

## **IRN Final Synthesis Report**

**April 2020**

### **Effective Teachers' Communicative Strategies When Working with Linguistically Diverse Learners**

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#### **Status of IRN:**

In 2017-2018, we added a new partner to our research network, Dr. Funke Omidire from the University of Pretoria, Cape Town, South Africa, bringing our network to three (3) countries: Israel, United States and South Africa. In August, 2019, we participated in two symposiums at the 2019 WERA Focal Meeting in Tokyo, Japan.

- *Using an International Lens to Understand Teachers' Awareness, Preparation and Teaching Strategies When Instructing Linguistically Diverse Learners (Accepted Symposium)*
- International Research Network (IRN): Effective teachers' communicative strategies when working with linguistically diverse learners (Invitational Symposium)

We also participated in the IRN chairs' meeting. Our IRN has a successful track record of collaboration in a variety of spaces, including virtual spaces (e.g. skype, zoom), email, conference calls, face to face at each other's institutions and at conferences where we have co-presented our work (AERA, WERA). We will continue to use a variety of venues and technologies for collaboration.

#### **Recent Publications:**

Mongillo, G., Feola, D. Kaplan, R. G. Vaknin-Nusbaum, V., & Abbas, R. (2019). Primary teachers' use of communicative strategies for linguistically diverse learners: A cross-cultural case study, *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*, 29(1) 5.

Abbas, R., Vaknin-Nusbaum, V., Neuman, A., Mongillo, G., Feola, D., & Kaplan, G.R. (2018). The use of modern standard and spoken Arabic in mathematics lessons: The case of

a diglossic language. *Cultura y Educacion*, Taylor & Francis Group. Doi: 10.1080/11356405.2018

*In Progress: Effective Communicative Strategies for Linguistically Diverse Learners: A review of the Literature in Israel, South Korea, and the United States. Global Perspectives on Education Research (WERA).*

### **Synthesis of IRN Research 2015-2019**

At the 2018 WERA World Congress in Cape Town, we shared policies and practices on teaching learners from linguistically diverse backgrounds in Israel, South Korea and the United States. We also summarized our classroom-based research on communicative strategies of effective teachers' when working with linguistically diverse learners from the three countries. From our own research and a review of the literature we concluded that teachers are struggling to find ways to accommodate new and ever rising numbers of learners entering their classrooms with diverse home language experiences. Additionally, teachers are not prepared in their regular education programs to help diverse language learners and certified world language teachers are limited (Wong, Indiatsi, & Wong, 2016). Finally, we found that enhancing teachers' instructional skills needs to take place within a school improvement framework that extends to all school staff, family and community (e.g., Cummins, 2000; Krashen, & Terrell, 1983; Sleeter, 2002).

We developed a survey study to pilot in 2019 for teachers of linguistically diverse students in three countries. The purpose of this pilot study was to examine primary/elementary grade teachers' awareness, preparation and teaching strategies when instructing linguistically diverse learners. The three countries represented include Israel, South Africa, and the United States. Teachers in these countries are faced with similar challenges that include the education of learners for whom the language of instruction is not their home or first language. The survey was distributed to teachers of elementary grade students. Findings from all three countries were shared and discussed with symposium participants at the 2019 WERA Focal Meeting in Tokyo, Japan.

### **New IRN Research in 2020**

Building on the results of our cross-national research and feedback received at our conference presentations, we expanded our cross-cultural research to include an inquiry on content teachers' use of instructional strategies with linguistically diverse learners,

collecting data from focus group in-person interviews with open-ended questions. We gathered and analyzed data from the focus group of content teachers who teach math and science across three countries. We will present commonalities and differences found in content teachers' strategies to work with diverse learners at the 2020/2021 WERA Focal Meeting in Santiago de Compostela, Spain. We continue to look for interested researchers from other countries to expand our investigation in other cultural contexts. Ultimately, we hope to increase the knowledge base and dissemination of on best practices on teaching linguistically diverse learner.

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