successes and opportunities for growth we have identified as a school based on various types of data collected as outlined above. It particularly highlights the importance of planning time, administrative support and positive working relationships as pre-requisites for co-teaching.

Key Words

Team teaching; dual language education; bilingual education; educational leadership.

Introduction

The goal of the article is for educators and leaders to recognize the strengths and opportunities for growth of co-teaching in a dual language bilingual education programme in the context of English- and Arabic-language early years education in the UAE. It should be noted that this programme is and has been in a constant state of change and fluidity since the Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) began a process of education reform in 2010. Education reform in the UAE takes the form of New School Model (NSM) and 'aims to raise the academic outcomes of Abu Dhabi students to the internationally competitive level necessary to achieve Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030' (ADEC, 2014). The article also clarifies, similarly to Friend (2008), that while co-teaching may seem to be a relatively simple strategy for engaging with learners in the early years, it is 'a sophisticated service option requiring a strong professional commitment and systemic supports' (ibid., p. 10).

Kindergarten schools within ADEC consist of two grades – KG1 and KG2. Children may enrol at KG1 from the age of three and eight months. There are typically two teachers placed in each classroom, although this is not the case in every school. English Medium Teachers (EMTs) have primary responsibility for English, Maths and Science, while Arabic Medium Teachers (AMTs) are responsible for Arabic, Islamic Studies and Civics. EMTs are mostly recruited from the United States, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There is a growing number of Emirati EMTS (EEMTs) being hired in public schools. Many AMTs are of Emirati nationality although there are some Arabic teachers of Egyptian, Jordanian and Syrian nationality. In cases where there are no 'specialist' teachers allocated to a school, both teachers are responsible for Visual Art, Music Education and Health and Physical Education. In the context of the UAE kindergarten engaged in education reform, where there are two teachers in each classroom bringing a variety of teaching experiences, initial teacher education and professional development backgrounds, it can be recognized that 'the two sets of knowledge and skills form a sort of Venn diagram in which there are overlapping similarities and distinct differences' (Friend, 2008, p. 11).

Literature review

The review of literature highlights four main areas of concern to this study; the aspect of co-teaching related to Content and Language Integrated Learning, co-teaching affordances, co-teaching requisites and the challenges presented by co-teaching to a prescribed curriculum.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL is an educational approach which has the objective 'of promoting both content and language mastery to pre-defined levels' in an additional language (Marsh, 2012, p. ii). CLIL can be viewed as a natural extension and merging of two methodological approaches – teaching through the target language (TL) and using a cross-curricular or thematic approach (Dillon, 2009). It is important that teachers present information and facilitate learning in a manner that is both cognitively demanding and context-embedded (NCCA, 2005). EMTs and AMTs working collaboratively in a team teaching situation where both languages are being used simultaneously during whole-group instruction provides a unique opportunity for teachers to integrate learning using the theme as the vehicle and facilitate understanding of concepts regarding both language and content. Wolff has it that CLIL has presented a challenge to the 'status quo' where subjects and parts of subjects are seen as discrete chunks (2012). This is indeed the case in our school where teachers are actively encouraged to see

the 'bigger picture' when it comes to language development and engage in a balanced bilingual literacy model.

Cummins has argued since 1979 that 'a cognitively and academically beneficial form of bilingualism can be achieved only on the basis of adequately developed first language skills' (1979, p. 222). The children in ADEC KGs are in fact learning additional L1s or L2s as Arabic and English when they come to KG as until that point, many children will have spoken local Arabic at home. This places them in a rather unique situation where a positive transfer of skills has to occur between formal Arabic and English as additional languages.

This highlights the need for teachers to be mindful of activating children's prior knowledge because students, particularly ELLs, learn and remember new information best when it is linked to relevant prior knowledge (Hill and Flynn, 2006). If this can be done in Arabic and English simultaneously in an interwoven co-constructed dialogue, this should have a positive impact on children's understanding. The development of children's comprehensible output by providing comprehensible input is key in this situation (Gass, 2003; Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Pica, 2005). The use of English and Arabic during a literacy lesson provides a unique opportunity for teachers to use their professional knowledge of the child's linguistic level to put them under developmentally appropriate communicative pressure under guidance i.e. the use of context to elicit more information which may result in teacher supplying new words but within a frame the child understands (Dillon, 2014).

Co-teaching affordances

It should be noted that while a variety of subjects in the school are co-taught in many different ways, the focus for this setting has been team teaching to model the outcomes through the theme in Arabic and English during whole-group literacy. Teaming is one of six fundamental co-teaching approaches 'in which both teachers share the instruction of the large group' (Friend, 2008, p. 15). In co-taught classrooms 'teachers work together as a team by sharing equal instructional and classroom management' (Bahamonde and Friend, 1999, p. 17). Liu holds that with team teaching, both teachers enjoy the same status. 'They jointly plan, teach, assess, and assume responsibility for all students in the classroom' (Liu, 2008, p. 111).

Co-teaching recognizes the value of having two or more professionals 'who contribute different but complementary perspectives' and creates the opportunity for 'educators to collaborate, trading ideas and increasing each other's expertise' (Bahamonde & Friend, 1999, p. 13). This is particularly true in the UAE context, taking cultural differences and language backgrounds of teachers into consideration.

> co-teaching suggests that professionals who share instruction can combine their knowledge and skills to create learning environments in which instruction is both rigorous and flexible, standards-based but accommodated to each student's unique learning needs. They can do so in a way that respectfully draws on each individual's talents, acknowledging that it is unlikely that any single professional in today's schools could possibly know everything necessary to optimize learning' (Friend, 2008, p. 11).

In this situation, not only are subject areas different areas of expertise but also pedagogical styles, education background and cultural background. Shaban and Ismail highlight that in the UAE context there are two different teachers 'from two different cultures teaching children' (2013, p.35). Much of the literature on co-teaching is drawn from the sphere of special education needs (see, for example, Cook and Friend, 1996; Vaughn et al., 1997). Bahamonde and Friend acknowledge that it

'seems to offer bilingual programs a next evolutionary step by maximizing the skills of two types of teachers collaborating for the benefit of students' (1999, p. 12).

Friend contends that 'The exact contribution that each person makes may vary, but together the educators create a learning situation that cannot be produced by a solo teacher' (2008, p. 9). Co-teaching may also make stress more manageable for teachers (Friend, 2008: 14) because 'teachers can form partnerships that give each member support that improve morale' (Bahamonde and Friend, 1999, p. 16). These types of partnerships also create the 'type of adult-adult support network teachers need' (ibid., p. 18).

When co-teaching is embraced and harnessed as part of the school culture, it can highlight the strengths of teachers. It can also 'help promote the growth of inexperienced teachers' (Liu, 2008, p. 108). By playing to the strengths of teachers and creating space for opportunities for growth to develop, Friend sees that 'the potential for co-teaching to improve outcomes is significant' (2008, p. 9). Liu states that co-teaching 'can provide more effective monitoring and input than what a single teacher can accomplish (2008, p. 106). It is also noted that 'co-teaching increases instructional options for all students' because 'two teachers can provide more individualization in a cotaught classroom' (Bahamonde and Friend, 1999, p. 13). Liu reminds us of the danger of making assumptions about the effectiveness of co-teaching as follows: 'The power of co-teaching lies largely in the assumption that all the participants will make a greater contribution than the combination of the participants' individual work' (Liu, 2008: 106). This leads us to areas of monitoring and support to be addressed in an exploration of co-teaching requisites.

Co-teaching requisites

Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007) found that teachers noted the need for a wide variety of supports in order for co-teaching to be effective. The same authors also found that principals are the key to putting into place the prerequisites for co-teaching to be successful and have a positive impact on student learning. Friend recommends that the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) monitor the effectiveness of co-teaching to make sure that 'it is having the desired impact on student learning' (Friend, 2008, p. 16).

According to Friend 'it is essential that co-teachers ask one another about roles in the classroom and continuously improve their shared instruction so that both educators are active participants. Doing so fosters exemplary practices' (2008, p. 15). This points towards the two main concerns highlighted by teachers – planning time and maintaining a positive working relationship. Co-teaching is, according to Friend, 'a far more complicated option than it may at first appear' (2008, p. 17).

Working relationship

Friend (2008, p. 11) refers to a study by Keefe and Moore (2004) where 'educators stressed the importance of compatibility between teaching partners'. Furthermore, student outcomes often depend on the working relationship between the teachers (ibid.). Therefore, we should see a difference in attitudes towards and results of co-teaching classrooms depending on the level of working relationship. When Shaban and Ismail interviewed KG teachers about the nature of cooperation in a co-taught classroom, all of those teachers agreed that when you have a good relationship 'then you are able to focus on what's important for the children and can work together in collaborating to make that happen' (2013, p. 33).

Effective co-teaching relies on each partner problem-solving to generate new strategies, negotiation to resolve differences of opinion and an openness to trying alternative solutions. Co-teaching also

requires committing to one another in terms on nurturing the professional relationship (Friend, 2008, p. 13). By the time the relationship has become collaborative, 'mutual planning and sharing of ideas have become the norm (Liu, 2008, p. 111). Friend (2008: 14) recommends giving potential co-teachers choices.

Team teaching, according to Liu, 'can only be successfully implemented if co-teachers' skills and relationships are strong and mature because it requires more time, coordination and trust in each other's skills' (2008, p. 111). Friend (2008, p. 13) notes that co-teaching relationships are often likened to 'marital relationships in that they depend on commitment, negotiation and flexibility'. The three stages referred to by Gately and Gately (2001), on which part of this study is based, are beginning, compromising and collaborative. An analogy can be drawn between the beginning stages of a co-teaching relationship and the dating or courting stage of a relationship, the compromising stage and the 'promised' or engaged phase of a relationship and the collaborative and the married stage. The beginning stage of the relationship may involve guarded, careful communication. The compromising stage involves a sense of give and take. Once teachers have reached the collaborating stage of their relationship, communication tends to be open and mutually beneficial.

Gately and Gately (2001) outline eight components of the co-teaching relationship; Interpersonal Communication, Physical Arrangement, Familiarity with the Curriculum, Curriculum Goals and Modifications, Instructional Planning, Instructional Presentation, Classroom Management and Assessment. Based on these eight components, the following points summarise in turn what a collaborative co-taught classroom could look:

- Teachers are positive role models for effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills;

- Teacher movement throughout the classroom should be fluid and intuitive and the children will be working in collaborative groups;

- Teachers appreciate the 'specific curricular competencies' (ibid., p. 43) they bring to the classroom;

- Both planned and instinctive differentiation of student learning is the norm;

- Mutual planning and sharing with space for on-the-spot modifications in planning;

- Both teachers freely facilitate instruction and group learning;

- The classroom management plan is implemented by both teachers and benefits all students and

- Teachers develop assessment practices on an ongoing basis and 'appreciate the need for a variety of options when assessing students' progress' (ibid., p. 45).

Planning time – in context

Teachers in the school were requested during the previous academic year to complete various surveys following professional development and engage in a reflective process with their co-teacher. Data from these sources indicate that teachers consistently requested more time for planning. ADEC requires that teacher complete three hours of after-school professional activities including professional development, planning, preparation and so on (ADEC, 2014). Therefore teachers were allocated 90 minutes of planning time once every week after school from the beginning of the school year and 90 minutes of weekly facilitated professional development.

Friend (2008, p. 12) says that co-teachers usually express a preference for a weekly co-planning period for each partnership. This is currently the case in this setting. Friend (2008, p. 12)

recommends considering planning for this situation as a two-component process. In this setting, planning is seen as a three- to four-component process. The first component involves 'sharing key decisions and discussing the most critical topics' (ibid.) This involves grade level, theme planning where decisions are made about mapping which literacy outcomes are most appropriate to teach over a four-week period. This typically occurs when planning at the start of the trimester. The second component is more directed towards sub-topics within the theme as the teachers decide during weekly co-planning where all teachers from the grade level decide which vehicles to use to model the literacy outcomes for the week. The third component involves the co-teaching pairs meeting to reflect on their practice and student data from the previous week. This informs their planning for their particular class as they decide on how to differentiate instruction for their students' needs. The fourth component includes 'on-the-fly conversations that occur on a daily or as-needed basis' (ibid.) Hargreaves (2007) recommends the type of compensated planning time as staff development described above as it is intense, immediately useful and reflective. Co-teaching by its nature encourages 'teacher reflection on best practices to meet all students' needs' (Bahamonde & Friend, 1999, p. 18).

Friend (2008) recommends making staff development meaningful. Based on the needs of the school derived from whole school inspection reports and teacher evaluations from the previous academic year, school improvement goals had already been set. The new SLT decided to encourage all co-teaching pairs to work on the same school improvement goal in order to engage in action research in their classrooms as they pilot various initiatives related to improving speaking and enhancing creative and critical thinking skills. In this way, co-teachers in this setting 'jointly participate in workshops, book studies, learning communities' (Friend, 2008: 14).

Curriculum and Co-teaching

Following on from the discussion of Arabic/ English team teaching, it must be highlighted that an area of concern relates to instructional intensity (Bahamonde and Friend, 1999). The revised ADEC curriculum at KG level reflects international standards and is driven by outcomes which teachers should systematically assess and report. At the same time, it is driven by a desire to help children develop 21st century skills; critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication. At KG level, the most appropriate way to do this is through play-based learning (Shipley, 2008; Macintire, 2001; Smith and Pellegrini, 2013).

This presents a dilemma as teachers often feel restricted to focusing on getting outcomes 'covered' while being aware of the need for children to work at a developmentally appropriate level i.e. through play (Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). Over the course of the year at KG2 level, for example, the children should be assessed in 51 Arabic outcomes, 50 English outcomes, 25 Mathematics outcomes and 12 Science outcomes. While a quick overview of the outcomes naturally shows a similarity in the type of literacy outcomes being taught, it takes a lot of planning time to ensure that these can be matched in order to maximize conceptual knowledge. In a standards-based curriculum 'no simple solution exists to this problem because it probably reflects philosophy and priority as much as fact' (ibid.: 19). In the context of the school in the study, teachers are encouraged to find creative ways of integrating the outcomes with the theme in a play-based manner, ideally in a manner that also integrates Arabic-language and English-language outcomes where possible.

Methodology

The study came about through an organic process of discussion, teacher observation and development of the school's community of practice. At the beginning of the academic year, the authors became the senior leadership team (SLT) of the kindergarten school where the study took place. While the Head of Faculty (EMT) had been working in the school for 6 months, the principal and vice-principal were both newly transferred to the school. This also saw a change in staffing with 23.5% of staff (8 out of 34) being either newly-qualified or newly appointed to the school. While conducting initial informal, exploratory observations, the SLT noticed that while the EMT and AMT were teaching literacy at the same time, there was a lot of turn-taking during the whole-group 'carpet' time. In many cases, for example, the EMT would teach some phonics, routines and phrases and then the AMT would take her turn to teach the Arabic letter, some sight words and phrases. It occurred to the SLT through reflecting on practice during then almost-daily meetings that this manner of presenting information in an early years setting was not the most age-appropriate way of engaging with the children bilingually, as outlined below. Thus ensued a planned and systematic period of learning walks focusing on whole-group teaching during literacy. In total 36 sessions were observed by the SLT over an eight week period during Trimester 1. In each of 18 classrooms, co-teaching was observed at varying stages of development; strengths were noted and feedback was given about these strengths and opportunities for growth.

Data collection

Case study research focuses on a particular interest in individual cases (Stake, 1994; Cregan, 2007). A case study can often provide a detailed snapshot of a system in action. In order to explore the area of co-teaching more rigorously in this setting, permission was granted by the ADEC Research office to conduct a survey with teachers (c.f. Appendix A). A survey was devised based on the literature review above including one section based on Gately and Gately (2001 – outlined above) as a model for exploring where the teachers feel they are at in their co-teaching relationship mid-way through the year. The survey was administered via WhatsApp and by email through www.surveymonkey.com to all participating staff members. There was a return rate of 65% (22 out of 34 teachers). Some of the newly-appointed teachers considered that they didn't have enough experience of co-teaching in the school to respond. There was a much higher return rate from EMTs, 81% of whom responded to the survey (13 out of 16 teachers). 50% of the 18 AMTs responded. The survey yielded mainly quantitative data based on Likert scale ratings and ranking scales. Highly structured, closed questions were used throughout the main body of the questionnaire. These types of questions are very useful in generating frequencies of response, which are suitable for statistical treatment (Oppenheim, 1992). They have also enabled comparisons to be made across groups in the sample. Three open-ended questions were included to add to the richness of the data and highlight areas for further exploration (Borg et al., 1996; Cohen et al., 2007). However, it is important to note that this research is not rooted within a positivistic framework. It is grounded in trying to explain the processes underlying the phenomenon of co-teaching in a naturalistic sense (Farhady, 2013). It is acknowledged that there is no intention of generalizability as the observations and survey were conducted in only one setting. The observations, while specific to the case in question, may be of benefit to colleagues working in similar settings (ibid.) In the case of the present study, the case has been selected as an example of 'phenomena occurring more widely' (Edwards, 2001, p. 126).

The bilingual nature of the research led us to consider the nuances of language and the importance of appropriate translation for research purposes. Jagosh and Boudreau (2009, p. 105) explain this succinctly as follows:

> cross-cultural research involves both translation and calibration. Whereas translation involves finding equivalency between source and target languages, calibration explores whether a word has the same placement or weight in the linguistic field of the target language as the source language.

This issue must be borne in mind in any interpretation of the data as the survey was written first in English, based on a review of the literature outlined above, and then translated into Arabic. The translation was cross-checked by three bilingual Arabic/ English speakers to ensure as much consistency as possible.

Findings

The findings from the survey administered to teachers will be framed with reference to the areas of co-teaching affordances and co-teaching prerequisites of administrative support and working relationships. Only where there are significant differences between responses from AMTs and EMTs will these differences be highlighted. One teacher responded that 'the effectiveness of co-teaching is dependent on each situation'. This points to the differences there are in whole-school administrative approaches and working relationships – differences that are present between classrooms at micro-level and schools at macro-level. The findings are framed by the SLT having originally found that for the context of the school, while other co-teaching models are in place, in particular one teach-one assist and station teaching, team teaching was the one that required most staff development and became the main focus.

70% of the teachers surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that a co-teaching environment can better facilitate the learning process. Of the 30% who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this contention, all were AMTs. 60% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with Liu's statement that co-teaching can provide more effective monitoring and input than a single teacher. Again, all of the teachers who either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement were AMTs. 68% of teachers believe that co-teaching minimizes both co-teachers' weaknesses as individual instructors. 55% of teachers surveyed believe that co-teaching results in better quality of teaching and learning.

82% of the teachers surveyed either agree or strongly agree that co-teaching can help to promote the growth of inexperienced teachers. Of the 18% of teachers who either disagreed or strongly disagreed, all were AMTs.

A large majority of 91% of teachers who responded either agreed or strongly agreed that the administration team arranges planning time and other logistics to make co-teaching feasible. In this setting, 86% of teachers agree or strongly agree that the SLT monitors the effectiveness of co-teaching to make sure that to make sure that it is having an effect on student learning. When teachers were asked if reflecting on practice with their co-teacher helps with planning for the next unit, 77% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed.

76% of respondents feel that they have enough allocated time for planning. However, collective decisions have been made as needed regarding how this time is used, particularly as feedback has been given to teachers regarding next steps.

When asked about whether students view each co-teacher equally as their teacher, 91% of teachers responded positively. Linked with this and also with the issue of workload of teachers, one teacher responded that 'one teacher tends to do more work than the other, or feel more responsible for documentation […]'. This is important to bear in mind in any discussion of co-teaching relationships. 18% of teachers agreed that they had a choice in teaching partner and the majority of teachers, 64%, disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 1 below shows the findings of the eight components of the co-teaching relationship. It can be seen that in seven of the eight components teachers rank themselves at the collaborating stage. The component that is ranked highest for collaborating is classroom management, with almost 82% of teachers at Stage 3. Almost 64% of teachers feel that they are at Stage 3 regarding familiarity with the curriculum, something that could reasonably be expected mid-year. One teacher responded that co-teaching 'requires both teachers to be aware of all the outcomes being taught so that they can use each other's ideas to explain […]'. The only area where a small majority of teachers feel they are at the compromising stage is Curriculum Goals and Modifications.

Table 1 Stages of the Eight Components of the Co-teaching Relationship at Zakher KG

Eight Components of the Co-teaching Relationship	Beginning stage (Stage 1)	Compromising Stage (Stage 2)	Collaborating stage (Stage 3)
Interpersonal Communications	13.64%	31.82%	54.55%
Physical Arrangement	18.18%	22.73%	59.09%
Familiarity with the Curriculum	4.55%	31.82%	63.64%
Curriculum Goals and Modifications	13.64%	45.45%	40.91%
Instructional Planning	9.52%	33.33%	57.14%
Instructional Presentation	4.55%	36.36%	59.09%
Classroom Management	4.55%	13.64%	81.82%
Assessment	27.27%	27.27%	45.45%

Discussion

It is acknowledged and lauded that in this setting, three models of co-teaching may be employed within even a single lesson, 'given the demands and nature of specific situations' (Liu, 2008, p. 112). This holds with Liu's recommendation that 'co-teaching models should not be chosen without a great deal of thought and consideration for the specific contexts within which they are going to be implemented' (2008, p. 111). The overall findings are particularly favourable towards working relationships in the school.

In terms of the benefits that co-teaching brings to a teaching and learning situation, many of our findings point towards the strength of pooling resources and skills as having great benefits for student learning and indeed student outcomes. Classroom management is seen by the majority of teachers in the school as the area where they have a positive collaborative relationship. As management is fundamental to the success of teaching and learning, this is a very positive finding in terms of an affordance of co-teaching. When exploring the other affordances of co-teaching, it appears that the AMTs who responded have a more negative view of some of these. This is an area for further reflection and consideration as we explore why this is the case. The low return rate among AMTs may be a contributing factor in this.

While the SLT facilitated the assignment of co-teaching partners at the beginning of the year, a very small number of teachers reported having any choice in co-teacher. The issue of teacher choice of co-teacher does not appear to be having a negative impact on working relationships in this setting but it must be borne in mind that the survey was administered mid-year. With 23.5% of the teaching staff newly appointed to the school and teacher turnover continuing throughout the year, this finding is of concern to the school. Retention of staff is an area which of concern within ADEC and the issue of teacher choice could certainly be minimized if staff transfers mid-year and at the end of the year were kept to a minimum.

Linked with the area of teacher choice is the issue of placing inexperienced teachers with experienced teachers. This is an idea which the majority of teachers in this setting agree with and one that could be capitalized on in future years as mentor/ mentee relationships develop. This finding could be used strategically by helping them to gain a better understanding of teaching methodologies. In a school with 20% of teachers newly-qualified, it is prudent to think about how much co-teaching may have the potential to support them in developing their skills.

Planning time is crucial to the success of co-teaching and the majority of teachers in this setting feel that they have enough time to plan together. It is essential to engage in dialogue with staff and address any needs they have in this area. By allocating specific planning time to co-teachers and by supporting them in trialing modifications, the SLT acknowledges and affirms the importance of co-teaching as a model. As the SLT, the authors have taken a proactive and constructive approach to addressing any dilemmas teachers face in co-teaching. This approach is having a positive effect on working relationships.

The area of teaching Arabic and English Literacy simultaneously in an interwoven co-constructed dialogue continues to be an area for concern, although most teachers agree that this model is an effective one. In order to ensure better quality of teaching and learning, one aspect of dual language teaching that should be avoided is direct translation – as one teacher said, in some cases 'they don't have to listen to the English teacher because it will be translated'. This would oppose the fundamental basis for CLIL as outlined above. For recommendations in this area, we must turn to the teachers for their advice. One teacher said 'we have yet to be properly trained on models of co-teaching […] I don't think we fully understand it'. This points to a need for targeted professional development in the area.

Conclusion

At the moment the SLT is working on editing videos of teachers engaged in exemplary practice to facilitate these professional development needs. Furthermore, the model of appreciative inquiry for

peer observation is currently being implemented through SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results; Stavros and Hindrichs, 2009). This aims to harness the strengths of the school by opening up opportunities for colleagues to strategically engage in dialogue about what we are doing well. It is envisaged that collectively we will be in a position to co-construct the vision for co-teaching in our school. Shaban and Ismail point out that teachers who 'are inspired to develop professionally and who create a concerted effort to learn on the job are more likely to be successful at team teaching' (2013, p. 26). In this school we see that in order for our students to become 21st century learners, teachers must also exemplify creative and critical thinking skills. To this end, all the teachers in the school are engaged in action research projects, some in the area of co-teaching. The conditions in the school seem to be, for the most part, optimal for co-teaching. It is hoped that by implementing targeted PD, by harnessing the strengths of the teachers in co-teaching and by teacher retention within ADEC improving, conditions for co-teaching in our school will be optimised further in the future.

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