



Developing dual literacy:

An Estyn discussion paper



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

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Contents	Page
Introduction	1
What is dual literacy?	3
The features of dual literacy	4
The role of LEAs	5
Whole-school planning	6
How can teachers help pupils to develop dual literacy?	7
(a) Linking areas of learning	7
(b) Planning the development of dual literacy	8
(c) Matching teaching to pupils' needs and abilities	10
(d) Enriching the study of literature	11
Conclusions and recommendations	14

Introduction

This discussion paper highlights some of the benefits of bilingualism and explores the ways in which schools can promote the development of bilingualism generally and of dual literacy in particular.

Bilingualism is the ability to speak, read and write in two languages. Research suggests that bilingual education offers pupils the added benefits of being able to use two languages and being aware of two cultures. Typically those who are bilingual make progress in learning and standards that correspond with those being achieved by monolingual pupils, across the curriculum.

By dual literacy, we mean the added ability to move confidently and smoothly between languages for different purposes. In this paper, we will be discussing dual literacy in the context of Welsh and English.

The provision of Welsh-medium and bilingual education in schools has grown significantly over the last 50 years. The 1996 Education Act states that a school is Welsh-speaking if more than half of the subjects (apart from English and Welsh) that are legal requirements of the school curriculum, are taught fully or partly in Welsh. About 27% of primary schools and 22% of secondary schools are defined in this way as Welsh-speaking schools. A further 6% of primary schools and 10% of secondary schools do some of their teaching in Welsh. Many of the pupils who are educated in Welsh or bilingually come from homes where no one speaks Welsh as a first language.

The National Assembly for Wales has made clear its commitment to fostering Wales' "unique and diverse identity and the benefits of bilingualism".¹ It aims to increase "the number of people who can speak Welsh, with the sharpest increase amongst young people".² The National Assembly's recent White Paper³ also expresses commitment to giving support, through ACCAC, for Welsh medium qualifications. It would benefit pupils to gain recognition for their achievements in dual literacy in the context of the formal assessment of curriculum subjects. In addition, a free-standing qualification in dual literacy should be developed to reflect the achievement of many existing pupils and students in schools and colleges.

¹ betterwales.com: The National Assembly for Wales May 2000

² Plan for Wales 2001: The National Assembly for Wales July 2001

³ The Learning Country: *A Paving Document: A Comprehensive Education and Lifelong Learning Programme to 2010 in Wales* August 2001

In schools that provide bilingual education, the use of the two languages, and the balance between them, can vary considerably. In some cases, teaching is carried out entirely or mainly through the medium of Welsh. In others, teaching is partly through the medium of Welsh and partly through the medium of English. Whatever use is made of the two languages, these schools have the same aim as far as developing pupils' language is concerned. That aim is to enable pupils to play a full part in a bilingual society and to benefit from being able to use Welsh and English to the best of their ability. In order to achieve this fully, pupils need to develop the additional skill of dual literacy.

Dual literacy is important because it:

- assists individuals' intellectual development by refining their ability to think, understand and internalise information in two languages;
- prepares individuals to learn additional languages, by developing flexibility of mind and a positive approach towards other languages and cultures; and
- prepares individuals effectively for situations where they need to use both languages and transfer from one language to the other.

This paper aims to identify the factors that contribute to the achievement of good standards in dual literacy. It shows how schools can develop dual literacy and the skills of moving from one language to another in bilingual situations. The case studies describe how pupils can develop the specific skills involved in moving from one language to another. The paper also considers how teachers can take advantage of pupils' dual literacy to expand and deepen their educational experiences in areas across the curriculum. It illustrates how hearing or reading about something in one language and explaining it in another can strengthen learners' ability in both languages and also give them a fuller and deeper understanding. Talking and thinking in two different languages allow pupils to consider concepts and ideas from different cultural perspectives. This process can help to reinforce learning, as in the following example:

Reinforcing learning through two languages

The aim of this Year 6 lesson in a Welsh-speaking primary school was to discuss the subject of Floods in Welsh, using a range of sources of information in English, including books, CD-ROM and the Internet. The teacher emphasised the usefulness of skim-reading headlines, scanning text, careful reading and recording key points. A guide on note-taking was made available. The pupils then got together in small groups to extract information and to talk about it together. The teacher circulated to help and encourage them and to ask questions. At the end, the pupils came together to report back in Welsh and the teacher raised questions about the significance of the information collected. In this way, the pupils were guided to evaluate their own work and to question the meaning of words in different contexts. They practised a number of key skills whilst researching, discussing, identifying key points and recording information in an appropriately concise manner. They learnt new Welsh terms, with the help of a dictionary. They became more practised in reading in one language and presenting oral and written information in the other language. Using both languages also helped pupils to gain a better understanding of the meaning of key terms.

What is dual literacy?

From the outset, when a young child understands that a word or phrase in both languages is interchangeable and linked to the same concept, dual literacy is starting to develop. As pupils' grasp of literacy in both languages improves, so does their ability to take advantage of dual literacy. The ability to speak, read and write easily in both languages and also the ability to move fluently between languages are part of dual literacy. The skills involved in dual literacy are sometimes called 'trans-languaging' or 'transliterate' skills. Pupils can use and develop them even in the early stages of bilingualism, although the range of situations and contexts where they can practise their language skills may be restricted.

The features of dual literacy

Dual literacy is relevant to any two or more languages, and its features are the same whatever the languages. The features of dual literacy in the language modes of speaking and listening, reading and writing are listed below. They are interdependent and are best developed in an integrated way. They can be developed at different levels throughout the key stages in schools or at any stage in lifelong learning:

- **speaking and listening**
 - use personal or factual detail heard in one language to give the gist of it in another;
 - summarise formally in one language, information presented in another;
 - express information or opinions in a formal register to a group of people who speak different languages by switching easily from one language to the other as required;
 - switch easily from one language to the other in an informal situation in a way which conveys nuance and uses equivalent idioms; and
 - give a verbatim message in one language which was heard or read in another language.

- **reading**
 - recognise the similarities and differences between the vocabulary, syntax and grammar of texts in both languages;
 - enrich and deepen general knowledge about language and its construction;
 - identify similarities and differences between opinions and ideas on the same subject expressed in different languages, so as to understand cultural, national and social perspectives;
 - read and be able to compare Welsh and English versions of the same fictional text and compare them in terms of their content, style and impact;
 - use sources of information in both languages and summarise main points or opinions for different purposes, orally or in writing;
 - compare Welsh and English poems, stories, novels and media products on the same subject or theme, taking into account aspects of content, style and treatment; and
 - read a text or part of a text in one language and complete a number of tasks based on it in another language.

- **writing**
 - communicate information, read or heard, from one language to the other in writing;
 - summarise information received in one language and present it accurately in writing in another language;
 - write a written appreciation in one language, of literature read in another language;
 - translate accurately from one language to the other in writing; and
 - compose or record in one language from a stimulus in another language.

Pupils with dual literacy should demonstrate an increasing ability to:

- draw on their linguistic resources in Welsh and English to reinforce their skills in both languages;
- improve and extend their understanding and grasp of different topics or subjects in two languages;
- draw on the cultures of both languages to understand the life and diverse perspectives of people from different linguistic backgrounds;
- communicate with people from different linguistic backgrounds and read their literature intelligently; and
- take full advantage of communication in both languages to transfer from one language to the other in order to fulfil specific tasks that need an understanding of both languages.

The role of LEAs

Many schools and LEAs have already developed language policies that have the basic aim of developing bilingualism. A few LEAs have raised awareness further and encouraged schools to plan for the development of dual literacy. They have introduced work packs that include bilingual materials and guidance for teachers. As a result of this, dual literacy has been effectively promoted in a few schools and more and more bilingual primary and secondary schools are starting to focus on developing their pupils' dual literacy. In order to make further progress, it is important to build on the current language policies of LEAs and schools and to share good practice in ways of establishing a firm foundation and sound progression in the development of dual literacy.

Whole-school planning

In order to develop dual literacy, schools should:

- develop policies that set out expectations and targets for dual literacy which reflect the linguistic context of the school;
- ensure continuity and progression in pupils' dual literacy experiences by planning their development over time and through a wide range of subjects;
- ensure that there is a good variety of stimulating resources, at appropriate levels of readability, in both languages; and
- offer regular training for staff in how to promote dual literacy in different areas and subjects of the curriculum.

In the best practice, there is whole-school planning and co-operation to ensure that teachers and pupils make the best use of their dual literacy, in a developmental manner, across year and subject groups. The following case study, from a comprehensive school in Gwynedd, where most pupils come from a Welsh-speaking background, is an example of good practice in planning for dual literacy;

Planning for dual literacy

The main objective was to develop learners' language skills so that they could communicate effectively in both languages in every subject in the curriculum. A whole-school policy had been developed to encourage departments to adopt a modular pattern of work, alternating between Welsh and English modules. This arrangement was implemented in science in key stage 3 and key stage 4, for example, where half of the units were taught through the medium of Welsh and half were taught through the medium of English. Whatever the main language, there was at least one task in every unit where both languages were used. These required pupils to move from one language to the other, for example, to read an extract of a text in English, but to answer questions in Welsh. This policy and the methods used helped to ensure that the pupils made consistent progress, not only in their ability to discuss aspects of the subject in Welsh and English but also in changing smoothly from one language to the other to accomplish different tasks. Consequently, pupils had a firmer grasp of subject terminology in both languages.

How can teachers help pupils to develop dual literacy?

Linking areas of learning

In primary schools, teachers often teach the whole curriculum to their classes and can effectively link areas of learning whilst developing knowledge and new skills by taking advantage of the pupils' bilingualism. The following case study shows how using pupils' dual literacy can be beneficial. Year 4 pupils were comparing Victorian life and schools with the present day by using primary sources of evidence. The lesson was carefully planned to combine aspects of history, drama and language curricula in the process of comparing schools in the past and present.

Cross-curricular work

At the start of the lesson, the teacher made extensive use of drama to convey the nature of the school as it was in 1868. This included using English to call the register, reciting times tables together, remembering historical facts and singing together. The pupils became completely absorbed in the activities and greatly enjoyed the experience. They were conscious of the strict discipline of the period - one pupil received the Welsh Not for saying something in Welsh. The teacher drew attention to artefacts, such as an old logbook, which further helped to convey the appropriate atmosphere. The class discussed the nature and language of the logbook. They then browsed through it and gathered information in Welsh about the old school. The pupils' next task was to write in Welsh about the school in the past and how it has changed. Before doing so, they revised orally the different sorts of phrases they can use at the start of sentences when discussing the past, for example, 'Amser maith yn ôl' ('A long time ago'), 'Yn y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg' ('In the nineteenth century'), 'Yn yr hen ddyddiau' ('In the old days'), and so on.

In secondary schools, too, subject departments can work together to help pupils use their dual literacy, by drawing on their separate areas of expertise. Joint working between Welsh and English departments in particular can help pupils to improve their linguistic skills and also to deepen their understanding of the characteristics of language. In some schools, learning packs on *Knowledge about Language* ensure that the one language supports and reinforces development in the other. This sort of guidance helps to improve pupils' grammar, spelling and syntax in both languages by drawing attention to differences between Welsh and English. Similarly, guidance packs on texts being studied can help develop pupils' ability to appreciate literature on the same theme in both languages, or in literature that has been translated from one language into the other. Guidance that focuses on style, linguistic features and content encourages pupils to see the links between how different languages work. It can also lead to more consistency in practice across the language departments involved.

Co-operation between Welsh or English and other subject departments can help promote dual literacy. In the following example, joint working between the Welsh and history departments, and a ‘theatre in education’ company, helped to develop Year 7 pupils’ knowledge of vocabulary and their understanding of the Black Death.

Joint work in Welsh and history

The majority of pupils came from English-speaking homes and a significant proportion had not received Welsh-medium primary education. Pupils watched a presentation on the Black Death performed in English. Immediately after the presentation, they had a Welsh lesson in which they discussed the performance. The teacher encouraged the pupils to use Welsh terminology and also introduced some new Welsh vocabulary to the learners. A number remarked that there were many complicated English words in the presentation that they did not understand. Afterwards, the class was split into smaller groups and each group was asked to draw up, on the blackboard, a list of key words in the presentation, either in Welsh or English. Where an English word was suggested, the teacher asked the class for the Welsh equivalent. Afterwards, the learners made up sentences, using the key vocabulary, in order to discuss the presentation in their next history lesson.

Planning the development of dual literacy

A few teachers plan carefully to take full advantage of pupils’ competence in both languages, and their ability to move from one language to the other. Schools sometimes set aside specific time to develop pupils’ dual literacy.

Practising the skills of dual literacy

In one lesson, for example, Year 6 pupils had the opportunity to practise moving rapidly from one language to the other when speaking and writing. They practised both Welsh and English versions of place names and countries of the world, as used in news bulletins, which were the topic of discussion. The emphasis was on giving a quick response – orally and in writing – in both languages. By completing activities of this nature, where the focus was specifically on trans-linguaging skills within a specific context, pupils developed greater ease of expression in transferring from one language to the other.

Effective planning is essential in order to build on what pupils can already do. Teachers need to consider:

- the level of pupils' competence in both languages so as to be able to match the requirements/tasks appropriately to their needs;
- the readability of texts used in both languages so that they correspond to the age and ability of the pupils who use them;
- the linguistic resources needed in Welsh and English to accomplish the tasks set, and how to ensure that pupils have a strong grasp of them; and
- the need to offer support and guidance to pupils who are undertaking tasks that require them to use higher order linguistic techniques and registers in both languages, for example, when searching for information on their own or using sources in one language and recording the findings in the other language.

In the best cases, teachers recognise the need to develop specific steps for pupils to follow when gathering information in one language and using those sources to work in another language.

Gathering information in one language for work in another

In one Year 6 class, where pupils used English sources, they skim-read the information before reading the relevant sections more carefully. They then underlined the important information in the original text. They went on to discuss the conclusions in sub-groups and exchanged their ideas and suggestions. They then reviewed their work in light of the discussion. After agreeing on the important sentences, they turned them into Welsh. The teacher emphasised that the aim was to paraphrase rather than to translate exactly. They were encouraged to think about Welsh syntax. The pupils used dictionaries and were able to draw on charts in the classroom that included key vocabulary and patterns. By following these steps, not only did pupils learn how to gather information but also how to transfer the information effectively from one language to the other. Throughout the whole process they widened their knowledge of the subject specific aspects and terminology.

In the same way, in the secondary sector, the use of different sources of information in both Welsh and English can enrich pupils' experiences of the subject studied as well as developing dual literacy. This is helped if a structure is provided, for instance, by breaking up lessons into distinct stages, so that existing skills can be extended and new ones developed. At different stages, teachers can ask pupils to read in one language and make notes in another, to read in one language and discuss the material in another and to read in one language and write in another.

A few teachers frequently use a stimulus in one language to inspire work in another language. Such stimuli can include printed or audio-visual texts, CD-ROMs, the Internet or dramatic presentations. In the best practice, teachers select stimuli carefully and ensure that all tasks offer an appropriate level of challenge in terms of language and content. In the following case study, featuring a Year 3-6 class in a designated Welsh-medium school in mid Wales, the teacher took advantage of a suitable stimulus to widen understanding of the art of persuasion.

Using stimulus in one language to inspire work in another

In a Year 3-6 class, in a designated Welsh-medium school in mid Wales, the teacher worked with a Year 6 group to write a persuasive letter in Welsh. They read an English letter written by a child to his parents who were away from home. The teacher then led a discussion about the form and structure of the letter, noting the methods of persuasion that were used. The pupils then studied newspaper articles to look for other examples of persuasion, before writing a persuasive letter to their own parents. The teacher listed vocabulary and phrases that would help them accomplish the task effectively (e.g. ‘fe hoffwn .. oherwydd...’ (‘I would like ... because...’), ‘rheswm arall yw...’ (‘another reason is..’), ‘erfyniaf arnoch...’ (‘I beg you...’). The pupils made a note of these in their Writing Guidelines booklets so that they were able to use them again. By taking advantage of suitable stimuli in English, the teacher widened the pupils’ understanding of the art of persuasion. Setting aside time to introduce useful vocabulary and phrases ensured that they were able to complete the task in Welsh. The pupils successfully applied what they had learnt in one language and used it in the other language.

(c) Matching teaching to pupils’ needs and abilities

The most effective teachers are aware of pupils’ attainment and ability in both languages and create situations to foster dual literacy. They take opportunities to extend pupils’ understanding and their knowledge of language, language registers and conventions by comparing and contrasting the grammar of both languages.

Some schools take advantage of methods used in the teaching of Welsh as a second language when teaching English as a mother tongue. This approach is used in a primary school in South Wales, where English is the main teaching medium, as the following example shows:

Using learning in Welsh as a second language to reinforce learning in English as a mother tongue

A useful document had been prepared to show how teaching and learning Welsh as a second language can reinforce pupils' first language learning in certain ways. For example, teaching how verbs are conjugated and change from one person to another had always been a part of second language teaching in the school; a similar method is now also used to teach aspects of literacy in English. The fact that the pupils were familiar with this analytical method helped them tackle the grammar and syntax of their mother tongue. One teacher helped pupils to understand the meaning of new English words by encouraging them to see whether there were any Welsh words that could help them. For example, when introducing 'millimetre' and 'milligram', she referred to the Welsh word 'mil' ('a thousand'), and the meaning of the word helped the pupils to remember how many 'millimetres'/'milligrams' are in a 'metre'/'gram'.

(d) Enriching the study of literature

In language lessons, at an introductory level, teachers can take advantage of pupils' dual literacy by giving them examples of literary terms such as 'metaphor' and 'alliteration' in both languages. This strengthens their understanding of the terms and enables them to recognise similarities and differences between Welsh and English usage. At a later stage, pupils' in-depth study and appreciation of literature can also be enhanced by their ability to think in both languages and move between them. As a result, pupils start to see how having diverse cultural and linguistic perspectives can help them improve the way they analyse, understand and compose prose and poetry in both languages.

Examples of case studies where proficiency in two languages is used to enhance understanding are given below:

Using proficiency in two languages to enhance understanding

In the first example, the teacher in a bilingual secondary school drew on pupils' proficiency in both languages to compare Welsh and English folk-tales in order to identify their common features. The pupils noted similarities in style and content and broadened their understanding of the genre and period as a result.

In another example, students on an A level course discussed one of the metaphysical poems of George Herbert. The lesson was enriched by the ability of the teacher to refer to work by other metaphysical poets as well as modern English language poets, such as R S Thomas, and Welsh poets like Waldo Williams and Meirion Macintyre Hughes. The teacher drew on the pupils' proficiency in both languages to explore nuance, tone and meaning and to bring complex poetry belonging to a very different age closer to students' experience.

The following example shows how teachers can use pupils' knowledge of the two cultural and linguistic sources available to them to stimulate a more creative use of language.

Appreciating the difference between translation and adaptation

The aim of the Year 6 lessons was to help pupils, mainly from non-Welsh speaking homes, to appreciate the difference between translation and adaptation. The teacher read 'Nos Da, Taid' (the Welsh adaptation, by Myrddin ap Dafydd, of 'Goodbye, Pappa' by Jennifer Eachus) to the class and then she read the original text. The pupils discussed the similarities and differences between the two texts. They considered why Myrddin ap Dafydd used 'Nos Da' ('Good Night') in the title, instead of Goodbye, and noted how different the texts were. For example, 'Daw'r bore'n gynnar i dŷ Taid' ('The morning comes early in Taid's house') was adopted instead of 'In Pappa's garden the path is made'. Pupils showed a good understanding of the difference between an adaptation and a literal translation and came to realise how hard it was to translate some phrases literally. In comparing the two versions, the pupils considered the different emotions implicit in the text, linked to the death of the grandfather. They also related them to their own experiences.

The teacher then divided the class into groups, based on ability, and pupils successfully created their own striking adaptations of the original version of the poem, illustrated in the following examples:

Mae'r afon yn ystumio'n ddiog ger tŷ taid (Near Pappa's house a lazy river flows)

Lleuad llawn yn loetran yn yr awyr (Outside the moon hangs round and yellow)

Cwlwm o fwg yn troelli (Wisps of smoke curl up)

Yng ngardd taid mae'r llwybr wedi dod i ben ei daith (In Pappa's garden the path is made)

To finish the lesson, the groups shared their compositions with the rest of the class and compared them with the original version of Myrddin ap Dafydd's adaptation.

A pupils' English version of Desmond Healy's poem - both shown below - is the outcome of another lesson where similar techniques were used.

Interpreting and using language creatively

Awyren – fin hwyr	Aeroplane - twilight
A'i nodwydd ddur	With her steel needle
Pwythodd	She stitched her
Ei hedafedd	Fragile white wool
Gwyn	On the
Brau	Blue velvet
Ar felfed	Of the twilight.
Glas	
Yr hwyr.	
Syllais yn hir ...	I stared awhile ...
Nes gweld	Until I saw
Y tlysau'n glwstwr	The clustered crystals
Gloyw,	Dazzling
Serennog	Starry
Ar wisg	On the blanket
Y nos.	Of the night.
Desmond Healy	Year 5 pupil

The type of work illustrated above draws on pupils' bilingual capability to widen their vocabulary and to discuss the writing techniques of authors and poets. It develops pupils' ability to write creatively and helps them to express and discuss emotions that are linked to life experiences. As a result, they come to understand the difference between translation and adaptation. They learn to 're-create' texts rather than be restricted by the confines of literal translation. Asking pupils to undertake a creative task such as rendering a poem into another language challenges their ability to appreciate the nuances of idiomatic expression in both languages and the subtle differences between translation and adaptation

Conclusion and recommendations

This discussion paper and the case studies included illustrate how bilingual pupils can benefit from developing dual literacy. The examples highlight a number of teaching and learning strategies that can help develop dual literacy further. They show how completing tasks that require pupils to move from one language to another, and which require them to use both languages instrumentally, can promote learning and deepen understanding. To foster and develop dual literacy effectively, teachers must plan carefully and ensure that the tasks they set are suitable for the age and bilingual ability of pupils.

LEAs, governing bodies, heads of schools, subject leaders and teachers can all help 'support the development of bilingual and other linguistic skills for most of our children and young people' (betterwales.com) by implementing the following recommendations:

- formulate LEA and school policies to show how pupils' dual literacy can be developed and, over time, used to deepen their educational experiences. This might involve extending existing language or bilingual policies;
- marshal the full and active contribution of every member of staff to accomplish this;
- carry out an audit of the contribution that different subjects in the curriculum can make in developing and using pupils' dual literacy;
- provide a whole-school plan for the development of pupils' dual literacy to promote progression and continuity across the key stages, especially between key stages 2 and 3;
- make sure that subject co-ordinators, heads of department and class teachers weave the development of dual literacy into their schemes of work, across the curriculum;
- be aware of the level of pupils' dual literacy so that the experiences offered in the classroom are suitable to meet their linguistic, as well as their subject, needs; and
- provide stimulating and challenging opportunities and experiences for pupils to encourage them to take full advantage of their bilingualism and their dual literacy.

There is also a need to expand opportunities for pupils to gain accredited qualifications for their attainment in dual literacy in the context of the formal assessment of both curriculum subjects. In addition, a free-standing qualification in dual literacy should be developed to reflect the achievement of existing pupils.