

Scotland, People and Language Forum

“1+2 Approach” Briefing Paper

Background

The “Scotland, People and Language Forum” took place on 20 February 2015 in Glasgow. The event was co-organised by Education Scotland, Bilingualism Matters (University of Edinburgh) and Gathered Together (Bemis Scotland). The aim of the forum was to discuss Scotland's linguistic diversity, current Scottish language policy (including “1+2 Approach”) and to share information, experiences and good practice.

The event was attended by 59 participants, representing a total of 31 institutions and organizations including the Scottish Government, 12 local authorities, NGOs, universities and colleges. Half of the participants were EAL or ESOL teachers.

This briefing aims to capture the concerns and challenges that were raised in regard to the “1+2 Approach” to language learning and highlight the opportunities that the Approach brings.

“1+2 Approach”

One in every five British exporters knows it is losing overseas business through its inability to overcome language and cultural differences (British Chambers of Commerce, November 2003)

The “1+2 Approach” to language learning was launched in 2012 and is currently being implemented in Scottish schools. The idea behind the approach is to give every child the opportunity to learn two other languages (L2 and L3) in addition to their mother tongue. The first additional language (L2) is taught from Primary 1 onwards, with the second additional language (L3) taught from P5 at the latest. The first additional language (L2) must be able to be carried on into secondary school and be available as a National Qualification thereafter. This means that in accordance with current arrangements German will be available as both an L2 and L3 while Polish could be taught as L3 (as there is no National Qualification in Polish at present).

The challenges

The participants were invited to consider what they felt the challenges of the “1+2 Approach” were within their work.

- **Recognising the “mother tongue”** Many of the participants, particularly those from an EAL/ ESOL background highlighted the fact that thousands of children have a language other than English as their L1. The Approach does not provide clear pathways for supporting these languages other than as L3- and the L3 approach does not support the development of language skills if the language is in fact a child's L1.
- **Ethnic Minority parental “buy-in”** Parents of children who speak English as an additional language have been resistant to introducing another language to their children. They are concerned that this is “too much” for their children who are still learning English. There is a challenge in convincing them that their children can benefit from the approach.
- **Limited languages in L2** Several participants raised that the majority of primary teachers would be trained in only German or French. This means that it is unlikely that many children will have the opportunity to learn languages such as Urdu or Mandarin.
- **Resources** Ensuring that the appropriate number of teachers, materials and support is available. This includes CPD opportunities for teachers, clear guidelines for teachers on the level of language skills required to deliver classes and that enough time is built into initial teaching education.
- **Support for children with Additional Support Needs** (including deaf children) to ensure that “1+2 Approach” is adapted to meet their particular needs.

Opportunities

During the discussion it was appreciated that the policy has the potential to support people coming to Scotland with no English and would be a blessing for EAL teachers, provided it offers support for English as well as the mother tongue of the newcomer. In the words of one participant,

The best way to learn English is to maintain and support the first language.

Participants were asked how they saw their role in supporting “1+2 Approach” and this highlighted the opportunities for partnership working and far wider involvement with local communities.

- **Celebrating language learning** The approach provides the opportunity to promote the idea of language learning in general, including the fact that language skills are transferrable. In the case of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants this would also involve raising awareness among parents about the available language options.
- **Engaging with parents and young people who are community language speakers** Invite students and parents who speak English as an additional language to contribute their language skills. Through bilingual story-telling. Promoting the “home language” in normal interactions would be desirable to embed diversity in the curriculum.

- **Co-operation with other organisations** “1+2” offers the opportunity to develop links with community groups, language schools and organisations like the Scottish Council on Deafness to support the teaching of L2 or L3.

Bilingual story-telling

St Albert's Primary, Glasgow, has been working with a group of parents to start a bilingual story-telling group. St Albert's has a high portion of families from Pakistan and wanted to recognize the home languages of the students. Together with their EAL teacher, Shagufta Ahmed, a group of parents were trained to do bilingual story telling in Urdu for the children. This helped the children feel more confident about using their mother tongue and boosted the confidence of the parents.

To see the mothers talking about their experience of getting involved go to <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/>

Resources

A 1+2 Approach to modern languages Education Scotland's overview of the 1+ 2 Approach including resources <http://tiny.cc/pz0j2x>

Able Kids Press Ablekids is an independent bookseller based in Scotland, specialising in bilingual and language resources for children <http://www.ablekids.co.uk/>

Bilingualism Matters Bilingualism Matters is a Centre at the University of Edinburgh, BM study bilingualism and language learning, and have a variety of leaflets for families and teachers around bilingualism and how to support learners <http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/>

Edinburgh EAL Service This website provides detailed information on supporting bilingual learners in class, translated materials and useful resources and publications <http://tiny.cc/o60j2x>

European Day of Language celebrates linguistic diversity in Europe and promotes language learning. Website has activities, fun facts and materials for teachers <http://edl.ecml.at/Home/tabid/1455/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>

Gathered Together Supporting parents from ethnic minorities become more involved in their children's learning and school communities. Ideas for promoting parental involvement in schools including good practice guides, videos and blogs <http://gatheredtogether.bemis.org.uk/>

Mantra Lingua Dual language books, including “sound-enabled” stickers for learners to hear words aloud. It provides books in 65 different languages <http://uk.mantralingua.com/>

National Centre for Languages CILT works to convince people of all ages, at all stages of learning and in all walks of life, of the benefits of learning and using more than one language. Includes reports, research and statistics on the value of language learning <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101227105751/cilt.org.uk/home.aspx>

SCILT Scotland's National Centre for Languages The first port of call for information about language learning in Scotland, including links, resources and further information about 1+ 2

<http://www.scilt.org.uk/Home/tabid/1069/Default.aspx>

