



Erasmus+

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Key statements

In this exercise, several statements supported by research are given regarding the integration of newly arrived migrant pupils related to the topics discussed in the section transition. Please give your opinion on each one and share concrete situations from your practice who confirm or nuance these statements.

1. Multilingualism is advantageous

Han (2010): Multilingual children surpassed the monolingual group with regard to learning strategies, self-control, and interpersonal skills. They also showed the least internalising (anxiety, depression) and externalising (aggression, disobedience) behavioural problems.

This adds to the existing knowledge that multilingualism contributes to higher academic achievement (Golash-Boza, 2005; Portes and Hao, 2002). However, this might, to some extent, depend on the support multilingualism receives from the school.

In a meta-analysis by Adesope, Lavin, Thompson, and Ungerleider (2010) the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism are described. Here it was stated that multilingual pupils could make a positive contribution to the classroom. According to them, it is important to investigate how this contribution can be fully exploited.

Your opinion:

Example from your practice:

2. The best results are attained by supporting the languages of the student in the school.

The prohibition of first languages has a direct impact on the school performance, well-being, and sense of identity of children (Cummins, 2009; Han, 2010; Portes and Hao, 2002). Some linguists argue that after multiple rejections of their way of doing and speaking, the children might resist against the target language (Cummins, 2009; Le Pichon, 2012).

August, Shanahan, and Escamilla (2009) found that students perform better if they also receive instructions in their first language, or have the opportunity to develop their first language.

First languages should be seen as an additional source of learning which both teacher and student can draw from. The school language must therefore be maximised, without the first language being minimised (Auger, 2009; Cook, 2001).

Greene (1997) concluded that students progress faster when their home languages play some part in the instruction.

Research shows that the more developed the students' languages are, the better their overall school performances will be (Baauw & Kieferle, 2012; Lindholm-Leary / Aclan, 1991, Genesee, 2008).

Your opinion:

Example from your practice:

3. One year in the school system is not fully sufficient to participate in a regular classroom.

Cummins has argued that there is a difference between the development of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 2012). Students develop BICS usually within 2 years; developing CALP takes much longer.

A study into one primary school in the Netherlands showed that students' Dutch language skills advanced significantly in the first year (Le Pichon & Baauw, 2015). After 2 years the students were on the same level as their Dutch classmates with regard to technical/ reading comprehension, spelling, and maths. It is important to realise that good test scores do not require fluent language skills. Multilingual children develop specific cognitive skills that give them the opportunity to come to the meaning with fewer words. The scores will get better as the language proficiency of the students progresses.

Mulder et al. (2008) believed that, to a large extent, the school language will catch up during the first year.

But PLEASE NOTE: it takes at least five years in school before the student can be compared to monolingual classmates (Cummins, 2009). This means you will only be able to really see the full potential of a student after 5 years of school!

Your opinion:

Example from your practice:

4. Going to school is already a transition in itself for newly arrived migrant students.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) noted that the transition to school requires a lot from students: they must adapt and change in terms of identity, relationships and roles. The same goes for the parents. They have certain expectations with regard to the school which is not necessarily what the Dutch school aims for.

The transition from home to school is an important transition for every student (Griebel & Niesel, 2003).

Never forget to ask the parents what they expect from the school. Do not forget that the situation of the family is not necessarily stable and that it is quite possible that the student has to move (see TRAM project). Therefore, building a portfolio from scratch can be very useful, both for the school, the students and for the parents.

For newly arrived migrant students the transition is even more radical. Sometimes they have enjoyed other or no education at all in their migration process. Education is different in every country because of the different school systems. (Yeboah, 2010).

Your opinion:

Example from your practice:

5. Successful transition to both the classroom for newly arrived migrant pupils as to the regular classroom depends on more than just knowledge and skills.

Griebel and Niesel (2003) found that social skills are very important for a smooth transition. These include self-confidence, problem solving, physical health and coping-mechanisms.

Niesel and Griebel (2007) emphasise that a successful transition is not only the student's work: the whole team (students, parents, teachers and social workers) contribute to a successful transition.

Valsiner (1994) also stressed the importance of multiple parties: in particular the role played by the family in conjunction with the institution. This also indicates that the parents, as mentioned previously, should be involved in the entire transition process.

The extent to which a transition is successful also depends on the coping-mechanisms of the student (Karraker & Lake, 1991, in: Griebel, Heinisch, Kieferle, Robe, & Seifert, 2015). Weak mechanisms often result in more stress for the student.

Your opinion:

Example from your practice: