



▶ THE IHLA AGM

○ Iss 4 | ○ Vol 15 | ○ July 2018



▶ THE IHLA YEAR IN REVIEW



▶ KEEPING AN EYE ON RESEARCH

IHLA

# Newsletter

INTERNATIONAL & HERITAGE LANGUAGES ASSOCIATION  
EDITED BY TRUDIE ABERDEEN

*The development of language is part of the development of the personality, for words are the natural means of expressing thoughts and establishing understanding between people. ~ Maria Montessori*

## Supporting IHLA Member Schools

Our Annual General Meeting was held on June 6, 2018. We had 25 IHLA members in attendance.

Some new developments included this year:

- Mentorship outside of Canada with the Truong Lac Hong School and the Edmonton Filipino School.
- International Symposium on Bilingualism in 2019
- A space available for a summer/ winter camp

### Welcome to the IHLA Board!

IHLA, much like our schools, would not be possible without the tireless efforts of our board. In addition to their work in their own schools, the board plans events, shows up to monthly meetings, and provides ideas, meets with the Ministry of Education and other officials AND listens to YOU and your suggestions! This year we say goodbye to Nedim who has returned to university for postgraduate work and Natalia who has moved on to motherhood! Thank you both for your service.



## Thank You AAME for helping us grow as multilingual writers!

We would like to offer a special thank you to the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education who has so generously sponsored our annual Mother Language Day Book. The \$5,000 cheque that they contribute allows us to publish the book. Without their generous support we would not be able to finance its \$6,300 publication fee.



## A Message from the IHLA President

Antonella Cortese, PhD

*A Special Thank You to Nedim & Natalia who served on the IHLA Board last year and a special welcome to Khuljeet Bhuee & Eyup Ozturk!*

Dear Esteemed Member Schools and Friends of IHLA,

First and foremost, on behalf of the IHLA Board, I wish you all a restful and enjoyable summer time with friends, family, and heritage language community members!

In 2018, we welcomed new schools to IHLA and our year was filled with well-received Professional Development Sessions which I hope you both enjoyed and implemented into your respective classrooms. The New Year led us to IHLA's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Mother Language Day and the publication of the Mother Language Book. Everyone's participation and tremendous performances were the highlight of our MLD celebration.

Minister David Eggen, Mayor Don Iveson and Mr. Thomas Lukaszuk attended and appreciated the work all our heritage language schools do everyday and how they enrich our City and Province.

Our sincerest thanks to IHLA Coordinator, Trudie Aberdeen for her continued efforts to always make Mother Language Day a well executed and attended event for all our schools.

To end, at our Annual General Meeting, we said good-bye to two of our Board Members, Natalia Malinova and Nedim Istemil. We thank them both for their much appreciated ideas and work on the Board to make IHLA a better and stronger organization. Along these same lines, we happily welcome two new Board Members, Khuljeet Bhuee and Eyup Ozturk with whom we look forward to working in 2018/2019.

I look forward to us all, together, continuing the good work that IHLA does via new, engaging and informative workshops for Teachers and Administrators and developing new opportunities for schools, including the the IHLA Mentorship Program

given its continued success, our work on IHLA Professional Standards, and our Principal Meetings so that there is more communication and exchange of ideas between schools and the IHLA Board.

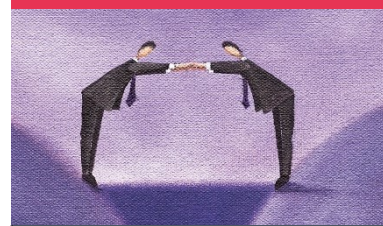
My hope is that we continue to strengthen our relationships amongst our HL Schools and our government liaisons, recognizing the importance and necessity of supporting Heritage Languages Education in Alberta. I look forward to working with everyone on the IHLA Board and all Member Schools to increase our profile and to encourage more active participation on behalf of all our Heritage Language Schools and Programs.

As a means of keeping abreast of happenings at all our IHLA Schools, I sincerely encourage everyone to send in notices about events/happenings, or projects your schools are doing so that they may be featured in the IHLA newsletter and website.

Sincerely,

Antonella Cortese, IHLA President

WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER



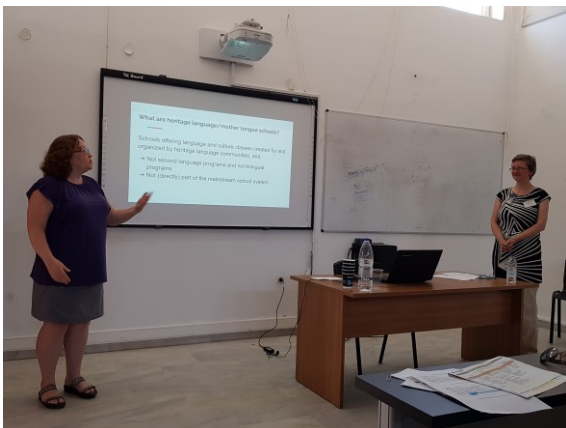
To be an IHLA member in good standing your school needs to a) complete a registration form, b) pay IHLA membership fees, c) participate at MLD through a table (and a book or presentation), d) volunteer at IHLA fundrasing events, and e) participate in at least 3 IHLA sponsored professional development sessions.

## IHLA goes to Rethymno, Greece and Portland, Oregon!

This past year IHLA was able to send representatives to two international conferences. These networking opportunities are essential so that we can showcase Albertan excellence, network with other organizations and gather new and interesting ideas!

### Rethymno, Greece

Thanks to the generous support of IHLA and the AGLC, IHLA was able to sponsor Trudie Aberdeen to attend the 5<sup>th</sup> *Crossroads of Languages and Cultures: Languages and cultures at home and at school* on June 1-3, 2018 at the University of Crete. At this conference she was able to co-present with Renata Emilsson Peskova at a paper called *Umbrella Organizations for Heritage Language Schools*.



*Trudie Aberdeen (left) and Renata Emilsson Peskova (Right) during their talk at the University of Crete*

During the talk both organizations described their approaches to teacher training for heritage language teachers. Both spoke of the challenges in creating meaningful PD opportunities for teachers who vary considerably in skills, interests, motivations, availability, professional licences, and language proficiency (both in the language they are teaching and the language of the host country). Emilsson Peskova spoke of the dreams of mother tongue teachers in Iceland based on an ethnographic study she conducted and Aberdeen spoke of a survey about professional development options she administered to IHLA members at the 2017 AGM. Both reported that the relationship between the sister umbrella organizations strengthens their resolve in their work and adds ideas and opportunities for their organizations' membership.

In addition to be able to talk about their own situations, they were fortunate to connect with Meredith Box and Elke Strake who in the field of heritage language education in Canberra, Australia. Both talked about their experiences working with heritage language schools. Meredith Box presented on early findings in her doctoral work on why students and families choose to participate in Community Saturday Schools.

You can find the PPT slides at the end of this newsletter.

### Portland, Oregon

Through the support of AGLC funding, IHLA was able to send our treasurer, Krystyna Dembowski, to the International Polish Teachers' Meeting and Parents' Committee held in Portland, Oregon from May 25-28, 2018. This conference held every two years provides spaces for Polish teachers throughout the diaspora to network and to learn from each other professionally. This year attendees came from Canada, the United States, Ireland, Sweden, and Poland. The Polish Minister of Education was even an attendee at this wonderful gathering.



*The Polish Minister of Education, Mrs. Anna Zalewski (center) surrounded by Canadian representatives*

Krystyna Dembowski acted as the Western Canadian representative and supported the keynote speaker in her talk about heritage language education in Canada. Krystyna added insights as to how heritage language organizations operate with the specialized assistance of umbrella organizations, in particular IHLA.

During her time in Portland, Krystyna was able to connect with the Polish Supplementary School Council of America, Dr. Dorota Andraka, and the Chicago District Commissioner, Dr. Ewa Koch. She learned of the 69 different Polish language schools in Chicago and was able to report about their differences in curriculum and school organization.

IHLA looks forward to the next conference which will be held in Toronto in 2020!





## An IHLA year in review

As the 2017-2018 school year draws to a close, we on the IHLA board think that it is important to reflect on all that we have achieved during this past academic year. IHLA has been working very hard to serve its member schools. Here is a list of some of the things that we have accomplished this year:

- Had 4 new schools join us
- Designed a new mailing system so that teachers are informed of IHLA events directly
- Hosted 3 Principals' Meetings
- Ran a fund-raising casino so that we could help support our member schools
- Held 8 professional development sessions for teachers (speaking & listening tasks, digital storytelling, website design for teachers and administrators, making music fun for the little ones, and project-based learning)
- Hosted a new series of workshops leading to school improvement (professional standards, contracts, registration forms, and more!)
- Held our annual MLD celebration with special visits from The Honorable Minister David Eggen, His Worship Don Iveson, and Former Deputy Premier Thomas Lukaszuk!
- Published a chapter called "The International and Heritage Languages Association's contributions to multiculturalism and multilingualism- 40 years of service!" In the book *Home: Stories connecting us all*.
- Supported the Alberta Association for Multicultural Education by filling 8 shifts at their casino fundraising event
- Financed 6 schools to participate in the mentorship program
- Sent IHLA representatives to Greece, Oregon, and Spain to showcase IHLA internationally
- Published our Annual Mother Language Day Book
- Published 4 newsletters that are sent to IHLA members and supporters around the world
- Held our Annual General Meeting
- AND offered funding to IHLA Schools in good standing!

## The Mentorship Program

For three consecutive years, IHLA has offered the mentorship program so that schools with experience and expertise could share what they have learned with those who are newer to the field. This year we were especially lucky to offer the mentorship program to SIX IHLA member schools. These schools are Gabriela Mistral Latin American School/ Edmonton Iranian School, St. George's Hellenic/ Gurukul Nepal, and the Slovak Heritage School/ Ivan Franko School of Ukrainian Studies. All of the schools report that they feel enriched by the experience. The newer schools profit from the expertise of the more established schools and the more established schools feel good about what they can share, reflect on their programs, and have new and invigorating ideas. Common themes across these and other mentorship projects are funding/budgeting, teacher recruitment, materials development and selection, tuition fees, and participating in community activities.

Two schools this year reached out to offer to support in other heritage language schools in Iceland! The Edmonton Filipino School has been making plans with a same language school in Reykjavik. Similarly, Truong Lac Hong School in Edmonton has been meeting regularly over Skype to support a new sister Vietnamese school in Iceland. Frequent topics of conversation have been about materials creation and lesson planning. These relationships have been very rewarding and it is great to share what we have learned.

Congratulations to everyone involved!

Next year, please watch out for the IHLA mentorship program registration. This wonderful opportunity will be available again thanks to your IHLA board who manage the projects and Alberta Education who offer financial support to those who participate.

## The Professional Working Group

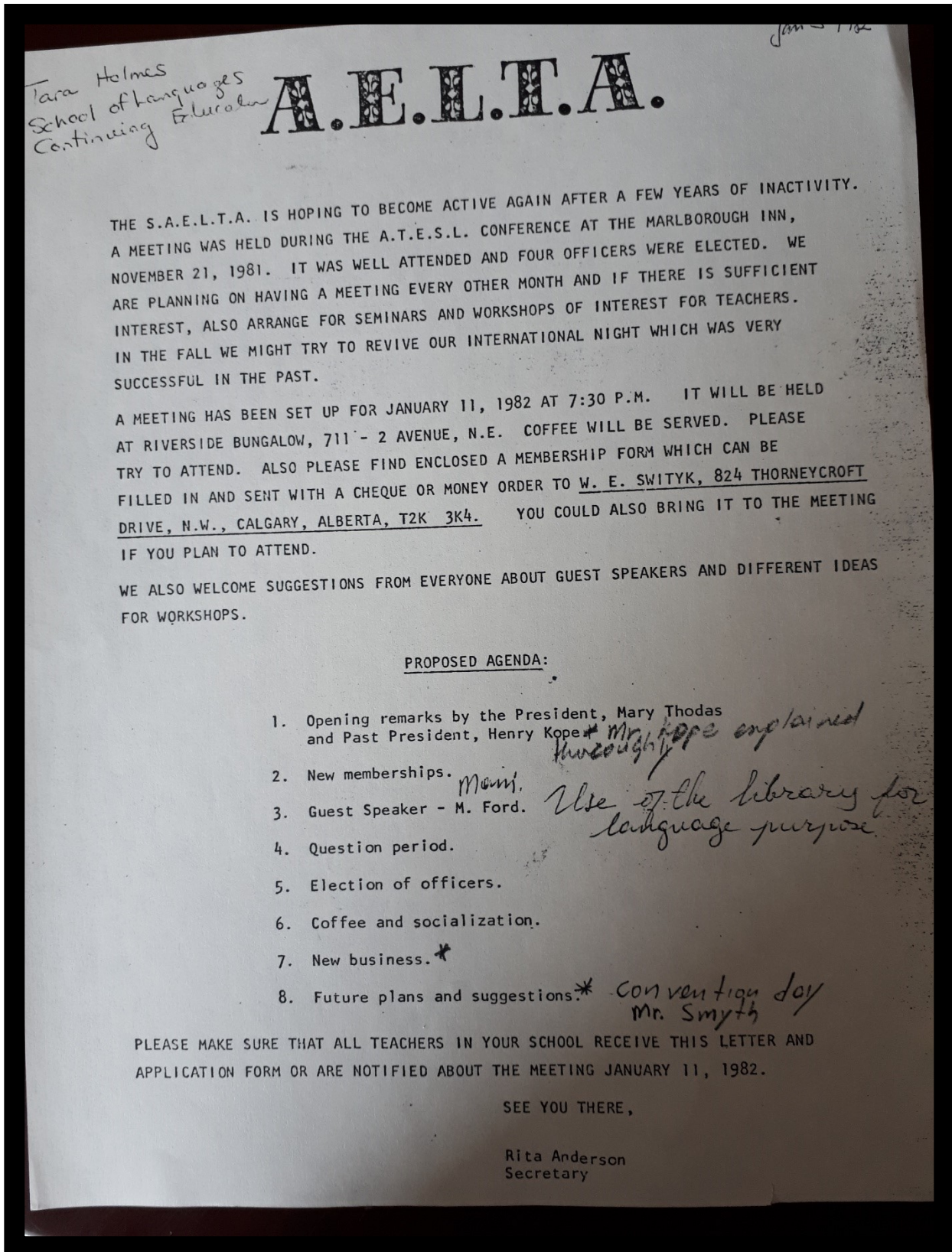
IHLA has been stalwart in its promotion of heritage language teachers. This year we made a conscious effort to create as many special opportunities for the principals as the teachers had, too. The start of this project was the Professional Working Group with the mission that we would create tools that support the documentation and sustainability of IHLA member schools.

Our first two tools include the creation of registration forms for schools and teacher contracts. We solicited samples currently in use from IHLA schools, created a working group to compare and contrast them, and created a simple and an all-encompassing version of each. These tools are meant to be adapted so that they can be modified to each IHLA member school's needs. These materials will be given out at the Principals' Meeting in September.

# The way we were... about other organizations

By Trudie Aberdeen, PhD

IHLA has long worked with other organizations in the area of language development. As you can see from the letter found below, IHLA worked with SAELTA (Now known as the Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association – SAHLA) and with the Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL). This proud tradition of reaching out to others still continues to this day with new relationships with other organizations, not only within Alberta, but with other parts of Canada and around the globe.



# Creating a proposal for a formal curriculum for mother tongue teaching in Iceland

By Maria Victoria Sastre  
University of Iceland

## 1. Introduction

One aspect of globalization is the increasing movement of people from one country to another, for the schools it is challenging to provide an appropriate education for these culturally and linguistically diverse children. They usually speak one language at home (mother tongue) and another at school (second language) and therefore become bilinguals. Jim Cummins (2001) presented several reasons about the importance of mother tongue teaching for the education of bilingual children. He stated that mother tongue promotion in the school helps develop not only the mother tongue but also children's abilities in the second language. Furthermore he says that the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development. According to this when children migrate before acquiring certain competence in their mother tongue and no further effort is done to develop it, they will have problems to learn the second language. Some countries have realized this and, consequently, supported the creation of mother tongue teaching programs and curricula to further develop of the students' mother tongue while introducing the second language.

There are different ways to introduce the national language (second language) to the newcomer student. One way is to have bilingual teacher that teaches both the national language and the mother tongue language of the student at the same time and bridges the linguistic and cultural gap between home and school (Benson, 2010), as it is done in Sweden and Norway. This approach, called transitional bilingual education, helps the transition of the student into the classroom as quickly as possible. A bilingual teacher teaches children subjects such as math, science, and social studies in their mother tongue while introducing the national language. In Sweden and Norway transitional bilingual education programs can be introduced in kindergarten and continue up to grade six or seven.

The actual situation in Iceland is critical in the sense that there is no official support to further developing the mother tongue language of immigrant children (except for Swedish, Norwegian and Polish), and, furthermore, the teaching of Icelandic as a second language in compulsory schools is not clearly structured and its guidelines in the National Curriculum are very general. This means that children that arrive to Iceland at an early stage are candidates to miss the opportunity to acquire their mother tongue and, at the same time, fail to acquire Icelandic as a second language, with all the negative consequences for the education of these children and the Icelandic society. Therefore, it is important that mother tongue teaching and Icelandic as a second language teaching work together and cooperate so the child can receive support from both.

Several countries have a mother tongue curriculum either for teaching newcomers (as in Sweden or Norway) or to teach the students have left the country of origin (as Poland). In the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory School there are no guidelines for mother tongue teaching.

Mother tongue instruction for Norwegian and Swedish in Iceland follow the curriculum for foreign languages, chapter 20 of the Icelandic national curriculum (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2014) while the mother tongue instruction of Polish in Iceland follows the Curriculum Principles for Polish pupils learning abroad (Ministry of National Education, 2009). The instruction of the other mother tongues is not yet recognized and the creation of a proposal of mother tongue curriculum is an important pending issue for achieving recognition.

The purpose of this essay is to analyze the curricula used for mother tongue teaching in different countries and try to find a best option for the Icelandic case, considering cultural, social and economic factors of the country. The curriculum for foreign languages of the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Compulsory School will be used to analyze similarities and differences with the other curricula as it is the one used by the recognized and supported mother tongue in Iceland.

## 2. A comparison of different mother tongue teaching models

### 2.1 Mother tongue teaching in Iceland

In Iceland there is only one official language, the Icelandic, and no recognized minority languages. In the compulsory schools students learn English and one Nordic language, by default Danish. Since 2002 when the students have certain competence in Swedish or Norwegian they can receive instruction in that language through the “The Language Center” (Tungumálaver) instead of Danish. Since 2009 the Polish language has been introduced and children with Polish as mother tongue (~10% of the school students) can reinforce their language instead of adding Danish. In the National curriculum no reference is made to any other language that might be the mother tongue of the student, except for the sign language (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2014). However, after the compulsory school, the mother tongue knowledge can be recognized in the upper secondary school as it says in the upper secondary school curriculum guide: “*Upper secondary schools may accredit the native language of students as an elective or in lieu of another foreign language*” (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2012). The option is open and some schools do it after submit of a language exam.

For other languages than Swedish, Norwegian and Polish, there is no official instruction of mother tongue but a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) called “Móðurmál - samtök um tvítyngi” is taking care of this important issue. Móðurmál is an umbrella organization that embrace more than fifteen



language groups and operate regularly in Reykjavik offering mother tongue teaching to bilingual children. Móðurmál was founded in 1994 by parents and teachers and through the years it has been growing, including more language groups and increasing the number of professional teachers participate in the instruction of mother tongue. The School and Leisure Department of Reykjavík (Skóla og frístundasvið Reykjavíkurborgar, SFS) have supported and have partially funded the program, as well as other tuition waivers and grants. Móðurmál provides teaching space for its mother tongue schools and teacher training on mother tongue and bilingualism issues organizing international conferences.

The lack of a curriculum framework that Móðurmál could offer to the associated language schools is an important and urgent issue. This is essential if the language schools and Móðurmál aim to get recognition from the official educational institutions in Iceland. The actual situation is that some language schools follow a curriculum from ministries of education in their countries of origin, others follow guidelines for teaching their languages in diaspora, while others follow curricula that they developed themselves for the needs of the concrete mother tongue group or a combination of the above. It would be desirable that Móðurmál offers the schools a curricular framework that can be adapted to the needs of each language school.

The Icelandic curriculum for foreign languages that will be used here for comparison with the other curricula, is organized by levels, level 1, level 2 and level 3 as not all the students start with the same competence and to facilitate the organization of individual-oriented studies. This curriculum takes into consideration the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning Teaching, Assessment” and the students at the completion of level 3 are expected to fulfill the criteria described there in the B1 self-evaluation frame. The competence criteria are organized so that first there is a description of the general criteria and then it is more clearly defined. For the aim of the comparison these general criteria were considered.

## 2.2 Mother tongue teaching in Alberta, Canada

In Canada there are ten provinces, eight with English as official language, one with French as official language (Quebec) and one with English and French as official languages (New Brunswick). Each province has its own educational policy where might or might not be considered mother tongue education. In addition, some provinces have an independent mother tongue teaching organization which supports heritage language groups outside of compulsory schools. In Alberta this institution called IHLA (International Heritage Languages Association) and it is an umbrella organization for all the different mother tongue language schools. IHLA does not provide any physical place for the schools to operate, each school is free to find its best place. IHLA supports these schools by offering funding and support depending on the funds they have from the governmental institutions.



Related to the school curriculum, in Alberta each mother tongue school can use whatever material they would like to (home country textbooks or create its own material) and whatever kind of curriculum they want to. However, to be able to ask for students to receive official acknowledgement for participating in heritage language classes, the school has to have at least one provincially licensed teacher and a formal curriculum. A provincially licensed teacher can be hard to find in Canada as it takes a lot of time to get the home-country credentials recognized and, in some cases, more study is required and the university costs are high. Also because heritage teacher's salary is lower than the one they could get in other jobs. Once the heritage language school has the licensed teacher and met other requirements as not-for-profit status, certain number of students, etc, it can apply to write a curriculum document based on the Common Curriculum Framework of the Western Canadian Protocol for international and heritage languages (Alberta version, 2001). It is a guide for the school to create its own curriculum and material and decide its implementation and use. This flexibility in the mother tongue schools of Alberta can be seen as a strength because it allows the members of the school to align the curriculum with the community and necessities of each language. The curriculum can be written as 12 year, 9 year, 6 year or 3 year and guides instruction in all school from grade 1, from grade 4, from grade 6 or grade 10 respectively. Most schools only do grade 10 (3 years) because students get credits towards their high school diplomas. The mother tongue school has some freedom in how the curriculum is setup, but they still have to meet with Alberta Education approval. Occasionally, a school board can adopt a program and use it in the public school system to teach within the regular class day. This can create a difficult situation for the heritage language school since they might potentially lose students to the regular school system. Technically heritage language schools can be funded by Alberta Education, but the expenses and requirements are so difficult that funding is almost impossible in all but the very largest schools.

The Curriculum Framework for International Languages used in Alberta is founded on four General Outcomes that are broad statements identifying the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to achieve (Alberta version, 2001). These four general outcomes are: application, language competence, global citizenship and language learning strategies. Each general outcome is then divided in several specific outcomes and for each specific outcome the competence criteria are presented. For the comparison the competence criteria for grade 9 were considered. It is important to notice that this organization of the curriculum is very different from the Icelandic and Swedish curriculum, making the comparison complicated. For simplicity, for the purposes of this essay, only two general outcomes were considered: "Language Competence" and "Global Citizenship" and the comparison with the other curricula established from the competence criteria associated to some of the specific outcomes included in these two global outcomes.

## 2.3 Mother tongue teaching in Sweden

In Sweden there is one official language, the Swedish and six recognized minority languages: Finnish, Tornedalian, the Sami languages, Romani, and Yiddish. The “National Curriculum for Compulsory School, Preschool and the Leisure-Time Centre”, 2011, includes curriculum for all minority languages as well as for Mother Tongue Tuition (MTT) and for Swedish Sign Language. Municipalities are in charge of the operation of the schools, but the curriculum for Mother Tongue Tuition (MTT) is national and applies to all schools, public as well as private.

In Sweden each city has its own mother tongue center, they provide mother tongue support and education for children and adolescents from families where at least one of the parents has a mother tongue other than Swedish and where this language is used at home. The organisation of the classes might be different from one city to another but they all follow the same curriculum. Students from kindergarten until 9 years old can request tuition in their mother tongue at school and the school will contact the mother tongue center. Usually students in kindergarten and first compulsory school years receive tuition in their schools and older students meet at a common school for the teaching. Students are gathered according to the age and not to their linguistic level. The aim of the MTT is to give students the opportunity to develop their spoken and written language so that they can become confident in their language skills and can express themselves in different contexts and for different purposes (Skolverket, 2011). The programme is designed to help students to achieve a level of proficiency in two languages and make them aware that a grasp of your mother tongue and knowledge of your country of origin is a major asset both in Sweden and in an international context. Teachers of MTT are also often involved in study guidance in the mother tongue, which is available to students who need help in understanding the school subject matter (which is in Swedish) in their mother tongue. (Reath, 2013).

Mother tongue tuition in Sweden was implemented in the 70's, being the first Nordic country to recognise the importance of mother tongue teaching for immigrant students. It is important to notice that the National Curriculum applies not only for compulsory school (as in Iceland and Canada) but also for pre-schools and for leisure time. This has some advantages like ensuring continuity in the introduction of matters to students and the opportunity to start with MTT from the first years. Chapter 3.7 of the Curriculum for Compulsory School, Preschool Class and Leisure-Time center is dedicated to MTT. The core content of the chapter is divided into four sections depending on the age group of the student: years 1-3; years 4-6 and years 7-9. Each section contains five different subsections: reading and writing; speaking, listening and talking; Narrative texts and non-fiction texts; use of language; and culture and society.

## 2.4 Comparative table of the different mother tongue schools

A comparative table of the three different mother tongue systems explored in this essay is presented below: mother tongue teaching in Iceland, mother tongue teaching in Alberta (Canada) and mother tongue teaching in Sweden. On the left column are different aspects of the comparison.

Table 1 Comparing the mother tongue schools: Iceland, Alberta and Sweden

	<b>ICELAND</b>	<b>ALBERTA - CANADA</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>
<i>National curriculum and mother tongue</i>	Mother tongue is not considered in the National curriculum for compulsory schools.	Mother tongue is not considered in the National curriculum for compulsory schools	Mother tongue tuition is a chapter in the National curriculum
<i>Type of organisation</i>	An NGO (Móðurmál) embraces the different language groups that proceed independently. Norwegian, Swedish and Polish are taught through Tungumálaver	An NGO (IHLA) embraces the different language groups that proceed independently	There is a mother tongue center in each city to coordinate the teaching
<i>Teachers' situation in the labor market</i>	Teachers who work for the language school under the umbrella of the NGO have no wages stipulated. Norwegian, Danish and Polish teachers have wages stipulated.	Teachers work for the language school, that works independently under the umbrella of the NGO. Wages are not stipulated	The different language teachers work for the MTC of the city. Wages are stipulated
<i>Students's fee</i>	The student's fee depends on each language school and is paid by the parents, except for Norwegian, Danish and Polish that is free.	The student's fee depends on each language school and is paid by the parents	The student's fee is paid by the school to the MTC
<i>Teachers requirements</i>	Teachers in the different schools don't need to be professional teachers, except for Norwegian, Danish and Polish that is preferable	Teachers in the different schools don't need to be professional teachers	Teachers in the MTC are preferable with teacher education but it is not indispensable.
<i>The profession of mother tongue teacher</i>	The profession of mother tongue teachers does not exist officially	The profession of mother tongue teacher exists and it is recognized depending if the school is recognized or not	The profession of mother tongue teacher exists and it is always recognized
<i>Organization of the mother tongue curriculum</i>	Curriculum guide organized by levels (foreign languages)	Curriculum Framework organized by grades	Curriculum organized by age-groups



### 3. Comparison of curriculum guides for mother tongue teaching

In order to find a proposal for mother tongue curriculum guide in Iceland, the Icelandic curriculum for foreign languages was used, as it is the one followed in Iceland by Norwegian and Swedish mother tongue teaching, and compared to the Alberta and Sweden curricula. Possible common subjects and criteria of these three curricula were investigated.

For establishing the comparison between the curricula, three common competence areas were investigated and their competence criteria compared. The investigated competence areas were, following to the Swedish mother tongue curriculum,: 1) Listening and speaking; 2) Reading and writing; 3) Cultural knowledge. The comparison was established using the competence criteria for students finishing the compulsory school, that is equivalent to level 3 for the Icelandic case, grade 9 for the Alberta case and year 9 for the Swedish case.

The Table 2 presents the correspondence between the competence area of the different curricula used in this comparison with the competence area investigated. As it shows, in the Icelandic and Alberta cases, the relation between competence areas is not one to one and in some cases the investigated competence area corresponded to more than one competence area for the Icelandic and Alberta curriculum. In Alberta-Canada column, in italic is the name of the global outcome followed by the specific outcomes, these specific outcomes were treated as competence areas.

*Table 2 Competence area correspondence*

	<b>ICELAND</b>	<b>ALBERTA-CANADA</b>	<b>SWEDEN</b>
<b>1) Listening and talking</b>	Listening + Spoken interaction + Spoken production	<i>Language competence:</i> Interpret and produce or texts + Apply knowledge of how discourse is organized, structured and sequenced	Speaking, listening and talking
<b>2) Reading and writing</b>	Reading comprehension Writing	<i>Language competence:</i> Interpret and produce written texts	Reading and writing
<b>3) Cultural knowledge</b>	Cultural literacy	<i>Global citizenship:</i> historical and contemporary elements the culture	Culture and society

### 3.1 Competence area listening and speaking

#### *Icelandic curriculum guide for foreign languages*

The competence area of “listening and speaking” is included in three different competence areas of the Icelandic curriculum: “Listening”, “Spoken interaction” and “Spoken production”. The general criteria for these three competence areas are:

- without difficulty understand spoken language on varied topics in **familiar** circumstances when presented in an understandable manner
- show that they are quite capable of carrying on a conversation on familiar topics, use fairly correct language, normal **pronunciation**, stress and **intonation**, use common idioms from everyday speech, common conventions of politeness and spoken communication, filler words and various means of **making themselves understood** and understanding others, for example by asking for rephrasing,
- express themselves in an understandable manner about topics that they know, **use the language fairly precisely, with regard to rules concerning usage, intonation and choice of words**

#### *Alberta curriculum frame for international languages.*

To cover the competence area of Listening and speaking, two specific outcomes from the general outcome “Language competence” were selected: “Interpret and produce oral texts” and “Apply knowledge of how discourse is organized, structured and sequenced”

The competence criteria for the specific outcome Interpret and produce oral texts are:

- (Oral interpretation) understand short texts on **unfamiliar** topics in guided situations
- (Oral production) produce a variety of short, simple texts in guided and unguided situations
- (Interactive fluency) manage simple, routine interactions without undue difficulty, asking for repetition or clarification when necessary

The competence criteria for the specific outcome of Apply knowledge of how discourse is organized, structured and sequenced, are:

- **use suitable, simple formal language in a variety of contexts**
- examine the role of idiomatic expressions in culture
- recognize other influences resulting in variations in language; e.g., level of education, occupation

#### *Swedish curriculum for mother tongue teaching*

The competence criteria for the competence area of Speaking, listening and talking are:

- **Oral presentations for different recipients. Adaption of language, content and structure to purpose and recipient.**
- **Pronunciation**, emphasis and **intonation** *in comparison to Swedish* as well as different spoken variants of the mother tongue.

Text marked in bold presents similar content of the competence criteria. Iceland and Sweden competence criteria are quite similar even though the Icelandic is meant to a curriculum frame for foreign languages and the Swedish for mother tongue tuition. This might be due to the fact that both are considering the European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The importance to “making oneself understood” as a competence criteria in the Icelandic curriculum of foreign languages is present in the Swedish mother tongue curriculum but for the grade 6 and not 9. This might be due to the fact that more requirements are done to mother tongue students than to second language students of the same age.

In the Alberta competence criteria used for the comparison there is no mention of pronunciation or intonation. However this issue is dealt in another specific outcome “attend to form” that has not been considered in this study. The correspondence between competence areas for Alberta’s curriculum is not necessarily clear and easy to find and might be a matter of discussion.

### 3.2 Competence area reading and writing

#### *Icelandic curriculum guide for foreign languages.*

This competence area is included in two competence areas of the Icelandic curriculum: “Reading comprehension” and “Writing”. The general criteria for these two competence areas are:

- read for instruction and pleasure a variety of **general** texts with fairly diverse vocabulary and select reading strategies depending on the nature of the text and the objective of the reading,
- write a fluent, continuous text using fairly correct language on a topic that they know, show that they have mastered vocabulary and the main rules of usage, use customary structure and cohesion in a text and suitable linking words,

#### *Alberta curriculum frame for International Languages.*

To cover the competence area of Reading and writing, the specific outcome “Interpret and produce written texts” from the general outcome “Language competence”, was considered.

The competence criteria for the specific outcome Interpret and produce written texts, are:

- understand short texts on **unfamiliar** topics in guided situations (written interpretation)
- produce a variety of short, simple texts in guided and unguided situations (written production)
- derive meaning from multiple visual elements in a variety of media in guided and unguided situations (viewing)
- express meaning through the use of multiple visual elements in a variety of media in guided and unguided situations (representing)



### *Swedish curriculum for mother tongue teaching*

The competence criteria for the competence area of Interpret and produce written texts are:

- Reading strategies to understand and interpret **literary** texts. Understanding the explicit and implicit message of a text.
- Strategies for writing different types of texts adapted to their typical structures and language features. Creating texts where words and pictures interact.
- Basic structure of the mother tongue in comparison to Swedish. Word formation and sentence structure in mother tongue **compared to Swedish**.
- Dictionaries and other aids for spelling and understanding words.

“Reading comprehension” criteria for the Icelandic curriculum focus on general texts as it does the Swedish’s one for grade 6 “Reading strategies to understand and interpret texts from various media”. For the grade 9 the mother tongue curriculum (Sweden) expects that the students can read **literary** texts. Once more the Swedish mother tongue curriculum seems to make bigger demands on mother tongue students than the Icelandic and Albertan curricula do for foreign language students.

### 3.3 Competence area cultural knowledge

#### *Icelandic curriculum guide for foreign languages*

The general criteria for the competence area of Cultural literacy are:

- show that they have good knowledge of the daily life and culture of the speech community and **are well aware of what is similar and different from their own circumstances**

#### *Alberta curriculum frame for international languages.*

To cover the competence area of Cultural knowledge the specific outcome “Historical and contemporary elements” from the global outcome “Global citizenship” was considered.

The competence criteria for the specific outcome Historical and contemporary elements of the culture are:

- make and test hypotheses about the culture
- identify and use a variety of sources of information to find out about the culture
- explore and identify some elements of the culture; e.g., major current events as a reflection of contemporary ways of life and cultural values
- identify different perspectives on the culture, and speculate on their origins; e.g., stereotypes of the culture present in their own community

- identify different perspectives on diverse elements of the culture, and speculate on their origins; e.g., stereotypes within the culture
- examine their own perception of the language and culture, including stereotypes

### *Swedish curriculum for mother tongue teaching*

The competence criteria for the competence area of Culture and society are:

- current social question in areas where the mother tongue is spoken ***in comparison to a similar question in Sweden***
- cultural forms of expression from areas where the mother tongue is spoken, such as visual arts, music and architecture

In this section it is important to notice how both Iceland and Sweden try to establish a cultural comparison while Alberta has obviously another approach to the issue investigating and analysing the different cultures without establishing any comparison. This might be because Canada is such an international and multicultural society that they try to avoid differentiations between cultures but to create one global culture that contains all of them.

## 4. Results

Regarding the different models for mother tongue teaching, the actual Icelandic situation is a mixture that contains many similarities with Alberta's situation and some similarities to the Swedish situation (see Table 1 in the section 2.4):

- In Iceland and in Alberta there is a NGO organisation taking care of mother tongue teaching (IHLA in Alberta and Móðurmál in Iceland). They are umbrella organizations and deal with similar issues. However in Alberta there is a curriculum framework "The Common Curriculum

Framework for International Languages" to guide the mother tongue schools to create their own curriculum. The text "international languages" in the title of the curriculum refers to mother tongue, second language and foreign languages, all languages except indigenous languages and official languages are considered international languages in Canada. The idea of having a curriculum framework that can be used for mother tongue schools to create their own curriculum is practical as it might allow the school to align the curriculum with the needs of the community and specifics of each language. The creation of such curriculum frame by the Education authorities in Iceland is interesting and might be taken into consideration.

- Though Tungumálaver has some similarities to the Swedish mother tongue center, a very important difference is that Tungumálaver only teaches students from grade 7 to grade 10 while the mother tongue centers in Sweden start with the first school year. This is because in Iceland these languages are taught instead of Danish, that is introduced in the schools at grade 7 as a second language. One important difference between the

Icelandic and the Swedish mother tongue teaching is that in Tungumálaver the Norwegian and Swedish mother tongue teaching follow the

national curriculum for foreign languages while in Sweden they have created a special mother tongue curriculum that is a part of their national curriculum. To create a new curriculum for mother tongue teaching in Iceland can be a good step forward the formalization of mother tongue teaching in Iceland. However mother tongue teaching of Norwegian and Swedish in Iceland follow the Icelandic curriculum for foreign languages and it could be more practical to try to follow the same curriculum than to create a new one. That is to say, each language school that forms a part of Móðurmál could create its own curriculum based on the Icelandic national curriculum for foreign languages that is already recognised by the Ministry of Education. The fact that when comparing the three curricula, no major differences between the competence criterias were found, supports this idea. As the results showed, even if the Swedish curriculum presented here was for mother tongue tuition and the other two curricula were for foreign and international languages, the content was similar and several connections were established.

An important difference between the three analysed curricula is that the Icelandic one classifies the competence criteria according to levels while the Swedish and Albertan ones do it according to the school grade. This level classification might not be the most appropriate for mother tongue teaching as the students have been exposed to the language since early stage and the intention is to continue developing the abilities already achieved and not introducing the language as a new one. This should be taken into consideration if a mother tongue school creates its own curriculum.

In all the competence areas analysed, the Swedish mother tongue curriculum included a competence criteria where the student compares its own language and culture to the Swedish ones (see the bold and cursive text in sections 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3), this was not so obvious in the other two curricula, Icelandic and Albertan. It is difficult to state that for a bilingual students it is important to establish the differences between their mother tongue and the second language. However it could be a way to encourage students to learn the country's language and also this might help them to get a better understanding of the language and culture of the mother tongue country and the country of residence.

The results show that, though the competence criteria used in the analysis were for students finishing the compulsory school, some of the competence criteria in the Icelandic foreign language curriculum corresponded to the ones presented in grade 6 in the Swedish mother tongue curriculum. This implies that higher requirements are done to bilingual children learning mother tongue than to children learning a foreign language. This should to be taken into consideration if a mother tongue school creates its own curriculum based on the foreign language curriculum.



Further analysis, including all the specific criteria of the Alberta's curriculum framework and all the competence areas of the Swedish mother tongue and Icelandic foreign language curricula, is required to fully establish the similarities and differences between them. It has been challenging to find similarities with Alberta's Curriculum Framework for International Languages as its structure is completely different to the one presented by the Icelandic and Swedish curricula. The correspondence established in this essay is one way of doing it and might be subject of discussion.

## 5. Conclusion

In this essay it has been established a comparison between three different mother tongue school-organizations and curricula trying to envision the future possibilities of an official mother tongue teaching in Iceland.

Similarities have been found between the actual Icelandic situation of mother tongue teaching and the ones in Alberta and Sweden. Iceland has an hybrid mother tongue system that includes official teaching as in Sweden (Tungumálaver) and NGO guided teaching as in Alberta (Móðurmál). This situation can be very strong, when properly developed. Cooperation between the two institutions, Tungumálaver and Móðurmál is desirable to coverage the needs of hundred of bilingual children living and being educated in contemporary Iceland.

Regarding the curriculum for mother tongue teaching in Iceland, it has been shown that no major differences are between the specific mother tongue curriculum of Sweden and the foreign/international language curricula of Alberta and Iceland. According to the results of this essay, if the Icelandic national curriculum for foreign languages is to be used as a guide for the mother tongue curricula, it should be taken into consideration that:

- the competence criteria might be better classified according to the grades instead of levels as it is in the foreign language curriculum.
- higher demands might be done on mother tongue students than on foreign language students regarding reading, writing, listening and speaking competence criteria.
- including competence criteria where the cultural and language differences are analysed might be desirable to increase the awareness of the student to differences and similarities between the countries

It would have been very interesting to include in this comparison an analysis the Polish curriculum created by the Ministry of Education of Poland however due to the limited scope of this essay this is not possible.

## 6. Acknowledgments

I want to thank Renata Emilsson Peskova and Fríða Jónsdóttir for their comments and ideas. Silvia Cordero (Sweden) and Trudie Aberdeen (Alberta, Canada) for helping me to find the information about the mother tongue teaching in their countries.

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These slides are taken from a presentation offered in Rethymno, Greece. For a clearer copy of the slides, please contact Trudie at [edmontonihla2@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonihla2@gmail.com)

Slide 1



**Teacher training for heritage language schools:  
Developing collaborative practices between  
Iceland & Canada**

Trudie Aberdeen, [edmontonihla2@gmail.com](mailto:edmontonihla2@gmail.com), University of Alberta / The International and Heritage Language Association (IHLA)  
Renate Embree-Pedersen, [rep1@hi.is](mailto:rep1@hi.is), University of Iceland / MEdJournal - the Association on Bilingualism

8<sup>th</sup> International Conference 'Crossroads of Languages and Cultures:  
Language and Culture at Home and at School' (CLCS)

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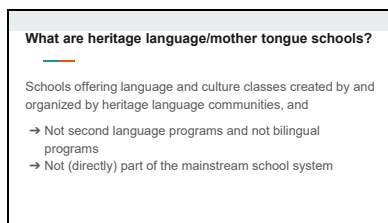
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Slide 2



**What are heritage language/mother tongue schools?**

Schools offering language and culture classes created by and organized by heritage language communities, and

- Not second language programs and not bilingual programs
- Not (directly) part of the mainstream school system

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## Slide 3

**Heritage language teachers differ in ...**

<b>Former training</b>	<b>Prestige of language teaching</b>
- local education degree, host country education degree, any degree, no degree	- ability to enter mainstream schools
- subject	<b>Language skill</b>
<b>Experience</b>	- native speaker, second language learner, language learner
- age level	- knowledge of linguistics and language development
- new country vs former country, teaching vs parenting	

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## Slide 4

**What is the reality of teacher training in our contexts?**

Professional development in heritage language settings needs to meet the needs of teachers with diverse:

- Skill sets
- Interests
- Motivators (internal vs external factors)
- Access to the mainstream school system for PD and for employment
- Availability
- Proficiency in English and English/Icelandic
- Connection with the profession in the former country

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## Slide 5

**Research questions**

1. What professional development is needed by HL teachers in Iceland and what is Móðurmál able to offer?
2. What professional development is needed by HL teachers in Alberta and what is IHLA able to offer?
3. How can a partnership of umbrella organisations benefit their professional development plan for HL teachers?

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Slide 6

**Kagan & Dillion- Professional Dev't of Teachers of HLLs**

Key areas of a teacher training program:

- knowledge of learner characteristics
  - Building on knowledge of the heritage learner
  - Building knowledge of the community
  - Assessing the HL student's starting point
  - Building on students' interests and proficiencies
  - Building on Global Teaching Approaches
- teaching mixed classes
- assessment practices

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Slide 7

**Aravossitas & Oikonomakou, 2017**

...understanding of the HL learners'

- sociocultural and academic backgrounds,
- their varied language proficiency levels,
- the psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic factors that affect HL acquisition,
- as well as affective variables, motivations, and attitudes regarding the target language.

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Slide 8

**Theoretical background**

- Professional development of HL teachers is not systematically supported nor assessed
- Financial, infrastructure limitations of PD
- Lack of professional recognition and certification
- PD is intended to influence student learning rather than develop teachers

(Tolomas & Aravossitas, 2017)

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Slide 9

**Effective teaching: a PD for Modern Greek HL teachers**

Feedback questionnaire to participants to identify their PD preferences:

- (a) lesson planning and unit planning
- (b) development of student engagement strategies
- (c) basic principles of language acquisition
- (d) assessment techniques & managing a multilevel classroom
- conflict management at the classroom level
- the study of learning disabilities and speech disorders
- psychological and ethical implications of teaching

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Slide 10

**Paulo Freire - Pedagogy of the Oppressed, p. 69**

A revolutionary leadership must accordingly practice co-intentional education. Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to it critically, but in the task of recreating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as permanent re-creators. In this way, the presence will be what it should be: not pseudo-participation, but committed involvement.

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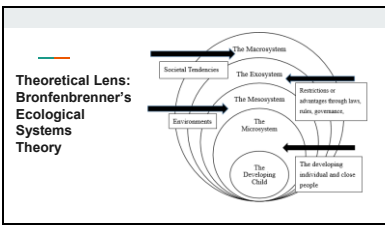
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Slide 11



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Slide 12

**Methodology- Action Research**

Action research is any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher-researchers, principals, counsellors, or any other school stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gather information about how their particular schools operate, how they teach, and how well their students learn. This information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment (and on educational practice in general), and improving student outcomes and the lives of those involved. (Mills, 2011, p. 5)

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Slide 13

**HLE in social and academic context (of Iceland) (2016)**

**Mixed methods:**

4 semi-structured interviews, questionnaire among 30 HL teachers of Móðurmál

**Themes:**

Reasons for teaching HL, Importance of HLE for children, Importance of HLE for families, Connection of HL schools and compulsory schools, Importance for the society, Challenges

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Slide 14

**Dream conditions, as expressed by HL**

**teachers** in the school system

- Curriculum for HLE
- Professional HL teachers
- HL in schools
- Support by the state and institutions
- HLE in all Iceland
- Devoted parents
- IT to support HLE (apps, games)
- Approval, support, empathy
- A place just for us, where we can have a big multilingual library, share tools, and walls full of languages and cultures

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**Conclusions**

Conclusions suggest that HL teachers are devoted to their volunteer work that they find very important for plurilingual children, their families and the society.

Sustainability, quality and existence of HL teaching in the Greater Reykjavik Area are dependent on individual volunteers who are continuously in danger of burning out or giving up because of many serious circumstances.

The sustainability and quality of HL teaching of plurilingual children in the Greater Reykjavik Area are very important for families, children's lives, and multilingual society as a whole.

Recognition, connection with compulsory schools, financial support, systemic support and support with building up heritage language education is missing

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**Research conducted in Edmonton, Canada**

21/28 Member Schools Participated (19 languages) were asked to rank 32 PD options:

Participants:

- 13 principals (60% of HL principals),
- 13 teachers (roughly 10% of our teachers),
- 4 teaching-principals, and
- 1 "other"

Teaching experience: 22% (less than one year), 19% (1-3 years), 16% (4-10 years), 42% (11+ years)

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**Survey Design**

PD choices came from:

- Kagan & Dillon's (2009) PD Matrix
- Carretero and Kagan's (2011) National Survey
- Anderson's (2008) ethnographic study of HL teachers
- Issues relevant to the Albertan context: provincially approved curriculum, global citizenship, grant writing, professional licensing

8 sections with 4 choices in each: school management, curriculum design, student evaluation, classroom specific issues, teacher professionalization, age-specific learners, language-specific issues, and extra-curricular activities

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Slide 21

Teacher training in two umbrella organisations	
IELA	McNornal
multiple PD sessions and workshops throughout the school year	workshops 2x a year - oriented at HL teachers / administrators, an annual conference - attending and opportunity to present
passing on opportunities with ERLC/ sharing upcoming conferences	sharing educational opportunities from elsewhere, share information about conferences and online training opportunities
Mentorship program	developing collaboration between schools
PBL book study	individual coaching website making, teaching age-mixed diverse groups, legislation about NCOs, etc., peer counselling
Professional Practices workshops	taking part in common project, on project management level
Historical: ESL classes, university scholarships	

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Slide 22

**Discussion**

Can you talk about teacher training without considering the context?  
Is PD meant to develop teachers or increase students' results?  
What role should umbrella organizations play in developing PD for HL/ MT programs?  
What challenges do organizations face in implementing effective programs?  
How can understanding limitations faced in implementation help to create better and more impactful PD?  
What funding structure is needed to create a strong PD program?

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Slide 23

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