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## Leading bilingual programmes

### Resumen

Como se ha venido demostrando, los niños bilingües tienen una serie de ventajas cognitivas en comparación con los monolingües. Como consecuencia de este hecho, se ha establecido en Madrid un sistema de educación bilingüe que, desde el curso académico 2004-2005, permite a los alumnos adquirir dos lenguas en educación primaria y secundaria. El éxito del curriculum bilingüe depende de una estrecha coordinación entre profesores bilingües, coordinadores y equipos directivos.

Los coordinadores de programas bilingües necesitan una imprescindible formación que comience con preguntas como: ¿Cómo podemos desarrollar y liderar programas bilingües? ¿Cómo puedo mejorar como coordinador? ¿De qué manera puedo ayudar a mis compañeros a enriquecer su formación en bilingüismo?

Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar los requisitos principales de un curso exitoso de capacitación de liderazgo bilingüe incluyendo aspectos tales como: programación de reuniones del equipo bilingüe; expectativas, responsabilidades y contribuciones lingüísticas de los auxiliares de conversación; explicación y motivación de las familias, los alumnos y los demás profesores del centro; conexión lengua-cognición y planes de mejora institucional o investigación-acción.

### Abstract

It has already been demonstrated that bilingual children exhibit a number of cognitive advantages in comparison with their monolingual peers. Consequently, a bilingual educational system has been established in Madrid, since the school year 2004-2005, to enable students to acquire two languages throughout primary and secondary school. The success of the bilingual syllabus at a school depends on firm coordination between bilingual teachers, bilingual coordinators and management teams.

Bilingual teacher leaders need strong and supportive training that starts with asking questions such as: How can we lead bilingual programmes? How can I improve as a teacher leader? In what ways does my teacher leadership foster growth and empowerment in others?

This study sets out to evaluate the main requirements of a successful bilingual leadership training course, which include: bilingual meeting planning; expectations, duties and linguistic contributions of language assistants; family, student and staff motivation; language-cognition connection; and action plans or action research plans.

### Palabras clave

Liderazgo, coordinadores bilingües, programa bilingüe, auxiliares de conversación, motivación, lengua-cognición, planes de mejora institucional, planes de investigación-acción.

## Keywords

Leadership, bilingual programme, language assistants, motivation, language-cognition, action plans, action research plans.

## Introduction

Teacher leaders, as well as management teams working at bilingual schools, must convince themselves about the numerous benefits of a bilingual education.

The training we provide or receive as bilingual teacher leaders must be based on this premise; therefore, we should all be fully aware of the advantages of a bilingual educational system, as well as the challenges that we occasionally face.

However, there is a small number of bilingual teachers who still see dual language acquisition as problematic and they believe it to be a challenge for developing children. This is mostly due to the lack of bilingual experience and training at schools.

Teacher training courses are essential to make all teachers aware of the various advantages bilingual students have, since we learn about bilingualism in general as well as foreign language teaching methodologies in other schools, autonomous communities and countries with much more experience, such as Canada, where two languages in primary schools for more than fifty years.

Professional experience is a key element, because the more time we spend teaching English as a second language, as well as other subjects delivered in English language, the more confident we feel about how much our students achieve.

Furthermore, as bilingual programme leaders we obtain an overall perspective of the school and can observe the different students with varied abilities and the extent of their improvements.

It is most satisfying to learn that children take pleasure in speaking English because they enjoy the lessons delivered in that language. However, this can only occur if we aim to teach the students in a dynamic and interactive way, providing them with the opportunity to participate in varied interactions and multiple activities that engage students' learning.

Bilingual leader training courses, seminars and lectures must use this idea as a starting point, to ensure that we demonstrate that claims about negative effects are not supported by research evidence, since children possess the biological ability to acquire two languages without jeopardising their development (Paradis, Genesee & Crago, 2011).

Studies have demonstrated that bilingual children produce the following words at around the same age as monolingual children: first words (12-13 months on average); first two-word combinations (1-2 years); and distribution of lexical categories and acquisition of the first 50 words (Oller, 1997).

Many researchers have proven that bilingual children exhibit a number of cognitive advantages in comparison with their monolingual peers, such as a higher number of independent cognitive strategies and greater flexibility in the use of these strategies to solve problems (Peal & Lambert, 1962).

Investigations show that there is a bilingual superiority in selective attention, mainly because misleading information is inhibited in favour of relevant information (Bialystok, 2001).

Bilingualism is also associated with increased attention to speech (Kuipers & Thierry, 2010) and an improvement of the brain's plasticity (Athanasopoulos, Dering, Wiggett, Kuipers & Thierry, 2010).

The aforementioned studies clearly prove that a bilingual education does not jeopardise students' cognition. Children should be fully supported in their acquisition of two languages from an early stage of their development. For that reason, the decision to raise a child bilingually should be made only if an enriched and consistent bilingual experience can be provided.

Once we are satisfied that children do not have cognitive limitations that make dual language learning burdensome, we can proceed to analysing the main requirements for successful bilingual leadership: bilingual coordination, language assistants, motivation, language-cognition connection and action plans.

### Leadership

Whether we are bilingual coordinators or part of the school management team, we as teacher leaders are required to know our responsibilities and duties in terms of coordinating the bilingual programme. We can learn about this information by simply reading and analysing the law; however, this article aims to demonstrate that we can move a step beyond and use innovative approaches. There is so much that we can do to make a major difference to how we manage schools within bilingual programme.

Firstly, we must begin to reflect on our own teacher leadership and ask ourselves what we think is needed for us to be successful teacher leaders.

According to Fairman and Mackenzie (2012), some of the main roles of a teacher leader should be to: engage in learning about our practice; experiment and reflect; share ideas and mentor other teachers; collaborate and reflect together; build support and organisational capacity; engage in collective school-wide improvement; collaborate with the broader school community; and share work outside the school with professional organisations.

Fox (2013) stated that there is no one way to be a teacher leader, but we must remember that being a leader involves working in at least three different environments:

- In our own classroom: teacher inquiry, reflecting in and on practice, researching new ideas...
- In professional learning communities and in departmental work: overseeing student work, peer mentoring, peer observation and coaching, lesson study...
- In the school: leading initiatives, chairing committees...

After considering these roles, we can state that teacher leaders must lead a research-based bilingual programme and, therefore, they must engage other teachers in a daily reflective practice that can contribute to our main goal: students' learning.

In order to achieve this main objective, we must consider four main areas, in each of which we can detect certain possible measures to take:

- Personal reflection and research approaches: self-study, action research, critical reflection...
- Assessment and evaluation: performance assessment (formative and summative), improvement ideas...
- Instructional practices and syllabus design: student-centred practices, activities for varied abilities, authentic and adapted resources, ICT resources, motivational, dynamic and interactive activities...
- Roles of teacher leaders: teacher and assistant observation, decision-making, coordination, external evaluation organisation, mentoring of new teachers...

In summary, every teacher leader must engage the teachers in reflective practice as often as possible, so that our teacher leadership fosters growth and empowerment in others.

Critical reflection is for all educators and is most helpful to expand perspectives as educators and researchers:

- Reflective teachers are more open to innovation and build more favourable relationships with colleagues and students (Munby & Russell, 1989);
- Connections between theory and practice are heightened (Cruickshank, 1985); and
- Effective teaching has been shown to correlate with higher levels of reflective disposition (Giovannelli, 2003).

### Foreign language assistants

The second element in learning how to be an enhanced bilingual teacher leader involves a critical reflective practice towards language assistants and their key responsibilities.

Assistants begin working in October and finish in June. Before they join the school, all teachers must know how to take full advantage of their linguistic contributions, so there must be a planned meeting at which the bilingual coordinator clarifies who the assistants are, what they can and cannot do, what is expected of them, the nature of activities in which they can help the teachers, inter alia.

All teachers who deliver subjects in English must attend the meeting and ask any questions they might have about assistants. They should know what the assistants' duties are and what they are required to do, but they also need to know what information they can furnish to the assistants in order to help them do their job.

Some of the most important details teachers need to tell assistants are:

- What the students are like: interests, abilities, needs, etc.;
- The subjects taught;
- The content of each subject;
- How each subject is taught;
- How to address students;
- How contact should be maintained between the teachers and assistants (phone, email, etc.);
- School policy and class code of conduct; and
- How to work in a small/large group.

As soon as the assistants arrive on their first day of work, bilingual teacher leaders must help them around the school.

It is always advisable to show the school areas to the assistants and introduce them to all the teachers and staff. Immediately after, there should be a meeting at which the bilingual coordinator and the head teacher provide all the necessary details to ensure that the assistants know exactly what is expected from them and what they must comply with throughout the school year.

Foreign language assistants represent an enrichment of students' learning of language and culture and a support for our own teaching, but this will only be the case if we manage to clearly explain their roles, expectations and duties, the kind of linguistic contributions they can make to optimise the students' learning process, the type of activities they will be required to perform on a daily basis, where to be positioned in the classroom, among other matters.

#### 2.1. Main roles of foreign language assistants:

- Strictly comply with the designated timetable;
- Follow the teacher's instructions and cooperate with them;
- Help the teachers in activity planning and assist them during the lessons;
- Discuss ideas for improvement with the teachers, and feel free to engage in the students' English education in an active way;

- Attend meetings along with the rest of the bilingual staff in order to organise class activities and plan ahead;
- Provide linguistic support in the classroom;
- Reinforce students' communicative skills in their foreign language and promote other cultures;
- Speak in their mother tongue to the students: speak to the students in English and require them to respond in English (playgrounds, corridors, etc.);
- Forge a consistent relationship with the students, particularly with respect to language;
- Motivate students and foster interest in the language and culture of their English-speaking countries;
- Provide teaching resources: engage the students with stories and *realia* from their home country;
- Participate in the activities that take place at the school: cultural week, English festival, Halloween, etc; and
- Encourage participation in training initiatives and in the learning and teaching of languages.

## 2.2. Expectations and duties of foreign language assistants

The assistant must show respect towards:

- The school's ethics, values and expectations;
- The classroom practices of the school;
- The school's pedagogical principles or management style;
- The level of formality between individuals;
- The code of discipline and assessment methods;
- The teacher's authority over the students; and
- The values and expectations of parents.

## 2.3. Linguistic contributions of foreign language assistants

Assistants must know how to model the language appropriately and how to treat student responses in the target language:

- Speak only in English with students and English teachers;
- Praise and encourage students for what they can do;
- Be aware of the range of abilities;
- Speak using appropriate speed and register;
- Be genuine and show interest in what students say;
- Allow students' speech to flow without interruption;
- Obtain as much language from students as possible;
- Build confidence; and
- Remedy incorrect pronunciation by reiterating students' words using the correct form.

## 2.4. Examples of activities that assistants can perform are as follows:

- Preview content, act as motivators, schema builders...;
- Introduce new language;
- Review language or grammar items;
- Correct homework;
- Give students feedback, encourage and praise them on a daily basis;
- Cover the morning routines: greetings, call out the register, talk about the weather, write the date...;
- Look for up-to-date materials which may appeal more to their particular students;
- Link the school to a school they know in their own country;

- Provide lists of children's books in English;
- Create engaging resources;
- Enliven listening materials;
- Act out scripts in class;
- Answer questions from students;
- Bring *realia* (books, stickers, stamps, maps, brochures, leaflets, etc.);
- Write information about themselves for the school paper, on a blog, on a poster, for a display...;
- Bring photos of their home town, family members or old school to use in group conversations or to do a presentation for the whole class;
- Participate in the planning of arts and crafts activities;
- Tell stories and act them out;
- Promote cultural awareness talking about: food, traditional games, typical songs, etc;
- Celebrate the typical festivities at school: Halloween, Bonfire Night, Thanksgiving, Saint Patrick's Day...;
- Sing and dance to songs with the students to help them learn the lyrics in English; and
- Help students create science projects in groups or individually.

#### 2.5. Assistants' positioning in the classroom:

- Never at the back, as students need to see them;
- In front of the class, with the teacher at the back: when practising pronunciation, vocabulary, working on the "star of the day"...;
- Working with a group of students outside the classroom: when practising conversations with students;
- Assistant and teacher side by side at the front of the classroom: when modelling behaviour, when learning personal questions and answers...;
- Assistant and teacher monitoring the groups: when students are working in pairs or groups, to make sure they are on task;
- Inside the classroom with a specific groups of students;
- Offering one-on-one support to those who find English language difficult or struggle with learning in general;
- Helping students individually to prepare for their speaking exams, practising their answers and giving feedback on accuracy or pronunciation;
- With a group that may require more support, to give them guidance and help when needed; and
- Working with the most able linguists in the class, who will be able to continue with a more challenging activity while the rest of the class is being taught.

In summary, by making both teachers and assistants fully aware of all the aforementioned information, we are promoting sound coordination within the school as well as preventing any possible problems arising from a lack of information.

### **Spreading motivation**

The third essential requirement for becoming a successful bilingual teacher leader is motivation.



As teachers, we should believe that what we are doing is important and that bilingual education is special and innovative.

As teacher leaders, we should also learn to motivate students, families and colleagues.

Motivating students should not be a problem because it is what we are accustomed to doing every day in our lessons. Certain elements that our methodology must include are: dynamic and interactive lessons, communicative tasks, creative resources, a student-centred approach, cooperative learning, daily routines, diverse activities every day, games and competitions, reward systems, positive feedback, learning centres, group/pair work activities and students as teachers.

Colleagues can be motivated by being able to help each other when needed, asking each other relevant questions and listening to each other. All this can materialise when a meeting takes place; therefore, we must build a comfortable meeting atmosphere in which everybody feels relaxed enough to speak and happy to share any challenges they might face.

As mentioned in the Leadership section, the introduction of reflective practice conversations can be extremely beneficial for the school as a whole, mainly because all the teachers listen to each other's reflections and help one another if necessary. It can help everyone at the meeting to expand their perspectives as educators and researchers.

The first question we could pose to the teachers at a meeting is whether they are naturally a more *interpersonal* or *intrapersonal* learner (Gardner, 1993).

- *Interpersonal* learners can reflect by being involved in the following activities: communities of professionals, action research, self-study teams and presentations, groups of "critical colleagues" for sharing and analysis...
- *Intrapersonal* learners can reflect by performing the following activities: journaling, writing individual thoughts to share with a critical colleague who may respond in writing or person-to-person, individual action research, blogging...

By critically reflecting about our own teaching practice at a meeting, we can have the opportunity to motivate and be motivated by one another.

Ultimately, families can be motivated by making them understand what a bilingual education is. We must find the time to do that in our parent teacher conferences.

The main aspects that are essential for families to know are the following:

1. What methodology do we use in a bilingual education?

- The main goal is for our students to be able to communicate fluently in the foreign language (oral and written communication);
- We try to replicate an English classroom in which the only language allowed is English, representing a full immersion in the foreign language, where students have to make the effort to speak and understand at all times;
- We want students to acquire the language as part of a natural and subconscious process in a meaningful context: we would like students to acquire their second language in the same way they have acquired their mother tongue (Krashen, 1988);
- Our day-to-day activities are always dynamic, motivational and interactive to ensure that children learn in a meaningful way;
- We encourage students to make a concerted effort to use English, and only English, to communicate their needs and we commend them accordingly using reward systems such as stickers, stamps, positive feedback, etc.; and
- We practise the four skills every day to make sure that students can use and understand both oral and written language.

2. How can parents help at home if they are unable to speak English?

- Check homework daily;
- Watch TV/films in English;
- Listen to the children speaking in English;
- Use the internet to find resources in English (school blog, videos, online games...);
- Listen to English songs/podcasts;
- Listen to the children reading in English; and
- Talk to them about how important English is.

3. What do marks mean and what are the guidelines for determining effort marks?

Parents must know that marks are not only what we write in the students' portfolios, written tests or notebooks. Marks include the following aspects:

- Participation: class discussions, group work, activities in pairs, attention and focus during activities, appropriate responses to student/teacher interactions, homework completion;
- Quality of work produced: neatness, attention to detail, completeness, grammar and spelling;
- Perseverance: task initiation, task follow-through, consistency, academic endurance;
- Receptivity to feedback: appropriate response to suggestions or redirection, positive interactions during student-teacher conferencing, implementation of peer/teacher suggestions.

4. What are the goals for students in terms of life skills and responsibility?

- Take responsibility for actions;
- Demonstrate active listening skills;
- Work effectively within a group;
- Solve conflict effectively;
- Follow instructions;
- Exhibit organisational skills;
- Complete assignments on time;
- Demonstrate self-control;
- Be a respectful participant at school;
- Use time constructively; and
- Follow established routines.

If families ascertain all this information in advance, they will not panic about bilingual education. As a result, they will hopefully be supportive and collaborative, since they know what is expected from their children.

### **Language-cognition connection**

After analysing the three most important topics of which all bilingual teacher leaders are required to be aware, we must take into account this fourth aspect, which relates to how students acquire a foreign language and what we can do to help them through this acquisition process, in the event that they are struggling and find it more difficult than other students.

1. How do children acquire English as a second language?

- Stages of second language acquisition

According to Paradis, Genesee & Crago (2011), all children go through the following stages when learning a second language:

★ Stage 1: Home language use

Children use their mother tongue in the English environment, even though nobody else speaks it.

★ Stage 2: Non-verbal period



Children accumulate receptive knowledge of the second language but produce very few or no words.

★ Stage 3: Formulaic language use

When children first begin to produce some of the second language. Their sentences are short and imitative, with little original content.

★ Stage 4: Productive language use

When children can vary the words they use to fill in all of the slots in a sentence. They achieve fluency and can use their second language productively.

- Factors that influence students' acquisition of a second language:

As teachers, we are all aware that children have varied learning styles and that there are several factors that can influence their acquisition of a second language.

★ Child-internal factors:

Age of acquisition: children who begin before 5 years of age have more extensive vocabularies than those who begin later on in life.

Language aptitude: working memory and analytical abilities are also factors that can influence their learning.

Structure of the mother tongue: they can transfer skills if their knowledge of their mother tongue is well structured.

Personality and social interaction: outgoing students usually acquire the second language more quickly than shy learners.

Motivation: attitudes, emotional factors, beliefs about the new language and its culture can also influence students' learning of a second language.

★ Child-external factors:

Length of time learning the second language: if we create an English atmosphere for our students in our classrooms and schools, they will be exposed to more English and, consequently, they will learn more quickly.

Amount of practice: the more students practise, the better they become and, therefore, it is essential for both teachers and pupils to always communicate in English.

Quality of the second language: we must provide young learners with a high-quality model of English that includes good pronunciation, a wide range of vocabulary and appropriate tone and musicality.

Contact with native speakers, media, reading resources, etc.: teachers must promote cultural awareness and intercultural understanding by sharing sociocultural aspects of English-speaking countries. Foreign language assistants also represent a most helpful resource and an enrichment of students' learning of language and culture.

Socioeconomic status: it has been demonstrated that families with low socioeconomic status speak less to their children; as a result, the children have fewer opportunities to practise the language.

- Code-mixing and its implications

Code-mixing is a natural phenomenon that we must be familiar with as bilingual teacher leaders.

People who are proficient in two languages can switch between languages fluently and flawlessly in the middle of an utterance, avoiding violations of the rules of each language as they do so (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

Learners who are in the process of developing proficiency in a second language often mix codes differently to fluent bilingual learners. The structure of the host language is imposed on the mixed segments from the other language, often resulting in violation of one or both languages (Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2011).

However, child bilingual code-mixing does not reflect linguistic confusion or lack of differentiation in the child's developing language: it is merely part of the acquisition process that every person goes through in life.

This matter is important to this study because all staff at a bilingual school (but, especially, bilingual teachers, bilingual coordinators, head teachers and deputy head teachers) must be familiar with the following code-mixing implications:

- It is not cause for concern;
- It is a communicative resource;
- Parents and educators should not reprimand children for code mixing; and
- It is very important that adults be understanding and supportive of bilingual children.

## 2. Differentiated instruction

All students can acquire a second language, regardless of their specific needs or family background; some may take longer than others, due to the factors evidenced above, but they can all acquire English as a second language.

However, students all over the world have varied abilities and needs and we must be prepared to help them all, particularly those who need some kind of extra support or help.

We as teachers and teacher leaders know that we must adapt our teaching to our specific group of students: we should take into account, among other factors, their age, abilities, interests, learning styles, aptitude, motivation, attitudes towards the language, etc.

Teachers work daily to find ways to reach out to individual learners at their varying points of readiness, interest in and preferred approaches to learning. There is no single "right way" to create an effectively differentiated classroom; teachers craft responsive learning places in ways that match their own personality and approach to teaching (Tomlinson, 1999).

Bearne (1996) identifies differentiation as an instructive approach by which teachers modify the curriculum, their teaching methods, educational sources used, learning activities and evaluation methods according to and in correspondence with students' differentiated needs in order to maximise the learning opportunities for every student.

In order to help our students, we can adapt several aspects of our teaching practice: the content we teach, the methodology we use and the results that we expect students to achieve.

- Differentiating content

Content is what teachers want students to learn and the materials or mechanisms through which learning is accomplished (Tomlinson, 1999).

Content may be differentiated by means of:

- ★ Resources for varied abilities;
- ★ Various delivery formats (videos, reading texts, mind maps, podcasts, recordings...);
- ★ Varied graphic organisers;
- ★ Reading partners;
- ★ Varied creative resources suited to all learning styles;
- ★ Students as mentors;
- ★ Wide range of supplementary materials;
- ★ Compacting; and
- ★ Think-Pair-Share activities.

- Differentiating process

*Process* describes activities designed to ensure that students use key skills to make sense out of essential ideas and information. They need time to reflect on and digest learning activities before moving on to the next part of a lesson.

According to Tomlinson (1999), students vary in:

Readiness: a student's entry point relative to a particular understanding or skill;

Interest: a student's affinity, curiosity or passion for a particular topic or skill; and

Learning profile: a student's ability to learn, which may be shaped by intelligence preferences, gender, culture or learning style.

Process may be differentiated by means of:

- ★ Levelled activities;
- ★ Interest/learning centres;
- ★ Hands-on materials;
- ★ Varied pace according to readiness;
- ★ Multiple intelligence assignments;
- ★ Flexible student grouping: individual, in pairs, small groups, etc; and
- ★ Entertaining activities and games.
  - Differentiating product

Product differentiation is probably the most common form of differentiation, as it relates to when teachers provide students with options from which to choose. There are usually varied levels of complexity which enable students to choose the option most suitable to them with the teacher's help.

Product may be differentiated by offering a wide range of product choices based on students' abilities. We can use activities such as: creating a presentation to show the class; writing a report; drawing a picture; building a graphic organiser, answering questions; highlighting important information; and creating a science/art project to explain content.

In short, differentiated instruction helps students in their learning process because it provides specific alternatives for individuals to learn as thoroughly and quickly as possible, without assuming one student's road map for learning is identical to that of anyone else. Teachers who employ this method believe that students should be held to high standards. They work diligently to ensure that all students: work harder than they meant to; achieve more than they thought they could; and come to believe that learning involves risk, error and personal triumph. These teachers also work to ensure that all students consistently experience the reality that success stems from hard and informed work (Tomlinson, 1999).

### **Action plan and action research plan**

Finally, all teacher leaders who are already convinced by the information in the previous chapters of this study, but still encounter certain unexpected issues in their coordination or management of time, must be encouraged to find the time to work on an improvement plan for the whole school.

Engaging in action research can help all teachers and teacher leaders, mainly because it helps us reflect more purposefully on what we do, why we do it and how we teach.

We can develop and investigate questions arising from our curiosities about teaching and learning. Teachers who do not carry out any research are unable to gather sufficient information on students and often feel overwhelmed or isolated. On the other hand, teachers who are also researchers intentionally ask questions about teaching and learning, organise and collect information, focus on

specific areas of inquiry, engage in reflection and benefit from ongoing collaboration and support of critical friends (Fox, Katradis & Webb, 2015).

If we believe we can make a difference in our school life, we can create an action plan by simply following the three stages below:

- Stage 1 – Desired results

To work on this first stage, we must consider our teachers and students as well as the context of the school in general: we can ask ourselves if there is an area of our school that could be improved, that is challenging or that we wish to investigate further. This area may be an issue we are struggling with or something that we are interested in knowing more about (Fox, 2015).

The first stage consists of three important parts:

- ★ Established goals: we must specify our goal, i.e. the main purpose of our action plan.
- ★ Understandings: we should bear in mind all the factors that can influence our objective, as well as the implications that teachers and administrators at the school should be aware of before implementing the plan.

English teachers should be willing to make a change and implement a new plan: the entire plan must be accommodated within the school's policies, and the management team and bilingual coordinator must be flexible with regard to its implementation.

- ★ Essential questions:

We must think about possible research questions, bearing in mind that they must be clear, significant, feasible and ethical.

- Stage 2 – Assessment evidence

This is the stage in which we write information about how we are to evaluate the planned goal of our action plan.

We must remember to list all the evidence we need to gather in order to put our plan into practice: informal and formal journal entries, observation, video recordings of students' oral presentations, etc.

- Stage 3 – Action plan

This is the final and most important stage, in which we detail how the plan shall be implemented and what exactly must be done for us to achieve our initial goal so that we can obtain our desired results.

Once the action plan has been implemented, teacher leaders must learn from the data gathered and monitor the results of the intervention in order to ensure that the action has improved a specific aspect of the school's bilingual programme.

Teacher leaders should always hold a meeting with the bilingual teachers to inform them of the conclusions and/or implications drawn from the study itself, as well as any ongoing monitoring.

## Conclusion

In summary, leading a school in the bilingual programme requires leadership skills and in-depth knowledge and expertise with regard to bilingual education and second language acquisition.

When you make the decision to become a bilingual coordinator at a school, you can read about your functions in the law, but you discover your potential as a researcher from your daily experience.

This study can be used as a guide to learn about the most important issues to take into consideration for successful bilingual coordination:

- How to be a successful teacher leader;

- How to take full advantage of foreign language assistants;
- How to motivate students, colleagues and families;
- What the connection between language and cognition is; and
- How to implement an action plan.

**This study is aimed at providing an insight into the knowledge that we are required to possess to be able to lead bilingual programmes, whether we are bilingual coordinators or part of the school’s management team. It offers guidance on leadership training, through research into the five essential aspects that are key to our development as bilingual teacher leaders.**

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