

# Linguistic Diversity - Multilingual Cities

## Support Information

### Background

This Example is from Sixth Class and there are 23 children in the class. The school celebrates the **cultural diversity** of families in the local community and acknowledges the **linguistic diversity** that children from different backgrounds bring with them. While some children in the class have English as their first language, many children have a **home language other than English**. Teachers across the different class levels in the school promote linguistic diversity in their classrooms by acknowledging and harnessing all children's home languages. Reference to languages other than English and Irish within the learning outcomes in the Primary Language Curriculum provides teachers with the opportunity to plan for meaningful learning experiences whereby children can bring their **knowledge and awareness of languages** to the classroom and learn from each other.

### Language Explorers Programme and Multilingual Cities Project

The school has invested in specialist training in Language Explorers, a programme designed to develop children's awareness of the different languages spoken by the school community. The programme encourages a **multilingual approach** to teaching and learning, and promotes children's use of their home languages in the school environment and development of language awareness and intercultural competence (<https://mothertongues.ie/for-schools/>).

The Example presents children using their knowledge and awareness of different languages to engage in the Multilingual Cities Project. The goal of the Multilingual Cities Project, a project of the Language Explorers initiative, is to encourage children to start **observing and appreciating the diversity of languages** encountered in everyday life.



The project is run in the classroom as follows:

1. Initially, the children are provided with a range of images and words in different languages relating to the city theme. In groups, they examine these words and through questioning and discussion with their peers, they try to **decipher words and phrases in different languages**.
2. Children use their knowledge and awareness of language to create their multilingual city display over time. They examine the **similarities and differences in words and phrases** across languages. They are encouraged by the teacher to consider how their knowledge of different languages can help them to recognise and figure out the meaning of words and phrases in other languages.
3. In their groups, the children work together to design their multilingual city. They choose cut outs of various buildings and try to use as many languages as they can to create the shopfronts and street signs. They draw on and **share their knowledge of various languages** when creating the multilingual city display within the group.
4. Finally, the children present their completed multilingual city display to the rest of the class.

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### Preparation for Teaching and Learning

The teacher discussed her familiarity with the **children's different backgrounds and diverse range of home languages**, describing this diversity as an opportunity to foster learning and **awareness about languages** for all children in the classroom. In recognising children's unique linguistic repertoire, she described how her knowledge of the **children's home languages and cultures** helped to inform her preparation for teaching and learning. She planned for opportunities for children to **explore, examine and compare languages**. The children had been engaging with the Language Explorers Programme for some time and were therefore accustomed to learning about different languages and cultures and there has been a **growing awareness of language** within the class as a result. The teacher identified appropriate learning outcomes from the **Reading strand** and the focus of new learning. These are as follows:

Learning Outcome (LO)	Focus of new learning
LO4: Phonological and phonemic awareness	Recognise and compare words across languages.
LO5: Phonics, word recognition, and word study	Use existing language skills and knowledge to decipher text in different languages.

Within the **Writing strand**, the teacher also planned for learning outcome 5 as follows:

Learning Outcome (LO)	Focus of new learning
LO5: Vocabulary	Select appropriate vocabulary across various languages.

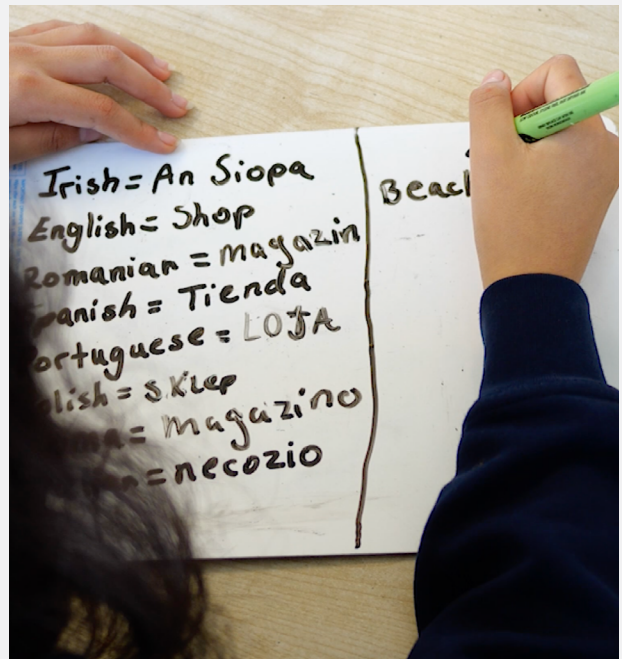


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### Assessment

Throughout this learning experience, the teacher drew on children's **previous knowledge of languages** through questioning and discussion. In this way, the children were provided with opportunities to reflect on their knowledge and experiences of using different languages. She used **intuitive assessment** and a series of **planned interactions** to identify how children **explore, examine and compare languages**. These included **observing** the children's ability to decipher words in different languages and to draw comparisons between languages. She also posed a range of **appropriate questions** during **whole class discussions** and **smaller group conferences** in order to encourage children to reflect on the **similarities and differences between languages**. A number of 'think aloud' strategies were used by the teacher to effectively draw children's attention to different languages, to check for meaning and pronunciation of words and to invite children's contributions to discussions about languages. Children were given opportunities to work together in groups to create their multilingual city, and there was clear evidence of **peer assessment**, whereby children questioned each other on the meaning and pronunciation of words in their home languages. Children presented their completed displays to the class and were further questioned by their peers and the teacher to allow for additional discussion around languages.



### Reflective Questions

- What beliefs are expressed by the teacher in relation to children's home languages? How are these beliefs exemplified in the Example?
- Consider the children's discussions about the Irish language in this Example. How does this Example signify the value of all languages, including English, Irish and children's home languages?
- What aspects of the pedagogical approach used by the teacher do you find most interesting?

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