

Linguistic Diversity - Young Interpreters

Support Information

Background

This Example is from a **mixed urban primary school**. The school celebrates and promotes the rich variety of languages spoken by **multilingual children** in the school. The Young Interpreter Scheme ([click here](#)) has been running in the school for a number of years. This is a scheme that was originally set up in the United Kingdom in response to an increase in the numbers of children attending primary schools with English as an additional language. Its primary aim is for bilingual and multilingual children to use their home language to **help newcomer children** access English, develop friendships and successfully transition into a new school.

In this school, children have an opportunity to act as young interpreters for children who are new to the school and who speak the same language as them. This usually involves pairing an older child with a younger child, and this is generally organised in June for the subsequent academic year. At the beginning of the school year, it is important for the young interpreters to get to know the children they are paired with and to help inform them of the school routine and school rules. The young interpreters and children they are paired with meet once a week as a large group for a half hour and they engage in a variety of learning experiences.

This video showcases two examples of learning experiences during which the young interpreters support the learning of the children.

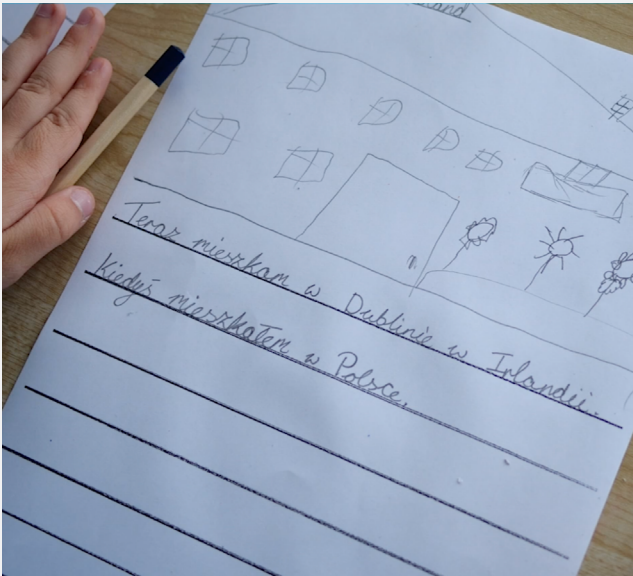


Example 1: Creating dual language texts

This learning experience involves children engaging in the **creation of dual language books**. The children are writing text about themselves in both **English and their home language** with the support of their young interpreter throughout the process. This learning experience is an opportunity to promote **peer tutoring** where children can work together in school to create the texts. During this project, children engage in **planning, drafting, editing and producing a final draft** of their texts written in both their home language and in English. They also illustrate the book appropriately. Each page of the book contains the **same material written in both languages**, and this enables the **transfer of skills across languages**. It also enables children to obtain the opportunity to think and write in their home language with the help of the young interpreters.

Linguistic Diversity - Young Interpreters

Support Information



There are a number of steps in getting to the point when children are ready to present their finished texts to an audience. These can be summarised as follows:

1. Children decide on a topic of their choice to write about and pick a title for their texts.
2. They plan and decide on the content for the texts.
3. Children create a draft of their texts.
4. As the child and young interpreter create each page of the book, they write the same text in both the home language and English. This involves lots of discussion between the child and their young interpreter.
5. The children then edit and re-draft the texts, adding illustrations to each page.
6. A final draft of the text is written.
7. Children present their texts to an audience. This involves reading the book in both languages and showing the illustrations.

Children with English as an additional language (EAL) get an opportunity to express themselves through their first language. The project, in turn, provides future reading material for other language learners in the school.

Preparation for Teaching and Learning

In preparing for children's engagement in the creation of dual language texts, the teacher considered **children's previous experience and knowledge** of writing in the home language. As these varied considerably among children, the teacher planned accordingly for the learning experience. Children's writing tasks were appropriately scaffolded by the young interpreters who were encouraged to **foster children's engagement with and confidence** in the writing tasks. Children were encouraged to choose topics of interest to them and to engage in the writing process with the support of the young interpreter.

For the creation of dual language texts, the teacher identified appropriate learning outcomes to plan from within the **Writing strand** as follows:

Learning Outcome (LO)	Focus of new learning
LO1: Engagement	The children are taking part in and enjoying writing across languages with the support of the young interpreters.
LO2: Motivation	The children are choosing content and topics for their own writing.
LO7: Writing process and creating text	The children are creating texts in a range of languages.

Linguistic Diversity - Young Interpreters

Support Information

Example 2: Reading dual language books



Within the school, there is a wide range of **dual language books** available for the children, including traditional fairy tales and high-quality picture books. The books are available in English and a variety of the children's home languages. In this example, children are reading a dual language book of their choice in their home language and in English with the support of the young interpreters. The young interpreter reads the book to the child in both languages and engages the child in follow-up activities including the following:

- Discuss the title of the story in both languages and make comparisons between both titles.
- Ask questions suitable to the level of the child's understanding in both languages.
- Describe and discuss the illustrations in both languages.
- Engage in reading comprehension strategies at a level suitable for the child in both languages e.g. making predictions.

Preparation for Teaching and Learning

The teacher and young interpreters initially sought to gain information on the children's prior knowledge of the home language, strengths and weaknesses and particular interests in relation to reading. This occurred through meaningful conversations with the children. With this knowledge, the teacher and young interpreters chose suitable dual language texts for the children. For this learning experience, the teacher planned for learning experiences relating to the **Reading strand** as follows:

Learning Outcome (LO)	Focus of new learning
LO1: Engagement	The children are enjoying listening to reading and they are discovering and exploring texts in various languages.
LO2: Motivation and choice	The children are reading texts in a range of languages.



Linguistic Diversity - Young Interpreters

Support Information

Assessment

For **Example 1**, the teacher used **intuitive assessment** and **planned interactions** during this learning experience. These included observing the children's ability to choose a topic to write about, **posing appropriate questions to children** at appropriate intervals about their writing and asking children to use **concept mapping** to plan their writing tasks in both English and their home language. The teacher also moved between the groups, **conferencing** with the children about their writing throughout the drafting, editing and publishing process. The teacher described the significance of **peer assessment**. The young interpreters were flexible and responsive to the level of support required, which varied across groups, depending on the challenges encountered.

For **Example 2**, the teacher and young interpreter **posed appropriate questions** to the children about their chosen dual language book in order to check for understanding. They also observed children to determine their **engagement and motivation** to explore dual language texts. **Peer assessment** was significant for this Example as the young interpreters continued to respond appropriately to children's reading ability in the home language, by **posing appropriate questions** to scaffold their learning and to determine their understanding of the dual language books.



Reflective Questions

- What ideas are expressed by the teacher in relation to the importance and significance of children's home languages? How do these correspond to your beliefs about children's home language use in school?
- Consider the roles of the teacher, young interpreter and child in these Examples. How do these roles demonstrate learning as a shared endeavour?
- How does this Example exemplify inclusion and appreciation for diversity and children's home languages?

To view the videos related to this support information click here.