the bilingual family newsletter

news and views for intercultural people editors: sami grover and marjukka grover

IN THIS ISSUE

2009
Volume 26
Number 1

editorial

Children are not computers, and they are not machines. That's probably a fairly obvious statement, but we can all do with reminding ourselves of this from time-to-time. While we can learn from each other's experiences in child rearing, education, or any other aspect of multilingual living - and while theory and research can be a useful tool for creating 'rules of thumb' - ultimately success lies in care and attention to the needs, wants, skills and motivation of each individual child.

Each of the articles in this quarter's issue illustrate this need to treat children as complete human beings - whether it's Xiao-lei Wang's experiences in motivational strategies for encouraging her trilingual children; Michael Rosanova's exploration of Montessori education and its focus on 'real world' play as an alternative to fantasy; or Susan Sze and Peter Cowden's plea for virtual field trips as a means of expanding childrens' boundaries.

Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert's latest instalment of the OPOL Diaries also relates to the importance of listening and adaptation – just because we are successful in raising two bilingual children, that's no reason to assume that we should simply follow the same tactics and strategies for the third.

So listen to the opinions, research and advice of others by all means, but if your own family is telling you something different, directly or indirectly, then listen to your instinct too. And as always, share your stories here at the BFN.

Sami Grover

Ensuring Sustained Trilingual Development Through Motivation

Xiao-lei Wang

Xiao-lei Wang

When I see my two adolescent sons eloquently conversing among people in English, French, and Chinese, I cannot help but admire their remarkable trilingual competence. Looking back on their simultaneous trilingual development process, the multilingual feat that my children have accomplished however, is not as effortless as it seems; tremendous hard work and assiduous use of effective strategies are behind their successful stories.

Unlike a typical language-learning environment in which children acquire and develop a language by receiving multiple linguistic inputs from many people (such as parents, grandparents, teachers, other adults, peers, and the media), the language-learning environment of my children is very different. Two of their three languages are acquired through a single source – French from their father and Chinese from their mother. Such a language-learning condition poses serious challenges for both the children and the parents. If it were not for the effective strategies used by my husband and me, my children's trilingual accomplishment would simply be a dream, rather than a reality.

When communicating with many parents who are raising multilingual children, a recurring question arises: "*How do you help children continue with their heritage-language development in parallel with the development of their dominant language in the country of residence?*" These parents find it particularly hard as soon as their children enter school and have more exposure to the dominant language in their environment.

To address the concerns of these parents, I would like to introduce some important strategies in this article.

In my trilingual childrearing practice, I found the key to assure children's enduring heritage-language learning and development is to find ways to motivate them. Research consistently suggests that motivation is essential for sustained learning. Motivation leads to increased efforts and energy, and it also increases initiation and improved performance.

Continued on page two

Ensuring Sustained Trilingual...

Continued from page one

Virtually all children are ready and motivated to learn when things are interesting to them. Nevertheless, heritage-language learning may not necessarily be interesting to children, especially when it becomes more difficult and time consuming (such as reading and writing), when they become increasingly involved in many other extracurricular activities, and when no peers around them use that language. Hence, parents may need to use effective motivational strategies to help their children turn heritage-language learning into a captivating activity. There are many ways to motivate children; the following are a few that I found particularly useful in my own childrearing experience.

Making Heritage-Language Learning Relevant to Children's Lives

A Chinese mother who resides in the USA once told me that her 12-year-old son refused to learn a poem from the Tan Dynasty that she gave him as a weekly Chinese assignment. The boy commented that he did not see any point in learning this poem because he had no place to use it. Despite the mother's good reasoning (such as the argument that it would help him appreciate the beauty of the Chinese language and culture, for example), the child remained unconvinced. From his standpoint, the boy is right. Indeed, why should he learn a poem that was written a hundred years ago and is not connected to his life? This example pinpoints one of the reasons why many children are not motivated to learn heritage languages, particularly literacy skills.

Thus, the first motivational task for parents is to connect children's heritage-language learning to their immediate interests or needs. For example, when my children were younger, they were interested in Pokémon cards. I used their hobby as an opportunity to infuse heritage-language learning into their lives, and began to buy Pokémon cards in Chinese. Because the children were so interested in collecting these cards, they were motivated to figure out the meanings of the Chinese characters and requested my help when they did not know them. This gave me a good opportunity to teach them many difficult Chinese characters they would otherwise have avoided learning. This example shows that when a heritage-language learning task is relevant to children, they tend to be more motivated to learn it.

Providing Heritage-Language Learning Incentives

Although it is important to link heritage-language learning to children's interests and needs, it is impossible to do so all the time. Sometimes heritage-language learning contains tasks that are beyond children's immediate interests and needs. Therefore, parents may want to try another important motivation strategy: providing children with incentives.

In our lives, we sometimes dislike participating in certain activities. However, we often manage to do them if there are incentives. Thus, parents may want to try to provide incentives for their children in heritage-language learning. There are two ways to provide incentives: One is to provide *extrinsic incentives* (motivation prompted by factors external to the child and unrelated to the task being performed) and the other is to provide *intrinsic incentives* (the internal desire to perform a particular task).

> *If it were not for the effective strategies used by my husband and me, my children's trilingual accomplishment would simply be a dream, rather than a reality.*

A Spanish mother told her daughter that if she was willing to do the Spanish verb conjugation exercises that she had prepared, she would buy a toy for her. The incentive shown in this example is an extrinsic motivation. Incentives such as this one can sometimes motivate children's learning, but they are often short-lived. As soon as the incentive is gone, the motivation is gone as well, (although for younger children, the material incentives tend to be effective initially).

If parents want to make heritage-language learning a continued endeavor, the types of incentives that they provide should be intrinsic. For instance, my younger son Dominique is a soccer fan and an enthusiastic soccer player. To motivate Dominique to read French, my husband

Do you want to raise your child bilingually but are not sure how to do it? Do you worry about how bilingualism might affect your child's school achievement? Are you concerned that your child has stopped speaking your language and wants to use only the other language? Do you worry that your child is not saying much in either language? Do you want to know more about how the mind of a bilingual child works?

Bilingualism Matters – a new service from the University of Edinburgh - answers these questions and many more. The service provides free advice and information to families and educators based on current research, as well as consultancies to international organisations.

Bilingualism Matters offers a website full of resources, an email advice service, and talks in schools, cultural institutes, and community centres.

Antonella Sorace, who is Professor of Developmental Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh, decided to set up the service with her research group because she noticed how bilingualism is often still surrounded by false beliefs, misconceptions, or simply lack of information. Research on bilingual language and cognition has shown that bilingualism is beneficial for children's development and their future in many different respects. Children exposed to different languages not only become more aware of different cultures and other people: they also tend to be better at 'multitasking' and focusing attention, they are more precocious readers, and find it easier to learn other languages. Bilingualism Matters aims to raise awareness in schools and communities about the benefits of bilingualism, so that more and more children have the opportunity to grow up with more than one language.

More information about Bilingualism Matters can be found on the website at

www.bilingualism-matters.org.uk or *by writing to* info@bilingualism-matters.org.uk.

introduced him to online European soccer news. In doing so, Dominique realized that if he read French online, he would be able to get the European soccer news faster. Such intrinsic motivation tends to last longer.

Setting up Challenging and Achievable Goals and Expectations

Setting up heritage-language learning goals and expectations is important. By providing a road map, children are shown a target, and gently guided towards the right direction. However, if the goals are set too high, it may result in frustration for both parents and children. Unreachable goals and expectations ruin children's motivation to continue heritage-language learning.

Therefore, the goals that parents set up for their children's heritage-language learning must be challenging but achievable. Challenging means that the learning task is not too easy; it requires children to make efforts to complete it. Achievable means that the task is not too difficult; there is a possibility for children to accomplish the language-learning activity. When a learning task is too easy or too difficult, it will block a child's motivation, which tends to impair their learning.

First, parents need to consider children's developmental levels when setting up heritage-language learning goals and expectations. At each developmental stage, children have unique intellectual and learning characteristics. For example, in early childhood, the reasonable and challenging language-learning tasks may be focused on building oral communication skills. In middle childhood (e.g. elementary ages), the learning goals and expectations may focus on building literacy skills, as well as incorporating oral communication skills.

Second, parents may also want to consider the children's personality. For example, my son Léandre is two years older than his brother Dominique. From a chronological perspective, I probably should set up higher Chinese learning goals and expectations for Léandre. However, in reality, I often do the opposite. This is simply because of Léandre's personality, and his tendency to avoid doing anything he considers extra. Recently, while helping the children prepare for a Chinese examination , I asked Dominique to complete all the review materials in two hours and only asked Léandre to finish two of the exercises in the same amount of time. This disparity recognizes the differences between my sons' personalities. If I had asked Léandre to finish all the review questions in the same amount of time as I asked Dominique, not

Continued on page six

Notes from the OPOL Family

Catching Up

Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert

Gabriel officially has a minor speech problem. He can't say double consonants like 'ch', 'pl' or 'tr'. Some words come out different, for example, he says 'kitchen' instead of 'chicken'. It's taken almost three years to pinpoint it. His pre-school teachers in Malaysia, America and France had all hinted that his language was 'immature'. There was also an unspoken message that his bilingual home was perhaps a factor, so he was given extra time to 'catch up'. The question for us was whether the French language was bothering the English, or vice versa. However, the same speech problem occurs in English and French. By the time he was five and a half it was clear there was a problem, because the children in Gabriel's class were making fun of his speech. But at what point do you take your child to see a specialist?

Gabriel also speaks French with an English accent, which worries (and amuses) family members. This should have faded away, especially since we have been back in France for over eighteen months and he spends most of his days in a French environment. It appears that his model is me, with my English-accented French, when he should be copying Jacques's perfect accent. How has our carefully organized OPOL practice gone so wrong?

At the end of the school year, a speech therapist came to his class and finally checked him properly, and recommended I go to see the orthophonist immediately. I made the appointment with some trepidation. What if she asks me to stop speaking English to him? Even armed with all the research and academic proof, it's difficult to justify the OPOL strategy when your child is talking wrong.

Fortunately, my local French orthophonist, Agnès, is married to a Danish chap (they speak English together). She is also working with several English kids who have moved to France. Agnès could see straightway that his English side was not the issue; she found that he cannot roll his 'r's (which makes his French instantly sound 'English'). Agnès immediately started him off practising 'tiger growling' to get the 'r' sound right.

The sessions with Agnès have made me realize that there has been some denial on my side – a rather naïve idea that time will sort things out. Because we were successful with our older children we thought that our third child would simply follow. There's a side of me that feels guilty too. Perhaps I did not speak as much to Gabriel as I did to the others? Did I not correct him enough? Did I not sing to him enough? Homework from the older children takes up much of the evening these days and he certainly gets less time for bedtime stories. But, as Agnès assures me, it is a minor problem, and with a bit of extra help he'll soon be rolling his 'r's and ordering 'chicken' instead of 'kitchen' in the restaurant in no time!

Falling Apples

The children come home at 5pm. They have a snack and talk about their day. At this point in the day they are swinging between two languages; the French of school and my English at home. Some stories can become a guessing game for me, as they flit from French to English expressions, which are sometimes untranslatable. For example, Nina begins to tell me a story….

'Today, in the canteen, this girl, Beverly…fell in the apples… you know what I mean?'

'What, she fell in her apple dessert?' I guess, hopefully.

'No! She fell.. in the apples!' says Nina.

'There were apples on the floor of the canteen?' I ask, wondering if she slipped on a crate of apples, misplaced on the floor.

'There were no apples, silly Mummy,' Nina says, looking grumpy. '*She fell over, like that…'* and she mimes a girl fainting and a teacher saying *'Elle a tombé dans les pommes'*.

'Ah!' I say, playing along with the Charades games, *'She fainted!'*

'Maybe', says Nina, not really knowing what 'fainted' means. *'Like I said, she fell in the apples…'*

With some investigation, we discover that 'to fall in the apples' literally means to fall over and faint. You learn something every day in the OPOL Family!

For more French expressions and their translations in several languages visit: http://www.expressio.fr/expressions/tomber-dans-les-pommes.php

Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert
Author of *Language Strategies for Bilingual Families: The One-Parent-One Language Approach* and the OPOL Family Blog.

www.opol4us.com

Montessori Community Rallies around Kennedy-King College

M. J. Rosanova

Montessori is important for bilingualism because it is an early childhood education model which is consistent with current linguisitic research on initial language acquisition. All of the major alternatives to Montessori depend on fantasy play as the vehicle through which language is expected to develop. Fantasy play may well contribute to certain kinds of vocabulary growth in children who have already mastered a second language; but if the children haven't already arrived at that point, the fantasy play will be far too abstract for them to apprehend. The Montessori project materials are radically more obvious, less random, more clearly interrelated and consequently more eloquent.

> *Montessori is reality-based hands-on discovery learning, built around a well designed core curriculum which reconciles student motivation...*

Rather than emphasize fantasy play during early childhood, Montessori waits to integrate fantasy and fable into the elementary curriculum, after children have discovered cause and effect relationships and after children have discovered "theory of mind" (the realization that what one knows or imagines in one's own head is not necessarily known or imagined by everyone else).

Before children discover "theory of mind", they cannot properly empathize with other people because they cannot understand that different people may have different and independent points of view. Understanding that different points of view exist comes before accepting or sympathizing with other people's right to have such different ideas. Similarly, before children discover "theory of mind", they cannot be said to know how to lie, because they do not understand that it is possible to conceal information.

Piaget calls these distortions in the way small children understand the world "ego-centric thinking". Before children emerge from this early stage of thought, fantasy can be quite random, literal, and even frightening, raising emotional issues that block rather than facilitate learning. Because of these characteristics, fantasy potentially "raises the affective filter," and closes children down.

Consistent with the research, Montessori avoids the "affective filter" by making it possible for children to spread real peanut butter on a real slice of bread, create an array on a real plate, and visit real classmates one by one to offer a taste and perhaps exchange a few words relating to the project material (the peanut butter slices). This is quite different from a plastic fantasy restaurant with plastic fried eggs which might also be flying saucers or fantasy bombs. Montessori is reality-based hands-on discovery learning, built around a well designed core curriculum which reconciles student motivation with a well-planned, highly "guessable" project-work environment — an environment which provides the immediately obvious "comprehensible input" that researchers such as Krashen claim to be the real source of initial language acquisition.

Children don't acquire language through abstract drills or elaborate exposition; loud, slow declarations of simple sample sentences have little charm for them. People often speak to children the way that too many Americans speak to immigrants: slowly, distinctly and loudly, and progressively more loudly as tempers mount over failed alacrity and faulty compliance. This is no way for either children or immigrants to learn much of anything: it only serves to raise "the affective filter", that is, to block any communication whatever.

The contribution of Montessori to developmentally appropriate, child-friendly bilingualism is immense.

This may be part of the reason why there was such a rush of enthusiasm at the first fall meeting of the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools. The City Colleges of Chicago have granted permission for two new Montessori classrooms to open on the new campus of Kennedy-King College, a major urban renewal initiative in the Englewood neighborhood a few miles west of stately Hyde Park. Unlike Hyde Park, home to world-class institutions such as the Museum of Science and Industry and the University of Chicago, Englewood has long been home to multiply stressed, multiply disadvantaged families. Englewood has never known a publicly funded Montessori program – until now.

The new Montessori program is located in the gorgeous eleven-classroom Child Development Laboratory Center Building at 65th and Halsted. Four classrooms have been set aside for an infant/toddler program which will begin during the next academic year. Two of the remaining seven classrooms are now being used for Montessori 3- and 4-year-olds, some of whom will grow into Kindergartners this summer and then remain with the program – if funding can be found.

State and federal funding agencies are largely unfamiliar with Montessori. Though City Colleges of Chicago has well established early childhood teacher training programs, none of the college faculty are Montessori trained. Luckily, the new demonstration-school teachers and the program director are all 3-6 AMS credentialed. Why is this so crucial? Because interpreting Montessori to regulators, funders and college personnel

> *The contribution of Montessori to developmentally appropriate, child-friendly bilingualism is immense.*

has proven to be a major focus of the new Montessori program.

The Montessori community in Illinois understands the significance of this challenge. Montessorians, both in Illinois and nationwide, share some very reasonable concerns about the future of Montessori in the coming world of universal preschool. Will Montessorians

Continued on page seven

Virtual Field Trips and Bilingual Learning

Susan Sze and Peter Cowden

Susan Sze PhD

Field trips have always been an important part of learning, and especially intercultural learning. But the time, expense and travel involved in field trips has often meant that some students must forgo the opportunity of participating. However, modern advances in computing, and in particular the development of the internet, has created a whole host of new opportunities for virtual field trips – broadening students' horizons and firing up their imaginations. In this article Dr Susan Sze and Dr Peter Cowden explore the potential for virtual field trips in bi/multilingual learning situations, both at home and in the classroom.

Peter Cowden, PhD

"…The closer they came to the ugly puffy blue- skinned fish, the more excited the children became. Ming Ming wanted to reach out and touch one before they swam away. At this depth, the ocean came alive with the sight of different species of fish and plant life. Mrs. Chan wanted these children to get the feel of these wonders up close. She wanted the children to experience different creatures living together in harmony. She was so pleased that her son could translate the words written in Chinese for his friends. Her intentions were to guide the children from this reality and apply it to the different cultures living back home in their school community. She was mesmerized by their minds being part of this reality…"

Learning needs to involve the real world. Parents of children from bilingual families need to provide avenues to help their children interpret multiple perspectives or ideas that may exist. Yet for so many, the television remains the main source for cultural knowledge. This form of passive learning needs to be revisited. Bilingual children need to experience rather than read and answer questions. One way to allow children to step outside this television world is to take them on virtual cultural field trips.

For us, as Professors of Education, the point of going on a field trip is to make learning come alive for children in a way that television cannot. Field trips are a constructivist tool that help to give children a better understanding of the material they are learning and allow parents to add experience into the curriculum. Cultural field trips help bridge formal and informal learning for children of various cultures, and help prepare them for lifelong learning.

In today's world, it is not always easy for a parent to take his/her children on a cultural field trip. There are times when a field trip is too costly or it is just too difficult to take one's children to a specific location. On a traditional school field trip, permission slips must be sent out and collected to cover liability problems such as accidents, injuries, etc. Funds to cover the costs of transportation, entrance fees, and meals must also be collected and deposited. It's not that it isn't worth it, but now there is another way to offer similar experiences for your children without traveling. For a bilingual child, the experience of different cultures is enhanced through Virtual Cultural Field Trips and children of all nationalities can now benefit through their shared differences by using a computer.

"…It wasn't that she didn't want her students to go on the trip, it was that she knew that a lot of them were living in poor conditions, where putting food on the table was more of a concern than coming up with the fee for a field trip. Still she knew she had to do something. She wanted desperately to have these children experience the joy of learning in a multicultural environment… She wanted education to come alive…"

With virtual cultural field trips the possibilities are endless. Children, through the computer, can select a topic, take a virtual tour, research it, and explore it further. A student may have only heard about certain types of marine life and wanted to explore more, maybe even wishing to visit the ocean. But because of circumstances beyond their control (money, transportation, or time) it is just impossible for it to happen. That is no longer the case. By using this constructivist tool, not only are you able to take them to places they could never imagine going, you can do it without cost. Bilingual children are presented with an opportunity to enhance their experiential learning, share their other language and in doing so, increase their and their friends understanding of the larger world. This is a great solution to the problems of costly field trips. What seemed impossible in the past is now available to everyone with access to a computer. Now children, at a click of a button can have the ocean right at their fingertips. They can swim with fish, then go deep down with the dolphins. They can share their cultural signatures. They can even take a journey from one part of the world to another with a group of turtles.

"…As Ling Ming and Kenny were busy climbing the Mayan ruins, Susan and Mary were deciding what clothes they

Continued on page eight

Some Online Resources for Virtual Field Trips

http://www.care.org/features/vfts.asp

http://www.uen.org/utahlink/tours/fieldtrips2.cgi?core_area_id=4 (Utah Educatioal Network)

http://www.field-guides.com/

http://www.internet4classrooms.com/vft.htm

http://www.tramline.com/trips.htm

http://satftp.soest.hawaii.edu/space/hawaii/virtual.field.trips.html

http://www.uh.edu/~jbutler/anon/anontrips.html

Ensuring Sustained Trilingual ...

Continued from page three

only would Léandre have argued with me about it, but he would also have been discouraged by the prospect of a task he deemed impossible. Worst of all, he might have just given up doing the review all together.

Linking Efforts to Heritage-Language Achievements

Another important way to motivate children is to link their heritage-language learning efforts to their heritage-language learning achievements. Because children learn heritage languages in a challenging environment, frustration may often be part of the learning process. Even when children make great efforts, the learning results may not be ideal and satisfactory (in particular, compared with children who are learning the same language in the heritage country). This situation may present children with a gloomy picture of their heritage-language competence. Thus, they may lose motivation to continue.

To help motivate children, parents may want to encourage them to self-compare their progress over a period of time. Self-comparison helps children see their own achievements. For example, Léandre once stated that he found it useless to attend Chinese school because he forgot all he had learned. One day, I asked him to read a short paragraph in Chinese; he could actually do it. I seized the opportunity to point out what he could do in Chinese. He was visibly pleased with his achievement, and gradually realized that his efforts paid off. When children see where they were and where they have arrived, they often tend to be motivated to continue.

Providing Parental Modeling

Parents are the first influential teachers for children. Parental modeling plays an important role in motivating children in heritage-language learning. Parental modeling can take place in many forms, such as:

Parents can show their enthusiasm and interests toward their heritage languages and cultures. For instance, daily reading of heritage-language newspapers and books can provide a good example, as well as encourage literacy skills. If parents show their interests in the heritage languages themselves, children will follow suit.

Moreover, parents can try to model heritage-language learning strategies to their children. For example, when they are not quite sure about a usage of a particular phrase or word, they consult a dictionary or an alternative language tool.

Furthermore, parents can show their children that heritage-language learning is a life-long process. Even as native speakers, parents need to make efforts and stay current with their heritage languages.

Providing Support

Because heritage-language learning is challenging, children need their parents' unconditional support. It is not an exaggeration to state that parental support is the most important motivation factor for children's heritage-language learning.

First, parents need to provide emotional support for their children. Children have a basic need to feel secure and loved before they can be motivated to learn. Due to the demanding and sometimes stressful nature of the heritage-language learning situation, friction may occur between parents and children. Sometimes parents may unintentionally breach the emotional bond between themselves and their children. For example, during Léandre's early adolescent period, the Chinese literacy learning became increasingly more difficult. The daily task of Chinese homework felt like a battleground between him and me. I found myself sometimes saying things that I did not mean. This situation did not help motivate Léandre with his Chinese learning. In fact, it resulted in increased anxiety. I often found that Léandre was more motivated when I showed my willingness and expressed my support to help him.

Second, children tend to make lots of mistakes when learning and using heritage languages. Instead of constantly criticizing them or fussing about their mistakes, parents may want to focus on their children's accomplishments and strengths. If children have successful experiences and receive more positive feedback from parents, they tend to be more motivated to continue with their heritage-language learning.

Helping Children Develop Self-Regulation

Ultimately, the most sustainable way to keep children going with their heritage-language learning is to help them develop self-regulation. Self-regulation is a process of setting standards and goals for oneself and engaging in self-motivated learning. Self-regulation may not be achieved immediately. However, if parents can incorporate this goal into their interactions with their children, heritage-language learning can progress indefinitely.

Besides setting up heritage-language learning goals for children, parents may also want to help children determine their own goals through providing them with options and choices. By doing so, children will feel empowered in their own heritage-language learning. For example, when Léandre refused to do an assignment from his Chinese teacher (an essay using all the Chinese words learned in the semester), instead of pestering him, I asked him what alternative to the requirement he would suggest. He said that he could start to make sentences with the words he had learned that semester. I honored his choice, and he was quite co-operative in completing the assignment. In this case, the goals Léandre set were lower than what his teachers had set up for him, but it was his choice. He thus felt obligated to follow through with it.

> *"It is not an exaggeration to state that parental support is the most important motivation factor for children's heritage-language learning."*

Once children decide their heritage-language learning goals, parents may also need to help their children self-monitor (self-observe) their progress in achieving their learning goals. Research suggests that self-monitoring brings about changes in learning. When Léandre decided that he wanted to make sentences with the learned Chinese words, he needed to monitor whether he could indeed fulfill his own learning goals. Obviously, children are not necessarily competent in observing their learning behaviors, and they may not necessarily know whether they make mistakes or not. What parents can do is to help them reflect on what they have done and ask questions to help them observe their own learning behaviors. In the example I just mentioned, I suggested to Léandre that he might want to check the proper punctuation mark in the middle of his sentences and watch the correct usage of his adjectives. Through my guidance, Léandre gradually understood what self-monitoring entailed.

To help children develop self-regulation, parents may also want to help them

the bfn needs you...

Whether it's research-based or from personal experience, if you have something to share about any aspect of bilingualism, bilingual education or intercultural living, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

develop self-instruction abilities in heritage-language learning. This process requires parents to demonstrate heritage-language learning strategies. Parents can model self-instruction by showing (think aloud or speak out their thoughts) what they would do in a given heritage-language learning task. In the above example, I showed Léandre when making a Chinese sentence that I need to pay attention to the word order and to the logic when putting words together. Developing self-instruction can also be in the form of repeating the right strategies the child is using. For example, I described to him what he was doing right: *"Yes, you are right to insert a comma with the phrase attached to 'because'...Great, I see you are thinking about using different words with the same meaning as 'immediately' in this sentence…It's really good that you remember to put a stop at the end of the sentence this time…"*

To help children develop self-regulation in heritage-language learning, parents may also want to help them self-evaluate their work. Questions such as these can help: "*Do you think you have put enough efforts in doing this assignment? If you were to grade yourself, what grade do you think you would give yourself and why? Do you think that you have fulfilled the learning goals you set up for yourself?"*

Finally, encouraging self-reinforcement is a good way to encourage self-regulation. For example, if Léandre has completed his Chinese homework with great efforts, he should be encouraged to treat himself for what he enjoys doing such as playing computer games. If he has not completed his Chinese homework because of his lack of effort, he should be encouraged to deduct ten minutes from his computer game playing. When children begin to self-reinforce, their learning behaviors tend to improve.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, I have suggested seven motivational strategies to help children sustain heritage-language learning and development.

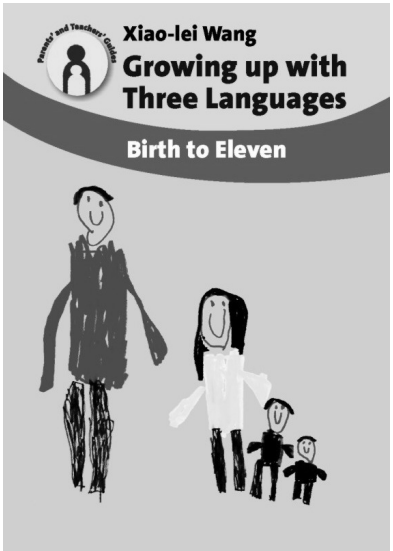
- Making children's heritage language learning relevant to their interests and needs.
- Providing children with heritage-language learning incentives.
- Setting up challenging and achievable goals and expectations.
- Connecting children's efforts to their heritage-language achievements.
- Providing parental modeling.
- Providing support.
- Helping children develop self-regulation in heritage-language learning.

Parents may want to try these motivational strategies and reflect on them to make the best decisions for their own children. Raising multilingual children is a complex and challenging process. Parents must be patient and reflective in using effective strategies to ensure their children's heritage-language learning success. For more trilingual childrearing strategies and tips, please refer to my recent book *Growing up with Three Languages: Birth to Eleven* (see details below).

Best wishes for raising multilingual children!

Please send all correspondence to

Contact details removed



This book is for parents who live in a foreign country and intend to raise their children in their own heritage language(s).

This book is hugely enjoyable! It is written in a highly accessible style, and yet it is academically rigorous. The author has a profound understanding of the linguistic, social, cultural and psychological aspects of trilingualism ... She draws excellent conclusions for prospective parents of multilingual children and has a clear message to those who doubt that multilingualism can work.
Dr. Jean-Marc Dewaele, University of London

Parents' and Teachers' Guides, 2008
200pp Pbk ISBN-13 9781847691064
Price £18.95 / US$36.95 / CAN$36.95

www.multilingual-matters.com

Montessori Community...

Continued from page four

succeed in preserving the essentials of Montessori in a system of funding and regulation which has dealt primarily with fantasy play approaches to daycare? Will Montessori priorities be recognized and supported? The Montessori program at Kennedy-King is on the forefront of that critical encounter, interpreting and digesting Montessori for public funding and public regulation outside the public schools.

A significant example of this struggle for support is the Montessori program's search for Montessori materials. Although City Colleges have funded teacher salaries with remarkable generosity, administrators here are new to Montessori concepts of scope and sequence in reality-based hands-on project materials. Why can't Montessori teachers "do Montessori" with block areas, fantasy dress-up, and plastic fried eggs? Could the Montessori program carry on without the classic didactic materials for another year, making do with the many wonderful and expensive toys which the college already owns? These are very reasonable questions for funders, regulators and administrators unfamiliar with Montessori – some of the same questions which private Montessori schools will face as universal preschool programs begin across the United States.

And this is the situation to which Carolyn Kambich responded in the recent meeting of the Association of Illinois Montessori Schools (AIMS) attended by approximately fifty representatives of Montessori programs.
"I motion that AIMS purchase and donate one thousand dollars worth of Montessori materials to the Kennedy-King Montessori Program, and that all schools able to donate Montessori materials to the program do so as soon as possible." The motion passed unanimously.

There really are wonderful new prospects on the horizon.

Rose Hill Montessori School (Wilmette), The Montessori School of North Hoffman, The Park Ridge Intercultural Montessori School, The Deerfield Montessori Schools, The Aurora Montessori School, Fox Valley Montessori (Aurora), and Country Meadows Montessori School (Gurnee) have all volunteered to make donations of materials.

The editors, with the help of the International Editorial Board, are happy to answer any queries you may have on bilingualism /biculturalism. We reserve the right to edit any letters published.

If you do not already subscribe, use the form below to enter a subscription for the next four issues. If you know of any other families who may be interested in BFN, enter their address on the form and we will send them a free sample of a recent issue.

Multilingual Matters/ Channel View Publications Ltd
St Nicholas House
31-34 High Street,
Bristol BS1 2AW,
England

Tel: + 44-(0117-3158562
Fax:+44-(0)117-3158563
E-mail: info@multilingual-matters.com
http://www.multilingual-matters.com

Vol.26, No.1, 2009

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

TOWN.....

COUNTRY.....**PostCode**.....

Please enter a subscription to BFN £12.50 (US$19.50)

Please send me the book.....

Remittance enclosed for £/ $.....
Please make your cheques payable to Channel View Publications Ltd.

PLEASE NOTE you can order all Multilingual Matters books either by sending the order and payment by post, or through our fully searchable, secure web-site. It offers 20% DISCOUNT on books (plus shipping) to any address in the world. The system is fully compliant with the latest security software, so you can order with confidence!

Please send a sample copy of BFN to:

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

contacts

If you wish your name and address to be included in the contact section, please send us the following information: Name, address, languages spoken in the family, children's birth dates and specifications of the types of families with whom you wish to get in touch.

UK

Russian speaking families in the West Midlands

A Russian/English family with a little boy (2.5 years old) would like to meet other Russian-speaking families with young children in the West Midlands. We would be happy to organise a Russian playgroup if others were interested in joining.

Contact details removed

Virtual Field Trips...

Continued from page five

would choose for the Chinese celebration... Mrs. Chan's class was alive with learning..."

For some teachers, the use of computers is mainly for word processing. For others, field trips are considered a waste of time. These are not active cultural classrooms. Ask a student in these classrooms to tell you about the revolutions that took place in Europe in the 1700s, or any other topic that they may be studying. Then ask that same question of a student who is in a constructivist class that took a virtual field trip to Europe and was able to experience the revolutions through a computer. Both children should be able to tell you about the revolutions, but the student who took the virtual field trip will probably be able to give more detail and should have a better understanding of the material. One is passive. The other is active. Parents who encourage educators to supplement their course using the internet add to the children's understanding of real world events through experiential learning.

Parents and teachers of bilingual children need to look to the idea of virtual cultural field trips. These trips will help their children gain a better understanding of the various cultures in their neighborhood while at the same time using websites that are in their language for others to enjoy. Children can go on a journey that is unimaginable to the average student or even the average parent. They can go to the Mayan Ruins, the peaks of Mount Everest, or even experience outer space.

As parents and teachers of bilingual children, we need to remember that technology is developing everyday. By allowing our children to use technology as much as possible, we are preparing them for the world they will one day have to enter. Regardless of socio-economic level, geographic location, or exceptionality; virtual field trips reduces these differences and allows for the greater equality of educational opportunity for cultural learning experiences.

As professors, we believe that we are here to provide our children with the best education possible. By using virtual field trips we enhance the learning process and give children an active, enjoyable, 'constructivist worthy' education. We are allowing bilingual children to celebrate their and others' cultures and language and, through this, see our differences as similarities.

Printed by C&S Printers, Weston-Super-Mare, England.
ISSN 0952-4096