

“We have to do this: teach and assess students in one language only!”—Really? Rethinking discourses and alternatives: Problematizing the Recurrent Discourses Regarding Academic Literacies Development and the Medium of Instruction in Higher Education (EN)

Organizer: Angel M. Y. Lin (Simon Fraser University)

Participants: Valia Spiliotopoulos (University of British Columbia), Jérémie Séror (University of Ottawa), Qinghua Chen (Simon Fraser University)

As increasingly plurilingual and intercultural spaces, universities face the challenge of redefining traditional approaches used to respond to the presence of language learners on campuses (Dafouz & Smit, 2014; Marshall & Moore, 2013; Lin, forthcoming). The proposed round table brings together a panel of researchers to report on differing insights linked to the core aspects of the challenges, opportunities and actual practices required to foster academic literacies development in higher education for a wider range of language learners. Each presenter will provide examples from various contexts of specific curricular innovations, governance issues and institutional discourses related to language and literacy development in their institutions. These examples underscore the importance of problematizing recurrent discourses surrounding the topic of language education and support in higher education and to shift from a deficit model to an asset-based model of students. These include the need to question attempts to address the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of campuses as something that can be done through minor adjustments to current practices or by relying on the implementation of a unit or centre to provide all solutions. Insights will also focus on the challenges of leaving for granted and thus unexamined the plurilingual processes that allow language learners to acquire the literacy skills and knowledge required to pursue with success their programs of students, especially when they face the double challenge of familiarizing themselves with not only the content but also the language their courses. Content-based language learning approaches, post-entry assessment practices, critical examinations of classroom and social discourse, as well as the institutional pairing of content and language experts will be offered as elements to consider when designing educational experiences that foster success while fusing core pedagogic and theoretical principles from both content matter and language education and plurilingual approaches for the internationalization of the curriculum. A question and answer session following the presentations will allow audience participation.