

To have another language  
is to possess a second  
soul.

- Charlemagne

# “I want my child to be bilingual.”

☞ What does that mean?

☞ Are you bilingual?



**Hello!**



**Bonjour!**



**Morgen!**

# Bilingualism is...

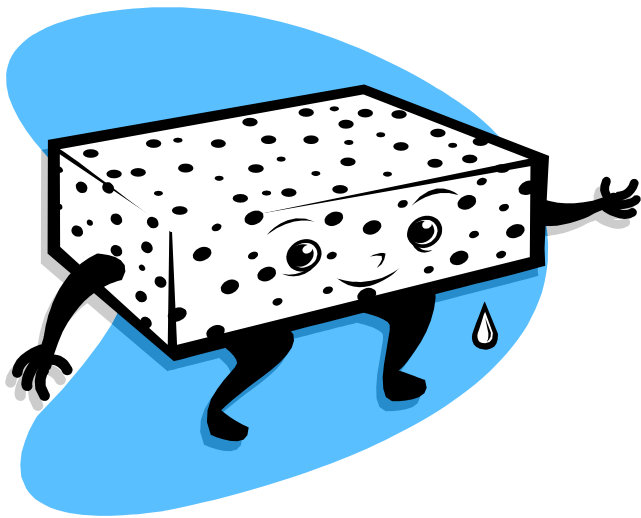
The ability to understand and use two (or more) languages in certain contexts and for certain purposes.

(Carder, 2007)

- ∞ Now are you bilingual?
- ∞ How hard is it to “become bilingual”?

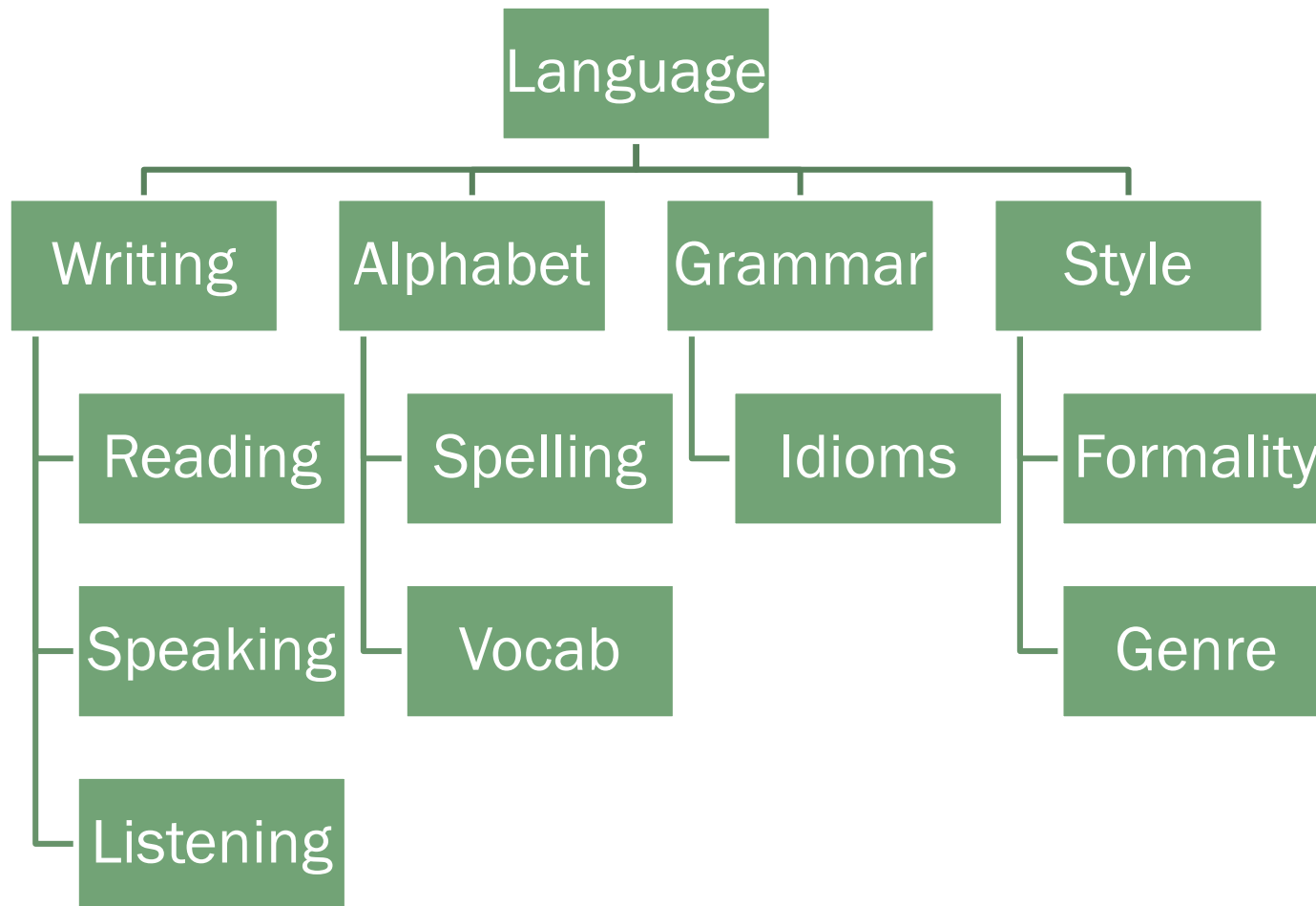
# Sorry...

1. You're in an important meeting. You've just drunk your colleague's coffee by mistake.
2. You didn't hear what someone just said.
3. Your boss, who you get on with quite well has just asked you to stay till 9pm tonight.
4. You're in a meeting and someone has just started to say something you completely disagree with.
5. You're at the airport and you want to get past some people with your heavy bags.
6. You've just said something you didn't mean to – nothing serious.
7. You've finally understood what someone has been trying to explain to you for ages.
8. You've forgotten – yet again – to give your partner an important message.



Children are little sponges.... They just soak up languages!

# “Just” learn English...

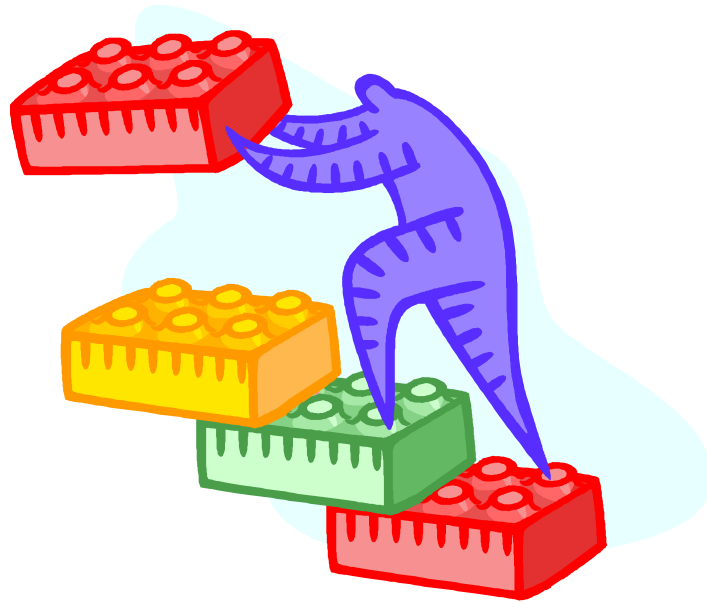


# Why “Bilingualism”?

Bilingualism has positive effects of children’s linguistic and educational development.

(Cummins, 2001)

# Choosing bilingualism: What's my job?



1. Learn the theory
2. Set your goals
3. Plan for your goals
4. Talk to your children
5. Talk to other key people
6. Know when to get help



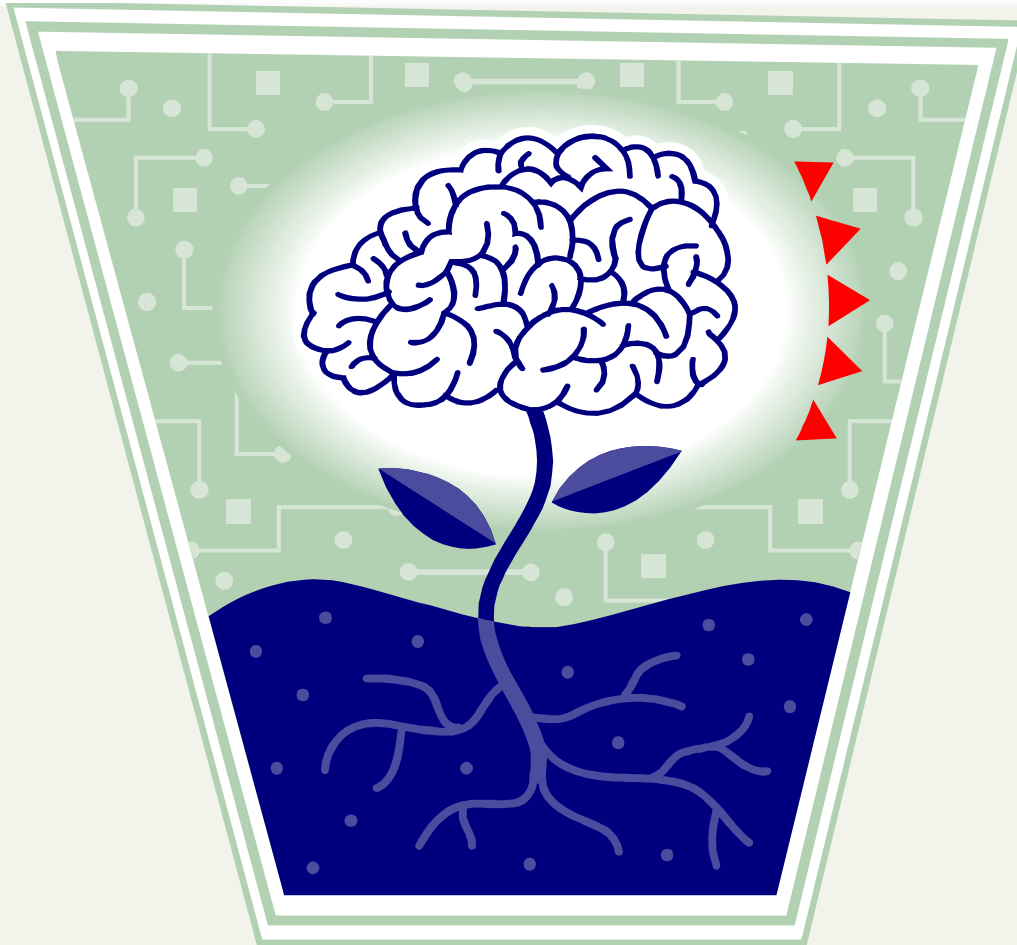
# A little vocabulary



- ∞ Mother tongue, L1, Language A
- ∞ L2 or School language

# Bilingualism opens minds

Linguistic benefits  
Cognitive benefits



# Language masters...

Linguistic sensitivity

Phonetic sensitivity

Accommodation

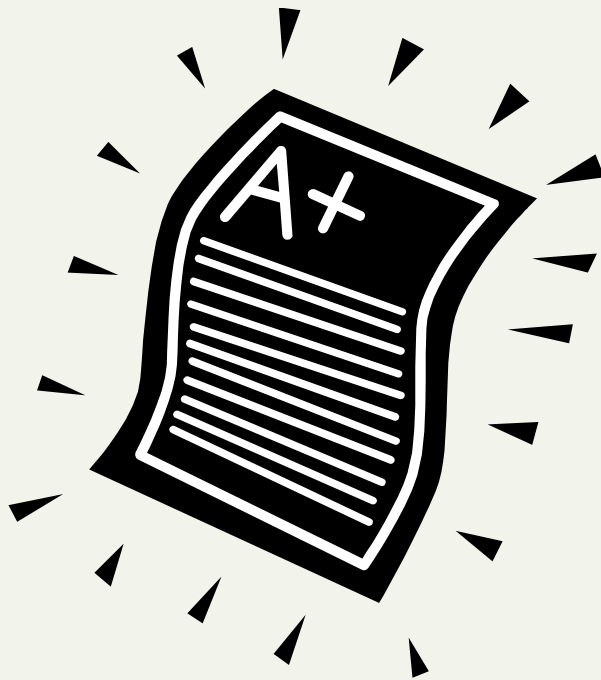


# Are bilinguals “smarter”?

Abstract thought

Rule discovery

Creative thought



$$(x + a)^n = \sum_{k=0}^n \binom{n}{k} x^k a^{n-k}$$



# Are bilinguals “smarter”?

Working memory  
Long-term brain health



# The “Bilingual advantage”

Concentration

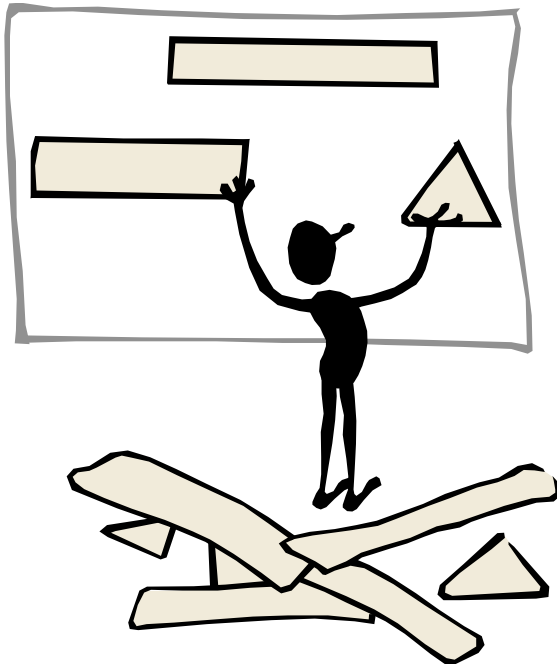
Multi-tasking

Decision-making



# The “Bilingual advantage”

Focus  
Planning



# Bilingualism opens hearts

Open to “other”  
Empathy

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.  
Nelson Mandela





# Bilingualism opens doors

Post-secondary study  
Job opportunities  
Better pay



**Being Bilingual “boosts brain power”**

**How being bilingual can boost your career**

**How the brain benefits from being bilingual**

**Bilingualism strengthens cognitive development**

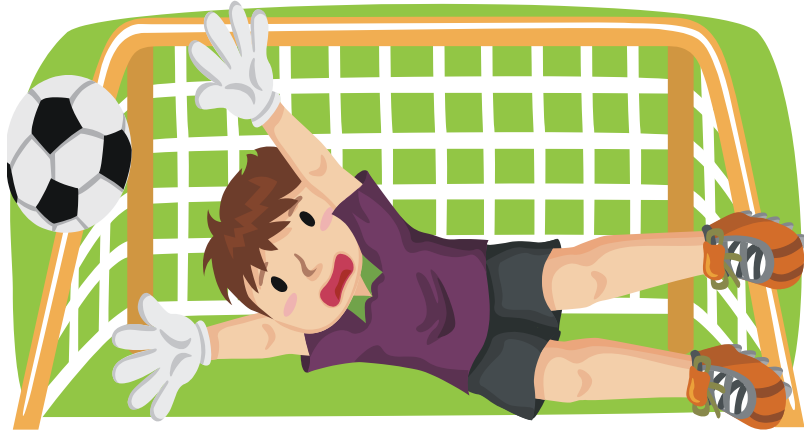
**Bilingualism offers “huge advantages”**

**Why it pays to be bilingual**

**The Bilingual Businessman...**

**The Business Case for Bilingualism**

## 2. What are your goals?



- ∞ Which languages do you want your children to master, and why?
  - Communicative goals
  - Literacy goals
- ∞ Do you have the support network and knowledge to achieve these goals?



One wheel  
(one language)  
can get you  
places ...



So can a big  
wheel and a  
little wheel ...



However, when  
your wheels are  
nicely balanced  
and fully inflated  
you'll go farther ...



Provided, of course,  
the people who made  
the wheels knew what  
they were doing

# 3. Do you have a plan?



- ∞ Planning for “adequate input”
  - How much is enough?
- ∞ Planning for multiple literacies
- ∞ What will happen if you move to... ?

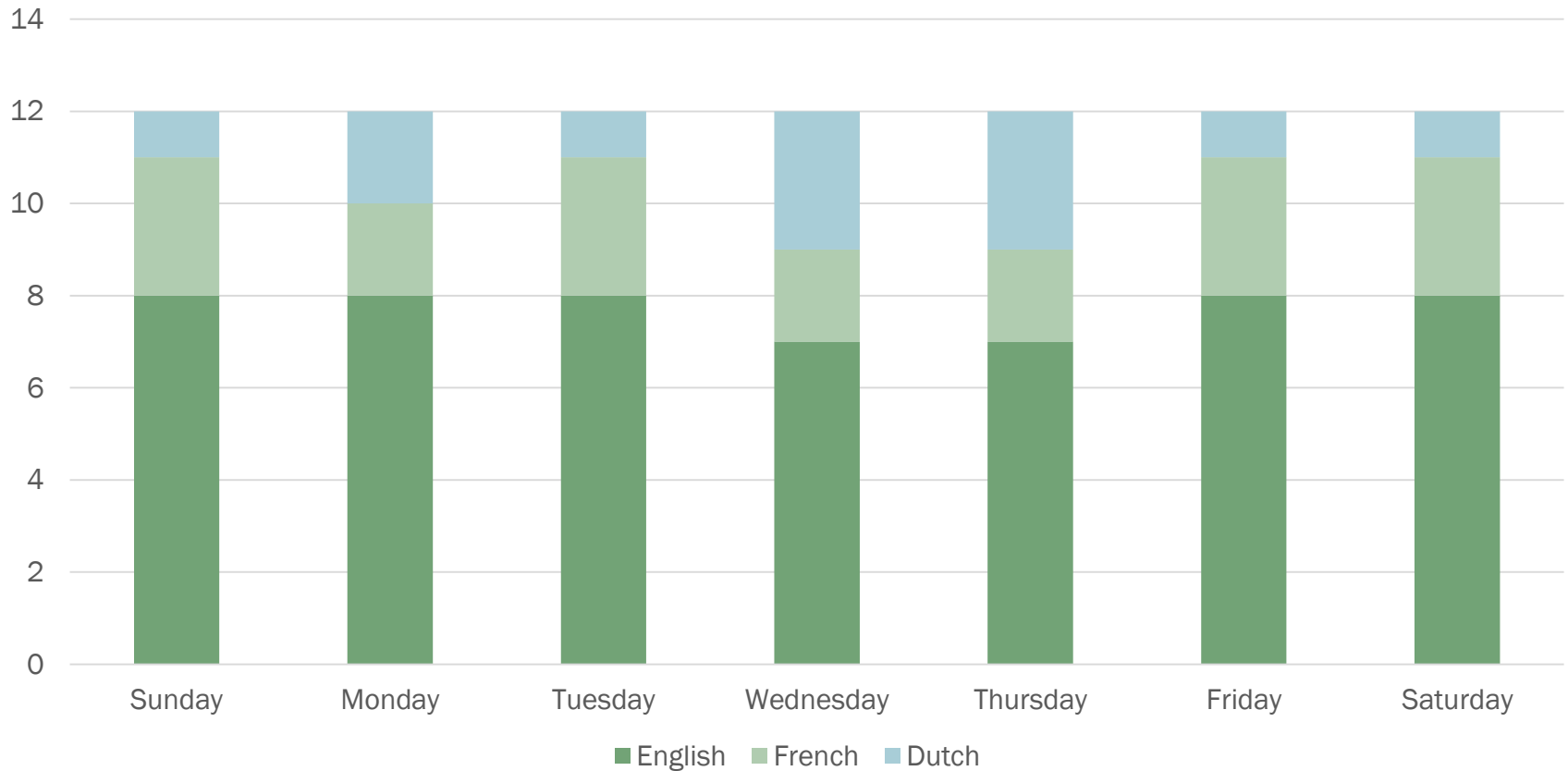
# So, how much is “enough”?



- ∞ How much language input is necessary?
- ∞ 20%?
- ∞ 30-35%?
- ∞ Quantity vs. quality

# Language Planning

Language Input Distribution



# How? Simultaneous Bilingualism



## ∞ Home

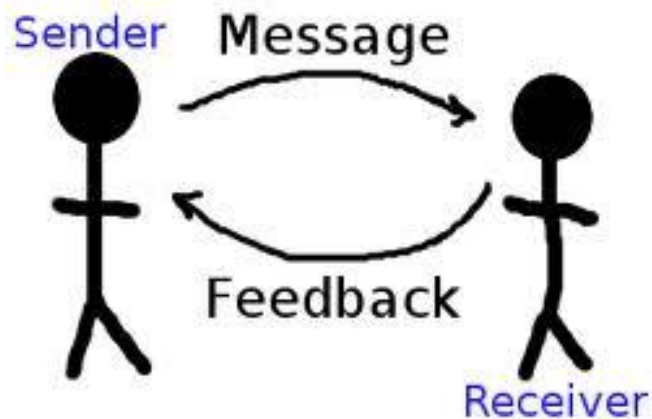
- One Parent-One Language (OPOL)
- Minority Language at Home (MLaH)
- Domains of use

## ∞ Playgroup/day care/childcare

- “Laissez-faire”



# “Domains of Use”



- ∞ By time
  - Dinner
  - Day of the week
- ∞ By topic
  - School, home
- ∞ By place
  - Home, school, room...
- ∞ Benefits of “domains of use”:
  - Practical
  - Affective

# Consistency



- ∞ How important is it?
- ∞ Reasons to be flexible
- ∞ Reasons to be consistent
  - Input balance
  - The “slippery slope”

# School-based bilingualism: Does it work?



- ∞ Language status
  - Maintenance of status in-home and at school
- ∞ Language in education “policy”
  - Additive bilingualism
  - Subtractive bilingualism
- ∞ Literacy
  - School languages
  - Home language

# How long does it take to be “bilingual”?



- ∞ Conversational versus academic proficiency
- ∞ BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills)
- ∞ CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)

# Becoming Bilingual: Being realistic



- ∞ Moderating expectations
- ∞ Understanding how studying in L2 affects children
- ∞ Understanding what you can do to help

# Issues for Learning



- I. Literacy
- II. Content learning
- III. Cognitive development
- IV. Confidence
- V. Socialisation

Looks like? Sounds like?

trawsieithu

# I. Reading In two (or more) languages



∞ How can you help?

- Understanding how reading works
- Literacy strategies

∞ Translanguaging reading

- Using both languages together

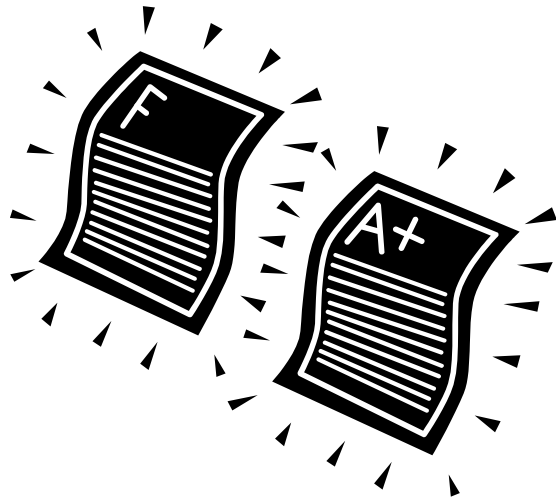


# Mother Tongue Literacy



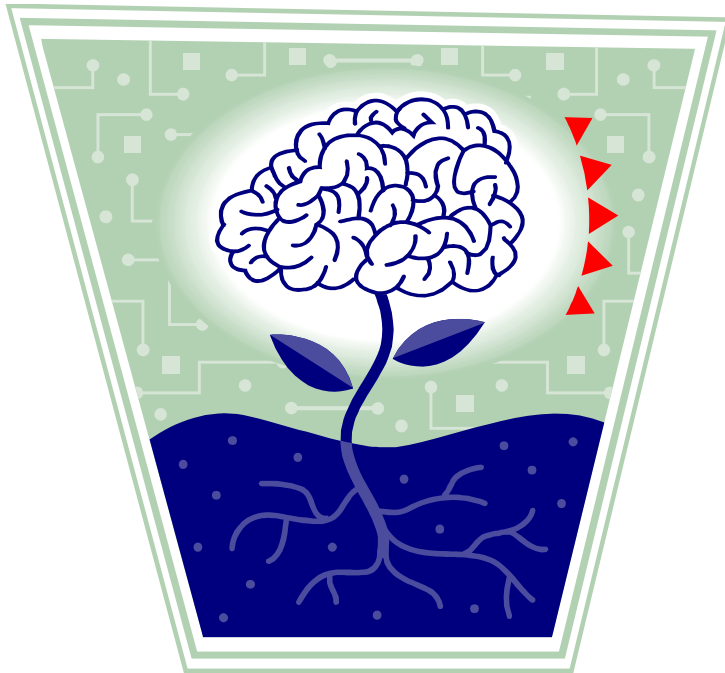
- ∞ Simultaneous or subsequent?
- ∞ Good beginnings
  - Reading at home (school topics)
  - Focus on writing
    - Meaning over form

## II. How can I learn when I can't understand?



- ∞ Supporting content at home
- ∞ Mother tongue resources
  - Books
  - Websites
- ∞ MT conversations about school topics
- ∞ MT writing/translating
- ∞ Homework in MT

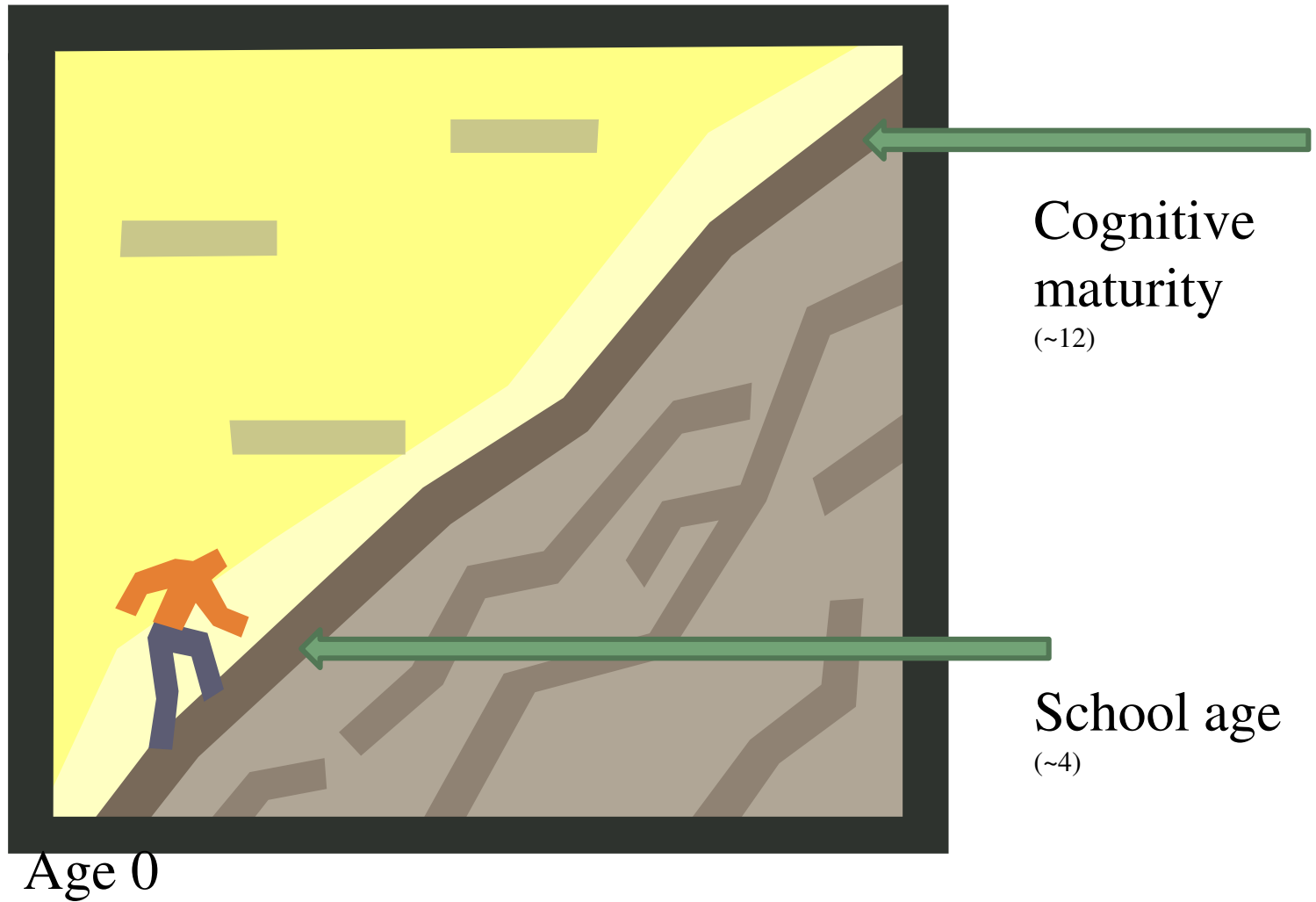
# III. Cognitive development



The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development.

(Cummins, 2001)

# Your most important job







- ∞ Explain what you did today, without using the letter “n”
- ∞ How did that feel?
- ∞ What language did you use?

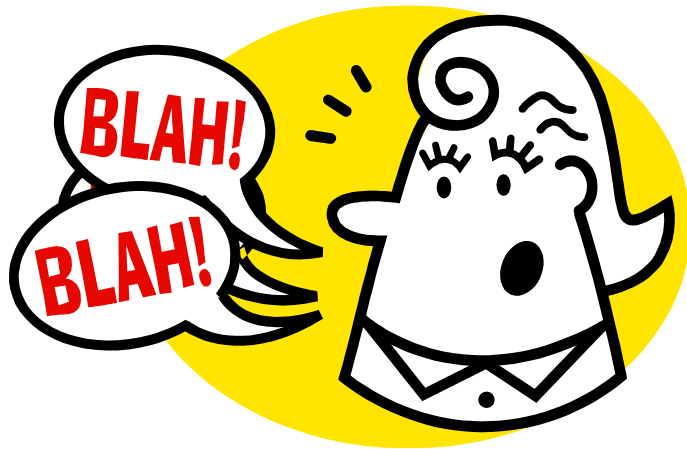
# IV. Confidence

## V. Socialisation



- ☞ Use of L1 encourages confidence
  - In self
  - In cultural identity
- ☞ Use of L1 encourages cognitive growth and learning
- ☞ Allows for experiences of “competence”
  - At home and at school

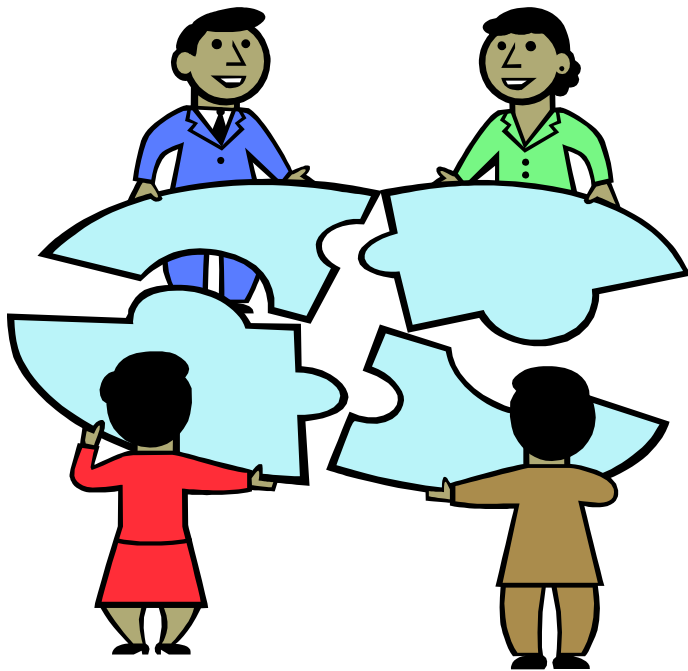
# IV. Talk to your children



- ∞ Why bilingualism?
- ∞ Who speaks what and why (or why not)
- ∞ What will I do with my languages?



# 5. Talk to other key people



- ☞ What is their role in your plan?
- ☞ How can they help your child?
- ☞ Knowing what advice to ignore

# 6. Know when to get help



- ⌘ What kind of help might you need?
  - Bilingualism/language planning
  - Speech/language therapy
  - Educational support
- ⌘ Getting the whole picture

# Common myths and questions



- ⌘ Initial language production
- ⌘ Language differentiation/mixing
  - Practical vs. pragmatic
- ⌘ Rejection of L1
- ⌘ Equal fluency
  - Passive vs. active language
  - Domains of use

# Resources

- A Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism ([Colin Baker](#))
- Contact: [onraisingbilingualchildren.com](http://onraisingbilingualchildren.com)

