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An Tumoideachas ag an mBunleibhéal in Éirinn: Léargais ón Taighde Náisiúnta (Immersion Education at Primary Level in Ireland: Insights from National Research) –

Report by Claire Dunne: Tuarascáil le Claire M. Dunne

Óráid Sheolta - Áine Hyland – 20 Samhain 2025.

Launch speech – Áine Hyland – 20 November 2025

Key Words: Irish language; Immersion Education; Gaelscoileanna: Tumoideachas.

An Tumoideachas ag an mBunleibhéal in Éirinn: Léargais ón Taighde
Náisiúnta

Tuarascáil le Claire M. Dunne

Óráid Sheolta - Áine Hyland – 20 Samhain 2025.

A dhaoine uaisle, a chomhghleacaithe agus a chairde, Is mór an pléisiúr agus an onóir dom fáilte a chur romhaibh inniu do sheoladh an tuarascáil seo: **An Tumoideachas ag an mBunleibhéal in Éirinn: Léargais ón taighde náisiúnta**. Is í Claire Dunne an túdar agus is iad COGG agus Coláiste Oideachais Marino na foilsitheoirí.

Foilseachán é seo a thugann le chéile blianta fada de scoláireacht chúramach agus anailís dhian ar ról agus acmhainneacht an thumoideachais sa tír seo. Gan amhras ar bith, is é seo ceann de na scrúduithe is cuimsithí a foilsíodh riamh ar oideachas lán-Ghaeilge.

Déanann an tuarascáil seo suirbhé ar an gcorp iomlán taighde ar thumoideachas ag an mbunleibhéal in Éirinn—agus déanann sí é sin le fairsinge agus doimhneacht shuntasach. Tugann sí le chéile staidéir ó scoileanna Gaeltachta, ó ghaelscoileanna lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht, agus ó aonad lán-Ghaeilge i dTuaisceart Éireann. Scrúdaíonn sí an taighde go léir suas go 2024, rud a fhágann gurb í an chomhiomlánú is cothroime a bhfuil ar fáil dúinn. Ceanglaíonn sí le chéile cur chuige éagsúla: anailísí ar shonraí daonáirimh; staidéir dírithe ar fhoghlaim teanga; suirbhéanna náisiúnta ar dhearcthaí i leith na Gaeilge; agus taighde tábhachtach eile a foilsíodh tríd na blianta. Ní hachomair atá romhainn, ach bailiúchán scolártha.

Ceann de na gnéithe is suntasaí den tuarascáil seo ná an scóip fhairsing atá inti. Áirítear inti caibidlí a dhéanann iniúchadh ar gach príomhghné den tumoideachas. Tugtar léargas mín ar **Fás agus Forbairt an Tumoideachais,** ag rianú an chomhthéacs stairiúil agus polasaí a mhúnlaigh an córas oideachais lán-Ghaeilge ó thuaidh agus ó dheas. Tugtar léargas ar **Ghnóthachtáil agus Taithí na bPáistí sa Chóras Tumoideachais**, áit a gcuirtear le chéile taighde ar fhoghlaim na bpáistí, ar a bhforbairt agus ar a gcuid taithí mar pháistí dátheangacha nó ilteangacha.

Tugann an chaibidil ar **Fhorbairt na Dé Litearthacht**a pictiúr casta agus mín ar an gcaoi a bhforbraíonn páistí litearthacht i dhá theanga, agus na tacaíochtaí is éifeachtaí chuige sin. Tá an chaibidil **An Tumoideachas agus an Domhan Ilteangach** thar a bheith tráthúil. Cuireann an t-údar in iúl dúinn go labhraítear suas le 200 teanga i dtithe ar fud na tíre sa lá atá inniu ann. Tá ról ag an gcóras tumoideachais an éagsúlacht i bpobal na Gaeilge a chur ar shúile na bpáistí, agus fáilte a chur roimh páistí a bhfuil féiniúlachtaí éagsúla acu, ina measc cainteoirí dúchais agus nua chainteoirí. Tá ár seomraí ranga ag éirí níos ilteangacha, agus tá páistí ag teacht chugainn le saibhreas teanga a gcuireann an tumoideachas ar a gcumas úsáid níos leithne a bhaint as.

Déanann caibidlí eile iniúchadh ar **mheasúnú sa chóras tumoideachais,** ag tabhairt béime ar chur chuige a aithníonn agus a thacaíonn le forbairt teanga. Tá caibidil fhairsing ar **Gach Páiste a Chur san Áireamh,** caibidil a chuireann i gcuimhne dúinn gur féidir le gach páiste leas a bhaint as an dtumoideachas, fad is go bhfuil cleachtais chuimsitheacha, acmhainní cuí, agus pleananna scoile dea-fhorbartha ann.

Tugann an tuarascáil sinn freisin isteach i saol **Rannpháirtíocht Tuismitheoirí agus Teaghlaigh**. Aithnítear go soiléir an ról lárnach a imríonn teaghlaigh i bhforbairt teanga agus taithí foghlama an linbh. Ní éiríonn aon chlár tumtha go neamhspleách; éiríonn leis mar gheall ar an gcomhpháirtíocht idir baile agus scoil.

Pléitear go mion **Riachtanais na Múinteoirí**, idir oiliúint, forbairt ghairmiúil leanúnach agus deiseanna chun dea-chleachtas a roinnt. Tá múinteoirí i gcroílár an tumoideachais, agus aithnítear sa tuarascáil go mbraitheann rath na bpáistí ar mhuinín, inniúlacht agus folláine na múinteoirí. Ina theannta sin, tá caibidil dár tideal **Tacaíochtaí don Chóras Thumoideachais**, ag soláthar léargais ar an méid a theastaíonn ó scoileanna, ó lucht déanta beartais agus ó chórais chun soláthar ardchaighdeáin a chothú.

Le chéile, cruthaíonn na caibidlí sin lámhleabhar údarásach—léarscáil dár dturas go dtí seo agus compás don todhchaí.

Ba mhaith liom gné amháin a lua: an rannán **Léitheoireachta Molta**. Leathnaíonn sé thar 23 leathanach agus cuimsíonn sé beagnach 500 tagairt. Dóibh siúd atá ag staidéar, ag múineadh nó ag déanamh taighde, is acmhainn ríluachmhar é seo. Dá mbeadh an leabharliosta amháin againn, bheadh cúis cheiliúrtha ann—ach tá i bhfad níos mó le fáil ann.

Léiríonn an taighde go léir a luaitear sa tuarascáil seo, gur cur chuige éifeachtach, fiúntach agus solúbtha é an tumoideachas. Éiríonn go maith le páistí ó thaobh acadúil, teangeolaíoch, sóisialta agus pearsanta. Ach múineann an tuarascáil dúinn freisin nach dtagann an rath sin gan obair. Éiríonn leis an dtumoideachas nuair a thacaíonn múineadh machnamhach, polasaithe cuimsitheacha agus cultúr scoile dearfach leis.

Tugtar béim arís agus arís eile ar **ghlór an linbh**. Tá scileanna, spéiseanna agus riachtanais éagsula ag páistí in ár nGaelscoileanna. Teastaíonn an tacaíocht chéanna uathu agus páistí i scoileanna Béarla—ach teastaíonn tacaíochtaí breise uathu freisin a bhaineann go sonrach leis an nGaeilge. Nuair a éistimid leis na páistí agus a thuigimid a gcuid taithí, is féidir linn tacaíochtaí a dhearadh a fhreagraíonn dá riachtanais i ndáiríre.

Ceacht lárnach eile ná gur féidir agus gur chóir go mbeadh an tumoideachas cuimsitheach. Tá an taighde soiléir: is féidir le gach páiste—lena n-áirítear páistí a bhfuil riachtanais bhreise foghlama acu—rath a bhaint as tumoideachas, fad is atá pleanáil chuimsitheach, comhoibriú scoile iomláine agus na hacmhainní cuí ann..

Cuireann an tuarascáil seo an tír seo i gcomhthéacs idirnáisiúnta. Cé go bhfuil an fócas ar oideachas lán-Ghaeilge ó thuaidh agus ó dheas, tarraingítear ar thaighde idirnáisiúnta agus ar

chomparáidí domhanda. Sa tslí seo, cuireann sé Éire i láthair mar rannpháirtí gníomhach i réimse domhanda an thumoideachais..

Gan dabht, beidh an foilseachán dátheangach seo ina léamh riachtana do mórán daoine. Cuirfidh sé treoir ar fáil do lucht déanta beartais, inspioráid do thuismitheoirí agus treo do thaighdeoirí. Ach thar aon ní eile, cabhróidh sé linn taithí oideachais na bpáistí a threisiú—na páistí a shiúlann isteach i scoileanna Gaeltachta, i ngaelscoileanna, agus in aonaid lán-Ghaeilge gach maidin, fonn foghlama agus fás orthu.

Ní hamháin gur seoladh tuarascála atá á cheiliúradh againn inniu, ach uirlis chumhachtach nua chun an tumoideachas a thuiscint agus a fheabhsú. Tugann sé eolas dúinn, agus spreagann sé muid ceisteanna a chur orainn féin faoi na réimsí ar gá feabhas a chur orthu. Tugann sé cuireadh dúinn gníomhú go stuama, chun a chinntiú go leanfaidh an tumoideachas ar aghaidh go rathúil in Éirinn atá níos éagsúla, níos ilteangacha agus níos nasctha ná riamh.

Mar fhocal scoir, ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas ó chroí a ghabháil leis an údar, Claire Dunne, as an obair iontach seo—leis na múinteoirí a úsáideann tumoideachas beo gach lá, leis na tuismitheoirí a thacaíonn le turas dhátheangach a bpáistí, agus thar aon duine eile, leis na páistí iad féin, a spreagann muid lena bhfiosracht, lena n-éirim agus lena misneach chun córas oideachais a thógáil atá tuillte acu. Ba mhaith liom freisin buíochas a ghabháil le COGG and le Choláiste Oideachais Marino a fhoilsigh an tuarascáil seo.

Is mór an pléisiúr dom an tuarascáil seo ar Tumoideachas in Éirinn a sheoladh go hoifigiúil. Go dtugadh sí treoir dár gcuid smaointe, go saibhreodh sí ár gcleachtas agus go neartódh sí ár ngealltanas maidir le daoine óga dátheangacha agus ilteangacha a chothú ar fud na tíre.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Immersion Education at Primary Level in Ireland: Insights from National Research

Report by Claire Dunne

(Launch speech – Áine Hyland – 20 November 2025)

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, colleagues, students, and friends, It is a great pleasure and an honour to welcome you here today for the launch of this remarkable new report on ***Immersion Education at Primary Level in Ireland: Insights from national research.*** This publication, being launched today in both Irish and English, summarises decades of careful scholarship, rigorous analysis, and deep reflection on the role and potential of immersion education across our island. It is, without question, one of the most comprehensive and ambitious examinations of Irish-medium education ever undertaken.

This report surveys the full body of research published on immersion education at primary level in Ireland—and it does so with exceptional breadth. It brings together studies from Gaeltacht schools, Irish-medium schools outside the Gaeltacht, and Irish-medium units in Northern Ireland. It reviews research up to 2024, making it the most up-to-date and exhaustive synthesis available to us. In doing so, it connects a wide range of earlier approaches: analyses of census data; targeted studies on language learning and achievement; national surveys on attitudes towards Irish; and key syntheses published in 2011, 2012, and 2015. What we have before us today is not simply an overview, but a scholarly compendium—a distillation of decades of research, reflection, and lived educational experience.

One of the most striking aspects of the report is its scope. It contains chapters that address every major dimension of immersion education. We see a detailed account of ***The Growth and Development of Immersion Education*****,** tracing the historical and policy contexts that have shaped Irish-medium schooling north and south. We are given insight into ***Children's Achievement and Experience*****, drawing** together research on how children learn, how they grow, and how they perceive their own bilingual or multilingual journeys.

The chapter on ***Biliteracy*** offers a nuanced picture of how children develop literacy in two languages, and what supports most effectively nurture that development. The section on ***Immersion Education and the Multilingual World*** **is** particularly timely. The author reminds us that, in today's Ireland, up to 200 languages are spoken in homes across the country. This reality is transforming our educational landscape. Increasingly, our classrooms are home not only to bilingual children, but to children who are truly multilingual—children who bring rich linguistic resources with them. This report helps us to understand how immersion education can both respond to and benefit from this diversity.

Other chapters deepen our understanding of assessment in immersion contexts, highlighting the importance of approaches that recognise and support linguistic development. There is a thoughtful exploration of ***Including Every Child—***a reminder that immersion education is not just for some children but can be for all, provided that inclusive pedagogies, appropriate resources, and well-planned whole-school supports are in place.

The report also takes us into the world of ***Parental and Family Involvement.*** It acknowledges, with evidence and clarity, the central role played by families in supporting children's language development and overall learning experience. No immersion programme succeeds in isolation; it thrives because of the partnership between home and school.

There is an important discussion of ***Teachers' Needs*** in immersion settings—what teachers require in terms of training, continuous professional development, and opportunities to share good practice. Teachers are at the heart of immersion education, and this report recognises that their confidence, competence, and wellbeing are directly connected to children's success. Related to this is a chapter on the broader ***Supports for Immersion Education*****,** which identifies what schools, policy-makers, and systems need to put in place to sustain high-quality provision.

Taken together, these chapters form an authoritative guide—a map of where we have come from, and a compass pointing towards where we must go.

Let me highlight one remarkable feature: the ***Recommended Reading*** section. Spanning 23 pages and containing almost 500 references, this bibliography is extraordinary in its scope. For students, researchers, teachers, and policymakers, it will be an indispensable resource. Indeed, for its bibliography alone, the report would be worth celebrating—but it offers so much more.

What emerges most clearly from this work is a rich picture of "What Works" in immersion education. We hear a strong message that immersion education is effective, valuable, and adaptable. The research shows that children in immersion programmes can flourish academically, linguistically, socially, and personally. But it also teaches us that success is not automatic. Immersion education thrives when it is supported by thoughtful pedagogy, inclusive policies, and a school culture that nurtures every child.

The report repeatedly emphasises the importance of listening to the child's voice. Children in immersion settings have diverse talents, interests, and needs. Many need the same kinds of supports that children in English-medium schools require—but they also need specific supports related to the Irish language. When we listen to children, when we observe their experiences and understand their perspectives, we can design supports that truly meet their needs.

Another central lesson is that immersion education can and should be inclusive. This report challenges outdated misconceptions about who can benefit from immersion education. The

research is clear: all children—including those with additional learning needs—can succeed in immersion settings, provided the school is committed to inclusive planning, whole-school collaboration, and the resourcing necessary to create equitable learning environments. Immersion education is not about exclusion; it is about opportunity, belonging, and potential.

As we reflect on the significance of this report, we are also invited to reflect on Ireland's place in a global conversation. While the focus is on Irish-medium education north and south, the report thoughtfully draws on international research and comparisons. In doing so, it positions Ireland not as a peripheral participant in immersion education, but as an active contributor to a global field of expertise.

This bilingual publication will undoubtedly become required reading for teacher educators, teachers, and student teachers. It will offer guidance for policymakers, inspiration for parents, and direction for researchers. But more importantly, it will help us to strengthen the educational experiences of children—the children who walk through the doors of Gaeltacht schools, Gaelscoileanna, bunscoileanna, and Irish-medium units every morning, eager to learn, to play, and to grow.

Today's launch marks not just the publication of a report, but the arrival of a powerful new tool for understanding and enhancing immersion education. It equips us with knowledge, with perspective, and with evidence. It encourages us to celebrate our achievements but also to ask hard questions about where improvements are needed. It calls us to act with intention, ensuring that immersion education continues to thrive in an Ireland that is increasingly diverse, multilingual, and interconnected.

In closing, let me express sincere thanks to the author for this extraordinary contribution—to the teachers whose daily work gives life to immersion education, to the parents who support their children's bilingual journeys, and most of all to the children themselves, whose curiosity, creativity, and courage inspire us to continue building an education system worthy of their talents.

It is my great pleasure to officially launch this report on ***Immersion Education in Ireland.*** May it guide our thinking, enrich our practice, and strengthen our shared commitment to nurturing bilingual and multilingual young people across our island.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.