Spotlight on Schools



Sharing good practice nationally



Developing an inclusive and plurilingual school environment

What are the aims of the project?

- To develop an inclusive and plurilingual school environment where all the languages spoken by the school community are valued
- To show how the student's mother tongue can support their learning
- To provide practical guidance and resources to support both teachers and students

How was the project organised?

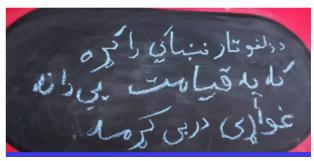
Narell Byrne is a language teacher and EAL coordinator with vast experience in linguistic diversity in schools. The project was developed over time. Students and teacher engage in different activities during the school year. The project engages the whole school community and also links with events and activities that take place during the school year such as maths week, literacy week and awards night. It encourges and shows teachers how to seek and indentify opportunities to incorporate their languages, countries and cultures into your class lessons. projects, and school celebrations

The best way to develop an inclusive plurilingual school environment is to practice home language-integration across the school. Show, through your words and actions, that all the languages of all the students in your classes are equal in value and status

Where to start

- Make every effort to find out:
- -who each EAL learner is
- -where they come from
- -what languages they speak and to whom;
 - Greet students in their home language
 - Encourage all students to answer roll call in their home language.





- Try saying goodbye and thank you to students in their home language
- Vary the language of greeting and roll call weekly, fortnightly or monthly.
- Learn, talk and ask about your students' cultures.



Activities and projects: some examples

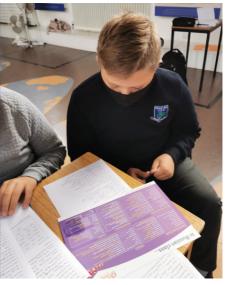
- Survey languages spoken in the school
- Create a wall of bilingual poems with all the languages spoken in the school
- Students produce a "How our school works" welcome booklet in the different languages for new students
- Apply for PPLI school library home languages funding scheme
- Translate letters when communicating with parents
- Subscribe to NASC
- Arrange a tour of the school with first language support fornew EAL learners and parents
- Organise Classroom buddies, homework buddies, pair reading buddies
- Use the PPLI language mats to support learning
- Consider non-verbal ways to communicate
- Consider how all subjects can support and include an intercultural dimension: Bussiness classes can look at currencies

Developing an inclusive plurilingual MFL classroom

The best way to develop an inclusive plurilingual school environment is to practice language-integration and celebrate cultures across the school

- MFL good practice is EAL good practice
- Allow EAL learners to attend MFL classes. MFL class can represent a 'clean slate' linguistically
- Bilingualism is an asset
- Building language awareness can help all students become more active in and more responsible for their own learning
- Ask students how their home language is the same and how it is different from the MFL?
- Compare syntax
- Teach students to recognise cognates
- Research borrowed words
- Ask students to say words that start with the same sound(s) in the MFL and in their home language
- Ask students to show you how words are changed and formed in their home language
- Comparing the languages of all students can create awareness of these differences and in turn improve literacy skills of all students





More ideas, examples and videos can be found here

How was the project successful?

This is a really successful project which is now part of the life of the school. The proposed activities and resources support not only heritage language speakers but the school community as a whole. It celebrates diversity as well as addressing the challenges heritage language speakers can sometimes face in school.

Narell Byrne is EAL coordinator at Mount Sion C.B.S. Wateford. She would like to also scknowldge Ms. Sheridan and all the EAL students' contribution, dedication and enthusiasm

