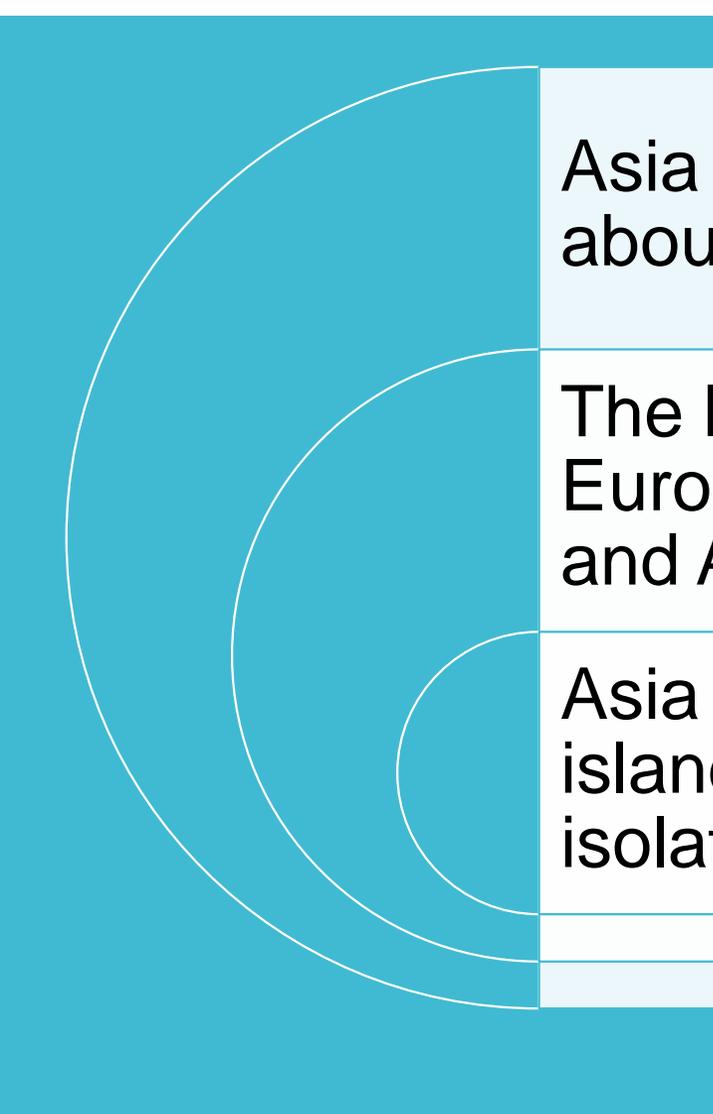# Effective Practices in Education in and Teaching of Minority Languages

Linda Tsung, The University of Sydney

Asia Pacific is home to about 4.46 billion people speaking about 2,300 languages.

The language spectrum in Asia Pacific is much wider than Europe, including Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Dravidian, and Altaic.

Asia Pacific is characterized by mountains, vast plains, islands, and jungles, features that allowed communities to isolate and develop languages without external influence.
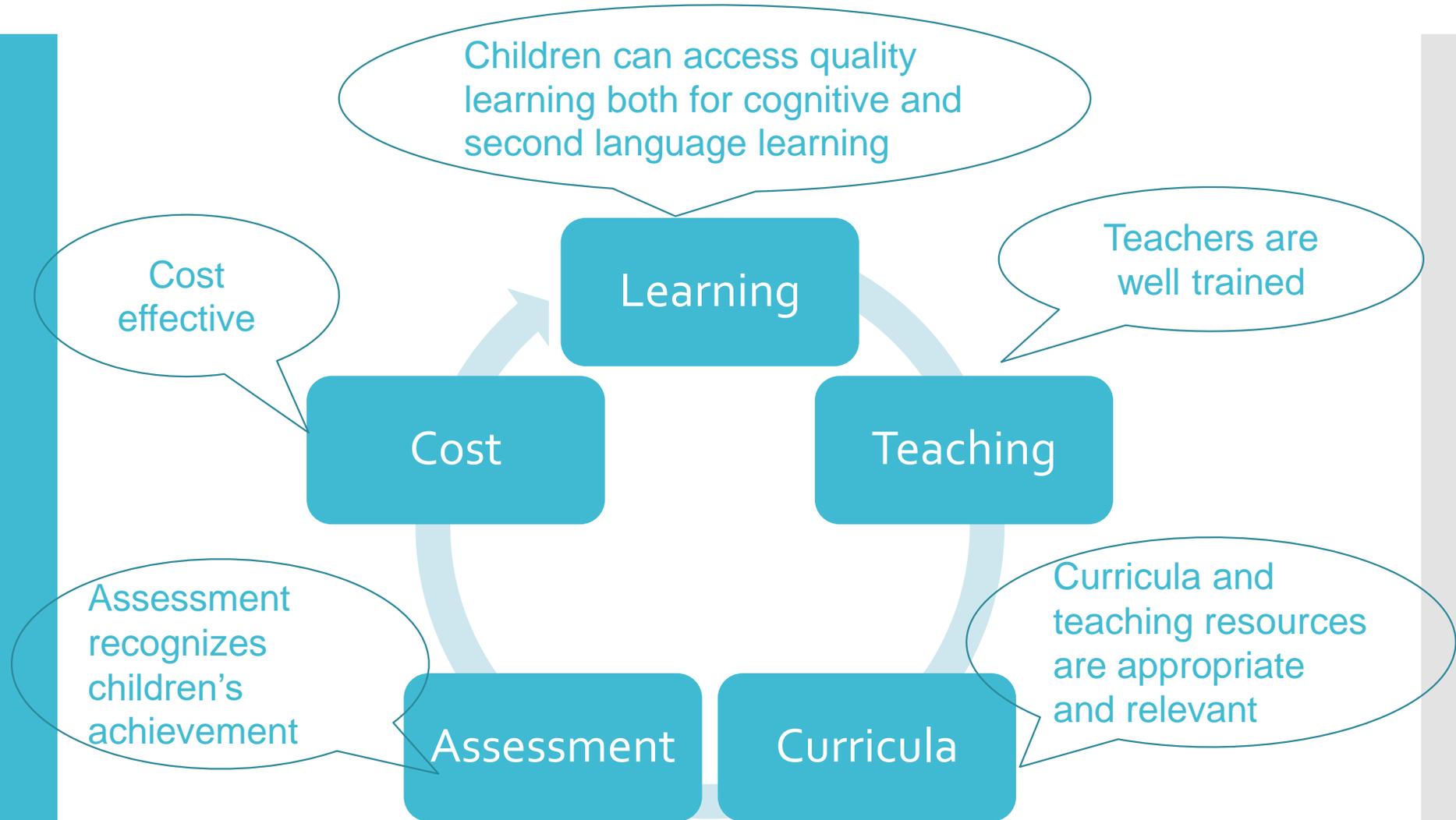
Children's cognitive learning

Effective Learning

It is difficult for a child to succeed as a language minority student without having a solid foundation in his/her first language (Pinnock, 2009).

Thomas and Collier found that the more time students spent in their mother tongue, the better their long term academic success. (1997).

According to a World Bank Report (2005), 50% of the world's school-age children who drop out of education systems, live in areas where the language of the school is different than the language of the home.
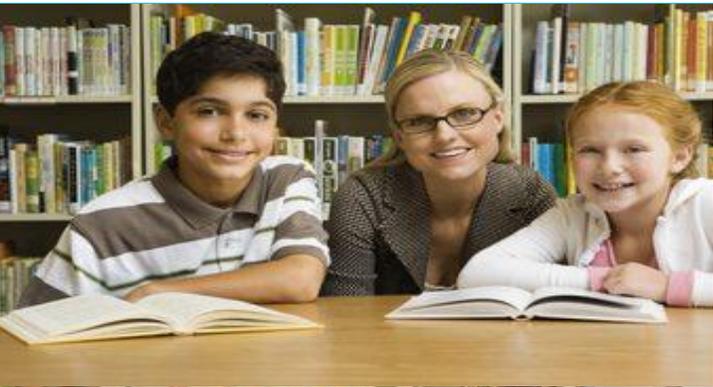
Bilingual studies that investigated the role of mother tongue on the child's development have suggested correlations between the child's level of mother tongue competence and his/her second language development (Ball, 2010; Cummins, 2001, Tsung, 2009, 2014)

Cummins (1980, 2001) maintains that additive bilingualism minimizes the difficulty of learning a second language. He supports additive bilingualism and claims that when a child has a good mastery of his/her first language s/he would encounter less difficulty retaining and labeling notions/concepts in a second language.

The transfer of acquired competences (e.g. in L1 or another L2) reduces cognitive demands of learning tasks and facilitates acquisition of the target language (Cenoz, 2003).

First year, exclusive mother tongue

**Zero barriers:** Bai bilingual program

Effective Teaching

- Research shows that effective bi/multilingual teachers are the most important factor contributing to minority student achievement. Although school, peers, curricula, funding, family and community involvement all contribute to student achievement, the most influential factor is the teacher. (Tsung, 2009,2014).

- Highly effective teachers can have an enriching effect on the daily lives of children and their lifelong educational and career aspirations. We now know empirically that these effective teachers also have a direct influence in enhancing student learning. Years of research on teacher quality support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement.

- *(Tucker and Stronge, 2005)*
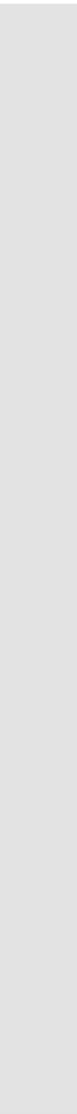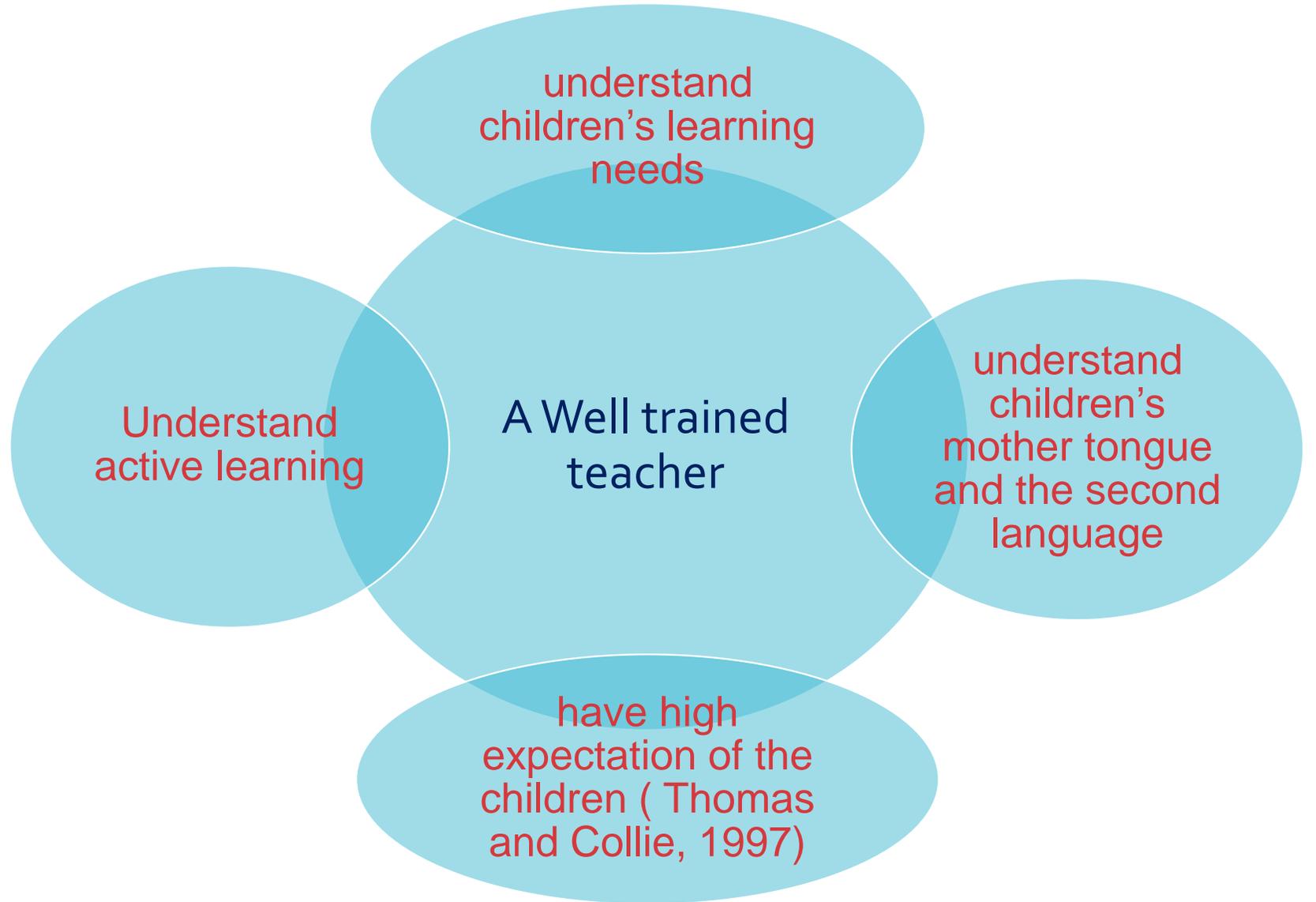
Teachers Make a Difference: What is the research evidence? (Hattie, 2003)

Percentage of Achievement Variance
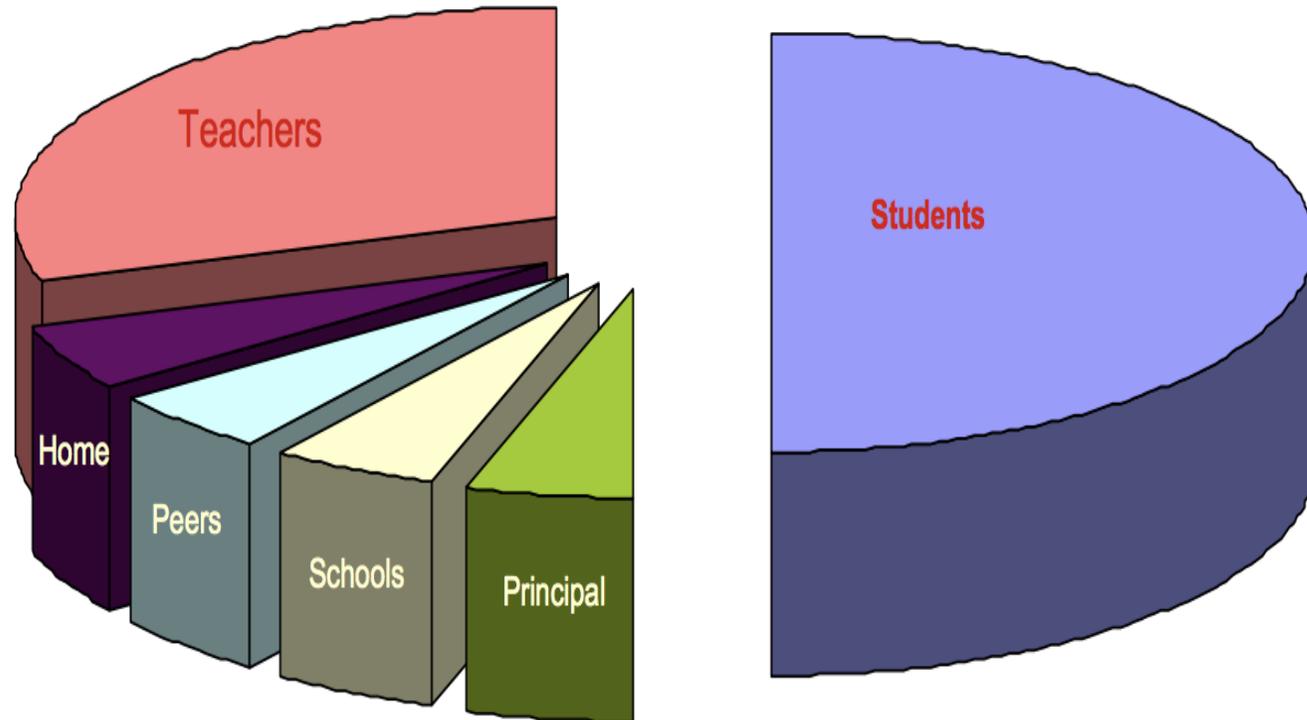
Curricula

- Well designed syllabus that meets student needs
- Culturally relevant teaching resources that meets national educational standards
- Detailed resources to support teachers
- Materials for student activities
- Effectively use of multi-media technology and internet
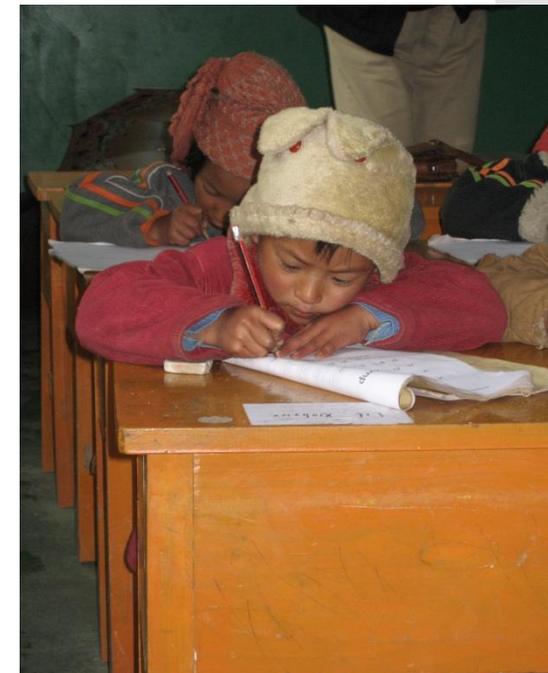
Teaching materials

Teachers

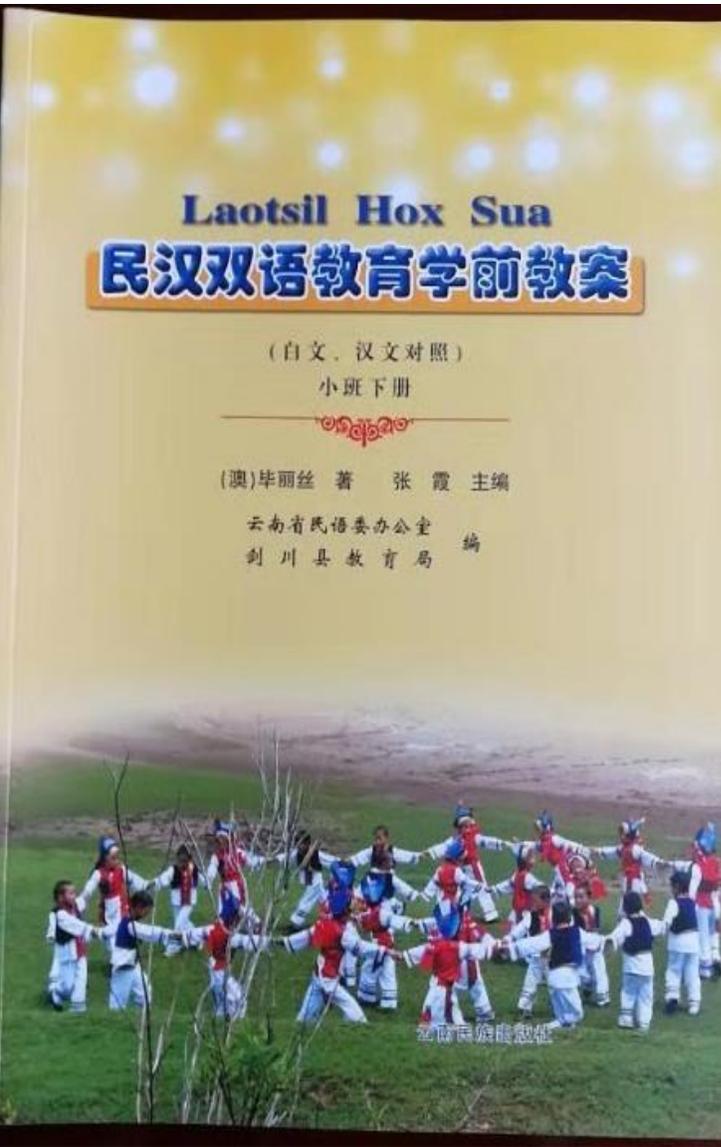- **Teachers' guide**
- **Teaching aids**

with the development of technology and internet, well designed teaching resources can be shared

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Students

- **Text books**
- **Student activity materials**

Shows lesson progression

Materials needed
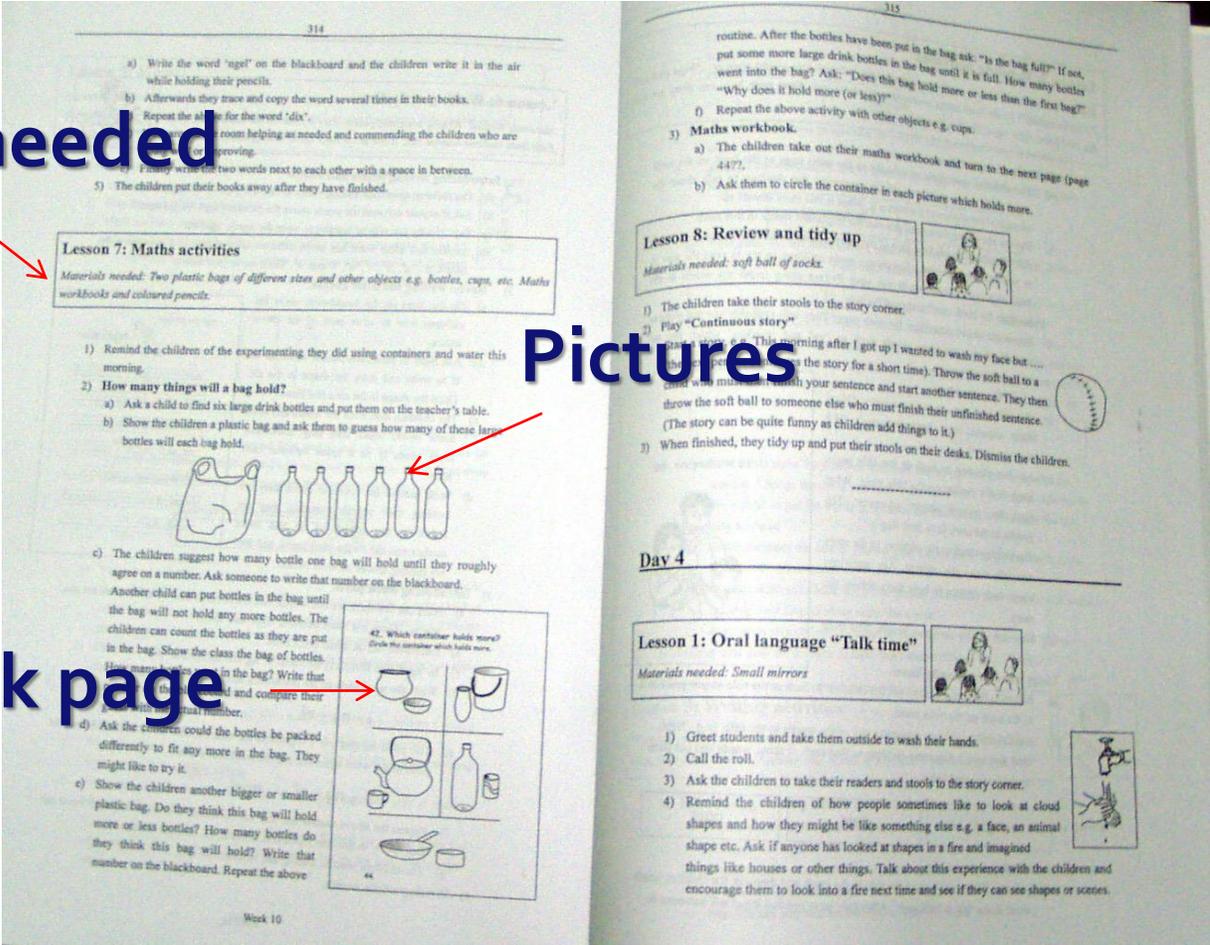
Pictures

Text book page

Teachers' Guide

Student activity materials

PMT-MLE: An effective example

Community members and local teachers working with "experts" produce a culturally relevant curriculum that meets national educational standards

145 teachers and 13 teacher assistants, along with musicians, artists, religious leaders, community members and linguists produced over 1400 books, songs, games, posters and other educational materials for Patani Malay children through a series of 106 workshops over a 9 year period.

In-service teacher training for the PMT-MLE programme occurred alongside the curriculum development process

Table 7: K2, Week 24 lesson plan linked to MOE standards, indicators and desirable characteristics

This week the students will...	Standard	Indicator	Desirable characteristics
Name the letter and pronounce its sound correctly	9	4	38
Spell words, create words, write letters	9	5	39
Use the language for conversation to ask and answer questions	9	1	32,35
Listen to and follow commands	9	9	47
Able to organize things by certain characteristics	10	2	3
Compare different amounts of things	10	8	54
Organize objects according to capacity	10	2	58
Know and understand the culture of various religions	7	1	23,24,26
Listen, sing, and do appropriate actions	5	1	20
Able to make creative art	11	1	61
Use the large and small muscles well	2	1	4, 5
Display positive mood/emotions	3	1	1
Able to play local games according to rules	2	3	12
Understand ethical principles	7	1	26

Effective Assessment

A crucial aspect of effective bilingual programs requires that specific emphasis be given to systems of assessment that truly reflect what students know about content and language, avoiding diluted interpretations of learners' performance due to the use of monolingual assessments (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2014).

Assessment is a powerful tool to recognize student learning (Tsung, 2009, 2014)

Students should be able to do examinations in their own languages

Students first language should be credited based on their level of proficiency and achievement

For example, the *minkaomin* system in China

Cost Effective and Reducing Wastage

- Research shows training bi/multilingual teachers is NOT more expensive than training monolingual teachers.

- While language is not the only factor in improving educational quality, it is now widely understood that a mismatch between the learner's language(s) and the medium of instruction is the root cause of school wastage (repetition, failure, drop-out) and may well influence the high rate of out-of-school youth in many contexts.

(Benson 2014; Heugh 2011; Walter & Benson 2012).

- Create career opportunities for bi/multilingual students.

Minority languages are valuable human assets for Asia-Pacific Region

Conclusions

Learning
- It is more efficient for children to learn knowledge and second language in their first language

Teaching
- Well trained bilingual/multilingual teachers are effective human resources in teaching

Curricula
- With the development of technology and internet, well designed teaching resources can be shared
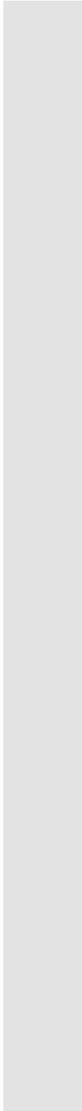
Assessment
Effective assessment scheme can recognize student achievement for their future career

Cost
Education in and teaching minority languages should be supported financially and effectively

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Thanks
Q & A