

Scottish Assembly or a group of parents or newly qualified teachers.

### Evaluation

Morgan and Wrigley (forthcoming) have undertaken an evaluation of the first year of the PBL course. They conclude that:

‘the course in its structure seemed to facilitate practical engagement with a great variety of educational issues.... The long-term process involved in presentation..., together with a thoroughness and range in the design of the Future Schools, strongly suggests that the PBL course does foster a significant sense of agency and personal commitment in participants’ (p.13).

The quality of the research and presentations, to my mind, testify to the potential of the approach to equip students with the questioning and problematising skills required to deal with the diverse nature of contemporary schools and to challenge the inequities which they often foster. The PBL approach is an excellent way of embedding issues such as linguistic and cultural diversity and the teacher’s response to it within the core of the undergraduate curriculum rather than leaving it to a final year optional course or a post-qualifying specialist programme. There are plans to develop this approach further in the third and fourth years of the undergraduate programme building in opportunities for greater student independence. There is also discussion of adapting the approach in a review of the School of Education’s highly successful Masters programme in Additional Support for Learning (Bilingual Learners).

### References

- Bolzan, N and Heycox, K (1999) Use of an issue-based approach in social work. In Boud, D and Feletti, G (eds) *The challenge of problem-based learning*. London : Kogan Page.
- Margetson, JP (1997) Why is Problem-based Learning a Challenge? In Boud, D and Feletti, G, *Problem-based learning* (2nd edn), London: Kogan Page
- Morgan, P and Wrigley, T (forthcoming) Transforming teacher education : professionalism for a changing world.

## REVIEWS

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### ***Continua of Biliteracy: An Ecological Framework for Educational Policy, Research, and Practice in Multilingual Settings.* Hornberger, N. H. (Ed.)(2003) Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. ISBN 185359-654-X**

For those of us with a keen interest in the literacy development of children and young people learning EAL we recognise that literacy acquisition does not take place in a vacuum or in one writing system. It is influenced by society’s ideologies and orientations towards literacy and through the individual’s different behaviours, interactions and literacy practices in a variety of domains, be it home, school or community. These literacy practices have varying degrees of importance, some of them are independent, whilst others may complement or be in conflict with each other. But how do you make sense of all of these interconnections? And how do you represent such a complex and dynamic phenomenon visually? This new book by Nancy Hornberger sets out to address these and many other questions about the use of communication occurring in two or more languages in and around writing. She does so with originality and impressive scope.

It is incredible to learn that Hornberger’s model of the Continua of Biliteracy was first put forward over fifteen years ago (reprinted here in the first chapter). The notion of ‘continuum’ is particularly helpful as it extends beyond the dichotomous classifications of bilingualism such as additive/subtractive and submersion/immersion which frequently situate the learner at opposite extremes. Hornberger’s comprehensive model recognises the numerous shifting and interwoven factors through which biliteracy develops in linguistically diverse settings. She conveys this through twelve intersecting continua.

To take into account the changes in her thinking in the intervening years the concept is revisited in collaboration with Skilton-Sylvester (Chapter 2) to emphasise the power relations inherent within the framework where one end of the continua is associated with more power and the other with less (as shown in the diagram below).

**Traditionally  
less powerful**

**Traditionally  
more powerful**

*Content of biliteracy*

|                  |   |             |
|------------------|---|-------------|
| Micro            | ↔ | macro       |
| Oral             | ↔ | literate    |
| Bi(multi)lingual | ↔ | monolingual |

*Development of biliteracy*

|           |   |            |
|-----------|---|------------|
| Reception | ↔ | production |
| Oral      | ↔ | written    |
| L1        | ↔ | L2         |

*Content of biliteracy*

|                |   |                  |
|----------------|---|------------------|
| Minority       | ↔ | majority         |
| Vernacular     | ↔ | literary         |
| Contextualised | ↔ | decontextualised |

*Media of biliteracy*

|                       |   |                     |
|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| Simultaneous exposure | ↔ | successive exposure |
| Dissimilar structures | ↔ | similar structures  |
| Divergent scripts     | ↔ | convergent scripts  |

This I believe is a strength of the framework as it clearly identifies how policy-makers and reflective practitioners can bring about change. For example, how can teachers move from the traditionally more powerful monolingual context of biliteracy to the traditionally less powerful bi(multi)lingual context? The answer is that they can make choices and exercise power by encouraging children to write and publish dual-language books within the classroom or invite parents to read stories in their home language or celebrate successes gained at complementary schools. These actions, as Hornberger argues, challenge the dominant educational discourse that claims that developing a children's L1 hinders the learning of English language.

The remaining chapters in the book offer a further discussion of the framework allowing the reader to gauge its validity against a range of detailed accounts of policy and practice from a global perspective. Some of the articles include an examination of Language planning and the Welsh National Curriculum by Colin Baker, a study of the literacy practices in two schools in New Delhi, India, a description of a multilingual education project in South Africa and an account of a US Korean church and its heritage language school. The diversity of chapters within the book attests to the adaptability of the framework to describe biliteracy

development from various standpoints within a variety of international contexts.

The final chapter, again by Hornberger, concludes nicely with a comparison between the bilingual programmes in post-apartheid South Africa and Bolivia and the challenges facing the implementation of multilingual language policies. She effectively uses these two countries to reinforce the metaphor of the ecology of language. The metaphor, explored with great vision, is defined by three ideological themes: language evolution, language environment and language endangerment.

The book is significant, as it is a further example of recent work that brings the fields of bilingualism and literacy into contact. It is therefore no surprise that it is topped and tailed by informative contributions from Jim Cummins (Forward) and Brian Street (Afterword). Both give due praise to the framework but in the spirit of generating professional and academic debate they act as 'critical friends' suggesting further questions that the framework may need to consider.

A possible criticism of this book is that the chapters are inconsistent. Some authors make explicit use of the framework for a robust interrogation and critique of the multilingual setting they are describing, whilst others only make passing reference to the framework. This may be reflected in the fact that about half the chapters are written by Hornberger's current and former students who will be more familiar with her work. Another complaint may be that the framework is too difficult to grasp at first reading and those who are not visual learners may find the three-dimensional and intersecting nested continua too abstract. However, Hornberger takes on board this point in the introduction. She argues that the complexity of the framework is perhaps its greatest virtue, in that the phenomena it intends to represent are complex and should not be subjected to over-simplification.

But these remarks are trivial. We have here an excellent book by someone who cares deeply about the promotion of social justice and universal literacy. It is a challenging yet intellectually stimulating read. To any researcher or practitioner who is concerned about the education and welfare of EAL learners, Hornberger's book is highly recommended.

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