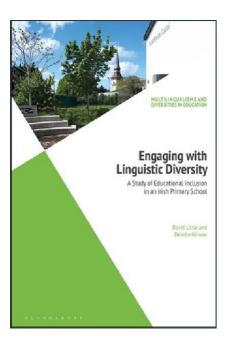
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Engaging with Linguistic Diversity

A Study of Educational Inclusion in an Irish Primary School

David Little & Déirdre Kirwan

"Little and Kirwan make alive the processes through which children construct knowledge and develop literacy and learner autonomy in a school which includes the languages of school, as well as the many home languages of the increasing number of immigrant students. Besides the rich descriptions of classroom practices, the book is significant because it demonstrates the importance of school leadership and teacher collaboration to transform instruction, as well as the ways in which different language practices can be leveraged to learn to transform language education policy." Ofelia García, Professor, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA

"The book I have been waiting for for a long time! It is a compelling must read for teacher educators and educational researchers engaged in rethinking language education in multilingual classrooms. Highly readable, it describes how a dynamic and integrated language policy implemented in an Irish primary school where 50 different languages were spoken by children from immigrant background, led them to academic success and to their integration into Irish society. All teachers and future teachers should read it: they will understand that it is possible to work with languages they do not know, and therefore to transform the learning journey of their multilingual students." Christine Hélot, Professor, University of Strasbourg, France

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Engaging with Linguistic Diversity describes an innovative and highly successful approach to inclusive plurilingual education at primary level. The approach was developed by Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní), Blanchardstown, as a way of converting extreme linguistic diversity – more than 50 home languages in a school of 320 pupils – into educational capital. The central feature of the approach is the inclusion of home languages in classroom communication.

After describing the national context, the book traces the development of Scoil Bhríde's approach and explores in detail its impact on classroom discourse, pupils' plurilingual literacy development, and their capacity for autonomous learning. The authors illustrate their arguments with a wealth of practical evidence drawn from a variety of sources; pupils' and teachers' voices are especially prominent. The concluding chapter considers issues of sustainability and replication and the implications of the approach for teacher education. The book refers to a wide range of relevant research findings and theories, including translanguaging, plurilingual and intercultural education, language awareness and language learner autonomy. It is essential reading for researchers and policy-makers in the field of linguistically inclusive education.

David Little was formerly Director of the Centre for Language and Communication Studies and Head of the School of Linguistic, Speech and Communication Sciences at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. For the past ten years, he has played a leading role in the Council of Europe's work on the language education of migrants.

Déirdre Kirwan was principal of Scoil Bhríde (Cailíní), Blanchardstown, Ireland, from 1987 to 2015. In 2008 she was nominated European Ambassador for Languages (Léargas) for her active promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity in the school, and in 2009 she received her PhD from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, for her research in this area.



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