

# Multilingual approaches in the language classroom

Isabelle Grappe and Claire Ross

# Learning outcomes

- Critically consider how 'Awakening to Languages' approaches can motivate your learners to learn English
- Evaluate **When, why** and **how** you can use learners' knowledge of their home languages to help them to learn English

# Get ready!

Take a pen and paper, or open an app on your phone.

Write numbers 1 to 6.

Read the questions on the next slide.

Write your answers.



# Which language(s) do you use?

1. You want to check that your learners understand your instructions.
2. You have to explain the meaning of a complicated word in a reading text, but you don't want to waste time.
3. A learner is ill and wants to tell you.
4. A learner makes a mistake in English. You want to correct him/her.
5. A learner is having difficulty expressing themselves in English.
6. You want to compare the similarities and differences in meaning or pronunciation.

# How motivated are your learners to learn English?

- very motivated
- quite motivated
- not very motivated
- not motivated at all



Image from Unsplash

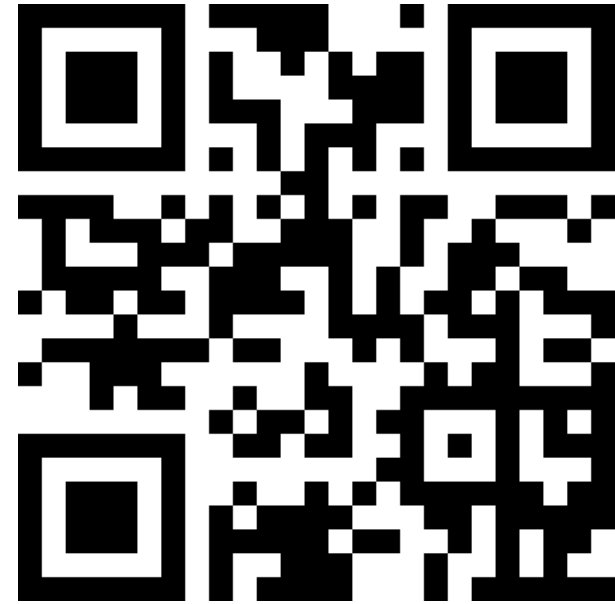
**Poll**

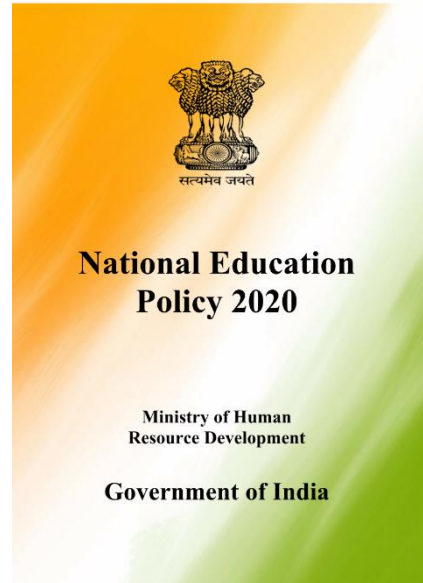
# How motivated are your learners to learn English?

## Why?

Scan the QR code or go to

<https://answer garden.Ch/2895358>





**Fundamental principles:  
promoting multilingualism and  
the power of language in  
teaching and learning.**

**NEP, 2020**



**A framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to  
languages and cultures**

Pluralistic approaches give  
all languages equal value.  
They give **languages**  
legitimacy by allowing them  
to be **heard, spoken, seen  
and written in class.**



**English is learnt best if  
it is learnt along with  
and not at the cost of  
other languages**  
NCERT, CCE English

# Activities



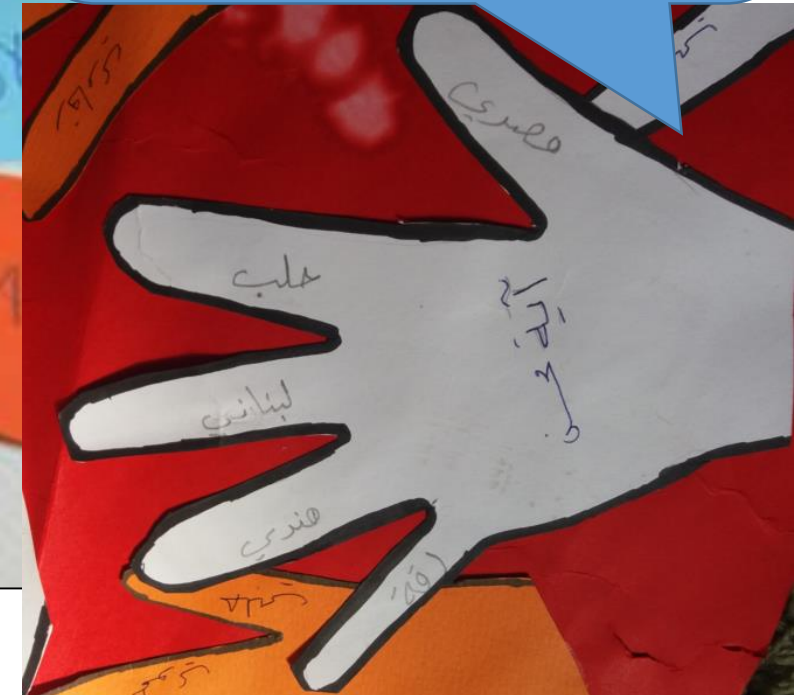


# Flower of languages

- Look at the flower and the languages on the petals
- Think about the languages you speak, when, where and with whom
- Write them on the petals of your flower



How could this motivate YOUR learners to learn English?



# Pluralistic portrait



European Union



Imagine what your learners might draw and write when they do this activity.

# Teacher testimonies

## BEFORE

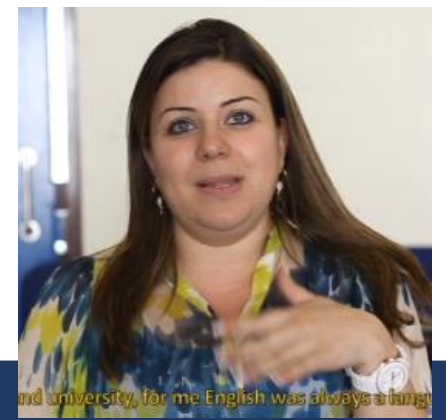
*“Before this training I thought that the Bedouins and Kurdish learners are limited.”*

*“At the beginning we thought the children had some kind of speech impediment because they were scared to talk and didn’t want to.”*

## AFTER

*“We decided to use the flower of languages to help learners to be proud of their languages.”*

*“We also learnt that we should let the learner feel secure. We should help him to release his fear so he can communicate with his classmates and his teacher.”*



# Languages in my neighbourhood

Could your learners do this activity with their parents at home?



My aunt's region: Malhamyeh

At home: Dirya from Dair El Zour

In the street: Lebanese, Syrian, Egyptian, Bengali

In the supermarket: Chamyat, Halabya

At school: Chamyat, Halabyat, Hamawiat, Adlibyat

# Parent testimonies



**BEFORE**

*“My son broke his hand when he was playing with his friends because they were making fun of his accent.”*

*“This fear inside him doesn’t allow him to ask questions, because he is shy from his classmates and the teacher.”*



**AFTER**

*“After the training, my daughter designed a dictionary of all the accents in the different parts of Syria.”*

# Child testimonies

What can we learn from this learner?



## BEFORE

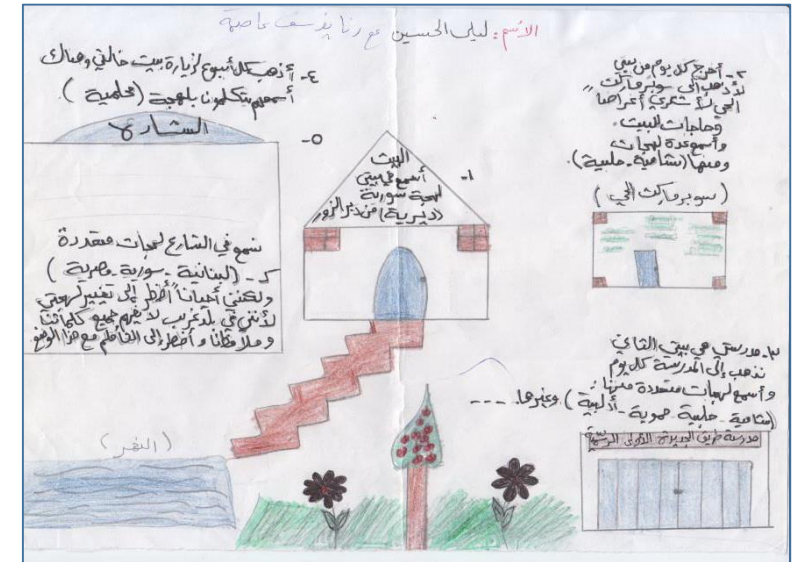
*“I was at school to learn the hours. The teacher asked who wants to go to the board. I raised my hand. When I went to the board she asked me how do you say ‘minutes’. I answered her [dagaheik with a Syrian accent] since this moment she didn’t stop making fun of my accent [Dagaheik dagaheik] – her and my classmate.”*

## AFTER

*“Before, I used to ask my teachers questions in Hourani [his home language], but they couldn’t understand me. Now when I speak with them they understand me. I speak to them now in Lebanese and a little bit in English. This way they can understand me and I can understand them.”*

# Stop and THINK

- Do you think these activities could help you/your learners in similar ways?
- Yes / No / not sure



# Strategies

- **When, how** and **why** to use home languages to help learners to learn English





# Language of instruction

A teacher is using each picture in a different class. She asks her learners: "What can you see?"

Can your learners answer this question about each picture?

yes / no / not sure

Could using home languages help them to answer?

yes / no / not sure

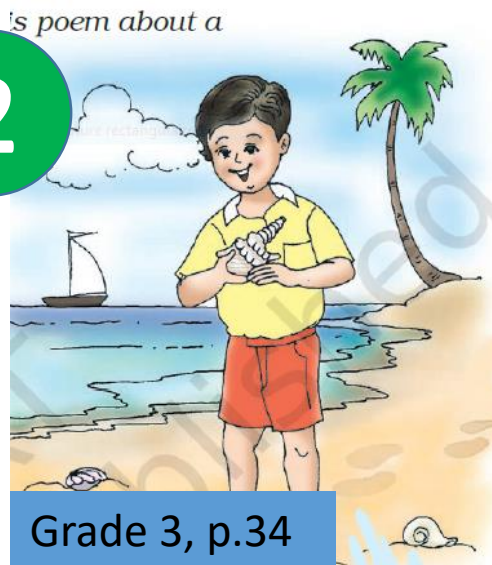
4



1



2



3



## Picture 1

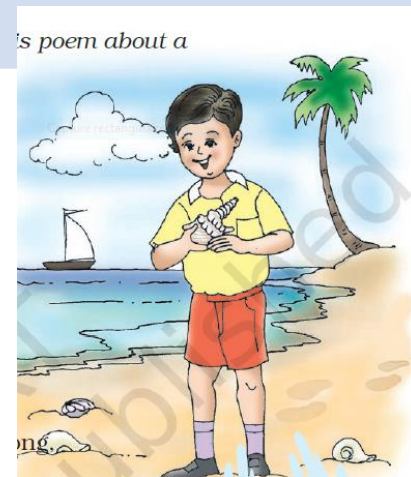
Perhaps no need for home language: familiar culture.



Grade 3, p.23

## Picture 2

Make use of the home language to ensure that they understand the children live by the sea.



Grade 3, p.34

## Picture 3

Make use of the home language to ensure that the children know what a microphone is, and that the children are dancing.



Grade 3, p.110

## Picture 4

Make use of the home language to ensure that the children understood the imaginary picture.



Grade 1, p.100

# Self-correction

Read the classroom situation.

- Teacher: “Look at the man. What’s he doing?”
- Learner: “He is fly.”

What order would you try these things?

- A. you correct the mistake
- B. ask another learner
- C. ask the learner to correct themselves



# Self-correction

Read the classroom situation.

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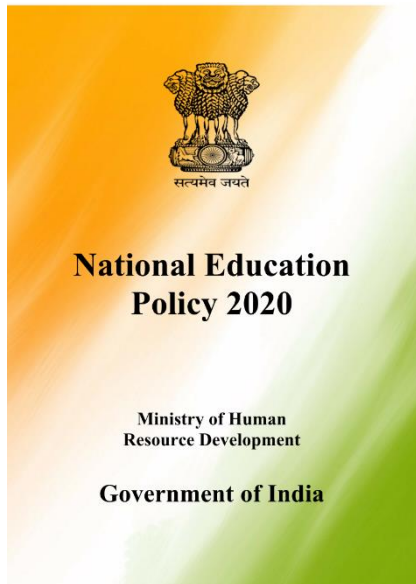
First: ask the learner to correct themselves. (C)

If they can’t, ask another learner to help. (B)

If they can’t, you correct the mistake. (A)

Finally, return to the original learner. Ask them to say the correct sentence. (C)



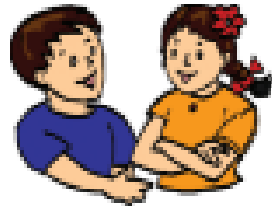


4.11 It is well understood that young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue.

22.4 Different languages 'see' the world differently, and the structure of a language, therefore, determines a native speaker's perception of experience.

# Helping learners understand a new topic

## **Talk time**



1. Which animal do you like?
2. Talk about three things that the animal you like does.
3. How can we look after this animal? Tell the class first in your own language, and then in English.

# Helping learners understand a new topic

The next topic in your book is 'the desert.'

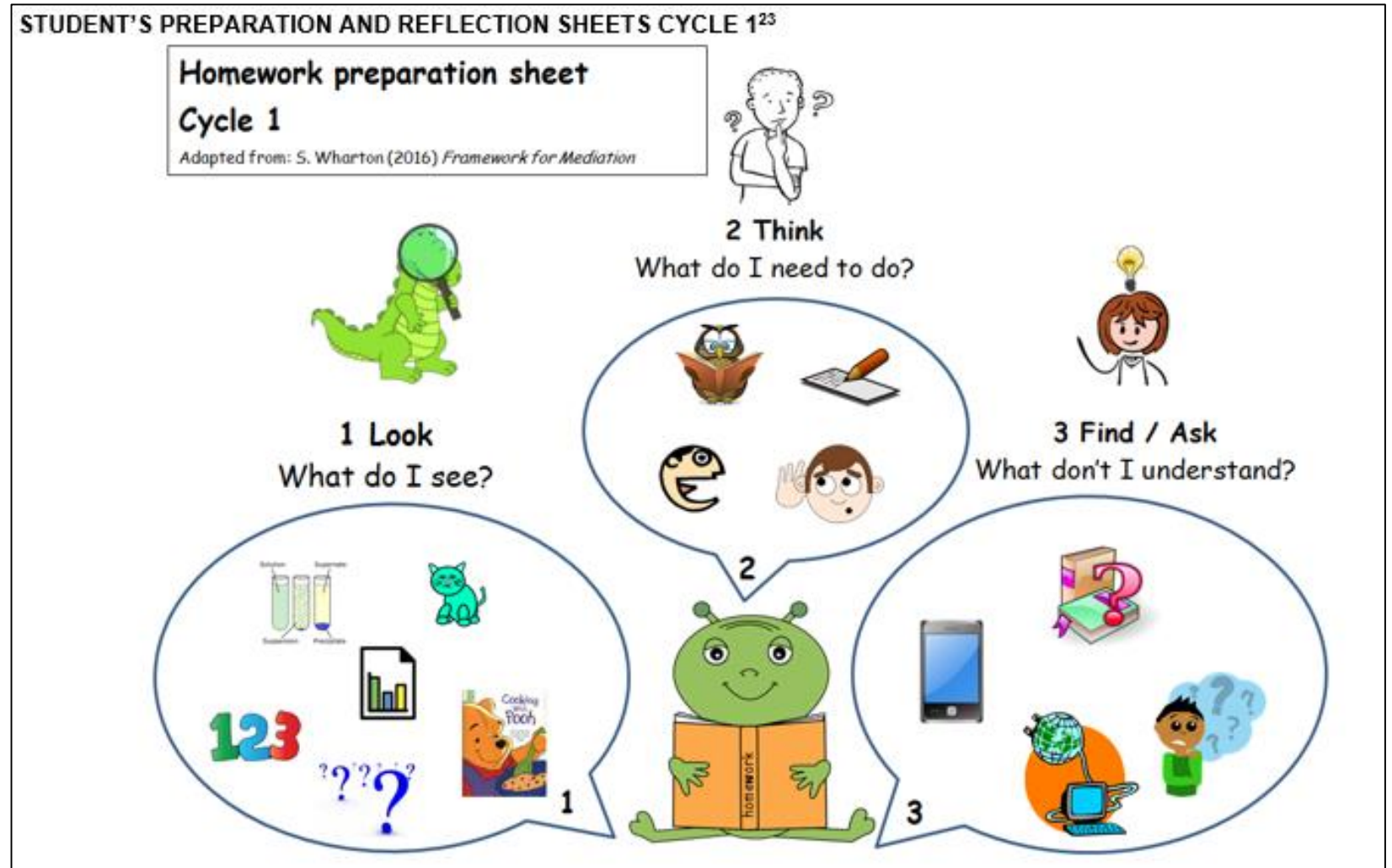
1. What do your learners know about this?
2. How can you help them to get ready to learn about this topic?



Can you think of other textbook topics where you could make use of parents' skills and knowledge?

# Developing learner autonomy

- How can learners use learning strategies from the classroom at home?





- Why is it important for learners to learn how to work independently from the teacher?



Multilingualism and Multiliteracy:  
Raising Learning Outcomes in Challenging Contexts in Primary Schools across India

*MultiLiLa*

Project overview of a study on multilingualism, literacy, numeracy and cognition in Delhi, Hyderabad and Patna (2016–20)



## 4.6 Multilingualism is good for the learners

Children coming from households where more than one language is used show cognitive benefits in complex working memory and intelligence. This finding is across schools and is true for both Delhi and Hyderabad children. Therefore, children from minority

language backgrounds who do not speak the regional language are equipped with good cognitive skills to catch up with their peers if *teachers give them time, support and special attention in the first few months of schooling.*

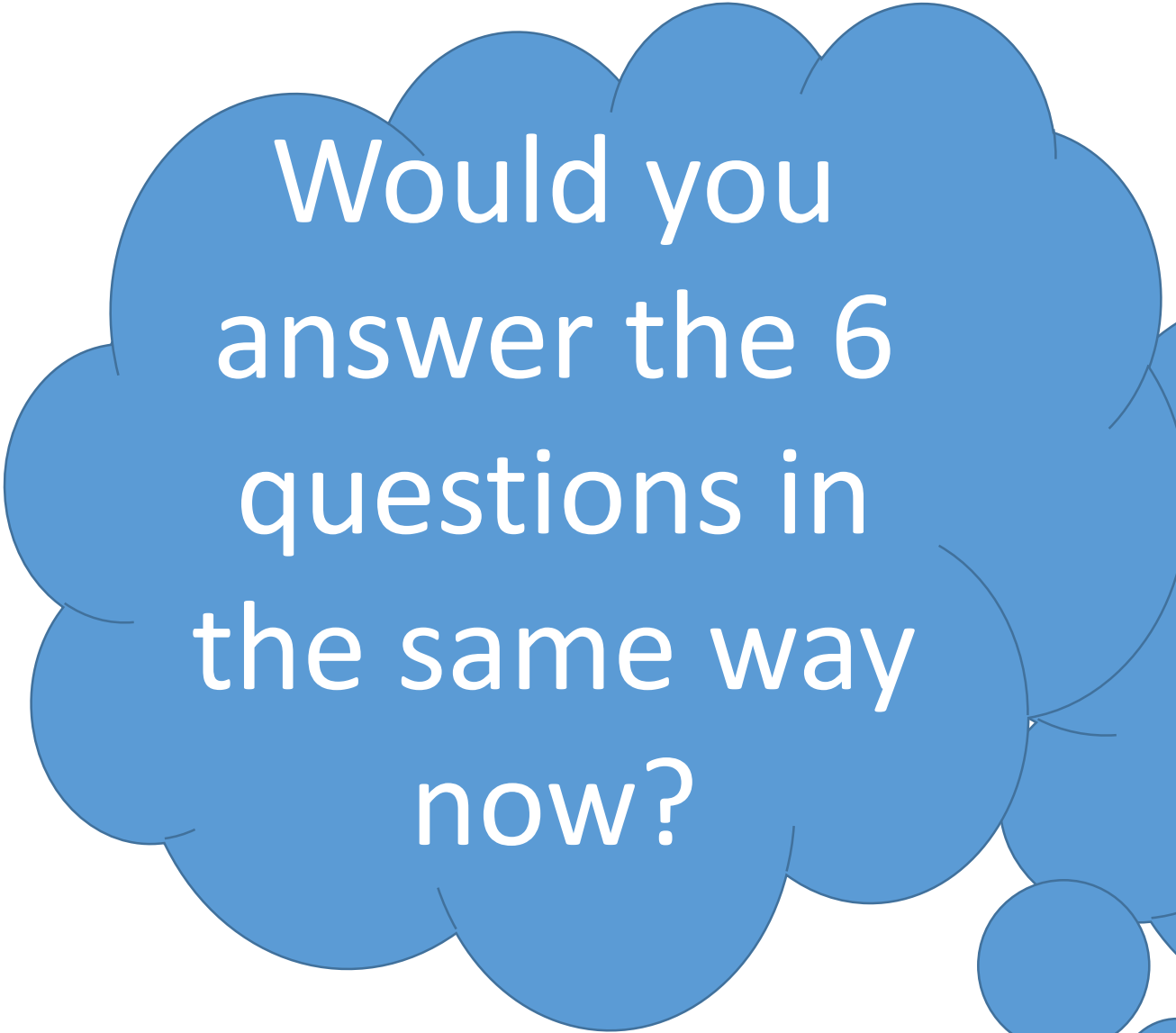
**Multilingualism and Multiliteracy (MultiLiLa) research findings,  
India, 2020**

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Would you  
answer the 6  
questions in  
the same way  
now?



What did you  
learn from this  
webinar?

# Summary

- “English is learnt best if it is learnt along with and not at the cost of other languages.” NCERT CCE p.5
- Awakening to languages approaches can help learners to feel secure and proud of their own languages and cultures.
- Activities that value other languages like Flower of Languages can motivate learners to learn another language.
- You can make conscious decisions about WHEN, WHY and HOW to use home languages to help your learners to learn English.

*“...it was really interesting. They [the Syrians] don’t feel anymore bits and pieces in our classes so the activities here helped them to have a place in this big world.” (NGO Advisor)*



# REFERENCES

- Government of India National Education Policy 2020  
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<https://www.britishcouncil.in/programmes/english/research-publications/mle>
- FREPA: A Framework of reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures <https://carap.ecml.at/>
- Elodil: Teaching in a multi-ethnic and multilingual environment  
<https://www.elodil.umontreal.ca/>
- Edilic: Education and Linguistic and Cultural Diversity <https://www.edilic.org/>



# Join a course

- Title: English in the multilingual classroom
- Dates: 14 February to 13 March 2023

