

Cover sheet

For this assignment I have submitted the following:

- Component 1- 10 minute recording of my activity.

- Component 2- Supporting paper that includes:
 - Benefits of bilingualism/multilingualism
 - EAL/WAL
 - Brain development
 - Divergent thinking
 - Frameworks and programmes

I confirm that I have not used AI during this assignment.

I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I have used which I may be asked to provide as evidence.

10 minute recording

[drive.google.com.url](#)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fsVdyAgI68BimVda2j5xXnamd_ZLSfoB/view?usp=sharing

Supporting paper

During this assignment I will be exploring the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism and how it can affect children's learning and development and focusing on Welsh as an additional language and how important it can be during a child's education. I will also be exploring how learning multiple languages can support brain development and how this links to divergent thinking, which is when the children think creatively and produce ideas independently. Lastly, I will be looking at the different frameworks and programmes that support bilingualism and multilingualism. Bilingualism is when someone can understand and speak two languages, and multilingualism is when someone can speak and understand more than two languages. These can vary depending on someone's confidence, meaning someone might be more confident in one language than the other (Baumgart and Billick, 2017).

Bilingualism and multilingualism can provide many benefits to children's cognitive development, as research highlights that when managing two or more languages at once, it acts as a form of "brain training" (Mehmedbegovic, 2020, p. 5), which strengthens children's cognitive abilities. This happens when switching between languages, which enhances children's thinking process, flexibility, and problem-solving skills and allows them to understand and reflect on how language works and eventually use all these skills in other areas of learning (Mehmedbegovic, 2020).

During my activity, I supported this by switching back and forth between the Welsh language and the English language to allow the children to understand what each Welsh term means. In addition, Wei and Woll (2019) further highlight that learning a wide range of languages is linked with wider cognitive development, including enhancing a child's creativity skills and the ability to transfer different skills across all areas of learning. This suggests that bilingual children may engage more during lessons, adapt their thinking depending on what they are learning and develop more complex ideas (Wei and Woll, 2019). Furthermore, recent research emphasises that bilingualism strengthens children's attention control and flexibility, as it supports academic skills and allows children to take on challenges more effectively (Filippi *et al.*, 2024). Overall, this evidence shows that bilingualism plays a key role in a child's

cognitive development, brain function, and educational achievements. This can also be relevant when choosing Welsh/English as an additional language, as it can also support the same cognitive benefits.

Welsh as an additional language can be defined as when children are learning and use the Welsh language alongside another language, and this plays an important role within education, as this supports children's cognitive development and links closely with bilingualism (Williams, ap Gruffudd and Gruffydd Jones, 2024). During practice, Welsh as an additional language is usually introduced through everyday activities, such as songs, instructions, resources, and Welsh phrases which are used alongside English so that the children have a full understanding (Jones, 2017). This is called the 'sandwich method,' where practitioners switch from Welsh-English-Welsh, which allows children to go back and forth to support their understanding. This also means that children can freely choose to respond in either language when being asked a question as their confidence grows (Jones, 2017).

This can then be linked closely with Vygotsky's social interaction theory, which highlights the importance of language and social interaction for children's cognitive development. By creating an engaging environment for the Welsh language, children are then supported in their zone of proximal development, which will gradually increase their confidence in these activities (McLeod, 2025). Furthermore, Dallimore and Cunnington-Wynn (2017) also highlight the importance of early exposure to the Welsh language in supporting children in long-term bilingualism, which increases their confidence and future language opportunities in education. Therefore, Welsh as an additional language helps support a child's cognitive development, creates meaningful engagement in education and an inclusive practice in all settings (Dallimore and Cunnington-Wynn, 2017). This can also be linked with brain development, as when using two languages, it can provide positive cognitive effects for the brain.

Bilingualism, or using Welsh as an additional language, can have a positive effect on children's brain development, as it can strengthen their thinking process and how they process information (Pliatsikas *et al.*, 2020). Piaget's cognitive development theory can support this, as it suggests that children gain their understanding through experiences

and interactions within their surrounding environment (McLeod, 2025). When children are learning two or more languages, their brains automatically start to make connections, organise information, and adapt in the way they think, which supports their brain development. This is because their brains are working to try and understand the meaning of the language, which improves problem-solving skills, memory and attention span (Berken, Gracco and Klein, 2017).

In practice, this can be supported by ensuring children have the chance to hear both languages in simple forms such as play and storytelling and throughout daily routines, as this is a way that children can link this language to the language they are familiar with (Wong, Yin and O'Brien, 2016). During my activity, I supported this by using both languages when saying phrases and singing songs, which could encourage the children to listen actively and respond to any questions that I asked in either language depending on their confidence levels. This allows the children to feel at ease as they are in a group setting and to also learn from their friends around them in a relaxed and supportive environment. Overall, these activities help strengthen a child's brain development by encouraging them to think in different ways and make the appropriate connections between the languages (Wong, Yin and O'Brien, 2016). This can also be linked with divergent thinking, as when learning or speaking two or more languages, it supports brain development, allowing children to think creatively and develop ideas.

Divergent thinking is the ability to think of many different ideas or answers to a question, rather than just looking for one, which children can use in play, allowing them to develop their creative and imaginative skills (Storme *et al.*, 2017). This type of thinking can be used in early years, as it supports children's problem-solving skills and confidence levels. Bilingual children often show this, as they can think and answer in each language, allowing them to make wider connections and visualise things in different ways (Storme *et al.*, 2017). However, some research suggests that bilingual children do not always show strong divergent thinking, as this can depend on their confidence levels and how well they know each language, which influences a child's ability to think of multiple different ideas (Booton *et al.*, 2021; Zheng, Denervaud and Durrleman, 2023).

During my activity, I supported this by allowing children to answer each question in the language they felt the most comfortable with, but next time I will extend on this by asking more open-ended questions, which will allow the children to not feel the pressure of being right or wrong. This can be linked with Cummins' theory, which suggested that if a child learns skills in one language, it can help support learning in another language, meaning that when children are thinking creatively in English, they are also developing new ideas they can use in Welsh (Cummins, 2016). Therefore, when using divergent thinking in activities such as circle time, it can help children feel a sense of belonging, build their confidence, and support their language development and creativity skills.

There are a range of early years frameworks and policies in Wales that support bilingualism and language development. The Curriculum Cymreig is a framework that promotes the Welsh language and its culture within education and encourages children to develop a sense of belonging and a general understanding of Wales (Smith, 2016). Practitioners can support this during practice by using Welsh alongside English during circle time activities to encourage a child's confidence and engagement and allow the children to answer any questions in either language (Taylor, Rhys and Waldron, 2016). This can also be linked to Krashen's theory, which suggested that children learn language most effectively through meaningful interaction and in environments with no pressure, which supports the use of circle time activities, as children can develop their language skills in a natural environment (Lichtman and VanPatten, 2021).

Another key framework is the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which recognises Welsh as an official language and ensures it is used equally alongside English in practices (Welsh Government, 2020). This is further supported by A Living Language: A Language for Living (2012-17), as its aim was to increase the use of Welsh in everyday life, including in early years practices (Welsh Government, 2016), and Iaith Pawb (2003), which focused on creating a bilingual country through encouraging the use of the Welsh language in educational settings and throughout the community (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003). Recent research also suggests that education plays a key role in promoting Welsh alongside English to achieve long-term bilingualism for children (Williams, ap Gruffudd and Gruffydd Jones, 2024). Overall,

these frameworks and policies highlight the importance of bilingualism in Wales, supporting children's development and Wales's culture.

In conclusion, this has shown that bilingualism and multilingualism play a key role in supporting children's cognitive development, creativity, and overall learning. On top of this, Welsh as an additional language can provide similar opportunities, as it can help children strengthen their thinking, problem-solving skills, and confidence. Supporting this, the Welsh frameworks and policies further reinforce the importance of promoting the language within practice. Theories such as Cummins, Krashen, Piaget and Vygotsky also highlight the importance of language and interaction for children's development, alongside circle time activities and the sandwich method, which help create a supportive environment. Additionally, the link between bilingualism, divergent thinking and brain development shows how children become more creative and produce new, broad ideas independently. Overall, for future practice, practitioners could provide open-ended questions and ensure there is regular exposure to both languages to build confidence in a supportive, low-pressure environment.

Reference list

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