

**Developing listening and talking
skills in Gaelic Medium
Education: A collaborative
project**

The accompanying videos may be viewed to support the following case studies.

Developing listening and talking skills in Gaelic Medium Education: A collaborative project between three schools

This resource outlines case studies from three schools who worked together on a project to develop listening and talking skills in Gaelic Medium Education.

Throughout the project, there was a specific focus on the improvement of children's listening and talking skills in Gaelic using active-learning approaches. All three schools collaborated and discussed children's progress throughout, sharing ideas and learning. The use of digital technologies played an important role in engaging the children with their learning.

The vast majority of children in the Gaelic Medium classes were from non-Gaelic speaking backgrounds, and the teachers had to ensure the children were provided with activities which were cognitively challenging but were also meeting language-development needs. The Gaelic language ability across the classes varied, from children who were new to Gaelic Medium Education, to those who had been immersed in the language for up to three years.

The main focus was on:

- language and literacy skills development at early and first level in settings where the children may already be fluent in Gaelic or have little or no knowledge of the target language;
- providing stimulating learning activities which challenged the children cognitively but were also pitched at the appropriate language level;
- the range of appropriate teaching methodologies adopted to support and develop Gaelic language skills;
- effective interdisciplinary learning using experiences and outcomes across learning;
- embedding technology to support Gaelic language development;
- using Glow to engage in professional dialogue;
- developing literacy skills through engagement in a wide range of collaborative activities.

The project provided an opportunity for teachers across the local authorities to reflect on learning and teaching in order to meet the children's Gaelic language and literacy needs. Working in collaboration with other teachers created opportunities to become more confident at assessing children's progress and achievement in Gaelic. Teachers also gained confidence in the use of Glow.

The three schools involved in the project used Glow on a regular basis to share ideas about ongoing work in their classes and to discuss different approaches for specific language learning. It highlighted the value of Glow and the great potential it holds for teachers in Gaelic Medium Education to network, share learning and support one another.

Case Study A

The main aims of this study were to:

- improve children's use and understanding of Gaelic using active learning approaches;
- involve the children in the planning and implementation of digital technologies within the project;
- analyse the opportunities to use digital technology to enhance and support learning and teaching through the medium of Gaelic.

The majority of children in the class were from non-Gaelic speaking backgrounds. The teacher had a strong focus on acquiring Gaelic through play, songs and rhymes. Gaelic language was developed through different contexts to ensure a breadth of learning. An important element of the process was to have a Gaelic speaking support assistant present as often as possible. This provided the opportunity of further modelling of high-quality Gaelic language which the children could absorb from another adult. It helped all the children to have another Gaelic speaking adult to engage with during teacher initiated or child initiated activities.

As part of the project the class regularly used 'flip video cameras' to record listening and talking activities. The hand-held video recorders were very accessible and easy for young children to use. Pieces of work were recorded on a daily basis and shared with others. Children were able to provide and accept feedback which helped to further develop

language proficiency. The children were recorded reading aloud their own and others stories onto the flip camera. This proved to be an enjoyable experience for the children and helped them view themselves on screen and determine what their strengths were, along with areas of improvement.

Experiences and Outcomes

I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to create texts of my choice. LIT 1-01a

As I listen and take part in conversations, I can use new words and phrases to help me to communicate. GAI 1-02a

I am exploring how pace, gesture, expression, emphasis and choice of words are used to engage others, and I can use what I learn. GAI 1-03a

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. LIT 1-04a

I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful for others. LIT 1-06a

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. LIT 1-20a

I can convey information, describe events or processes, share my opinions or persuade my reader in different ways. LIT 1-28a

I have observed living things in the environment over time and am becoming aware of how they depend on each other. SCN 0-01a

I can distinguish between living and non-living things. I can sort living things into groups and explain my decisions. SCN 1-01a

I can explore and experiment with digital technologies and can use what I learn to support and enhance my learning in different contexts. TCH 1-01a

Using digital technologies responsibly I can access, retrieve and use information to support, enrich or extend learning in different contexts. TCH 1-02a

The teacher used the theme 'Under the sea' as a context for learning and created interdisciplinary learning experiences where the children actively participated in planned activities. The children learned vocabulary relating to the theme which allowed for breadth of learning and language development.

During this project the children used digital technology daily to aid their progress in Gaelic and enrich the learning. Using MP3 players, with recordings from older children, provided opportunities for them to recall and retell what they had listened to. Using the flip camera, interactive white board, tablets and digital camera gave them an alternative and more interactive and motivating way to develop their Gaelic language fluency. They

demonstrated enthusiasm and motivation for their Gaelic learning whenever technology was introduced. The teacher capitalised on this motivation and used technology to continue to engage the children with learning. Technology was also used by teaching staff for observations and evidence gathering.

Impact:

- The children had a better understanding of the purpose of their learning and how to improve;
- The children were actively involved in their learning at all times resulting in full participation;
- The children developed editing and redrafting skills from examining sentences from their writing pieces which supported their understanding of the differences between sentence structures in Gaelic and in English;
- The children developed their skills with the use of different technologies and had ownership of their learning.

The children also became familiar with the different ways in which evidence of their learning could be gathered and used.

As part of the project the children filmed their work for its duration, and were able to identify progress and discuss the activities with which they had engaged. They shared the class video with parents at a dedicated open evening for sharing and celebrating learning. This enabled the development of their enterprise and creativity skills.

Case Study B

The main aims of this study was to:

- use and further develop Gaelic language skills as part of total immersion;
- develop Gaelic language skills across the curriculum;

- develop the use of active learning approaches through an interdisciplinary project.

The initial focus was on the development of numeracy skills and the teacher recognised a natural link between language and numeracy development when learning actively. Most of the children in this P1-3 Gaelic class were fluent Gaelic speakers and it was therefore important that the teacher took account of their prior knowledge and learning so that their language was being enriched and extended. This composite class provided the opportunity to focus on specific aspects of language development through numeracy.

The teacher felt that the main aim was to encourage the children to talk, discuss and question in meaningful, real life contexts, ensuring they were aware that Gaelic was the language of communication in all areas of learning. The children applied their Gaelic language skills in different contexts.

Experiences and Outcomes

I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to create texts of my choice. LIT 1-01a,

As I listen and take part in conversations, I can use new words and phrases to help me to communicate. GAI 1-02a,

I am exploring how pace, gesture, expression, emphasis and choice of words are used to engage others, and I can use what I learn. GAI 1-03a

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. LIT 1-04a

I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful for others. LIT 1-06a

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. LIT 1-20a

I can convey information, describe events or processes, share my opinions or persuade my reader in different ways. LIT 1-28a

I have investigated how whole numbers are constructed, can understand the importance of zero within the system and can use my knowledge to explain the link between a digit, its place and its value. MNU 1-02a

I can use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division when solving problems, making best use of the mental strategies and written skills I have developed. MNU 1-03a

I can tell the time using 12 hour clocks, realising there is a link with 24 hour notation, explain how it impacts on my daily routine and ensure that I am organised and ready for events throughout my day. MNU 1-10a

I can use a calendar to plan and be organised for key events for myself and my class throughout the year. MNU 1-10b

I can estimate how long or heavy an object is, or what amount it holds, using everyday things as a guide, then measure or weigh it using appropriate instruments and units. MNU 1-11a

Using technology and other methods, I can display data simply, clearly and accurately by creating tables, charts and diagrams, using simple labelling and scale. MNU 1-21a

The teacher used 'The Seashore' as a context for learning. Before the children engaged in any activities they shared their prior knowledge, what they would like to learn and how they thought they might discover and explore new things. The teacher introduced new words to broaden their vocabulary as required.

The children contributed ideas and thoughts and the teacher then carefully planned numeracy activities which also had specific target language, eg positional language, length, time, data handling. During the planning process the teacher asked questions to gauge the children's understanding of certain concepts, to ensure that they were challenged in their learning. Learning was not only confined to the classroom. Good use was made of the school playground and of the local environment. In one instance the children explored the local seashore to search for and identify different creatures, plants, etc, and then gather and display information. They were encouraged to ask and answer questions ensuring accurate verbal structures of Gaelic language were applied.

When the children engaged in activities, they contributed very well to discussion. For example, in one activity they looked at simple number patterns in small groups and went on to create their own patterns. This involved much discussion about colours, shapes and numbers and they were able to create a more complicated pattern through exploring, discussing and questioning.

The teacher planned carefully the types of questions she asked so that the children were being challenged to think creatively and independently. The children were also encouraged to ask their own questions.

Impact

The teacher evidenced that an active learning approach to numeracy and literacy positively impacted on the children's learning in that they:

- were more confident in using Gaelic in various situations and contexts, and with a range of people;
- gained a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts as they were actively engaged in working things out;
- contributed to planning, discussed and identified prior learning and shared thoughts about their next steps;
- made best use of the wider school community and environment to enhance their learning;
- used digital technologies successfully to record and share their learning.

Case Study C

The main aims of this study were:

- to develop skills in Gaelic with a particular focus on listening and talking;
- to motivate the children through the use of active learning approaches;
- to present and share learning with parents/carers and the wider school community.

The class teacher and children embarked on an interdisciplinary project to focus on particular aspects of Curriculum for Excellence. Relevant Es and Os were grouped together.

Experiences and Outcomes

I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to create texts of my choice. LIT 1-01a

As I listen and take part in conversations, I can use new words and phrases to help me to communicate. GAI 1-02a

I am exploring how pace, gesture, expression, emphasis and choice of words are used to engage others, and I can use what I learn. GAI 1-03a

As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose. LIT 1-04a

I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful for others. LIT 1-06a

I can explore and experiment with digital technologies and can use what I learn to support and enhance my learning in different contexts. TCH 1-01a

I understand how technologies help provide for our needs and wants, and how they can affect the environment in which we live. TCH 1-07a

I can recognise a variety of materials and suggest an appropriate material for a specific use. TCH 1-10a

I can explore and experiment with sketching, manually or digitally, to represent ideas in different learning contexts. TCH 1-11a

I can follow and understand rules and procedures, developing my ability to achieve personal goals. I recognise and can adopt different roles in a range of practical activities. HWB 1-23a

I can recognise progress and achievement by discussing my thoughts and feelings and giving and accepting feedback. HWB 1-24a

The class teacher selected an animation project to motivate the children and thus encourage them to work to the best of their abilities. The children and teacher worked together to plan and reflect on the learning.

The main aim of the project was to develop listening and talking skills in Gaelic, although a wide range of other skills would also be developed. The children and the teacher agreed that a context such as animation would be an effective means to stimulate conversation, debate, feedback, listening and questioning.

The process

The teacher used 'Fairy-tales' as a main theme. The children researched and read some humorous versions of well-known fairy tales. The children then wrote their own version of their chosen traditional tale, *Na Tri Mucan Beaga*.

The writing process was very structured, using a range of techniques. Storyboarding and drama was also incorporated into the creative process. Opportunities were provided throughout for peer and teacher feedback. Pupils discussed and debated aspects of plot and characterisation and then voted on the parts of the story to include in the final animation.

All the ideas for the stories, the storyboards, the artwork, the animation and the script came directly from the children. They had ownership of the project, led the learning and actively contributed to how the project developed. The teacher supported the learners to reflect on their learning and make decisions. Opportunities for personalisation and choice

enhanced the learning experiences which contributed to the overall aim of the project. The children were eager to share ideas and opinions.

The children collaborated to create a film script and record an audio track to accompany the visuals. The finished animation was previewed by parents in the classroom and was also displayed on the school plasma screen. Visitors to the school were able to view the animation.

The use of digital technologies was a significant feature of this project. The interactive whiteboard was used throughout the project, and was helpful for presenting the animation to the children's parents on a large screen.

This project developed the children's listening and talking skills in Gaelic, had breadth, challenge and application within the area of language, and also across other curricular areas. Opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, including learning across numeracy, health and wellbeing, technology and expressive arts was evident throughout.

Impact

The teacher evidenced that:

- the children's Gaelic literacy skills improved;
- the children developed self-assessment skills and the ability to give practical advice to others;
- the children's team-working skills improved;
- the children developed greater appreciation of the time and effort required to produce animated movies;
- the children enjoyed seeing their contributions being valued and celebrated by their peers, parents/carers, staff and other members of the school community;
- the children became more confident in the use of technology;
- all the children had fun.