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LISA 21 AND PILOT STUDY FINDINGS

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INTRODUCTION

LISA 21 is a one-year-old project supported by the Swedish Research Council which focuses on plurilingualism, identity work and learning in multicultural secondary school settings. It is part of the Communication, Culture & Diversity – Deaf Studies research group at Örebro university, Sweden. This text aims to present the project group's emerging research interest with reference to some preliminary findings of a pilot study conducted in the spring of 2007. It is envisaged that these preliminary findings provide impetus and direction for PhD research work.

The full title of this project – Languages and Identities in School Arenas at the beginning of the 21st century – points to the immediate need for some clarification of the title's terms 'language', 'identity' and 'culture' and why a focus on language and identities may be vital to understanding learning in plurilingual and culturally-diverse educational environments. Broadly put, LISA 21 takes a sociocultural perspective on learning, is informed by a post-colonial understanding of human identity, seeks to build on classroom interaction studies and embraces an ethographically-inspired methodology. However, this overview needs qualifying since the project's interest has been aroused by questions which have perhaps not received sustained research focus. Moreover, there is a determination among the project members to identify unexplored spaces which lie at the intersections between several theoretical perspectives. We hope these vantage points will yield novel approaches to the project's fieldwork and subsequent analysis of empirical data. In the following paragraphs, our understanding of the terms 'language', 'identities' and 'culture' will be outlined and serve as a very rough sketch of the project's theoretical framework. This is followed by a brief rationale for the project's dual focus on language and identities in school learning settings.

Language
Language is viewed as a primary social sign system which plays a central role in mediating human action, consciousness and conceptual development (Vygotsky 1978). It takes on relevance and currency as its meanings are shared and renewed through collective social practices (Dewey 1916). It comprises "an array of social practices, an extensive set of social actions" (Watson 1992) through which social life, order and learning are managed and realized. The organization and institutions of a society are brought about communicatively, primarily through the medium of speech. Such heavy and extensive service inevitably leaves its mark on the medium. Language functions as a social instrument of change, mediating ways of perceiving and understanding the world (Whorf 1956) but is itself being continuously transfigured as individuals struggle to wrench it from conventional codes and make it

serve their own purposes and meanings (Bakhtin 1981). To make language one's own is to diversify its usage.

The concern that studies inspired by a 'sociocultural perspective' have focused too exclusively on 'micro' factors (see, for example, Watson 1992) aligns with our commitment to give balanced attention to both micro and macro levels in our study. With regard to language, any single utterance is integral to a specific instance of speech exchange which is itself part and parcel of an ongoing, intermeshed, process of social interaction among a particular group of people living under particular cultural and historical circumstances. Any single utterance reverberates with, and in some way reconstitutes, the social order of both the verbal exchange and the wider sociocultural context (Hirst & Renshaw 2004). This implies that the analysis of language (e.g. in a school classroom) *is* the analysis of communicative patterns (e.g. teacher question-student answer sequence) as well as of wider discursive practices (e.g. curricular guidelines, goals and educational authority directives). In the following two paragraphs, two examples are sketched to illustrate the way a resolve to maintain balance between 'micro' and 'macro' approaches prompts the need to qualify currently popular sociocultural views on language and knowledge which tend to emphasize the 'micro' or at least one perspective among a range of possible views.

In our view, Bakhtin's notion of individuals appropriating words by populating them with their own intentions offers a highly useful perspective on the constitution of social movement, the psychological plane and the individual self. However, it must be noted that this process does not divest language of the cultural meanings and connotations that commonly attach to it. Having made a word his or her own idiosyncratically, an individual still has to use it within the surrounding systems of discourse (see Kramsch 1998) and their generally agreed meanings that prevail socially. If 'appropriation' meant that words lost the colouring of cultural codes and understandings, communication and other social practices would be seriously hampered. It is compounded by the ongoing tensions between individual and 'collective' meanings, that sense has to be *made* and mutual understanding *achieved*. Vygotsky's emphasis on the significance of sociohistorical forces affecting human development over generations seems to give complementary counterbalance to the "self-contained, internally coherent" and yet 'inside' view of some ethnomethodology and conversation analysis -inspired studies (see Sharrock & Watson 1988, for a defence of this observation).

In an attempt to shed more light on achieving skills and understanding, there has been the gradual, but widespread tendency within sociocultural research approaches to equate knowledge and participation. Dewey (1916) describes knowledge as "a mode of participation". Lave (1990) focuses on situated learning *in doing* and Rogoff (1995) argues that *participatory appropriation* is the process by which people transform their understanding of activities through their own participation. While siding with Dewey's criticism of the idea of knowledge as an external, ready-made "accumulation of cognitions" on which the individual draws when studying, the need to hold both macro and micro perspectives in balance warns against viewing knowledge simply *as* participation. Knowing is also a precondition for participation. Because we know things and how to do things, we are able to participate in activity. Dewey points out that, for example, social participation is not only facilitated by, but is

insured by knowing how to communicate. This factor is clearly demonstrated in foreign language classrooms.

Knowing (how) is not only a prelude to participation, it is a phenomenon that transcends the specific setting where participation and engagement was achieved. As Dewey suggests, social and cultural continuity assumes that what is learned and known is transmitted from those with experience to those without experience, from context to context. This life-renewing process assumes the transferability of knowledge beyond the situation in which it was gained. The 'participation' metaphor associated with the concept of "situatedness" has not accommodated the idea of 'transfer' easily. Sfard (1998) concludes that a model of learning is only going to be convincing if it builds on the notion of acquired, situationally invariant competence and skills which learners carry with them from situation to situation. Other metaphors are needed to complement 'participation' for a fuller picture of the way knowledge is generated, retained and applied to new situations.

Schools, like all institutions, reflect complex mergings and managements of macro and micro forces. Recent project fieldwork suggested that schools continue to be formidable cultural institutions wielding certain powers and authority and yet sites of enormous struggle between, for example, curricular mandates and vision, teacher beliefs, educational traditions and ethos, parental demands and student identities. Data suggested that a teacher's conception of how pupils can become more knowledgeable has a decisive effect on the aims, the roles, expectations, interaction patterns, learning activity and outcomes in the classroom.

Identities
Identities are of special interest in this project. As postmodernists have stressed, the idea of a self-contained, essential and unified self is highly questionable (Rorty 1985). The self is invaded by its surrounding culture, (Donald 2000) changes with it and, like postmodern culture, is fragmented and veined with conflict. The human self is assumed as a relatively fluid and socially situated quantity, both facilitating and formed through human social activity (Dewey 1916). As mentioned, our conception of 'identity' is inspired by a post-colonial perspective which expresses human identity as re-negotiations and narratives in different everyday and textual practices and processes (Giddens 1991). From this position, describing identities in terms of organizational and institutional roles and rituals does not account for their contingent, dynamic and multilayered natures. Post-colonialists contend that a person's attributes or self-representations only become meaningful and socially necessary when individuals interact with significant others in specific sociocultural situations. They highlight the way identities are constructed and manifested, the way people position themselves in socially optimal ways, through communication practices in social contexts (Luk & Lin 2007).

However, in our view, qualification of this position is called for. While acknowledging that human identities are conditioned, contingent and multiple, it seems that they add up to more than the sum total of different positionings an individual achieves in his or her social dealings with others. There is a strand of historical continuity and coherence to the self which is revealed in every encounter with others and gives a certain predictability to everyday social life. As Beck (1993) insists "[i]ndividuals are only *in part* identifiable in terms of the various categories to which they belong". Gee

(2001) describes identity as being recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context and outlines four ways to view identity – nature, institution, discourse and affinity-identities. He stresses that these are not discrete categories; they interrelate in complex ways and may well all be present when a person acts in a particular context, but different societies and historical periods have tended to foreground one or other of these aspects as a way of explaining how identities are formed and sustained. Dewey (1916) equates the self with interest – a perspective which brings out both the shifting and more anchored qualities of 'identity'. Human interest naturally has many layers of intensity and value; the least intense 'interest' may fluctuate considerably across time and contexts, but interests that are attached to personal beliefs and 'core' values are notoriously resistant to change and tend to have a pervading influence on human decisions and actions (see Pajares 1992).

In approaching identities, it appears that there is *disposition* and *position* at play in every social interaction; there is the human gap between the person we recognize ourselves to be and the person we would like to be seen as through our social performances. Given the complex and paradoxical nature of identities, multiple perspectives and intersectionality will be especially useful for exploring the concept and gaining deeper understanding of its dimensions.

Culture
The diversification of culture as a construct has been widely recognized (see for example, Kramsch 1993; Tornberg 2001; Van Esch & St. John 2003:40-41). An individual's culture is nourished and niched by the many different groups to which individuals 'belong' and forge loyalties. Such a spectrum of layers and boundaries includes not only national, ethnic and religious bearings, but a host of other cultural differences that might relate to gender, generation, education, social class, region or city, language community, special interest group, family and life experiences. This perspective shows the national dimension to be simply one category in a wide spectrum of cultural differences and identities individuals bear, rendering the one nation-one language-one culture model of limited use as a tool for competent, comprehensive multicultural analysis (Baumann 1999:84).

However, the forever changing and unfolding quality of culture has perhaps received less widespread attention and certainly the pedagogical prospects of recognizing culture as constant opportunity for renewal and re-creation have not been worked through into school arenas (St. John 2004b). LISA 21 assumes culture as both *difference* and *dynamic*. It seeks to develop a conception of culture which comprehends both culture as something people bear which contributes to social activity, constrains their behaviour, affects their understanding and culture as a process they constantly shape and are shaped by. From this perspective, all human communication is intercultural (Van Esch & St. John 2003) and all classrooms are multicultural (St. John 2004a).

Research into cultural diversity and differences is crucial because conceptions of culture can limit or open up pedagogical opportunities in the classroom. For example, a vision of culture that recognizes the existence of cultural differences at many levels will allow a language teacher to use the cultures of the classroom (e.g. small/ large families, teenagers/ pensioners, snowboarders/ non-snowboarders) to engage her students on a cultural journey which may cross less familiar boundaries towards

foreign cultural frontiers. By making the learners and their own 'backyards' the initial point of cultural reference, what was remote and condemned to the horizon can be related to and comprehended on the basis of cultural differences and boundaries that immediately surround them. Though different in degree, these cultural phenomena nonetheless trigger the same kind of responses and offer parallel learning experiences. With a *differentiated* view of culture, every classroom can be exploited for its multicultural resources. Moreover, a *dynamic* conception of culture will allow for a pedagogy which anticipates the possibility of cultural change; it recognizes that students are not simply victims of their own 'cultures', but can experience and channel multicultural change and progress.

Language and identities
It is also assumed that language and identities are inextricably related when learning is in focus; that they interweave in learning activity. Language is culturally produced for a host of different purposes and its use presupposes a culturally susceptible 'self', capable of cooperation, but also of idiosyncrasy, which is grappling with and growing through the appropriation of words, genres and discourses. Once made one's own, the language becomes a defining dimension of a person's identity. In social situations, individual language habits and practices reveal, even 'betray', personal identities – the kind of person an individual is recognized as being (Gee 2001). To talk, to write, to engage in communication practices therefore "necessarily involves identity work" (Renshaw, 2004). At the same time, human identities are formed and reformed through the appropriation of particular language practices, the revoicing of discourses, as people communicate and act in relation to each other (Bakhtin 1981; 1984).

We believe that a research focus on language and identities in plurilingual and multicultural learning environments is vital because both language and identities are implicated fundamentally when individuals learn. The learning of language is a very personal venture (Ellis 1993). It impacts already existing and often very fragile language egos and self-constitutions (Guiora, *et al*. 1972) which lie at the heart of people's sense of who they are. Humanistic language teaching (see Harmer 2001) and methodologies which stress the affective dimension of learning as critical (e.g. Krashen 1982) have made significant statements about the way classroom resources should be used to meet learners' socioaffective needs for solid learning. The pedagogical implications of the intimate relationship between language and identities are clear – identities must be recognized, must be accommodated, in language learning activity and classroom communication practices. No one is going to throw themselves into language learning unless they see the process as addressing the kind of person they perceive themselves to be and as contributing to their capacity to be recognized as significant.

SOME PRELIMINARY PILOT STUDY FINDINGS

The following section of this text offers, firstly, brief descriptions of the project's research settings and methods and, secondly, some preliminary findings and questions from an initial, but far-from-complete, analysis of data gathered during a pilot study in the spring of 2007.

Project aims and methods

Over the coming three years, in-depth fieldwork has been planned in three very different kinds of school – a school of the Deaf, an 'international' school and a multicultural school. These schools have been chosen because of their "good practice" status and all offer the opportunity to study plurilingual practices in teaching-learning situations. The fieldwork sites are secondary schools, specifically pupils in grades 7 to 9, since it is at these levels that it becomes possible to study the communicative practices of teachers and pupils in environments where they are using different languages for classroom communication.

Since LISA 21 is interested in gaining insight into learning processes and identity work by exploring communication practices in plurilingual and culturally-diverse classrooms, an ethnographic approach has been chosen. Ethnographic methods in the context of prolonged field presence and relationship-building lend themselves well to exploring and mapping culturally complex phenomena. Fieldwork will involve both participant and nonparticipant observation techniques as a well as a study of national, school and classroom texts which bear relevance for pupils' learning experiences.

Pilot studies, 2007

During the spring of 2007, two pilot studies were conducted with a fellow PhD student in a school for the Deaf and an 'international' school with the aim of identifying key areas of commonality and contrast for forthcoming ethnographic investigation. The studies involved 'shadowing' two classes through their daily schedule over ten-day periods in order to piece together a picture of the pupils' daily school lives and routines. Video and audio recording of lesson activity as well as field notes were the primary methods used to collect data. A preliminary analysis of the data has pointed to several areas of potential significance for further fieldwork. They are of particular interest because they suggest educational incongruities, even contradictions, whose tensions and resolutions have important bearings on learning and development at school. In the following paragraphs, I outline three of these areas which hopefully will contribute impetus to the project's focused fieldwork and analytical framework.

ı. Suspending and resourcing dialogue

It was evident that the way teachers coordinate and conduct student attempts to contribute to the lesson has important repercussions for the extent to which pupils are allowed to engage with the subject matter and therefore for the generation of certain kinds of knowledge. Teachers exercised their monopoly on communication rights in the classroom by gate keeping access to the 'floor' and orchestrating student participation. Factors that governed teachers' decisions to constrain rather than encourage student contributions included the teacher's need to protect the delivery of his/her points from competing contributions. Behind this tendency is often a teacher-constructed body of material that the teacher feels pressure to 'get through' as well as conceptions of what counts as legitimate or 'real' school work.

If knowing is viewed as an internal storing up, layer after layer, of factual information which students receive as a result of expert teacher presentation, then preparing and delivering this 'knowledge' package becomes a central steering mechanism in the classroom, always at the expense of student contributions and participation. Indeed, a conception of knowledge as a mode of *packing* brains rather than *participating* in

social activity is likely to foster an attitude that students' questions are superfluous, even unfruitful, to what is most educationally rewarding and valuable to focus on at school.

Given the patterns of participation these constraints imply, what kind of learning do they lead to? If learning is an aspect of participation (Lave & Wenger 1991) and people change and transform their understanding of activity through participation (Rogoff 1995), then there is the strong possibility that pupils will be learning more about school culture and classroom practice than becoming competent in a subject. At the same time, a constraint on classroom participation and a suspension of dialogical rights tended to divert participation and, with it learning, to the 'edges', centrifugally, where plenty of knowledge sharing was going on, but which was not directly related to the activity in the 'official' arena. The term *diverted learning* perhaps describes the kind of learning that emerges when pupils are denied an 'official' opportunity to gain a discursive grip on a particular issue or concept. *Diverted* learning seems to entail a loss of potential power and to lead to a more fragmentary and shallow learning experience.

Despite considerable constraint on student contributions, there is clear evidence of the way student contributions served as a *conversational resource* and facilitated a deeper level of understanding in the lesson. Student responses added meanings and ideas to the 'discussion'. Students often asked probing questions and made remarks which helped clarify the conceptual boundaries of terms the teacher introduced. Sometimes the teacher took his cue from student questions and interjections. On a few occasions, initiated by a student question, the contributor managed to draw the teacher into a dialogic exchange. In these cases, both parties are engaged on unpremeditated terms, both are responding with direct reference to the other's stances and together they are converging on mutual understanding. Data suggests that these short bursts of dialogic activity affected student understanding and satisfaction most significantly.

Since participation in classroom activity is so central to learning and gaining knowledge (Dewey 1916; Rogoff 1995) and others are highly significant in coming to understand concepts and experience (Bakhtin 1981), individual and collective contributions and engagement is a highly critical pedagogical classroom component. Greater recognition of the way student contributions can resource meaning making and understanding may encourage teachers to seek a more sensitive balance between conducting participation and creating conditions for genuine dialogic activity. Without such awareness and the pedagogical practices it would suggest, there is the danger of lesson activity that may result in teacher satisfaction while leaving students indifferent, without having gained greater interest in or understanding of the topic than they brought to the lesson.

There were also discursive barriers to student lesson participation which some teachers failed to break down, but which others managed to bridge. One teacher – a teacher of Swedish – stood out as particularly successful in mobilizing 'free' and fluent intercourse, almost effortlessly, between all members of a class of 29 students. How did she facilitate and sustain *whole-class* discussion in the classroom? Generally, the teacher was able to create conditions which successfully drew all the students into dialogical interaction by allowing them to participate on their own terms

with the language resources they were most familiar with and could deploy most easily. The Swedish teacher managed to achieve this discursive involvement by:

- *Prioritizing and harnessing students' contributions as a vital dialogic resource*.
- *Legitimizing the everyday vernacular language familiar to the students*.
- *Praising the students sincerely and giving acknowledgement where it was due*.
- *Building a bridge from student contributions (the concrete and immediate) to new concepts*.

To achieve dialogical activity the teacher relaxed the reins of power and established more symmetrical relations between herself and pupils. The result was not disorder or chaos. Although initially there was considerable chatter – "How talkative you are today!" (My translation) – and jostling for the floor, responsibility for the social order and discipline in the classroom (listening to and respecting turns, etc.) quickly became a cooperative venture – a joint responsibility. Perhaps, above all, the students felt they *owned* the discussion and this sense of ownership quickly created accountability and its own regulated order. The 'unofficial' became the 'official'; the teacher led from within, more participant than conductor; language resources were recycled and voices revoiced into a rich and energized discourse; meaning was constructed interactively and learning took on a cooperative character. Time sped past and rather than the discussion fizzling out, the teacher had to round things off while the discussion was moving forward purposely and promisingly. It was a remarkable achievement by most accounts. Interestingly enough, the teacher in question was the youngest and least experienced of those we observed during this pilot study.

ιι. Transferring and transforming understanding

In many of the lessons observed (Science and Social studies being prime examples), there seemed to be a paradox or at least a critical tension with regard to the learning aims and needs in the classroom. This tension is reflected more widely in the dichotomy between knowledge as acquisition and knowledge as participation (see Sfard 1998). Gaining knowledge or competence seemed to be conceived blatantly as 'receiving' rather than reconstructing a body of 'knowledge'. The teacher's "lecturing" was presumably rationalized by the view that the material is received to be reproduced (e.g. in a test) rather than transformed or reconstructed to be understood. There did not seem to be a concern to relate the new information to other areas of pupils' personal lives or involve them creatively as co-producers of understanding. To put it more crudely, in these lessons, the gaining of knowledge seemed to be viewed as a cumulative packing of brains with bits and pieces of information which the teacher and pupils, by speaking and listening respectively, transfer intact from an external to an internal plane to become subject knowledge in the pupils' minds. Knowledge is assumed to come in 'bytes' of what students can say or do; progress is seen very much in terms of 'completing' certain sections, assignments and exercises in course and workbooks.

Three incidents which illustrate this critical tension in different ways:
In a social studies lesson, the teacher pointed out that the highest grades would be given to those students who showed a reflective stance and were able to relate the topic to their own experiences and other issues. Despite this challenge, the whole

thrust of the lesson was geared to pieces of factual information highlighted by 'decontextualised' propositions and convergent questions. This practice suggested that knowledge can be learned bit by bit in an cumulative process of acquisition. There was little room for engaging reflectively with the material and for the kind of interaction that encourages the co-production of understanding.

In a science lesson, the teacher seemed determined that students should understand atomic structure ("We are going to fata"); however, she seemed unable or unconcerned to give full answers to the students' pertinent questions, preferring to drag them back to the safety of her 'script' which she seemed very dependent on. In order to help pupils understand and to allay their anxiety about a forthcoming test, the teacher delivered her "lecture" consisting of a series of statements – scientific facts and terms – about atomic structure which students transferred to their notebooks ("It goes in your brain more easily when you take notes"). To elicit this information (since this was recapitulation), she asked display, fact-oriented questions (e.g. "What is an atom?"). After the "lecture", she gave the pupils exercises to work on "so that it [the material] will stick in your brain".

In contrast, the students asked many sensitive and searching questions, demonstrating their real desire to understand (e.g. "Why does the nucleus weigh so much?"). Although the teacher 'took' all the questions, she did not address them satisfactorily, dismissing a good number of them with a trivial comment or joke. Why was this?

She did not know the answer. The teacher's static, fragmentary knowledge was seen to limit the kind of answers and discussion students were afforded.
She felt the need to get back to the safety of her script, her set of discrete statements, and schedule. Several times, students' questions were literally marginalized as the teacher dragged pupil attention back to the secure ground of the statements.
She replied several times, "But we don't care about that". This response to some of the students' probing questions implied her lack of concern to engage students' curiosity and to help them transform their understanding of atomic structure and take responsibility for appropriating the new concepts.

What kind of understanding can we expect from this lesson? Was the teacher's goal to develop understanding about atomic structure or to help students retain a set of statements, facts, about atoms that could be reproduced, recalled in, for example, a test situation? The teacher's practices suggest she sees the development of knowledge as the transference or the internalization of words and terms without the transformation meaningful participation triggers, without the need for students to create their own conditions for learning.

In an English lesson, the teacher clearly expressed his aim – to stimulate the creative writing of student stories by reading aloud some model texts. However, when reading aloud the story models intended to inspire such creative writing, the teacher did not really allow the students to contribute to the interpretive process or co-produce meaning in relation to the narratives. He seemed to hold exclusive interpretive rights on the story. Did the teacher fail to see the importance of reading imaginatively and gaining multiple perspectives on the stories for writing creatively?

ɪɪɪ. **Identity affordances and restraints in plurilingual learning environments**

A formal learning environment in which two or more languages are in operation as main means of classroom communication both creates opportunities for new identity positions, new roles and relationships in the classroom as well as conditions which restrain pupils' ability to identify themselves as significant and eligible selves.

On one hand, becoming 'bilingual' is a prized competence, an attractive goal, and students are well aware of its communicative and social benefits in a globalized world. A bilingual 'front' is an identity position that most students in this school are interested in being able to project and manoeuvre flexibly. The appropriation of new language practices, extends pupils' communicative capability and therefore their range of possibilities to be seen as personally significant, as worth including. As members of this 'international' school, they even borrow status and a certain amount of self-esteem from the school's special profile and reputation.

At the same time, the ability to contribute and participate actively in classroom activities with the new language demonstrates language competence and can boost esteem and status in front of teacher and peers. For example, the new language gives pupils with competence and confidence special opportunity to display their linguistic knowledge by their use of advanced vocabulary and 'up-to-date' phrases. Observations suggest the creation of new roles in bilingual learning environments which gives leverage to identity work. For example, in classes where the teacher could not or, for pedagogical reasons, did not use the pupils first language, the role of 'interpreter' of the teacher's meaning or instruction for peers emerged as vital to the learning process and important for positioning. It provided leverage on positioning in that it gave certain students something to offer their peers and created the relational aspect of helping another classmate who might not have previously had much in common with the 'helper'. This gave students a chance to 'tutor' even when their subject competence was not necessarily greater than their 'tutee's'.

On the other hand, there are restraints precipitated by bilingual learning environments. For some, the new language (which may be their third) threatens their language 'egos' so powerfully bound up with their mother tongues. At the same time, working in a second language can limit students' capacity to express meaning, reducing their opportunity to contribute and be seen as competent. The fluency and ease with which the native-speaker teachers deploy the language for instructions, descriptions and managing the classroom constantly underline the students' limited competence and undermine their self-confidence.

Perhaps above all, the new language they are immersed in carries a high cultural status, a prestige, which it is impossible to 'neutralize' in the classroom. For many students at international schools, a sense of being culturally over-shadowed underlines their view of their classroom position as less powerful, as disadvantaged, and may add to their feelings of inferiority and anxiety. A reduced view of oneself and one's place in the 'system of things' impinges on learners' identities and precipitates inner conflict. It can 'silence' their voices in the classroom. The dangers of pupils being alienated by the values and practices associated with the new language, cramped by feelings of inadequacy and cultural disqualification are very real in a classroom environment where a second or third language is dominant. Given these restraints, plurilingual learning settings, without considerable pedagogical care, can

war against inclusion. Whether these tensions are resolved or remain sharp depends on several factors which include second or third language competence, attitudes to this language, self-confidence and cultural affinity or remoteness.

CONCLUSION

It is some of these preliminary findings and issues which we would like to present to and discuss with others at the Advanced Study Colloquium. The capacity to be comfortable alongside cultural differences, and to appreciate them, is perhaps the greatest gift education can offer pupils and teachers. To recognize one's place alongside, rather than above or in opposition to, other human beings lies at the heart of intercultural competence and the fostering of foundational values across the curriculum. Teachers need much support to make intercultural learning a priority in the midst of the many demands they face in school. At the same time, if a focus on intercultural capacities and competences and how to promote them is not introduced into teacher education courses, then this kind of learning will be sidelined in favour of the 'flavour of the day' rather than fostering a 'core' life skill.

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