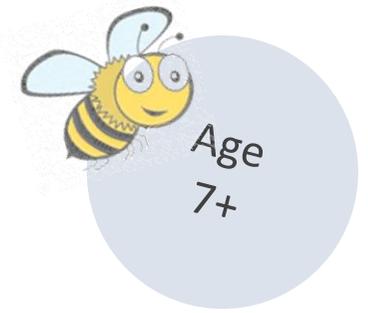


Diary



Context:

- A primary school in Dublin, Ireland. English is the language of schooling. The Irish language is a curricular subject with 3.5 hours per week teaching allocation. There are 34 children in this Second Class (age 7+). 26 children speak home languages other than English. Within that group there are 9 different language backgrounds.
- Whatever their stage in dual-language expression, all children in this class have the opportunity to write in two languages, receiving help where necessary from their parents.
- The following morning, children are always eager to read aloud their entries for their teacher, classmates and any visitor who is present and from whom they receive whole-hearted affirmation.

Reasons for choosing this activity:

- In order to encourage children to develop oral and literacy skills in both English and their home language, the teacher encourages his class to keep a diary of their after-school activities.

Description:

- The teacher has bought a hard-backed, A4 size copy for writing and each evening a different child takes 'The Diary' home and writes a paragraph about her activities in both English and her home language (→ relying on existing linguistic repertoires). Children whose home language is English are encouraged to write in English and Irish.
- The children look forward enthusiastically to having their turn to write in the diary (→ meaningful language learning). Some children are able to do this writing independently in both languages while others need help from parents.

Observation:

- As children read in one language, they are able to refer to their more developed language for help in identifying words and/ or phrases (→ active language learning).
- Encouraging children to write dual-language texts on topics that are meaningful to them, provides the facility for each language to help the other. Their developing dual-language literacy skills contribute to enhanced proficiency in both languages allowing them to express increasingly complex thoughts (→ language is a process).
- Children also become motivated and enthusiastic when expressing themselves in their home language and in English (→ learner autonomy).
- The greater their proficiency develops in both languages, the more enthused they become.

Comments:

- Even though all children do not understand all the languages used in their classroom, being encouraged to listen to their peers' reading helps to develop their auditory awareness in relation to sounds that occur within languages other than their own, thus laying the foundations of language awareness.
- These children are in a classroom where their efforts at written expression are valued and praised.
- It is clear from the examples that children have developed the idea of sentence structure and how it can extend meaning (→ continuous and coherent language learning). They demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of punctuation that clarify meaning, i.e., full stops, capital letters, etc.

After school I went home and had a lovely dinner. Then I did my homework and had a rest. When my Dad came home we opened my Birthday presents which I got from Poland. I got a lovely pink dress, jumper with Elsa and sweets. I was so happy. After that we had a tea and donuts because it was "Fat Thursday" which is a Polish tradition, similar to Irish "Porridge Tuesday".

Dual-language text in Polish and English

Po szkole wróciłam do domu i zjadłam pyszny obiad. Potem odrabiałam zadanie domowe. Kiedy tata wrócił do domu, otworzyliśmy moje urodzinowe prezenty, które dostałam z Polski. Dostałam śliczną różową sukienkę, bluzę z Elsa i słodycze. Byłam bardzo szczęśliwa. Potem wypiliśmy herbatę i zjedliśmy paczki z okazji "Tłustego Wtorku", który jest polską tradycją, podobną do irlandzkiego "Naleśnikowego Wtorku".

After school I went to Little Stars and I ate. Then [NAME] and I did homework. [NAME] and I played football and I won. I played with my sister [NAME] and I had fun. I read a book and it was called Cluck Cluck Crocodiles Bath. Then I sat down and did art. After art I played and I was playing with animals. My sister [NAME] was under a table with a bag and doing silly things. Some girls were playing music and it was nice. I played with my sister and it was a dog and it was so fun. Then we had something little to eat and after I went home. I had dinner and watched some TV, brushed my teeth and went to bed.

Saná chuairt mé go Little Stars. Bain, ní raib [NAME] ar obair bhair. D'inn mé le [NAME] ar obair nua mé róla, bhí fáil ar obair. Bhí cailín, na píníní, bhí sí go deas. Ar ais d'ith mé, snácaí beag. D'inn mé le [NAME] arís. Chuairt mé arís. Lighar mé ma fada. Chuairt mé go dtí an táb.
 Cluck Cluck Crocodiles Bath.
 Arís d'inn mé le [NAME] arís. Chuairt mé arís. Lighar mé ma fada. Chuairt mé go dtí an táb.

Dual-language text in English and Irish