



English-Medium Instruction (EMI) en la Educación Superior Colombiana

Dr. Jennifer MacDonald



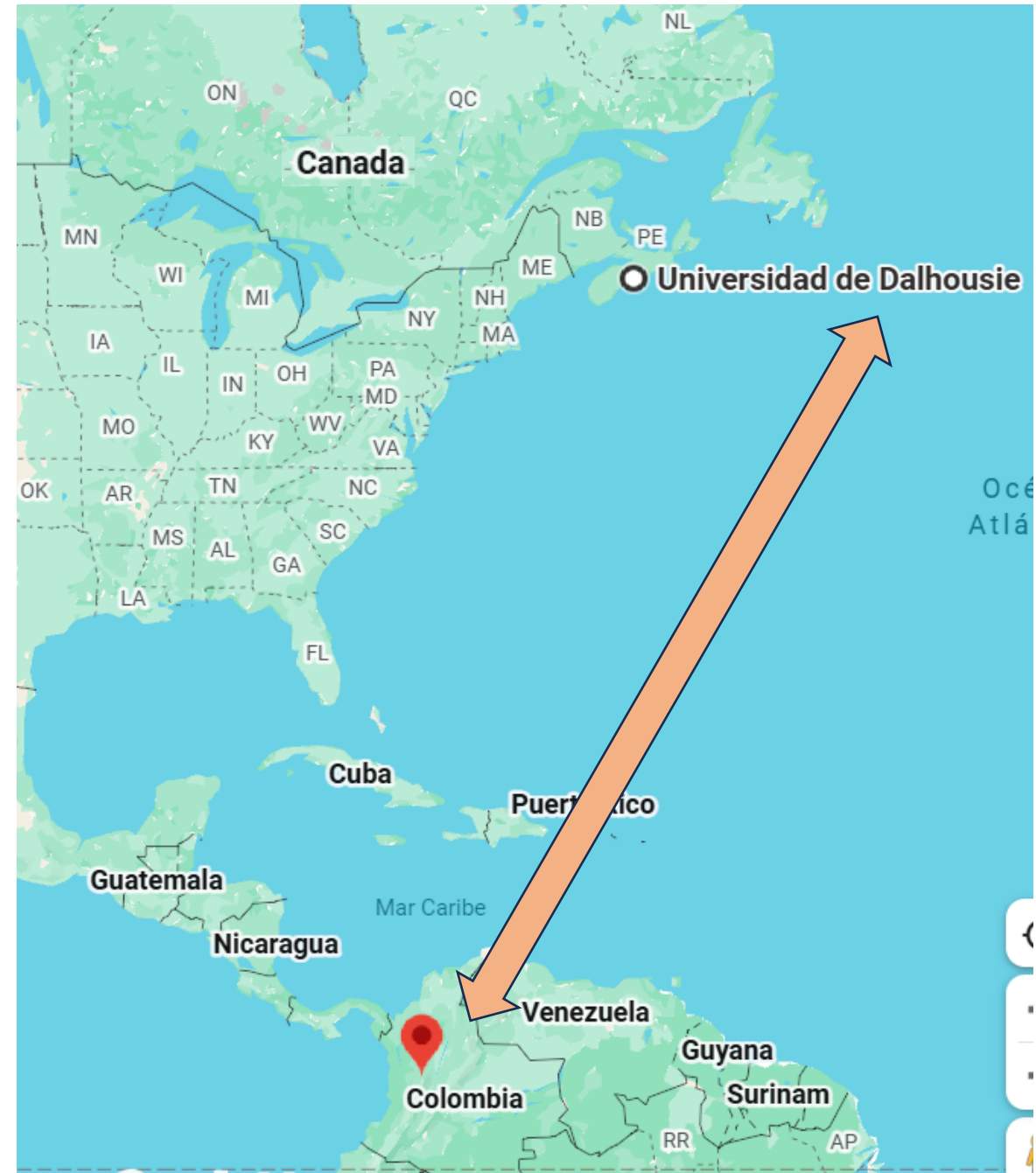


Agenda

- Agradecimientos
- ¿Qué significa la instrucción por medio del inglés o la EMI?
- Oportunidades y desafíos que de la EMI
- Una EMI para la educación superior en Colombia



Thank you!
¡Gracias!
Merci!





Un multilingüismo intencional al servicio del aprendizaje





Collaborating with Colombia and Manizales





About Me



A consultant, applied linguist and “pracademic”: an *academic* with concern for the *practical* application and professional *practice*

Director of Academic Partnerships, Languages Canada



Have been a language teacher since 2001

Have taught content courses based in CLIL in English, French and Spanish



Have led faculty development in EMI and language education in Canada, China, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay



Director; Assoc. Director, Dalhousie University
Dept. of English Language Studies (2012-2023)

Adjunct Professor/Instructor, Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University, Mount Saint Vincent University



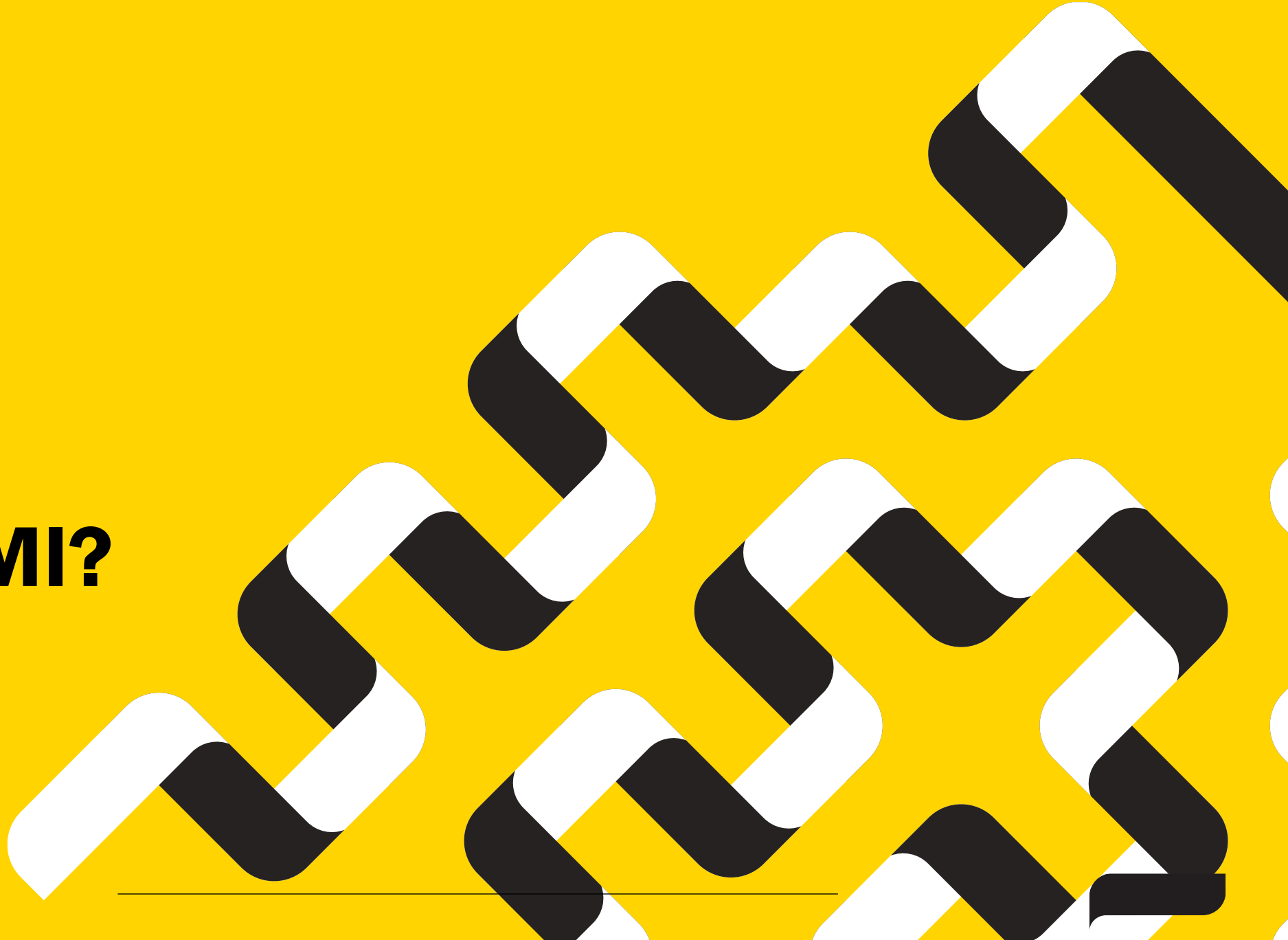
Imagine: it's one month before the beginning of a new semester.

**You have only ever taught in Spanish.
Suddenly, you're told all your courses
will be taught via EMI!**





What is EMI?





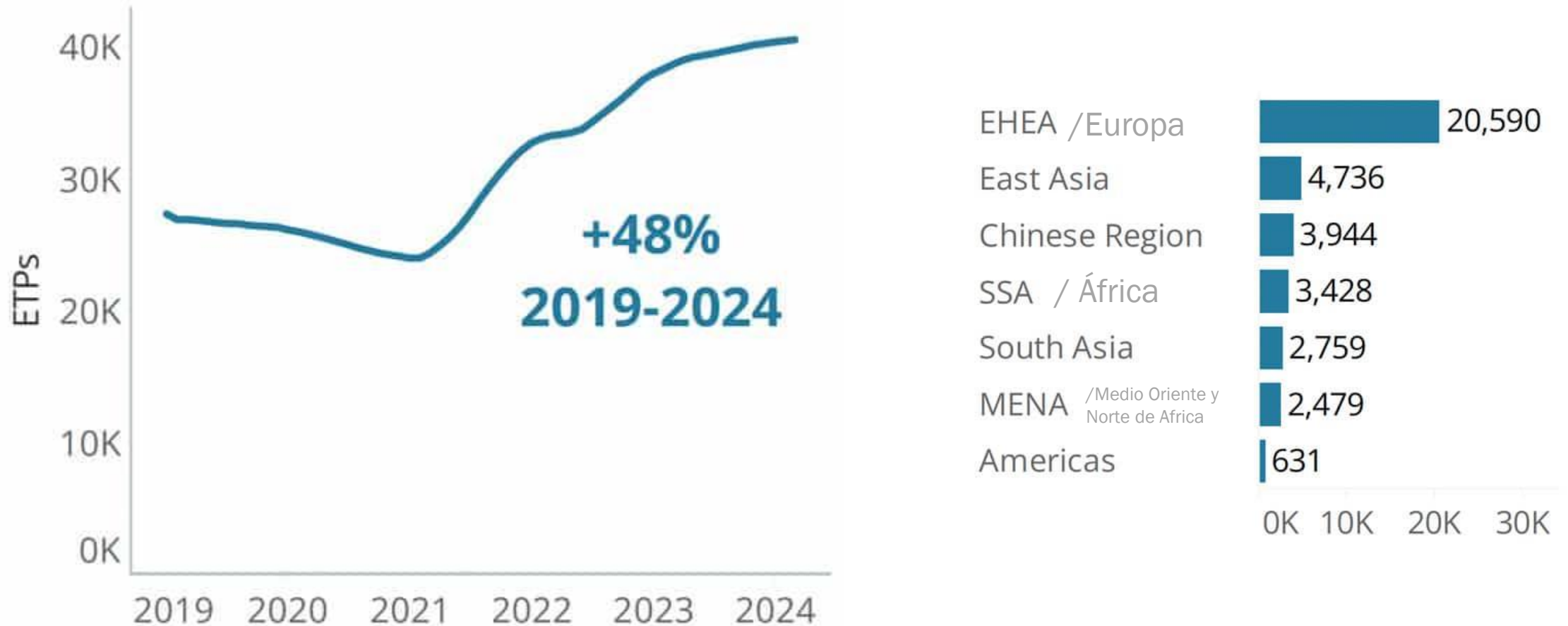
La instrucción por medio del inglés

English Medium Instruction (EMI)

Se refiere al uso de la lengua inglesa para enseñar asignaturas académicas, distintas del propio inglés, en contextos en los que el inglés es una lengua extranjera o segunda lengua para al menos parte del estudiantado y/o del profesorado.



Fuerte crecimiento de English-Taught Courses (ETPs) fuera del RRUU, Canadá, EEUU y Australia



ICEF. (2024, June 5). Number of English-taught degree programmes rises by 22% from 2021 to 2024. *ICEF Monitor - Market Intelligence for International Student Recruitment*. <https://monitor.icef.com/2024/06/number-of-english-taught-degree-programmes-rises-by-22-from-2021-to-2024/>



La internacionalización, un fenómeno multifacético





Benefits of EMI

- Internacionalizar el perfil de la institución (incluido el profesorado) y mejorar su reputación;
- Contribuir a la mejora de la clasificación en los rankings.
- Atraer a estudiantes, profesores y personal internacionales.
- Fomentar la movilidad de los estudiantes, el profesorado y el personal.
- Algunas metodologías utilizadas en la EMI pueden mejorar el nivel de inglés de los estudiantes.
- Inversión en el desarrollo pedagógico del personal académico.
- Puede impulsar la revitalización curricular y pedagógica.



Drawbacks of EMI

- Legalidad en las instituciones públicas
- Implementación. Subestimación del alcance de la EMI (afecta al plan de estudios, la metodología en el aula, la oferta lingüística vinculada, etc.)
- Falta de apoyo institucional al profesorado y al personal
- Diferentes niveles de compromiso de los estudiantes, el profesorado y el personal con la EMI; pueden persistir los mitos
- Algunos lo ven como un indicio de la mercantilización de la educación superior bajo el capitalismo
 - *Inglesificación* de la educación superior



Common Consequences of the Dominance of English-Medium Instruction



Loss of language = loss of culture

Much of what gets
lost in translation is
local relevance



Loss of alternative research methodologies and academic orientations

The drive to publish
in English language
journals standardizes
research around
English language
editors and reviewers



Loss of local language debate and coverage and dissemination of ideas

Academic discussions –
often full of nuance
and technical terms –
will be further removed
from local discussion



Diminished quality in teaching and learning from lack of fluency

A lack of fluency in
English can lead to
partial understanding
of subtle distinctions

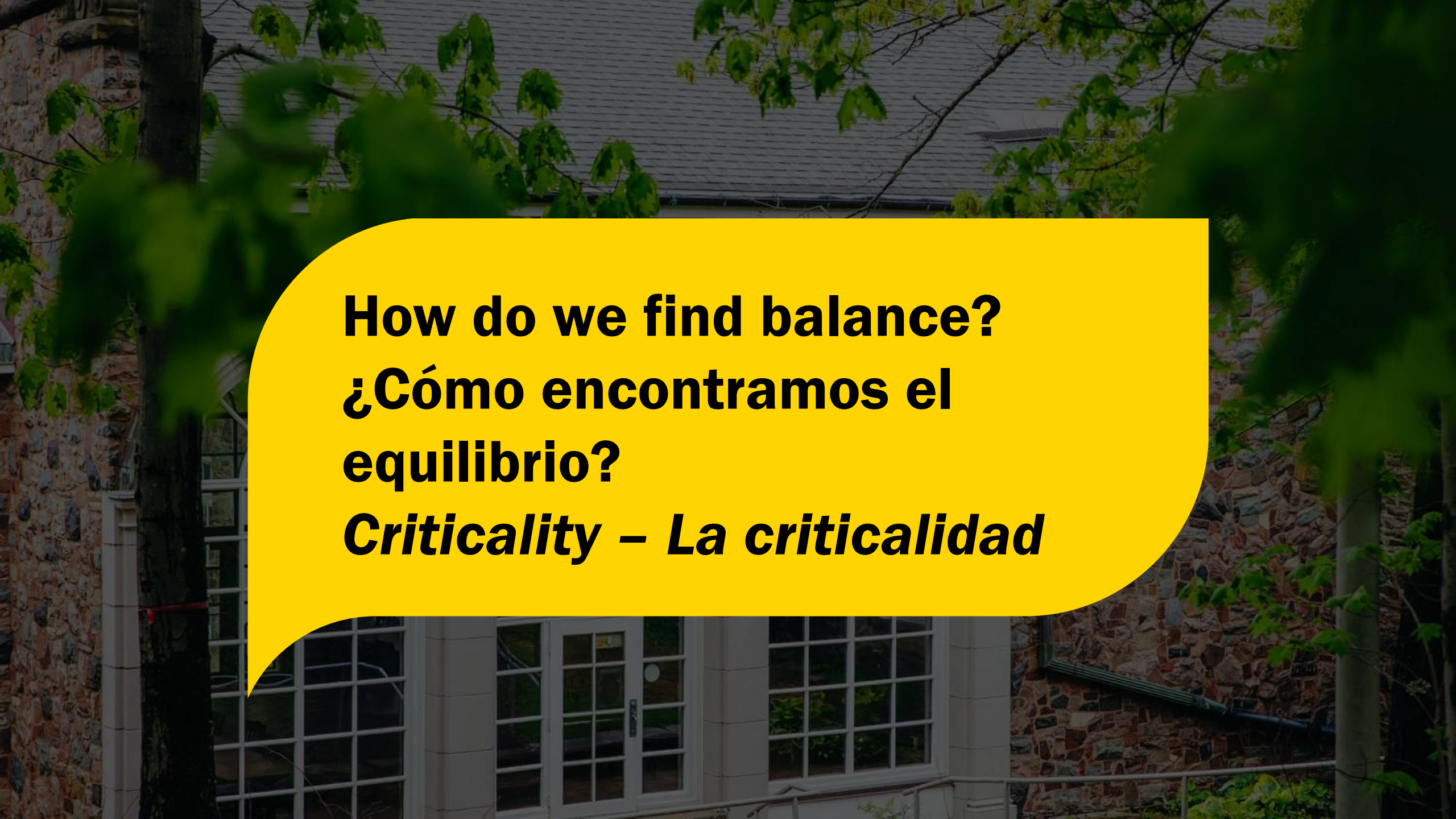


Barrier to higher education access for students with little primary and secondary exposure to English

Students from countries
with local language
curricula will be
excluded from
higher education

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How do we find balance?
¿Cómo encontramos el
equilibrio?
Criticality – La criticalidad



Criticality – La criticalidad

Taking a “critical” perspective means taking power into account as we discuss EMI.

- Whose voices are centered and amplified?
- Whose voices are marginalized or silenced?

A student who attended public school whose parents couldn't afford private English tutoring

vs.

A student who attended an elite private school with lots of English instruction



Criticality – La criticalidad

Taking a “critical” perspective means taking power into account as we discuss EMI.

- Whose voices are centered and amplified?
- Whose voices are marginalized or silenced?

A high-achieving faculty member who has published extensively in Spanish whose English is developing

vs.

A faculty member with fewer research achievements but who has a high level of English proficiency and has published exclusively in English



A Critical Approach to EMI

1. **Universities as sites for liberation and empowerment:** knowledge is a tool for students to pursue what they value
 - Centering student learning
2. **Multilingualism:** harnessing the power of multiple languages in the EMI classroom
3. **English as an international language:** Shaping a new English as its used around the world, rather than as controlled by “native speakers”



How do we center student learning in EMI?

The Need for a Framework in EMI





EMI describes a context, not a way of teaching

- How does learning happen?
- How does language interplay with the learning of content?
- Are there other things that are important to learn alongside the content?

→ Research shows that the EMI has the best results when there is a clear approach to teaching and learning in place, and professors are trained and supported in it.



Language gains in EMI

Research shows that in EMI:

- Language learning does not happen by accident; English skills will not improve if specific attention is not paid to language.
 - Content learning is decreased if language isn't addressed.
 - Examples:
 - Subject-specific vocabulary:
Deformación vs. deformation in physics
 - Word problems in statistics and mathematics
-



Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)





CLIL en español es AICLE

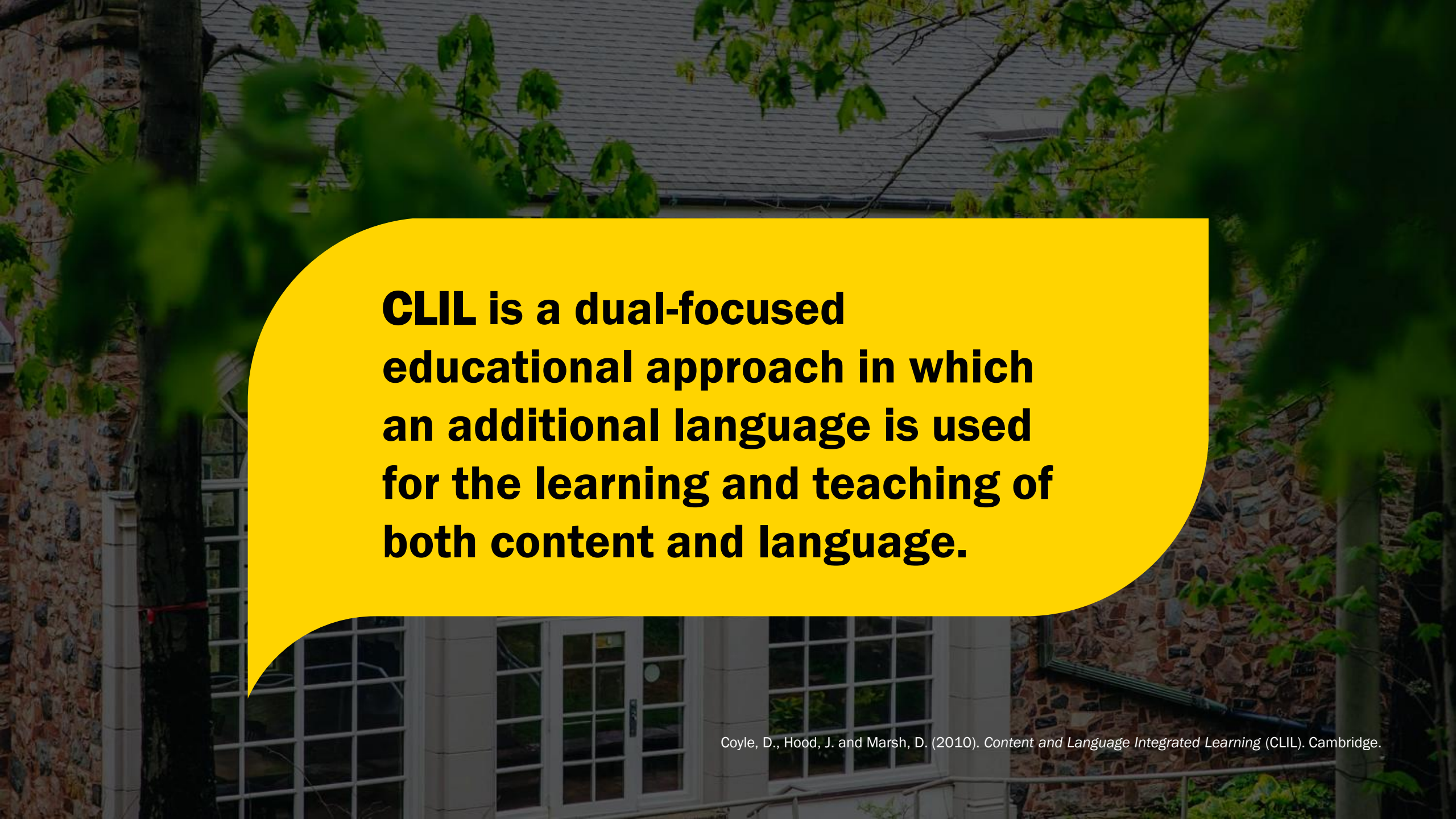
¿Qué significa?





Aprendizaje integrado del contenido y lengua extranjera (AICLE)





CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language.

Coyle, D., Hood, J. and Marsh, D. (2010). *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)*. Cambridge.



Content and Language Integrated Learning

- Emerged in Europe in the 1990s in primary and secondary schools
- Describes a teaching approach, not a type of program (i.e. bilingual programs, immersion programs may or may not use CLIL)
- Flexible approach, different practices employed based on the context
- Collaboration between content teachers and language teachers: same class or linked language provision
- Based on sociocultural learning theory (Vygotsky): learning is a social process where cognitive development is shaped by social interactions and cultural context

E.g. Primary school CLIL geography class.

Topic: maps.

Content: different types of maps, projections, how to read a map.

Language: vocabulary related to maps, and how to describe the location of a country on a map using the cardinal directions.



The 4Cs of CLIL

Content

- Knowledge and skills related to the subject matter

Communication

- Language related to the content
- Vocabulary, functions, texts, necessary to engage with the content

Cognition

- Thinking skills and processes related to the content
- Critical thinking, higher order thinking skills,

Culture

- Intercultural skills
- Disciplinary culture and belonging
- Also Community or citizenship



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Multilingualism as Critical EMI





Monolingual mindset

The perspective that using
one language is the norm





Multilingualism vs. Plurilingualism

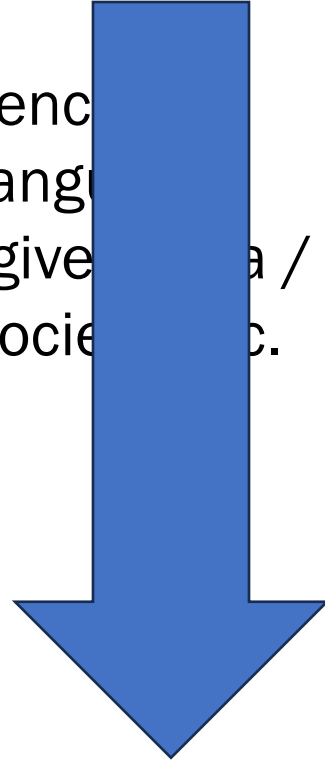
The presence of
several languages
within a given area /
place / society, etc.

A competence for people;
The ability to use more than
one language

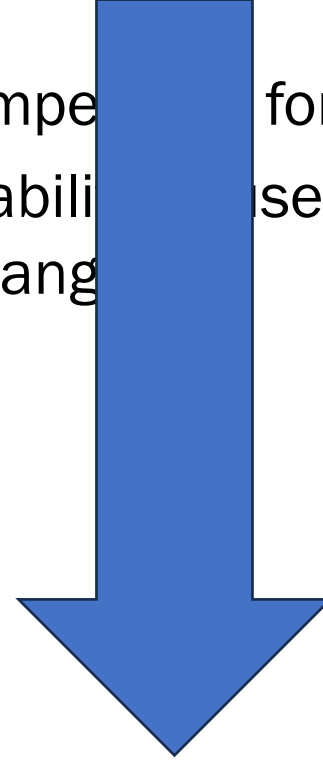


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En español?

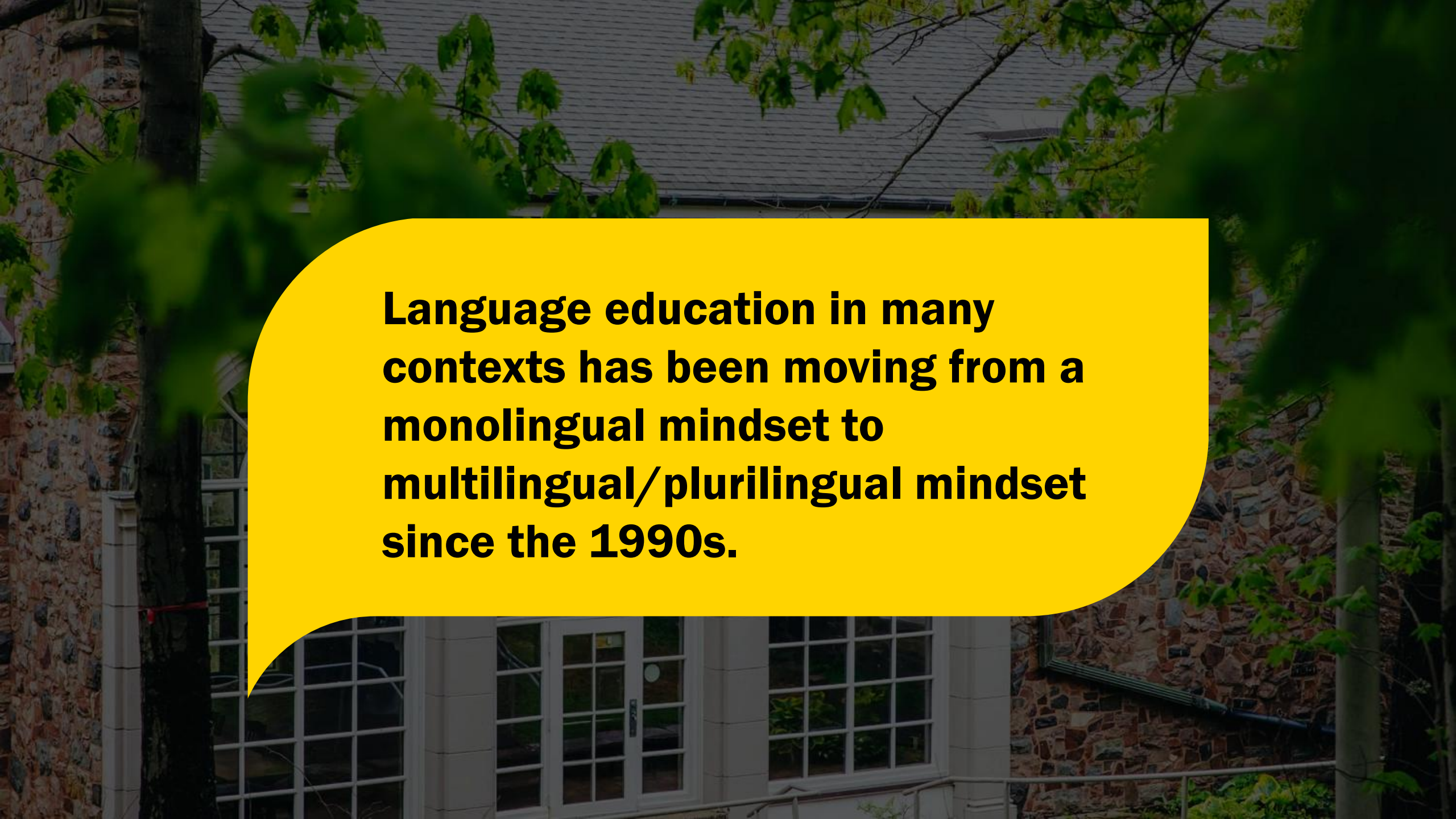


Monolingual Approaches to English Language Teaching

Monolingual fallacy (Phillipson, 2018): that English is learned most effectively through only English

“English-only” approach in:

- Instructional techniques
- Language models
- Materials
- Classroom behaviour
- Assessment



Language education in many contexts has been moving from a monolingual mindset to multilingual/plurilingual mindset since the 1990s.



**How can we involve
multiple languages in the
classroom?**





**Linguistic
repertoire**



¿En español?



**Linguistic
repertoire**



**Repertorio
lingüístico**



Linguistic repertoire

Linguistic Repertoire

The entire set of linguistic resources, including different languages, dialects, and styles, that an individual can use for communication and expression.



**What language(s)
are in your linguistic
repertoire?**



Plurilingualism in Language Education

“The aim of language education is profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve ‘mastery’ of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the ‘ideal native speaker’ as the ultimate model.

Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertoire, in which all linguistic abilities have a place.



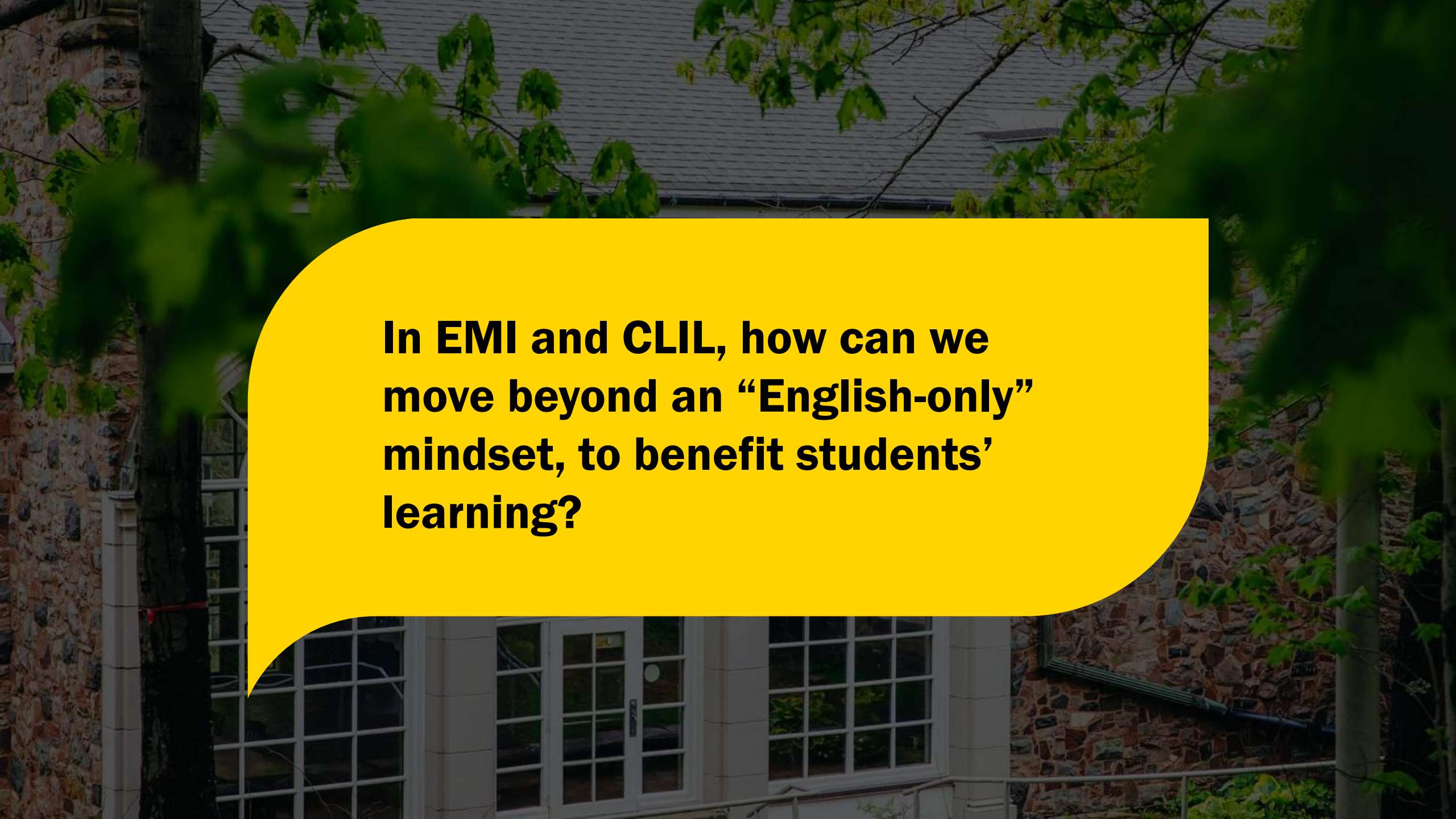
Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence

Common European Framework of
Reference for Language (2017)

CEFR (2018)

E.g.: Plurilingual Comprehension:

A1	Can recognise internationalisms and words common to <u>different languages</u> (e.g. Haus/hus/house) to: - deduce the meaning of simple signs and notices; - identify the probable message of a short, simple, written text; - follow in outline short, simple social exchanges conducted very slowly and clearly in his/her presence; - deduce what people are trying to say directly to him/her, provided they speak very slowly and clearly, with repetition if necessary.
B1	Can exploit creatively his limited repertoire in <u>different languages in his/her plurilingual repertoire</u> for everyday contexts, in order to cope with an unexpected situation.



In EMI and CLIL, how can we move beyond an “English-only” mindset, to benefit students’ learning?



Plurilingual Instructional Strategies



Comparons nos langues encourages students to compare linguistic items across the languages in their entire repertoire at the level of syntax, grammar, pronunciation, and pragmatics.



Translanguaging

Drawing on all the languages in one's linguistic repertoire in communication.

Translanguaging is not negative; it's part of the natural behaviour of multilinguals.

It can be a powerful teaching tool in EMI and CLIL.

En español:
translinguación o
translenguar

¿Cómo se dice andamiaje en inglés?





Translanguaging as Scaffold in EMI

Scaffold (n., v.):

in learning contexts, a measure, tool, or support put into place to bridge the gap between what a learner can currently do and what you want them to be able to do.

Scaffolds are eventually removed.





Plurilingual Instruction and Translanguaging in EMI

1. Providing definitions in Spanish of concepts or vocabulary alongside English
2. Some readings, video, or audio in Spanish or subtitles in Spanish
3. Using Spanish in one-on-one meetings with students
4. Giving instructions in Spanish or checking understanding of instructions in Spanish after giving them in English
5. Using Spanish in group discussions before reporting back to class in English

- Pedagogical translanguaging is:
 - Deliberate, planned and intentional
 - Supports learning and comprehension
 - May eventually be reduced or eliminated
-



Which strategies have I used today?

- ☐ Translanguaging English-Spanish
 - ☐ Speaking in English with slides in Spanish
 - ☐ Speaking in Spanish with slides in English
 - ☐ Encouraging you to draw on your knowledge of Spanish to guess vocabulary in English
 - ☐ Comparing vocabulary in English and Spanish
 - ☐ Use photos or visuals to support new vocabulary
-



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What is happening in Colombian higher education with regards to EMI?

Research findings





La internacionalización como principal motor

Las universidades colombianas han adoptado la EMI como parte de sus agendas de **internacionalización**, más que como políticas lingüísticas en sí mismas.

Esto ha dado lugar a:

- Un aumento de cursos etiquetados como EMI
- Nuevas políticas lingüísticas institucionales
- Esfuerzos estratégicos por atraer alianzas internacionales

No obstante, la implementación sigue siendo **desigual**, incluso dentro de una misma institución.



Del ideal “English Only” a la realidad multilingüe

Aunque las políticas de EMI suelen promover el uso exclusivo del inglés, la práctica en el aula muestra una realidad diferente.

Docentes y estudiantes combinan de manera natural **inglés y español** para apoyar la comprensión y el aprendizaje disciplinar.

La investigación reciente evidencia un giro desde:

Ideologías de *English Only*
hacia

Enfoques que valoran el **multilingüismo** y el **translanguaging**.



El CLIL como marco pedagógico más sostenible

Muchas instituciones han optado por el CLIL/AICLE dentro del contexto EMI como una vía para **bilingüizar progresivamente** sus programas académicos.

El CLIL se percibe como más viable porque:

- Integra objetivos de contenido y de lengua
- Permite el uso flexible y estratégico del español
- Se ajusta mejor al nivel real de competencia lingüística del estudiantado
- Ofrece herramientas pedagógicas claras para el acompañamiento

Varios estudios destacan que el CLIL resulta más coherente y sostenible que el EMI sin enfoque pedagógico



Mayor atención a la equidad y la justicia lingüística

Las investigaciones más recientes adoptan una mirada más crítica y plantean preguntas sobre la **equidad** en la expansión del EMI:

- ¿Quiénes se benefician realmente del EMI?
- ¿A quiénes puede excluir?
- ¿Cómo evitar que el EMI refuerce desigualdades sociales y lingüísticas?

Este enfoque marca un desplazamiento desde discursos promocionales hacia una comprensión más **socialmente responsable** del EMI y el CLIL en Colombia.



Apoyo al EMI, pero condicionado al acompañamiento

Diversos estudios muestran que tanto estudiantes como docentes perciben el EMI como una ventaja para la empleabilidad y el acceso al conocimiento internacional.

Sin embargo, estas actitudes positivas son **condicionales** a:

- Andamiaje lingüístico y pedagógico
- Formación docente específica
- Expectativas realistas sobre el nivel de inglés del estudiantado

Cuando estos apoyos faltan, se reportan **ansiedad, sobrecarga cognitiva y menor participación estudiantil.**



Síntesis: EMI y CLIL en la educación superior colombiana

Colombia's approach to EMI is evolving from English-only, prestige-driven policies toward more flexible, multilingual, and pedagogically grounded practices.

As EMI continues to expand, CLIL is increasingly viewed as a necessity within EMI, resulting in a **more sustainable and equitable model** for Colombian universities.





This is our objective together:

Contribute to a critical, multilingual EMI ecosystem at the Universidad Autónoma de Manizales, grounded in CLIL, and focused on student learning and empowerment and pedagogical innovation.



THANK YOU

¡Gracias! Merci!

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Slides & References →

