

Cuairt ar an Meánscoil

Context:

- A primary school in Dublin, Ireland. English is the language of schooling. The Irish language is a curricular subject that is taught in an integrated manner with English. The official *Primary School Curriculum* allocates 3.5 hours per week for the teaching of the Irish language at this age level.
- There are 21 children in this Sixth Class (age 11+). 20 of these children speak home languages other than English. Within this group there are 10 different language backgrounds.

Reasons for choosing the activity:

- In order to facilitate a parent who has called to the classroom to speak to her, the teacher quickly thinks of an activity for the children to undertake.

Description:

- As they have visited their prospective second level school the previous evening, she asks them to write an account of what they have experienced there (→ meaningful language learning). She adds that they may try to use as many languages as they can for this exercise (→ relying on existing linguistic repertoires). The children carry out this task independently. Where necessary, they use class dictionaries and thesauri (→ active language learning).
- The teacher is understandably amazed and delighted by the results of the children's efforts.

This is an output of the project "Inspiring language learning in the early years – Why it matters and what it looks like for children age 3-12" (2016-2019) of the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML). The ECML is a Council of Europe institution promoting excellence in language education in its member states. www.ecml.at/inspiringearlylearning

Age
11+



Comments:

- These children are in an environment where their full linguistic repertoires are valued and affirmed on a daily basis.
- They are encouraged to use all the languages at their disposal to aid their understanding and learning (→ relying on existing linguistic repertoires).
- The example shows text written in Irish, English, French and Tagalog.

Observation:

- This example shows how individual children's plurilingual skills are employed to compose texts using all the languages at their disposal.
- A further cognitive challenge in this exercise is to sustain coherence and cohesion in a text where the language changes continually throughout.



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Chuaigh mé agus mo chlann go dtí Pabal Scoil Mhín. Talagang yumao sa gabí. Nous avons vu beaucoup filles e garçons. Thosaigh an phríomhoide ag coint . The whole room started to quiet down. We were told that all the sixth class children were to make their way to the door. Ensuite, une fille a amenée nous dans une piece . Thosaigh saíd ag scoilt ar na páistí. Si at si at ako nag paghati-hatiin sa isang grupo. We went into one of the English Classes and we did a Volcano Quiz . Une femme a demandé une question difficile et facile a propos de volcan sur le tableau . We also saw a bit of Romeo and Juliet . Four of my neighbours were part of the play.

Example 1: Report written in Irish, Tagalog, French and English

Cuairt ar an Meánscóil

Lá amháin, chuaigh mé ar cuairt ar an meánscóil. Bhuail mé le mo chara Margaret, Is Spainneach í. Elle a portée une jupe et un pull. La jupe était rouge et un pull bleu.

"Hello Cheesecake!" she exclaimed, waving her tanned hand at me.

"Eillo Maggie!" I replied nodding.

"Don't call me that!"

"You... You called me 'Cheesecake', so what would I have said?"

"Kamusta ka dyan?"

"Non, mon amie..."

"Sinabi ko sayo..."

Bhí Maggie agus mise ag siúil ar an bparóiste. Chonaiceamar cailín agus shiúil sí chugainn.

"Dio duit. Is mise Anna." she smiled.

" ¡ Hola ! Soy Margaret y this is Cheesecake!" she smiled, talking in a monotone.

"Kamusta..." I said, waving a bit then brought my palm to my face.

"Ah... Don't you have a person to show you around?"

"Nope!" Maggie answered, still smiling.

"Okay, I'll show you around!"

Example 2: Report written in Irish, French, English, Tagalog and Spanish