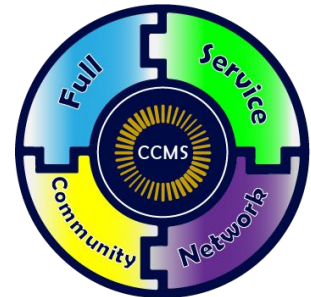


All Island Community of Practice

Session #2: embedding plurilingualism in the mainstream classroom



Question 1: What ideas may you 'borrow' from the video?

- Roll call
- Inviting parents in (easier in primary)
- Language of the month with cross-curricular focus (e.g. geography)
- Keeping things simple!!!!
- Positive impact on children's well being (we often forget the impact that being out of one's culture and language can have on mental health-)
- Positive impact on families also (parents feeling involved in school community- home languages being used for greetings etc.)
- Scope is an issue: the larger the school, the harder it is to ensure home languages are included across the board (especially post primary schools)
- Keeping it as simple as possible
- Bringing personal experiences/showing that empathy matters

Question 2: what challenges do you face with the inclusion of home languages in the classroom?

- Buy-in from teachers
- Time pressure: so much curriculum-based work to cover, teachers feel under pressure and ,may be reluctant to slow things down by asking 'how do you say that in your language?)
- teachers are aware of the inherent value of including home languages but don't feel confident including them in their own classroom
- Misconceptions: 'am i expected to learn all the children's languages?'
- Parents may also need to be informed/ trained: some families want to see their children using English only at school
- Hard when there's one teacher in the school working hard to be inclusive but it's not on other teachers' radar as such
- Harder at secondary level: subject teachers (history, maths...)- how can they include home languages- easier at primary level.
- Teachers attitudes and thinking that they need to know the language to support children

Question 3: Have you tried anything else that has worked?

- Staff training and focus in SDP. Target to get key words from each department. Maybe make kids do the key words.
- Google Docs translator/ Microsoft Word translator for home-school communication but also for school work (e.g. to produce dual language texts)
- www.2lingual.com: bilingual search engine (so students can do research in English and home language)
- Letting students complete homework in home language

Your turn: think of 1 question you would like to ask about using home languages in the mainstream classroom!

- The inclusion of home languages seems easier to implement at primary level. How can we encourage this in secondary schools? Practical ideas for subject teachers would be useful
- How can subject teachers plan for EAL language support?
- How can we help develop a whole school approach to multilingualism?