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Bilingual Education in Primary School

Aspects of Immersion, CLIL, and Bilingual Modules



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Chapter 7 On the Road to Nowhere? The Transition Problem of Bilingual Teaching Programmes

Kristin Kersten & Andreas Rohde

This paper discusses the challenges of acquiring English across different institutions from preschool to secondary school with regard to both regular language education that starts at primary level and bilingual programmes which may be offered at various stages in the learners' course of education. It is suggested that content-based bilingual programmes with no specific language curricula allow for a smoother transition across institutions than language-course-oriented approaches. The latter are problematic because the higher the level of institution, the more strongly the problems of transition are perceived. Additionally, programmes with a form of regulation within their transition processes encounter fewer problems than programmes without regulated transition. This is supported by the results of a survey that was conducted across more than 100 preschools, primary and secondary schools.

Pre-reading questions

- In very general terms, i.e. without a specific focus on foreign language teaching or bilingual programmes, collect different factors that may be relevant in the transition from preschool to primary level and from primary to secondary level.
- 2. Compare a regular language-course-oriented English teaching programme to an immersion programme (partial or full, with at least 50 % of the subject matter taught in English). What are the specific challenges of each programme in terms of transition?
- Given that a particular secondary school is not capable of establishing an immersion programme for primary school children who have been in such a programme, discuss possible English teaching models that could accommodate those primary school children.
- 4. Think of measures that can be taken by preschools or schools in order to facilitate the transition between the institutions.

Structure of the chapter

In the following sections three different levels of transition are discussed. The chapter starts with changes and challenges that young children are confronted

2 From the parental home to preschool

The attendance of a preschool is usually not mentioned within the problem area of transition because in that case we are not dealing with the transition from one educational institution to another. Yet this first step out of the shelter of the parental home into an educational institution requires our attention. What Jürgens & Standop (2011: 393f.) suggest for the transition from preschool to primary school therefore also goes for the introduction to preschool: The child has to orient towards new roles, new relationships, and new social bonds. This transition requires individual adjustment processes as a reaction to entering a modified learning and living world. This new orientation must not be underestimated. Most of the parents have experienced their children's reluctance to be left to their own devices during their first days in a completely new environment. At the beginning, a transition measure therefore often is a parent's presence in the preschool for at least a few hours.

bilingual programmes in German preschools

new roles.

ships, new

social bonds

new relation-

If the child comes into a bilingual group in which one of the two preschool teachers uses English exclusively, this is a further challenge, at least for some time. The child does not only make contact with other children and adults, who will be part of the children's future daily life. She/he is also introduced to a new means of communication, a new language. In most of the cases this does not present a problem as usually German is also spoken in the preschool group, but the fact that single individuals of the groups or staff exclusively use English can lead to critical and stressful moments for the children. In this vein, Tiefenthal (1999) reports that a girl burst into tears when the English speaking preschool teacher described a scene in a book with the words, "look, this is a frog". The girl was at first not able to accept that familiar concepts could be referred to with different names hitherto unknown to her.

The preschool supports the transition from the parental home into the preschool group in that the new educational institution builds on domestic experiences. Thus there are toys and numerous opportunities to play. In addition, all the daily routines such as brushing one's teeth, having breakfast, going for a walk etc. are continued in the preschool and give security to the children in this new environment. Thus, in a bilingual programme, the only new component may be the new language, and the children find out quickly that they do not have to understand every single utterance because, especially during the first months, the new language accompanies the preschool routines, which are well known from the children's domestic experience. Another important factor for a smooth transition might be the presence of the other, more experienced children, who take the bilingual environment for granted. Observing the relaxed and natural handling of everyday situations in two languages will have a reassuring effect on the new child.

3 From preschool to primary school

School entry is a cut in the child's biography in which the child and her/his family have to cope with changes according to status, role and identity, which are

with when they first enter a preschool institution such as kindergarten. In a second step, two models of transition from preschool to primary school level are introduced and discussed. Different scenarios for a smooth transition with regard to bilingual education are illustrated. The chapter continues with the question of how pupils coming from a bilingual or traditional primary school can be accommodated at bilingual or regular secondary schools. The chapter concludes with a study illustrating how the different preschools and schools react to the challenges of dealing with previously acquired skills, knowledge and experience of their learners. (The term *preschool*, in this paper, is used for programmes with no formal instruction.)

1 Introduction

The nationwide introduction of English at primary school in 2003 (except for the Saarland) has not only given rise to the discussion of how the foreign language is ideally taught at primary level but also highlighted the question of how the transition from primary to secondary level has to be created. If the students have already been taught English for at least two years, at the secondary level the curricula have to be adapted to this two-year experience and we have to recognise the students' foreign language experience instead of starting from scratch, pretending the secondary level is the genuine start. This discussion has revealed two different teaching concepts in foreign language teaching (FLT): Whereas appropriate teaching at primary level tends to be action- and communicationoriented ("using language to learn it", Howatt 1984 as quoted in Richards & Rodgers 2001: 155), teaching at secondary level, especially at German grammar school, still is very strongly structure- and course-oriented (lehrgangsorientiert, "learning the language to use it", cf. ibid.). There are still a number of grammar school teachers who claim that English at primary school does not generate at least comparable language skills (Lernstände) among the children and that this urges them, the grammar school teachers, to start afresh (Sommerschuh 2003: 110, see also below). This problem is reinforced by the fact that, more often than not, English at primary level is taught by teachers who have not studied English for second/foreign language teaching and do not have the necessary knowledge of how English or any other foreign language is best introduced at primary level, very often underestimating the children's abilities (Kolb & Mayer 2009: 16, Rohde 2012: 37f.).

transition

At first sight, the transition between bilingual programmes appears to be even more problematic to handle. On the one hand, the programmes also comprise the preschool level so that the transition between preschool and primary level has to be focused on (as a case in point, the transition from the parental home to a preschool programme must not be ignored either). On the other hand, the programmes are individually adjusted to the respective institution's resources and are therefore very difficult to compare to each other (Kersten et al. 2010) so that every discussion about transition is necessarily individual.

two concepts of FLT Chapter 7

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school readiness paradigm accompanied by intense emotions (Faust et al. 2011: 40, Kucharz et al. 2011). In addition, the concept of a *school readiness paradigm (Schulfähigkeits-Paradigma)* which is unilaterally targeted at the primary school level (it highlights socioemotional independence, cognitive and physical prerequisites) may lead to stigmatization and negative selection. In this respect, many children are disadvantaged, for in their upbringing, school readiness has not been viewed as significant—especially if they have not attended a preschool programme (Jürgens & Standop 2011: 409). Even if the construct of school readiness has recently been viewed in close connection with the *eco-system model* discussed in the next section, it remains a hurdle and a threshold that decides whether or not a child is admitted at primary school (ibid.).

the skills model

Two distinct models of transition from preschool to primary school level are discussed by Carida (2011): The skills model and the eco-system model. The skills model highlights the demands made on the children upon school entry, i.e. for a momentary event, and is therefore very similar to the German idea of school readiness. It comprises the general skill of learning, which, according to Jürgens & Standop (2011: 402) is often understood in a narrow way in the sense of the ability to store new knowledge. What Jürgens & Standop see as more significant is the acquisition of procedural knowledge and the ability to deal with the unknown, e.g. to handle unfamiliar situations. Instead, at primary school level, the children are believed to already have acquired a number of skills/abilities (social adjustment, rule acquisition, consciousness etc., cf. Dockett & Perry 2001: 3, see also Luttropp 2010). These abilities, however, should not be seen as skills that have to be specifically developed for primary school level, but for every level of education (Kucharz et al. 2011). In other words, the different institutions do not require distinct skills or abilities. Rather, in every new step the child takes, these capabilities are further developed. There is no sequence or order of distinct skills but rather they form a continuum and are fostered throughout the child's learning biography (ibid.: 409). For Jürgens & Standop, a school readiness paradigm (see also Eckerth et al. 2011) has to be replaced with a child readiness paradigm (Kindfähigkeitsparadigma) which bridges the gap between preschool and primary school. In the child readiness theory the tables are turned: An institution has to be ready to accommodate children with different skills and abilities (ibid.), a notion compatible with the recent claim for inclusive learning of both "typically developing" students and learners with special needs. One possibility to realize such a paradigm would be the so-called educational establishments (Bildungshäuser) which accommodate children from ages 3-10 (Strätz et al. 2007, Drexl 2011). The national curricula (Bildungspläne) which were introduced in all of the federal states of Germany between 2002 and 2006 (Faust et al. 2011: 40) could represent the basis of a comprehensive development.

the eco-system model The eco-system model, on the other hand, looks at the total amount of factors which are part of the transitional process, thus also regarding the parties involved in the children's education process: the family, preschool, primary school and wider society. These parties are viewed as co-constructors of the child's education (Faust et al. 2011: 40). In the eco-system model there are no a priori skills/abilities formulated for the child to acquire. Rather, the model calls upon a tight

cooperation of the involved parties in order to pave the way for a smooth transition across the institutions. Cooperation measures comprise mutual visits by both children and preschool staff and primary school, information events for parents, advanced training for staff etc. (Faust et al. 2011, Giallo et al. 2010, Luttropp 2010). Cooperation between preschool and primary school still is irregular and selective. One important question is: What inhibits cooperation measures? According to a survey (Faust et al. 2011), preschool teachers assess the measures as more important than primary school teachers. It is assumed that the preschool staff wants to be treated as partners at the same level with the primary school teachers - something which has as yet not been realized on a larger level (ibid.: 58). Another observation is that not all preschools are part of cooperation activities. A reason for this may be that those preschools whose children later go to many different primary schools (so that there is no larger number of children entering the same primary school) do not seek cooperation or are not contacted for any cooperation measures. One problem in this regard is that the involved parties have the duty of discretion so that data cannot easily be exchanged (ibid., see our survey below).

There is no specific transition problem for regular preschool and primary school programmes with regard to the onset of English as it is only introduced in the third grade at primary level (with the exception of Baden-Württemberg and North-Rhine Westphalia where it is introduced right at the beginning of the first year and in the second half of the first year, respectively). However, there are four other scenarios with regard to English: Some children move from an English-free preschool programme into a partial immersion programme which features some/most of the school subjects in the foreign language (German as a subject is usually taught in German). Other children move from a bilingual preschool programme into a partial immersion primary school programme. A third scenario would see children come from a bilingual preschool into the regular primary school with English either beginning in grade 1 or 3. The latter scenario is one that especially parents try to avoid as they fear that acquired skills in the second language will soon be lost again. There is no conclusive research available yet as to when and to what extent once acquired language skills may be forgotten or lost again. Studies focusing on the relearning of a second language by children in a naturalistic setting suggest that skills which were believed to be lost may be revived and even extended within a short period of time (Rohde 2002). This evidence, however, must not be seen as a justification of discontinuous bilingual programmes. The fourth scenario concerns languages other than English, which are not part of the German primary school curriculum. If the programme is continued from preschool to primary school in one way or another, similar scenarios as described above will take place. If, however, the preschool programme is discontinued in primary school, the gap or the cut-off of the foreign language will be much longer/stronger than in the case of English, and the effects on the acquisition of this particular language cannot be foreseen.

As mentioned above, one significant skill (that may be easily overlooked) is handling "the unfamiliar" in terms of novel situations in which children have to quickly decide how to react to the specific demands. This is a skill that is clearly important for both preschool and primary school contexts and would be part of

cooperation measures

four different scenarios for the transition from preschool to primary level

the skill of handling the unfamiliar

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the above sketched continuum view. There is some preliminary evidence from a bilingual preschool project that suggests that bilingual children accept unfamiliar situations (including unknown words and objects) more readily than their monolingual peers (Rohde 2005: 207).

pressure from above In more specific terms, one problem that may arise in bilingual programmes between preschool and primary school level is the pressure that may be felt at preschool level to achieve certain foreign language aims dictated by the primary school. This pressure from the educational institution which is one level above preschool in the education hierarchy should by all means be avoided. As formal foreign language teaching at primary school level is deemed unsuitable it is all the more inconceivable for preschool children. We believe that foreign language drills and targeted practice of language forms easily lead to exhaustion and have the potential to kill the children's positive attitude towards the new language. These measures are not believed to be appropriate although, in fact, there is at least one workbook available for preschools which follows, at least partially, a formal linguistic approach by including a formal grammar section which, tellingly, happens to be inaccurate in places (Bollig & Bollig 2006: 26).

foreign language learning as a linear process

The issue of inappropriateness points to a general problem of transition which needs to be discussed. As yet, there obviously is no integrated curriculum of English neither for regular FLT nor for partial immersion programmes which would distinguish between preschool, primary and secondary level. Such an integrated curriculum would necessarily run into the danger of putting each educational institution lower in the hierarchy under pressure by suggesting a certain skill level to build on. This, however, is extremely problematic as it has become clear that the characteristics of the three (four, if the parental home is included) levels involved in our discussion differ from each other considerably so that no curriculum is conceivable which would see the acquisition of English as a linear integral process. It becomes clear that we face problems as long as we envisage FLT as a language course in which every involved educational institution is supposed to cover a fixed number of lessons in that course. Rather, it becomes apparent that every eco-system has its own inherent features so that none of these systems should be pushed by the needs of the systems higher up in the hierarchy. In other words, neither the eco-system view nor the skills/abilities view allow for an approach where a second language is taught according to a view of formal progression. This suggests that intensive bilingual programmes may in fact avoid the problems typical of transition by simply focusing on the children's respective environment, their current interests, subject matter areas and, more generally, their cognitive and emotional development. Bilingual teaching is no method that caters for the peculiarities of a particular age. It is a teaching concept that sees the language as an expression of the learners' states of mind and not of different grades of grammatical or vocabulary knowledge. Through bilingual teaching, the second language accompanies the children's development rather than determining it through fixed language curricula. In other words, we cannot avoid general problems of transition due to different eco-systems and different required skills in subjects such as maths, history, geography or social sciences. Through bilingual teaching, however, which is not language-course-oriented but content-based and

communicative, the subject of English does not present an additional barrier for transition as it practically merges with the other subject matter.

4 From primary to secondary level

The fact that there is no fixed curriculum for German preschool education renders the transition from preschool to primary level relatively easy as the above mentioned skills and "child readiness" views do not require any specific factual knowledge. This is different between primary and secondary level. The secondary school expects the children to have acquired certain skills and factual knowledge so that the primary schools may feel the pressure to cater for the higher level in the hierarchy.

At secondary level, however, English teachers complain about very heterogeneous English competences. The secondary level teachers' expectations are rarely met. 65 % of these teachers deem English at primary school level pointless (Böttger 2009: 16f.). In the course of the EVENING study in North-Rhine Westphalia, 35 % of both primary and secondary school teachers reported that there was no contact between the schools or that contact was rare (65 %) (Thürmann 2009: 9f.). Kolb (2011: 168) assumes that only 20 % of the English teachers at primary level have a university degree for teaching English. Those primary school teachers without a degree (understandably) feel less well informed about teaching at secondary level. In addition, there is a correlation between the foreign language competences of the students and the primary school teachers' qualification (ibid.: 168f.).

In addition, there is a discontinuity in terms of teaching methodology, learning environment and academic demands. At primary level, language teaching is communicative, multi-sensory and action-oriented (handlungsorientiert) with a focus on oral language and listening comprehension. Written language has only a supportive role even though its significance is gradually increasing (Serrurier-Zucker et al. 2009: 130 f.). This situation is different, partly to a very high degree, in bilingual programmes, and particularly in immersion. At secondary level, teaching is more form-focused and rule-oriented and is still based on grammatical knowledge (a fact that is also clearly reflected in the secondary school textbooks; cf. Keßler & Plesser 2011). The divide is even more pronounced by the fact that, at secondary level, English has the status of a major subject, which does not suggest that FLT has to be more form-focused but certainly more reliable in terms of teaching and learning aims. That such goals and methods do not necessarily need to be mutually exclusive has increasingly been stressed in recent literature on language pedagogy, which promotes autonomous, action-oriented, meaningful and content- and context-related language learning for all levels of language teaching (e.g. Piepho 2003). A wider implementation of successful principles known from content-based language teaching and bilingual programmes, which have long taken these approaches into account, might help bridge the gap between these seemingly different goals.

The EU project *Pri-Sec-Co* (primary and secondary continuity in foreign language teaching) involving seven European countries has come up with a

the primary school teachers' qualification

teaching methods at primary and secondary level

Pri-Sec-Co Project set of twelve bridging tasks and a host of different materials that have been developed to promote continuity at both the end of primary and the beginning of secondary school (Serrurier-Zucker et al. 2009: 131, Kolb et al. 2012). It is doubtful, however, whether secondary schools in Germany are genuinely willing to modify or adjust their teaching approach: In the DESI study (Deutsch- und Englisch-Schülerleistungen International), carried out between 2001 and 2005, 10–15 % of the students at both secondary modern schools (*Realschulen*) and grammar schools (*Gymnasien*) received scores higher than average and well beyond the requirements of the curricula (Klieme 2006: 2). This reinforces the perception especially of the grammar school as an autonomous and self-sustaining system, less so for education policy makers and the public but rather from the point of view of those working and teaching at grammar schools (Bludau 1998: 157, cited after Kolb & Mayer 2009: 18).

accommodating children coming from bilingual programmes question is how the students can be accommodated at secondary level. As the immersion students' competences in English are much higher than in traditional English teaching programmes at primary level, it is obvious that these students will encounter problems in a regular English programme at secondary level, which often means a fresh start anyway as the teachers have problems assessing the children's skills acquired at primary level. This opens another can of worms, namely the question of how to diagnose and/or assess learners' target language skills in general. One approach has been suggested by Keßler (2006), Pienemann & Keßler (2007) and Keßler & Liebner (2011). Their approach is based on linguistic profiles yielded by an expert software called Rapid Profile (for a full discussion see Keßler 2006 and Keßler & Plesser 2011).

When students have been in a bilingual programme at primary school level, the

moving from
a bilingual
programme
into the regular foreign
language
classroom

Ideally, the primary school bilingual programme is followed by a similar programme at secondary school level (Wode 1995). Especially in the past twenty years, many bilingual branches have been established at secondary level, mostly opting for geography and/or history to be taught through the medium of English (Wildhage & Otten 2003). Transition is not a problem if such a programme can be provided as early as 5th grade (the usual starting point is grade 7; history as a subject is normally not introduced before grade 7) and the number of lessons for English as a subject is increased (4 to 5 hours per week in 5th grade). This, however, cannot always be warranted. In an early case study in Kiel, children were observed and studied in a bilingual preschool programme and later in a partial immersion programme (70 % share of English) at a nearby primary school (Wode et al. 1999). After finishing primary school, 15 children went to one particular grammar school in Kiel together. Along with 15 children from a nonimmersion background they formed a new 5th grade class. The school was not willing or ready to offer an immersion programme. Other than English as a subject no further subject matter was offered through the medium of English. The only compromise the school was willing to offer was a special English class referred to as ACE (Advanced Class of English). The 15 bilingual children from the preschool project were joined by three children with an English speaking background from a different 5th grade class to form a unique class for the five regular English lessons per week. The major challenge for the teacher now was to find topics and develop

materials for these students since there obviously was no model for this unique enterprise (Rohde 2004). At present, the grammar school offers geography through the medium of English from grade 7, however, unlike at primary school, there is no more comprehensive immersion programme, but at least the grammar school recognises the students' acquired foreign language skills and gives them the opportunity to further develop these skills – even if the so called ACE groups are not more than a compromise. Scenarios such as these are likely to increase with a more widespread implementation of bilingual programmes in primary schools, until stronger regulated ways of cooperation have been found.

5 The survey

The previous sections have discussed a number of relevant factors for the transition from one educational institution to another. In order to gain an overview of how transition procedures are handled across different educational institutions in Germany and whether the above discussed problems are recognised by the institutions, a questionnaire titled "Transition in Bilingual Programmes" was constructed to capture the practical experiences of bilingual institutions from preschool to secondary school (see Appendix). The term "bilingual" was not defined for the purpose of the survey in order to include a range of different programmes in the survey which refer to themselves as being bilingual. It was chosen as a neutral term which was supposed to avoid the fuzziness in terminological usage of concepts such as "content-based foreign language teaching", "immersion" or "CLIL" (Content and Language Integrated Learning) which are applied in a variety of meanings especially in the selfconception of practitioners (see discussion below for a definition of these terms). Indications with regard to the special characteristics of the programmes involved in the survey were elicited through a background question on the percentage of weekly input offered in the L2 (Question 3). The questionnaire consists of twelve both closed- and open-ended questions in German which yield information about the bilingual programme itself, its forms of transition and exchange, and about the teachers' personal evaluation of measures to support the transition process. The questions were constructed based on recommendations in the research literature and on personal experience of best practice in bilingual programmes. The questionnaire was piloted with teachers from one bilingual preschool, two bilingual schools and a number of researchers from the field of bilingual learning and teaching, and subsequently adapted slightly according to the feedback.

For two weeks in March 2012, the questionnaire was available for online completion. The internet link was distributed to the mailing list of the FMKS (Association for Early Multilingualism in Day Nurseries and Schools, www.fmks. eu), Germany's largest association of bilingual institutions, which included ca. 300 bilingual preschools and ca. 900 bilingual schools (both primary and secondary), at the time. In addition, colleagues in the field were asked to distribute the link through their lists of bilingual institutions.

the question-

Background information

the different school types participating in the study 102 questionnaires were submitted and included in the analysis. Of these, 36 questionnaires were submitted by preschools, 17 by primary schools, 39 by secondary schools (1 Hauptschule, 6 Realschulen, 27 Gymnasien, 5 Gesamtschulen including Oberschulen/Sekundarschulen), and 10 by specified institutions such as comprehensive programmes from preschool or preschool to primary or secondary school (n=5), a Saturday/supplementary school (Ergänzungsschule), a primary school in a transitory phase to becoming a neighbourhood school (Stadtteilschule), a nursery school for children aged 1-3, and a centre for secondary education (one institution did not give a specification of the programme in question 1). 55 institutions are publicly supported, 47 institutions are funded by private associations (question 2). Four institutions (1 preschool, 1 primary school, 1 Realschule and 1 supplementary Saturday-school) indicate not to have a bilingual programme. Of these, the preschool offers 90-100 % of the weekly language input in the foreign language (L2) but describes further below that language input is given in two languages; the supplementary school offers content-based teaching in Czech (probably 100 % although no percentage is given). For the other institutions (including the preschool mentioned above) the self-evaluation of weekly input offered in the L2 is displayed in Table 1 (question 3). Survey questions and answers were translated from German into English for the purpose of this chapter.

ca. 10-25 %	ca. 30-45 %	ca. 50-65 %	ca. 70-85 %	ca. 90-100 %
32	27	16	9	12

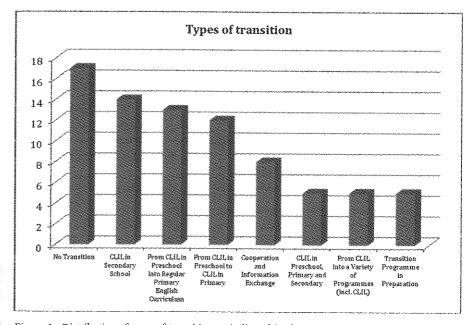
Table 1: Distribution of percentage of weekly routines / curriculum which takes place in the foreign language in bilingual programmes (q. 3)

This distribution shows that the application of the term "bilingual" programme differs widely across the institutions. The majority of the institutions offers English as L2 (n=80), 9 offer French, 4 Italian and Spanish, respectively; languages offered by one institution are Russian, Czech, and Turkish (question 5). 37 institutions are based on a preceding bilingual programme (question 4). Similarly, 37 institutions indicate to have a regulated transition between either preschool – primary school or secondary school (however, even though the number is the same, they do not coincide) (question 6).

Results

Figure 1 shows the different types of transition described in the comments to question 7: What are exact forms of transition in your programme from preschool to primary and/or from primary to secondary school? Please comment. The comments were grouped into different categories (one comment could be attributed to several categories.): The majority of similar comments indicate that there are no transitory measures whatsoever in the programmes (n=17). A number of other

institutions report to have a close cooperation and information exchange even though no direct transitory measures are in place (n=8). A large number of bilingual preschools lead to conventional primary English teaching in grade 1 (in the federal states of North-Rhine Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg) or grade 3 (n=13). Other institutions send their pupils to a range of different schools, some of which include a bilingual programme (n=5). The various forms of bilingual programmes in this survey are referred to as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in this section (for an explanation, see Discussion below). Types of programmes which include a form of transition are bilingual preschools which lead to CLIL in primary school (n=12) and primary schools which lead to CLIL in secondary school (Bilingualer Sachfachunterricht), in most cases with intensified English lessons in grade 5 and 6, and one to several CLIL subjects from grade 7 onwards) (n=14). Only a small number of institutions contain a bilingual programme from preschool to secondary school (n=5). 5 institutions report that they are currently in the process of implementing a transition programme.



different types of transition

Figure 1: Distribution of types of transition as indicated in the comments to q. 7

Table 2 shows the distribution of answers to question 8: Do you perceive this transition between the preceding and/or succeeding institution and your own as problematic in your institution at present?

perceived problems of transition

not problematic at all	41	
partly problematic	40	
rather problematic	18	
highly problematic	3	

Table 2: Distribution of perceived problems with transition in own institution at present (a. 8)

To see which factor might contribute to the differences in perception, the data were grouped according to several filters. There are no statistically significant differences between the group of preschools, primary schools and secondary schools in the data set nor between those with or without a preceding bilingual programme (question 4).

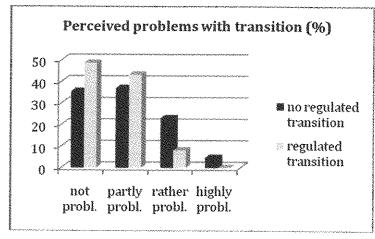
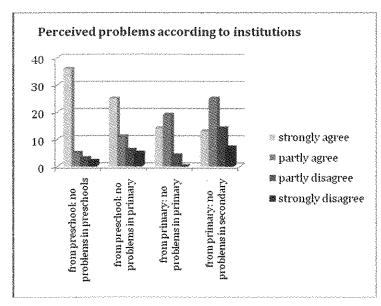


Figure 2: Distribution of perceived problems with transition in the institution at present (q. 8) according to programme regulation. (q. 6: no regulated transition: n=65, regulated transition, n=37) Unpaired T-Test: t(100) = 2.2589, p < 0.05

This is different, however, for institutions which indicated that they had, or did not have, a form of regulated transition in their programmes (question 6, again the term "regulation" was not defined in order to include all self-conceptions of the participants), as illustrated in Figure 2 (in % of the group answers): The rate of perceived problems in the institutions with no regulated programme is significantly higher than in institutions with a regulated programme.

Question 9 was asked to specify this perception with regard to the different institutions (Figure 3, Table question 3).



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Figure 3: Perceived problems in transition, ordered according to type of institution (raw scores; numbers of "no comment" are disregarded in this illustration) (q. 9)

Transition from preschool to primary school	strongly agree	partly agree	partly disagree	strongly disagree	no com- ment	
does not cause problems in preschool	36	5	3	2	56	
does not cause problems in primary school	25	11	6	5	55	
Transition from primary to secondary school						
does not cause problems in primary school	14	19	4	0	65	
does not cause problems in secondary school	13	25	14	7	43	

Table 3: Distribution of perceived problems with regard to level of institution (scores underlying figure 3) (adapted from question 9). The difference between the groups is highly significant. (ANOVA, F(3, 185) = 8.861, p < 0.001)

As can be seen in Figure 3, the higher the level of institution, the more strongly the problems of transition are perceived, as illustrated in the increasing numbers of the columns "partly agree", "partly disagree", "strongly disagree" (the number of participants who chose not to comment was disregarded). As statistical analysis showed, these differences are highly significant.

When asked to comment on their choice, the informants gave a large number of different reasons: The highest number of institutions that commented on the same factor suggested problems with the heterogeneity of the classes due to vast differences of the pupils' language levels gained in primary school (n=16, mainly from secondary schools). One school states:

Chapter 7

(1) #37: Considerable problems are caused by the different approaches of each primary school in the state of Baden-Württemberg. In my opinion, FLT in primary school only functions as an alibi for politicians. The level at the Realschule was significantly higher and more homogenous before the implementation of obligatory FLT in primary school. Highly different schools of origin prevent mutual progression.

challenges

Others claim that a lot of time and energy has to be invested to bring the pupils to a comparable language level. Related to this are four comments regarding language weaknesses, especially in the areas of grammar and pronunciation, of the pupils who enter secondary school. This fact is ascribed to a lack of training of primary school teachers in one comment. Two institutions claim to handle this heterogeneity without any problems with the help of careful differentiation for the different levels. Two others find that the language level of the pupils converges over time.

By contrast, other programmes see a problem in the advanced language level of children from bilingual classes for whom the ordinary FLT is below their needs and thus remains "boring" and unchallenging (n=3). One even goes so far as to attribute a negative "sense of elite" to immersion children with regard not only to their language level, which, however, were to cease after some time in the new school, according to the questionnaire. Another problem mentioned for bilingual institutions in particular is presented by newcomers to a running programme, or classes with a number of bilingual children that have to be filled up with children who possess no prior knowledge of the foreign language in order to form a full class. In addition, the question of the conditions under which pupils are selected for bilingual classes is discussed by one subject in this respect.

A problem inherent to bilingual preschool transition in federal states other than Baden-Württemberg and North-Rhine Westphalia (where FLT of English starts in grade 1) is the gap in the exposure to L2 English between preschool and grade 3. Some preschools claim that much of the acquired language will be lost during this gap (n=3). This problem is increasingly evident in programmes with a language other than English and no transition at all as the foreign language of the preschool is not offered as part of the primary curriculum. One participant mentions, in addition, the discontentment of the parents if no programme continuation is provided after primary school.

cooperation

Concerning the exchange between programmes, six institutions claim that a well-functioning cooperation is in place, which relies on good educational programmes and collective preparation. Several other institutions state that they have no experience at all, partly because their programmes are still in the process of implementation (n=8). Another eight institutions claim that communication is difficult or does not exist, even if one partner would like to establish a closer exchange. Reasons for such difficulties are the extra time that needs to be invested, as well as different educational administrative boards and curricula for the different levels, which hamper a coherent common pedagogical concept.

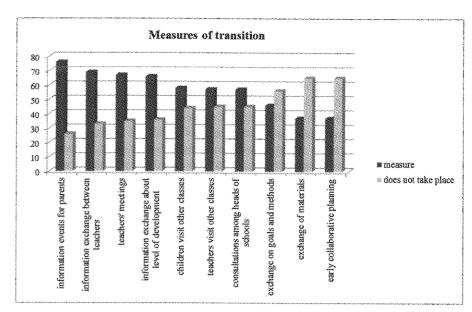


Figure 4: Sum of measures of transition in FL programmes (raw scores) (adapted from q. 10)

Figure 4 summarizes the number of measures of transition taken by all institutions, as indicated in the answers to question 10 (in sum). By contrast, Figure 5 shows the perceived importance attributed to each of these measures by the subjects.

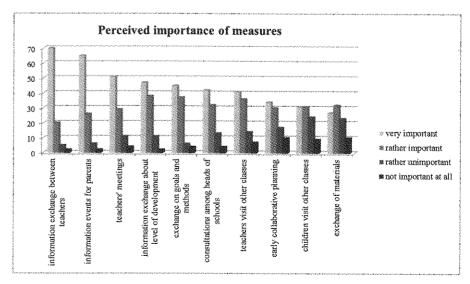


Figure 5: Perceived importance of measures of transition (raw scores) (q. 11)

measures of transition

Comparing these two illustrations, it becomes obvious that the four measures taken most frequently, i. e. information events for parents, information exchange between teachers, teachers' meetings and mutual information about the children's development (Figure 4), are also considered the four most relevant in the questionnaires (Figure 5). Similarly, the exchange of materials and early collaborative planning are considered less important than other measures, and do not take place very frequently. A mismatch between perception and realisation, however, can be found within the categories of children's visits to the other classes, which do not have a high relevance within the range of measures, but seem to take place more frequently than others in spite of that, and the exchange of goals and methods across institutions. The latter is perceived as fairly important by the participants, however, its implementation is among the three most infrequently used categories. The only additional category mentioned in question 10 under "other" is the following comment:

- (2) #22: We are trying to create interest at the new local educational conferences.
- In their comments to the perceived importance of these measures (question 12), most subjects attribute positive effects to the measures mentioned. Only one subject states:
- (3) **#91:** It should be the goal of the primary school to strengthen the mother tongue! Category: exchange of goals and methods. Bilingual teaching in primary school is useless, [it is] more important to strengthen the competence in the mother tongue, [which is] also very beneficial for the foreign language competence. Category: other

In spite of the overall consent to a number of measures, a number of subjects mention difficulties to find the time for such extra activities or to integrate them in the organisation of the school routines, for example with regard to cancelled or replacement lessons if special activities including teachers or children happen during the school day. This seems especially relevant to schools with a large catchment area and a high number of different preceding institutions they draw from. Some participants report on special work groups or informal or private exchange, and one mentions how dependent the success is on the individual teacher. Some describe a well-planned and implemented exchange, whereas some others claim that there is no need for measures of exchange. The general tendency expressed in a large number of comments, however, is summarised in quotes such as:

- (4) **#34:** Becoming mutually acquainted with each other and also with the work of the other would lead to mutual appreciation and a better collaboration. Category: teachers' meetings
- (5) **#69:** All measures are of the same relevance to guarantee a well-structured content-based work, the interconnection between different institutions, and the practical implementation. Category: other

(6) **#97:** Special offers are only embraced if the preceding and the succeeding school act in concert / collaborate. Category: consultations among heads of schools

Discussion

As has become obvious, the institutions in the data set differ widely in terms of their programmes, the foreign languages they offer, and the intensity of the implementation of these languages within their system. According to the Canadian model (e.g. Genesee 1987), programmes which label themselves immersion programmes have to fulfil the criterion of offering at least 50 % of their curriculum in the foreign language. This is especially important to bear in mind as the positive research results connected with immersion in a) the level of foreign language attained, as well as b) in the majority language, c) in the subject matter and d) in general cognitive abilities (cf. Wesche 2002, Festman & Kersten 2010) all pertain to intensive programmes that fulfil this criterion. Recent European language policy has implemented a new umbrella term for bilingual teaching, *Content and Language Integrated Learning*, in short CLIL (e.g. Marsh & Langé 2000, also see chapter 3 in this volume), which stands for content-based foreign language learning in a variety of degrees of intensity:

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a generic term and refers to any educational situation in which an additional language and therefore not the most widely used language of the environment is used for the teaching and learning of subjects other than the language itself. (Marsh & Langé 2000: iii)

We would argue, therefore, that strongly content-based sections within traditional FLT can be located at one extreme of a continuum scale of CLIL (compare Met 1999), followed by single units, modules or projects within other subjects carried out in the foreign language, as well as the bilingual teaching of single subjects (Bilingualer Sachfachunterricht), while partial and full immersion programmes represent the other extreme of the continuum (cited after Kersten 2011, see also Burmeister & Massler 2010: 7, Burmeister, forthcoming, who do not include content-based sections within FLT in their definition). While 37 institutions within the data set fulfil the criterion of an immersion programme (cf. Table 1), 59 institutions indicate to have bilingual programmes with a lower intensity than 50 %, thus qualifying for CLIL programmes but not for immersion.

The forms of transition within these programmes are also very heterogeneous, and many of the institutions seem to be in the process of searching for or of implementing new forms, so that all results have to be interpreted with caution and seem to point to the fact that the situation of bilingual programmes in Germany can, at best, be called transitory at present. However, the results from questions 6 and 8 indicate that a regulated form of transition seems to be the most important factor to avoid problems within the institutions, as the group of institutions with a declared regulated transition perceives it as significantly less problematic that the group without regulation (Figure 2). This factor of regulation seems to be even more important than the extension of bilingual

various bilingual teaching programmes

heterogeneous forms of transition programmes across levels (which, in fact, might not be regulated at all). Such results underline the overall importance of the factor of regulation. This is somewhat at odds with the view presented in the first part of the paper according to which content-based bilingual teaching is per se less problematic in terms of transition as the content plays the important role rather than the language. It is possible, however, that the "inherent bridging nature" of content-based bilingual teaching has not yet been discovered by the institutions taking part in the survey, because other factors of the respective eco-system may still be more relevant for the teachers.

bilingual teaching and levels of education

With regard to the level of education, the highest degree of problems seems to be perceived in secondary schools after the pupils' transition from primary schools. This difference in perception is statistically highly significant. Here, especially the heterogeneous language levels of the arriving children are mentioned (Figure 3, Table 3, compare Böttger 2009). As has been discussed in the first part of this chapter, the higher the level of the institution, the more pressure may be generated, especially for the institutions below as certain linguistic skills have to be in place at a particular time. How problematic a lack of exchange of goals and methods can prove to be became obvious in four comments on perceived language weaknesses in grammar and pronunciation after primary school, which are, however, not part of primary school curricula. Reasons for perceived problems include, in particular, the situation of many schools that seems to be transitory, the fact that cooperation has not yet been established, and a certain degree of frustration if the need for an exchange is not reciprocated by the other institution. However, the subjects also give examples of good practice with wellfunctioning collaboration (question 9). To sum up, the need for communication across levels seems to be high for a large number of subjects, but is often not yet at a satisfactory level.

With regard to the measures of good practice pertaining to the transition phenomenon, the selection offered in the questionnaire seems to cover the most important activities, as only one subject added another aspect in the open comment section, i.e. information at local conferences. The highest discrepancy of measures perceived important versus measures that are actually implemented in the institutions can be found in the visits of children in classes in the other institution, and, on a more theoretical level, in the exchange about goals and methods. Given the problems with transition mentioned above (question 9, compare Jürgens & Standop 2011, cf. section 2 and 3 of our chapter), especially those of heterogeneity and of the insecurity about the language level with which the pupils will arrive at the succeeding school, the lack of knowledge of the others' goals and methods might in effect reinforce these problems (compare Jürgens & Standop 2011: 409ff). In this respect, it is also surprising that only two questionnaires mention differentiation to meet this challenge. Thus, increasing an exchange about goals and methods of each programme, and the amount of differentiation for the newcomers, might remedy this perceived unbalance to some extent.

6 Conclusions

From our perspective as well as the perspective taken throughout this book, it will become increasingly indispensable in primary English to take into account the concept of CLIL and cross-curricular learning as promoted by European language policy. This should be reflected in the curricula of primary English across Germany, and in the level descriptions based on the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001) for the final primary grade. Introducing primary English in grade 1 through teaching staff who is well-trained in modern FLT methodology will be another advantage, as the gap between various and increasing forms of foreign language learning in preschool will be bridged, some early sensitive periods for language at a young age will be met to a fuller extent (Burmeister et al. 2011, Kersten 2011, Rohde 2012), and the language level at the end of primary school might generally increase to a more homogenous level (Rohde & Lepschy 2007). How beneficial bilingual and especially immersive learning in German preschools and primary schools can be for the foreign language competence as well as for the children's knowledge of German and of the subject matter has recently been demonstrated by an increasing number of publications (cf. Kersten 2010 and Kersten et al. 2010 for bilingual preschools, Kersten 2009, 2011, Zaunbauer & Möller 2007, 2010, Zaunbauer et al. 2005, Gebauer et al. 2012) which support the overwhelmingly numerous results from, e.g., Canadian immersion (see Wesche 2002 for an overview). Thus, as we have known for several decades, the request to strengthen the majority language (in our case, German) is one of the key factors of immersion programmes, and well documented within their results. It has to be pointed out, in this respect, that the request to strengthen the mother tongue (cf. comment 3) is somewhat misleading as many multilingual children in the German school system have a language other than the majority language (German) as their mother tongue. Strong support for the different languages of children who grow up multilingually at home should be provided by the family, in particular. For languages other than English, however, which are not part of the primary school curriculum, the effort will remain to take care of special programmes and measures to guarantee a continuation of the language learning process.

This chapter has identified some of the most important measures taken by schools and preschools to enhance the difficult transition process from one educational institution to another for the children. These measures include, in the order of perceived importance, information exchange between teachers, information events for parents, teachers' meetings, information exchange about the level of the children's development, exchange on goals and methods of the programmes, consultations among heads of schools, teachers' visits to other classes, early collaborative planning, children's visits to other classes, and the exchange of materials. Finally, a change on the view of heterogeneity, as addressed in this study, is recommendable in our perspective. Much could be gained if heterogeneity among the students was seen as chance for an inspiring classroom experience instead of a burden. To meet the requirements of highly heterogeneous language levels, mutual exchange and differentiation will become increasingly indispensable in the FLT classroom. A good quality of teacher training

foreign language competence

role of mother tongue and majority language

measures to enhance transition at the university level is needed to prepare young teachers for the new requirements of a changing educational landscape in (early) foreign language learning.

Summary

We demonstrated that transition across English teaching programmes is a multifaceted problem. If English teaching is predominantly language-course-oriented (a linguistic skills view), pressure is generated especially at the higher school levels as at every level linguistic skills have to be acquired that are mandatory for the succeeding level. Content-based English teaching (especially immersion programmes) may theoretically avoid this pressure as there is no hierarchy of linguistic skills, i.e. no specific English language curriculum. The survey we conducted at preschools and schools supports the idea that the higher the level of an institution the more strongly the problems of transition are perceived. However, if institutions take regulated transition measures, there are fewer received problems than in programmes with no such measures - irrespective of the programme type, content-based or language-course-oriented. The suggested measures which are deemed especially important by the schools, and which are implemented most frequently, are information events for parents, information exchange between teachers, teachers' meetings and mutual information about the children's development. In addition, differentiation is recommended to meet the requirements of increasingly heterogeneous classrooms.

Acknowledgments

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Review - Reflect - Research

- 1. What are the components of a skills/abilities model and how do individual skills and abilities have to develop in order to mitigate transition from one institution to another?
- 2. What can be advantages of a language-course-oriented English teaching programme for an institution?
- 3. Compare content-based teaching from a language pedagogical perspective to regular language-course-oriented teaching programmes. What are the commonalities and differences, especially with regard to content and language learning goals?
- 4. According to our survey, information events for parents and mutual visits of students and teachers from the different institutions appear to minimize the

problems of transition considerably. Think of reasons why such simple measures can have such an important effect.

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- 5. Think of reasons why transition problems are perceived more strongly in institutions which are located at the higher end of the hierarchy. What could be measures to counter these problems?
- 6. Compare national curricula of elementary education, primary schools and secondary schools with regard to foreign language learning in your federal state. What are the differences and commonalities? Are the goals at each level adjusted to those of the other levels? Are they reflected in the teaching materials for that particular level?
- 7. Based on comment 1 (#37, page 106), construct and conduct a survey on teacher attitudes and self-conceptions in different forms of primary and secondary schools in your region. Are such opinions widespread, or do they represent a minority? What is the teachers' perception of the role of a language teacher?

Further reading suggestions

Jürgens, E. & Standop, J. (2011), Die Perspektive der Grundschule in einem erweiterten Bildungsraum - Der Übergang vom Kindergarten in die Grundschule in die weiterführenden Schulen. In Bollweg, P. & Otto, H.-U.(Hrsg.), Räume flexibler Bildung. Bildungslandschaft in der Diskussion. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 393 - 417.

Kucharz, D., Irion, T. & Reinhoffer, B. (Hrsg.) (2011), Grundlegende Bildung ohne Brüche. Jahrbuch Grundschulforschung. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Serrurier-Zucker, C., Mayer, N., Kolb, A. & Stotz, D. (2009), Bridging the Gap between Primary and Secondary Foreign Language Teaching: Pri-Sec-Co - Primary and Secondary Continuity in Foreign Language Teaching. Views 18 (3) Special Issue: 130-132.

O Andere:

Annex: Questionnaire

Übergang in Bilingualen Programmen

Fragebogen zur Erfassung von Praxiserfahrungen mit dem Übergang der Fremdsprachenangebote in bilingualen Kitas, Grundschulen und weiterführenden Schulen.

Chapter 7

Wir sind daran interessiert, wie der Übergang des Fremdsprachenlernens von der Kita über die

Grundschule bis in die weiterführende Schule funktioniert. Gibt es in Ihrer Institution einen geregelten Übergang im Fremdsprachenprogramm zwischen Grundschule und/oder Kita und Sek. 1? (Pflichtfrage) О Ја O Nein 🙀 Welche konkreten Übergangsmöglichkeiten gibt es bei Ihnen von der Kita in die Grundschule und von der Grundschule in die Sek. 1? (Pflichtfrage) (Mehrfachnennungen sind möglich) Das Kita-Programm führt in ein bilinguales Programm der Grundschule. Das Kita-Programm führt in den normalen Englischunterricht der Grundschule. Das Kita-Programm führt in einen erweiterten / angepassten Englischunterricht der Grundschule. ☐ Das Grundschulprogramm führt in ein bilinguales Programm der Sek. I. Das Grundschulprogramm führt in den normalen Englischunterricht der Sek. L. Das Grundschulprogramm führt in einen erweiterten / angepassten Englischunterricht der Sek I. Bitte erläutern Sie Ihren Programmübergang kurz: B Halten Sie in Ihrer Institution im Moment diesen Übergang zwischen Ihrer Institution und der vorgeschalteten und/oder nachfolgenden Einrichtung für problematisch? (Pflichtfrage) O überhaupt nicht problematisch O teilweise problematisch O ziemlich problematisch O höchst problematisch Diese Frage soil Ihre Auswahl noch konkreter machen: Der Übergang des Fremdsprachenprogramms... (Pflichtfrage) 1=ich stimme voll zu 2=1ch stimme teilweise zu. 3=Ich stimme teilweise nicht zu. 4=Ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu 2 3 Keine Angabe .. von der Kita in die Grundschule verursacht keine Probleme in der Kita. 0 0 0 0 ololo .. von der Kita in die Grundschule verursacht keine Probleme in der Grundschule. 0 .. von der Grundschule in die Sek I verursacht keine Probleme in der \circ \circ \circ 0 .. von der Grundschule in die Sek I verursacht keine Probleme in der Sek I. 00 0 0 Bitte erläutern Sie Ihre Auswahl:

10 Welche Maßnahmen zum Übergang des Fremdsprachenprogramms finden in Ihrer Institution statt? (Bitte klicken Sie alle zutreffenden Punkte an.)

117

Bitte beachten Sie in Fragen 9-11: Leiter/Innen umfasst Kita- und Schulleitungen Lahrkräfte umfasst Erzieher/innen und Lehrer/innen (Pflichtfrage)

	zwischen Kita und Grundschule	zwischen Grundschule und Sek I	zwischen Kita und Sek I	zwischen Kita, Grundschule und Sek I	findet nicht statt
Informationsaustausch zwischen Lehrkräften	0	0	0	0	0
Treffen von Lehrkräften	0	0	0	0	0
Absprachen zwischen den Leiter/innen	0	0	0	0	0
Informationsveranstaltungen für Eltern	0	0	0	0	0
Besuche durch Lehrkräfte in den jeweils anderen Gruppen/Klassen	0	0	0	0	0
Besuche durch Kinder in den jeweils anderen Gruppen/Klassen	0	0	0	0	٥
Austausch von Materialien	0	0	0	0	0
Frühzeitige gemeinsame Planung	0	0	0	0	0
Austausch von Informationen zum Entwicklungsstand der Kinder	٥	0	0	0	0
Austausch zu Zielen und Methoden	0	0	0	0	0
Sonstiges	0	0	0	0	0

11 Für wie bedeutungsvoll halten Sie die folgenden Maßnahmen zum Übergang des Fremdsprachenprogramms? (Pflichtfrage)

- I=Sehr wichtig
- 2=Ziemlich wichtig
- 3=Eher unwichtig
- 4=Völlig unwichtig

	1	2	3	4	Kann ich nicht sagen
Informationsaustausch zwischen Lehrkräften	0	0	0	0	0
Treffen von Lehrkräften	0	0	0	0	0
Absprachen zwischen den Leiter/innen	0	0	0	0	0
Informationsveranstaltungen für Eltern	0	0	0	0	0
Besuche durch Lehrkräfte in den jeweils anderen Gruppen/Klassen	0	0	0	0	Q
Besuche durch Kinder in den jeweils anderen Gruppen/Klassen	0	0	0	0	0
Austausch von Materialien	0	0	0	0	0
Frühzeitige gemeinsame Planung	0	0	0	0	0
Austausch von Informationen zum Entwicklungsstand der Kinder	0	0	0	0	0
Austausch zu Zielen und Methoden	0	0	0	0	0

12 Bitte kommentieren Sie Ihre Auswahl: (Pflichtfrage)

Informationsaustausch zwischen Lehrkräften	
Treffen von Lehrkräften	
Absprachen zwischen den Leiter/innen	
Informationsveranstaltungen für Eltern	
Besuche durch Lehrkräfte in den jeweils anderen Gruppen/Klassen	
Besuche durch Kinder in den jeweils anderen Gruppen/Klassen	
Austausch von Materialien	
Frühzeitige gemeinsame Planung	
Austausch von Informationen zum Entwicklungsstand der Kinder	
Austausch zu Zielen und Methoden	
Sonstiges	

Herzlichen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme. Ihre Daten wurden an uns übermittelt. Das Ergebnis der Umfrage wird nach Fertigstellung auf der Webseite des FMKS zugänglich gemacht. Sie können Ihren Internet-Browser jetzt schließen.