

Priorities in research on inclusive education in multilingual contexts

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Hello!

- I am a teacher
- I am a teacher trainer
- I am a researcher
- I am



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We will...

- ... **report** about our **four years of collaborative work** on inclusive education in multilingual contexts (IEMC);
- ... **shed light** on our **research agenda for IEMC**;
- ... **engage in a dialogue** about **promoting and sustaining IEMC**.

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Education in the Netherlands

- **Compulsory** between the ages of **5 and 16**.
- **Language of instruction** is (mainly) **Dutch**
- 8 years of **primary education**
- 4, 5 or 6 years of **secondary education**
 - preparatory vocational secondary education (vmbo) - 4 years in duration
 - senior general secondary education (havo) - 5 years in duration
 - university preparatory education (vwo) - 6 years in duration
- **vocational education** or **higher education**.

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What brought us together?



- National **collaboration** between research groups on (language) education for immigrants (newcomers).
- Two core problems in educating multilingual students:
 1. Transitions in education are problematic
 2. Professionalization of teachers is insufficient
- **Shared ambition:** working towards more inclusive education in multilingual contexts



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The consortium



- 4 **universities of applied sciences** across the Netherlands
 - 2 research groups on multilingualism
- **primary, secondary** and **vocational** schools
- **ISK schools** (for newcomers to learn Dutch before entering the school system)



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Objectives / Main ambition

To contribute to a sustainable transition to Inclusive Education in Multilingual Contexts (IEMC):

- **Joint vision development** and knowledge creation
- Strengthening the **competences of professionals**
- Formulating a **research agenda**
- Establishing a national **knowledge infrastructure**

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Inclusive education in multilingual contexts

Education that...

- ... is based on **potential** instead of disabilities, limitations or disadvantages,
- ... is based on **equality** with an eye for linguistic diversity,
- ... is **adaptive**,
- ... promotes optimal **development opportunities for** and **participation of all students**.

Language is key to participation.

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Research questions to address

1. *What urgent questions exist regarding inclusive education in multilingual contexts according to educational practitioners?*
2. *Which of these questions deserve priority according to educational practitioners?*

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What did we do?

• Regional (north, central, south)

- From March 2020: partnerships of teachers, teacher educators and researchers
- Working in 'Sprints' on practical issues

• National

- Thematic meetings and inspiration sessions
- Study days
- Setting up and reinforcing partnerships



Working in Sprints

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Example Region South



- Teacher education and secondary school

- **Sprint:**

secondary

- *How can we strengthen (upcoming) teachers knowledge and skills regarding inclusive education in multilingual contexts while incorporating practical experience into the curriculum?*

secondary
teach edu

- Developing a shared minor programme for teacher education students, partly implemented in schools by both school educators and teacher educators.

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Registrate and analyse challenges



- What is the challenge?
- Who is involved?
- What are you doing to address this challenge?
- Who can learn from this?
- What do you think can be learned?



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From regional challenges to a national research agenda



- **Inside** our partnership:
 - Registrate challenges, bottlenecks, success factors
- **Outside** our partnership:
 - Test findings by means of a national survey

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The survey (56 questions in total)

1. **Open-ended questions**
 - desired knowledge to improve education for multilingual learners
 - pedagogical-didactic skills needed to improve education for multilingual learners
 - other questions related to education for multilingual learners
2. **Close-ended questions (7 categories, 42 items)**
 - Indicate to what extent more knowledge about an item (didactics, teaching materials, assessment, etc.) was urgent for their own educational practice
3. **Questions (14) concerning background information**

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National research agenda

- **Sustainable language policy** that takes shape at all levels of IEMC
- **Integration of languages and culture** throughout the curriculum
- **From *agency* to *leadership***: shaping IEMC yourself, acting on it and getting others on board
- Anchoring IEMC in **teacher education** and **continued training**
- **Transitions and collaboration**: between and within educational practices/systems
- An **inclusive methodology for testing and monitoring** learning processes
- **Long-term processing** of IEMC approaches

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Discussion: learning from each other?

- *(how) Are you working on the themes reflected in our research agenda (priorities in IEMC)?*
- *How do you contribute to fostering inclusive education in multilingual contexts? (good practices)*
- *What opportunities do you see in making inclusive education in multilingual context more sustainable?*
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Example Region North



- Vocational education Entrance class & Teacher Education Dutch
- Sprint:
 - **vocational** Q: How can we improve students' transition from Entrance class to regular education ?
 - Identified obstacle: language level remains low due to lack of interaction in Dutch
 - **teach edu** Also: many teacher education students know no/barely any L2 learners

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Language buddy project

- Assignment for teacher education: weekly (6 weeks) meeting with peers from the Entrance class
 - *“What could you do for each other? Contribute to their integration by interacting with your peers. Interaction stimulates (oral) language development. At the same time, you get the chance to broaden your view, and experience that learning a new language is quite a challenge.”*
 - *“Discuss about whatever you want, but it would be nice if you also talk about language learning.”*

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Teacher education students' evaluations

we went to the Food Bank, where she often goes, but I had **never been there** before, that made a **big impression** on me

how **motivated** he is to learn the language, I have **never experienced** that before

Besides talking about his **background and the differences in culture**, we also talked about other things. For example, I mentioned that I lived in Spain for three months as an au pair, and that I went to dance lessons there. Omar immediately reacted very enthusiastically to that, because he also danced. He usually danced a kind of Syrian folk dance. Together we watched some videos, which I found very interesting because I had never seen a similar dance before. [...] It was very nice that **we had a common ground** like dancing, which is why we were able to talk about it together for hours.

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