

*From life worlds and work worlds to college: The
bilingual literacy practices of young Welsh speakers*

MARILYN MARTIN-JONES
University of Birmingham

ABSTRACT

The research presented in this article is drawn from an ethnographic study of bilingual literacy practices among young Welsh speakers, which was based in a Further Education (FE) college in North Wales.¹ The research was conducted with forty six young Welsh speakers (aged 16–19) and their bilingual tutors. In the first year of the project, the focus was on the out-of-college literacy practices and language choices of the young people in our sample and on their uses of texts, in Welsh and in English. This included the literacy practices of their life worlds and their workplace literacies. In the second year of the project, college tutors planned and introduced small changes in their in-class uses of texts, in Welsh and in English, with a view to building on the findings regarding their students' out-of-college literacies. The main orienting theory for the project, and the ethnographic approach adopted, were those that have been developed within the New Literacy Studies tradition. The main questions addressed in

¹ The project was entitled: *Dwyieithrwydd, Llythrennedd a Dysgu mewn Addysg Bellach / Bilingual Literacies for Learning in Further Education* and it was funded, from 2005 to 2007, by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) under its Teaching and Learning Research Programme (Extension to Wales). The members of the university research team were Daniel Chandler, Buddug Hughes, Roz Ivanič and Marilyn Martin-Jones (project director) and the members of the college-based team were Beryl Davies, Margaret Lewis and Anwen Williams. In keeping with the shared ethos of the projects involved in the Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP), the project was designed, from the outset, as an FE/HE research collaboration, as research in which educational practitioners played an active role (hence the naming of the college above).

this study were as follows: How are the young bilinguals drawing on print and screen literacies in different domains of their lives outside college and for what purpose? What reading and writing do they do in Welsh and in English? How are their language choices facilitated or constrained? What are the main characteristics of their out-of-college literacy practices? And finally, how can these characteristics be harnessed with a view to supporting bilingual learning at college?

A changing communicative landscape, changing literacy practices

With the advent of new technology and with the globalized spread of new technoscapes (Appadurai, 1990), there have been far-reaching changes in our communicative landscape. The way we communicate and conduct our everyday affairs has been transformed. While some everyday practices of reading and writing persist, many of the ways in which we use and produce texts are substantially different from those of only a few decades ago (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000; Snyder, 2002; Kress, 2001, 2003; Hawisher and Selfe, 2004). There has been a rapid diversification of communication media, digital artefacts (such as new software) and textual resources (new genres, such as web pages and blogs) and this has opened up new affordances for literacy within local life worlds and within the worlds of work and education.

Young people's literacy practices

As recent research has demonstrated, young people are actively engaging with these changes in the communicative landscape (e.g. Alvermann, 2002; Hagood et al., 2003; Lewis and Fabos, 2005; Buckingham and Willett, 2006; Jacobs, 2006; Low, 2005 and Sefton Green, 2006). While still engaging with a range of print literacies, they are also exploring the potential of screen literacies, using new media and trying out new genres. Many have become adept at combining images, colour and sound with words and exploiting the facilities opened up by the computer screen for integrating modes of meaning-making. Their communicative practices are increasingly characterized by what Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) have called multimodality. Research in this area is beginning to shed light on the ways in which young people are responding to the opportunities and constraints of specific means of communication, in SMS or text messages, in Instant Messaging (IM) via

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internet-based chat systems such as MSN, in blogging or in the construction of personal web pages. We are also building a keener understanding of young people's perceptions of the affordances of different means of communication and of the ways in which their use of particular screen literacies is related to their off-line lives and situated in particular social and cultural contexts.

Mixed discourses about literacy in education: the need to reframe the debate

From a research standpoint, the changes in the contemporary communicative landscape provide a unique opportunity to compare and contrast the ways in which human creativity is expressed through print and screen literacy, in different languages, and an opportunity to develop an understanding of the kind of literacy learning that occurs, in different socio-cultural contexts, through the use of new media. However, within education, reactions to the changing communicative landscape and to young people's engagement with new media have been mixed. Some educators see the changes as an opportunity to re-examine their own uses of texts in the classroom and to re-design them so as to build on the communicative resources and the 'ways with words' that students have acquired within their local life worlds and to explore with students different means of using literacy to mediate learning in different educational contexts. Others argue that the diversification of text and screen literacies and the increasing multimodality of communication are undermining students' capacity to write extended prose: a long-established convention in education and a privileged means of displaying knowledge. The latter view is often articulated within a broader discourse about 'falling standards'. This has, in fact, become the dominant contemporary discourse about literacy in education. However, the main challenge to education in the twenty-first century (including bilingual education) is not the 'level' of students' capabilities but the rapid multiplication of possibilities for literacy that we are witnessing. As Ivanič et al. (2007a) have observed: 'The increasing abundance of text and screen literacies and multimodal minglings ... cannot be reduced to a single standard against which all else is measured' (Ivanič et al., 2007a: 704).

These were the central concerns for us as we began our research project on *Bilingual Literacies for Learning in Further Education*. We wanted to contribute to the re-framing of educational debates about the literacy capabilities of adolescents and young people in a constructive way, by building an

account of literacies in the lives of young bilinguals.² We also wanted to identify ways in which the bilingual literacy practices of their college courses could take account of some of the characteristics of young people's out-of-college literacy practices. In the sections that follow, I show how we went about designing and carrying out the project with these concerns in mind. I also give a brief account of our orienting theory, the wider research context and the ethnographic approach that we adopted.

The literacy practices of young bilinguals: a research project in North Wales

Our project focused on young Welsh/English bilinguals in the sixteen to nineteen age range who were enrolled in Further Education (FE) courses at one college in North Wales, called Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor. This college is the leading provider of bilingual education in the FE sector in Wales and all of the young people participating in the project (forty six in all) were enrolled in a range of bilingual courses. In this paper, I will focus on the students taking vocational education courses, in Agriculture and in Early Years (Childcare).

The questions we addressed in our research in this bilingual context were as follows: How were these young bilinguals drawing on print and screen literacies in different domains of their lives outside college and for what purpose? What reading and writing did they do in Welsh and in English? How were their language choices facilitated or constrained? What were the main characteristics of their out-of-college literacy practices? And finally, how can these characteristics be harnessed with a view to developing and consolidating bilingual pedagogy?

² The project was carried out in tandem with a similar project that was already underway in FE colleges in England and Scotland (four colleges in all). This 'sister' project was entitled *Literacies for Learning in Further Education (LlLFE)* and ran for three years, starting in January 2004. The members of the research team were: Roz Ivanič (project director), Richard Edwards, David Barton, Greg Mannion, Zoe Fowler, Candice Satchwell, June Smith and Kate Miller. Roz Ivanič oversaw the liaison between this research project in England and Scotland and our research project in Wales.

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A social approach to literacy

The main orienting theory for the project was that which has been developed, over almost three decades, within the New Literacy Studies (NLS) (e.g. Heath 1983; Street 1984; Barton, 2001; Ivanič, 1998; Baynham and Prinsloo, 2001; Baynham, 2004; Pahl and Rowsell, 2006). This social approach to literacy stands in sharp contrast to the view of literacy as an attribute of individuals and as an 'autonomous' set of skills for coding and decoding written language, which can be taught, measured and assessed at different 'levels'. Within the NLS tradition, literacy is viewed as a profoundly social and cultural practice. It is also seen as plural in nature, hence the use of the term 'literacies' in the title of our research project. The everyday practices of reading and writing are not the 'same' everywhere. They differ across domains of social life, with different styles, genres and types of texts being used and produced in different domains, in local life worlds and in different institutional worlds.

In bilingual and multilingual settings, the picture is more complex: people draw on different styles, genres and text types in more than one language as they read and write in different domains, hence the use of terms like 'bilingual literacies' or 'multilingual literacies' (Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000). Moreover, the social and cultural nature of literacy practices is thrown into sharp relief in such settings. We see this in the substantial body of research with young bilinguals built up since the 1990s. This research has captured the particularities of literacy socialization and literacy practices in different bilingual and multilingual settings (Edwards and Nwemely, 2000). It has provided us with detailed insights into the ways in which cultural values come to be associated with particular ways of reading and writing, in particular languages and/or particular writing systems (Gregory and Williams, 2000; Kenner and Kress, 2003). It has also given us a firmer understanding of the creative and nuanced ways in which young bilinguals draw upon both the linguistic resources and semiotic modes available to them to construct and cultivate different peer group networks and to negotiate different identities and relationships (Martin-Jones and Bhatt, 1998; Rubinstein-Avila, 2007; Warriner, 2007). And, more recently, it has begun to uncover some of the complexity involved in the use of new media by young bilinguals (McGinnis et al., 2007; Lee, 2007 and Lam, in press).

However, most of this research has been conducted in multilingual urban contexts. There has been surprisingly little research that focuses on the nature and uses of text or screen literacies among young people from

regional minority groups, for example, in regions of Europe such as Catalonia, Wales or the Basque country. Thus, in embarking on this project in Wales, we were moving onto relatively new terrain. The only study we knew of was a ground-breaking study of the construction of personal web pages by young Welsh speakers (Chandler and Roberts-Young, 1999).

Building on an established tradition of ethnographic enquiry

Because of the NLS emphasis on the situated nature of literacy, in both monolingual and bilingual settings, and on the ways in which it is bound up with the day to day construction of social and cultural life, any research methods which take literacy out of its contexts of use are deemed to be inappropriate. A robust tradition of ethnographic enquiry has therefore been established, focusing on the ways in which literacies mediate people's real lives in particular places and at particular points in time. Studies are designed so as to gain insights into participants' own emic perspectives on their literacy practices. Different data gathering approaches are employed with a view to triangulating data sources.

Our approach to data gathering

Our main data gathering strategy in the first phase of the project was a series of individual interviews with each of the young people in our sample. The first interviews were designed as diary-based interviews, following an approach developed in previous research on bilingual literacy (Jones, et al., 2000; Ivanič et al. 2007a³). Our aim was to make the interview process as collaborative and dialogic as possible. The young people were asked to compile diary notes about their literacy practices over the course of one weekday and one day during the weekend and to note the languages used. These notes were handwritten on a large diagram resembling a clock face. Each young person was then interviewed about their diary notes. Two thirds of them chose to be interviewed in Welsh.

³ We adopted a similar research design to the LfLFE project (see Ivanič et al., 2007a and 2007b for details) so as to allow for some comparison and contrast. However, since our project was conceived on a much smaller scale, being based in just one college and focusing on only three curriculum areas (as compared to their sixteen), we had the opportunity to pursue particular data-gathering activities in more depth. For example, we did more ethnographic observation and all our interviews, in Welsh and in English, were transcribed in full.

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After this, the young people took photographs of different literacy events in their daily lives outside college. Further interviews, with a sub-sample, were then based on these photographs. The young people were asked to select three photographs which represented the literacy practices that were most important to them. They were then asked to write captions for these three photographs. Finally, they were asked to place all of their photographs on a Venn diagram which represented different domains of literacy: home, college and work.

In addition to these interviews with the young people, we gathered other kinds of ethnographic and textual data. This included: samples of texts used and produced by the young people and our own ethnographic field notes based on observations and informal contacts with the young people.

Our approach to data analysis

All the interviews with the young people about their out-of-college literacies were transcribed in full and then coded. Our coding was based on four broad categories: domains of literacy, uses of literacy, literacy technologies and characteristics of the young people's literacy practices. The analysis of the data then proceeded in two stages: first, we did a 'vertical slicing' of the data. This involved building case studies of individual bilinguals. In building these case studies, the interview data was triangulated with other data sources (e.g. fieldnotes from our observations and samples of texts used and produced by the students). In the second stage of the analysis, we did 'horizontal slicing', with a view to identifying commonalities and differences across the case studies.

Bilingual literacies in the lives of young Welsh speakers: two case studies

The widest range of reading and writing that the young people did, in Welsh and English, was in their lives outside college. They moved with ease from text to screen, using literacy for different purposes. The highly situated nature of the literacies in their out-of-college lives is captured in the extracts from two case studies below. I have chosen to focus on these two cases because they show particularly well how different languages, literacies and literacy technologies mediated the young people's everyday activities outside college and the ways in which their literacy practices were bound up with the identities that they were taking on in these activities. Both of the young

people had grown up speaking Welsh at home and, prior to entering college, they had received all of their primary and secondary education in bilingual schools.

Hâf⁴

When we met her, Hâf was living on a council estate, in a village on the border between Powys and Gwynedd. She lived with her father and she spoke Welsh at home and with most people in the village. She was enrolled in a BTEC Level three course in Early Years (Childcare) and her main aspiration was to work with young children as a teaching assistant. Her interest in working with young people stemmed from the fact that she had six cousins, all younger than her, living in the village. She spent a lot of time with them, reading stories and devising games, in Welsh and in English.

Hâf had a key role in the village youth club, as the leader of a committee that organised events, like discos, Halloween parties and talent nights. She drew on a range of literacies, primarily in Welsh, in organising these events. For example, for the Halloween night in 2005, she had produced bilingual posters, she had made a hand written inventory of games and she had organised contributions to the buffet by giving children word-processed slips to take home. She knew the home language of each of the children and gave each child a slip in the appropriate language.

Posters for the youth club events were produced on Hâf's laptop at home, using software like *Publisher*. She had inherited the laptop from her older sister who was away at university. However, Hâf did not have access to the internet so, when she needed to incorporate photographs and graphics into her posters, she had to do this at college or at a friend's house. She often used Google as a means of searching for appropriate visual material. She did her college work in the same way, starting on her laptop and then going to the internet to search for further semiotic resources.

Hâf often spent time on-line at her friend's home across the road. She had her own Hotmail account and her own identity on her friend's computer. This is how she was able to use instant messaging facilities like MSN. Sometimes, she and her friend shared this writing tool and logged in at the same time for fun. Her friend had 'hundreds' of emoticons and other symbols, in fact she collected them, so Hâf used these too. Her friend had

⁴ Pseudonyms are used throughout this paper so as to preserve confidentiality. The pseudonyms were chosen by the students. Some of them chose common Welsh names, like Hâf, and others, like Cadwaladr, chose traditional Welsh names.

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already constructed her own home page and Hâf was also contemplating doing this.

Hâf made ample use of her mobile phone. She used it primarily to send and receive text messages, but she also exchanged photographs with friends and family from time to time. She used both Welsh and English when sending messages, depending on who she was communicating with and what she knew about their language capabilities and preferences. She said that she had tried to abbreviate in Welsh but found this harder to do than in English. She saw her 'texting' as having three broad functions: firstly, she used text messages to make arrangements to meet friends. Secondly, she and her friends used them as a way of keeping in touch. She put this in the following terms:

Sometimes, you text to see how they are, if you haven't seen them in a bit ... Sometimes it's easier than a conversation. It starts off a conversation. Like if you haven't talked to someone for a bit, you text them and say 'what are you up to' or something like that, then the conversation starts.

Thirdly, she saw texting as a means of sharing communicative resources, such as photographs or ring tones, with friends. She had recently sent some ring tones to a friend using MSN.

Hâf talked at some length about reading magazines during her leisure hours. This was clearly a significant source of enjoyment for her. She said that she selected what she wanted to buy by looking at the cover page, to see what stories were on offer. The magazines she read were mostly in English. She read these to unwind last thing at night and then finished off reading them first thing in the morning. She also collected song lyrics from magazines, again, mostly in English. Her musical tastes were also reflected in her sizeable CD collection and in her recent acquisition of an MP3 player.

Cadwaladr

Cadwaladr came from a small sheep farm in the south west corner of Gwynedd. When he agreed to take part in our research project, he was enrolled in the BTEC Level three National Diploma course in Agriculture. He also ran a small business from the family farm, on a part-time basis. This work was mainly done in the summer months since it was a grass-cutting business. Nearly all his customers were English speakers since the farm was located close to two coastal resort towns where the proportion of English speakers in the local population was quite high.

Cadwaladr drew on a number of literacies in running this small business: for example, he prepared all the invoices himself. He had designed an invoice format on his computer, using *Publisher*, creating graphics as well as text. The invoice was entirely in English, except for the section showing his address. He also had a log book, where he kept a tally, in Welsh, of what work he had done for whom. Through this business, Cadwaladr was contributing in a small way to the diversification of the economic activity on the family farm. He also did occasional work for neighbouring farms. This mostly involved helping with sheep shearing. The bills he sent out for the sheep shearing work were all in Welsh.

Cadwaladr was also beginning to participate in different aspects of the general paperwork (gwaith papur) associated with the agricultural activities on the family farm. While his grandfather and his mother took the main responsibility for the paperwork, Cadwaladr was occasionally involved in completing the animal movement forms in Welsh when animals were taken to market.

Cadwaladr kept in touch with rural affairs by reading the 'Farmer's Weekly'. He also read the 'Daily Post' from time to time. However, he said that he did not spend much time reading during leisure hours. He was a keen rugby player and this took up quite a lot of his spare time. He played for the Machynlleth team. All the communication with the team coach took place via text messages in Welsh. He also had a close-knit circle of friends: they were mostly young Welsh-speaking men with a farming background and were dispersed over a wide area. He kept in touch with them by sending and receiving text messages and by using MSN. He said he used Welsh most of the time in these informal means of communication, depending on who his interlocutors were. At home on the farm, there was only one desk top computer in the living room. The household had internet access, because of his mother's bed and breakfast business, but there was considerable competition for access to the computer since his mother and his older sister also made frequent use of it.

*Insights from these and other case studies:
domains and uses of print and screen literacy*

Drawing on these and the forty-four other case studies, we built a wider picture of the young people's uses of literacy, in Welsh and in English, in different domains of their out-of-college lives, and we gained insights into

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the nature and extent of their involvement with new literacies and into the characteristics of their literacy practices. I will take each of these dimensions of our work in turn, in the sections that follow. We focused on two broad domains of literacy: (1) the young people's life worlds: at home, within their friendship networks and in local community contexts; and (2) in the case of those who had part-time jobs, their worlds of work. Their literacy practices mediated the activities they engaged in within these worlds in somewhat different ways.

Literacy and language choices in local life worlds

The bilingual literacy practices that the young people engaged in within their local life worlds were similar to the 'vernacular literacies' described by Barton and Hamilton (1998). In their study of adult literacy in one urban neighbourhood, Barton and Hamilton identified six areas⁵ of social life in which vernacular literacies played a significant role. In this rural context, among these young bilinguals, there were three areas of social life in which bilingual vernacular literacies played a particularly significant role: (1) Personal communication; (2) Reading and writing as part of leisure; (3) Participating in local activities.

1. Personal communication

Mobile phones figured prominently in the lives of all the young people in our sample. The case of Hâf illustrates this well. Text messaging was their preferred means of communication in both Welsh and English. They kept in touch with each other, organised their social lives and exchanged resources using their mobile phones. As we see from the cases of Hâf and Cadwaladr, the choice of language was determined by the language capabilities and preferences of those they were communicating with. The use of instant messaging via MSN was also a widely valued means of communication. Only a few young people mentioned use of e-mail outside of the college context. Again, language choices were shaped by the particular constellation of participants involved in the chat room at any one time.

2. Reading and writing as part of leisure

Few of the young people in the sample reported reading books in their leisure time. Local newspapers like the 'Daily Post' occasionally got a

⁵ The six areas identified by Barton and Hamilton (1998) were: (1) organising life; (2) personal communication; (3) private leisure; (4) documenting life; (5) sense-making; (6) social participation (pp. 248–50)

mention, as in the case of Cadwaladr above. A clearly gendered pattern did emerge with regard to magazines. The only magazines mentioned by the young men were work-related publications like 'Farmer's Weekly' or 'Farmer's Guardian'. In contrast, most of the young women in the sample mentioned reading magazines for pleasure. All the magazines they referred to were in English: 'Hello', 'More', 'Sugar', 'Elle' and 'Marie-Claire'. As we saw above, Hâf talked about the particular attractions of magazines for her and specified particular times of the day when she read them.

During their leisure time, both the young men and the young women were using a range of digital literacies and, particularly, internet-based resources such as websites related to their recreational interests. For example, Steven (another young person in our sample) was an ardent Liverpool fan and visited the website of this premier division club 'quite a lot ... to see if players are injured or if they find a new player'. As with the magazines, in their use of the World Wide Web, the young people's options for the use of Welsh were limited.

3. Participating in local activities

Literacy was also an important resource for social participation. The young men in our sample often mentioned participation in sports activities. Thus, as we saw above, Cadwaladr played rugby for his local team and said that his training sessions and match fixtures were arranged by text message. Luke was a qualified ski instructor. He was also registered as a racer. He arranged his participation in English via the relevant UK websites. He also had to fill out race entry forms which were sent by post. In addition, he kept a log book with details of his races, his fitness and his coach's comments.

Both young men and young women participated in a diverse range of community-oriented activities, which were all literacy rich. As I showed above, Hâf drew on a range of text and screen literacies in Welsh and in English in her role as the leader of the social committee at the youth club in her village. Clive, a young man studying Agriculture, was active in the local Young Farmers' Club. He helped to put up posters and send out leaflets in Welsh about events such as First Aid demonstrations and local barn dances. He had also competed once in the County eisteddfod of the Young Farmers' Club as a solo baritone, learning the Welsh words of the classical pieces he sang by heart. Danielle attended a local church that was part of a UK-wide religious denomination. She played bass guitar with her worship group. They exchanged lists of hymns by e-mail before the morning and evening services. She also contributed to the running of the Sunday school activities. All the activities and the texts she used and exchanged were in English.

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Literacy and language choices at work

Most of the young people in our sample had part-time jobs. Some worked for companies with a national reach, such as supermarkets, DIY or sports stores, launderettes or hotel and restaurant chains. All the reading and writing they did in these workplaces was in English. One group did, however, mention workplace literacy in Welsh: these were young people, like Cadwaladr, who were studying Agriculture and who were running small businesses on the family farm to bring in additional income. Eight out of the sixteen students studying Agriculture were involved in such businesses. We identified several areas of their working lives where literacy in Welsh and in English played a significant role. I focus on just two here: (1) communicating with customers, and (2) record keeping. The insights from this part of our work are discussed at length in Martin-Jones, et al. (2009).

1. Communicating with customers

For those running small businesses on a part-time basis, the choice of language of literacy was influenced by the nature of the economic activity undertaken and by the type of customer targeted. As we saw above, Cadwaladr had two different groups of customers: those for his grass-cutting business, who were almost all English speakers, and the Welsh-speaking farmers for whom he did sheep-shearing on a sub-contracting basis.

Sasha, a young woman in our sample from the Blaenau Ffestiniog area, ran a small enterprise, with her brother Siôn, which involved doing dry stone walling, repairing fences and gardening. Sasha had taken an advanced Welsh-medium course in dry stone walling and, when we interviewed her, she and her brother were doing work for a Welsh-speaking landowner who had received a substantial grant for a land improvement scheme. All the written communication with this customer was in Welsh.

Bryn ran a specialized business venture with his mother in Ynys Môn (Anglesey). They had established a small pedigree sheep flock and used artificial insemination methods to develop the flock. Their customers included local Welsh farmers and others, from much further afield, who were interested in their particular pedigree breed. Bryn and his mother travelled to agricultural shows in the summer with a view to selling rams and sheep from the flock. Some of these shows were in Wales and others were in England and Scotland. Communication with customers was in both Welsh and English, depending on their language background. Bryn and his mother used e-mail, faxes and word-processed letters when communicating with customers.

2. Record keeping

Several young people, like Cadwaladr, were involved in assisting family members with general farm paperwork (gwaith papur). This included registering animal births; ensuring that individual animals had ear tags (or 'animal passports'); filling in animal movement forms or keeping track of medicines or vaccines administered. These young people were also contributing their expertise with computing and their facility with screen literacies to the task of keeping the farm documentation up-to-date.

Characteristics of the young people's literacy practices

Having emphasised the importance of understanding the nature and scope of the young people's engagement with screen and text literacies, in different languages, in different domains of their lives outside college, I move on here to consider some of the salient characteristics of their bilingual literacy practices. The first and most salient characteristic is that their literacy practices mediated purposeful activities, such as dealing with customers, planning youth club events or participating in sports. The texts they used and produced as part of these activities had clear audiences and were tailored to these audiences. A second, and equally significant characteristic of their bilingual literacy practices, is that they were closely bound up with the identities that the young people took on in different activities.

Thirdly, their literacy practices were often shared and sometimes involved talk around print or screen texts. This ranged from fleeting interactions in which the young people, like Hâf, discussed a text message on a mobile phone with a friend to more sustained interactions such as those where the young people, like Cadwaladr, were involved in assisting an adult in their household with the farm paperwork. Fourthly, their literacy practices involved use of a range of new media. They moved with ease from page to screen. There were different levels of expertise within the sample and different possibilities for access to particular media, but all the young people in our sample were exploring the communicative and representational potential of these media, in Welsh and in English. And, lastly, their literacy practices were also multi-modal. All the young people had a preference for using and producing multi-modal texts. Most of the photographs they took of literacy events in their lives featured such texts.

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Harnessing these characteristics for bilingual learning at college?

Adopting a social approach to literacy, with its emphasis on understanding the contexts and purposes of reading and writing, and the specific characteristics of literacy practices, enables us to chart out ways in which pedagogy in local educational sites can be re-tuned so as to take account of the literacy preferences, capabilities and experience that students bring to the classroom.

Firstly, as educators, we can all seek to understand and draw on the literacies and 'funds of knowledge' (Gonzales et al., 2004) that the students in our local sites bring to the learning process. This has, of course, been an enduring concern in language and literacy education, ever since the seminal work of Heath (1983). In the first year of our project, the three FE lecturers in our research team worked closely with us in building an account of their students' out-of-college literacy practices. They were struck by the nature and scope of the text and screen literacies that their students engaged in, especially in the case of students, like Háf, who appeared to be having difficulty with reading and writing at college.

Secondly, we can examine our own uses of texts in our classrooms and consider how we might re-design our ways of working across the curriculum. As Ivanič et al. (2007a) have noted, students prefer in-class literacy practices that are collaborative, multimodal and have a clear purpose and audience. They also take up and engage well with literacies that are clearly associated with their sense of who they are and who they want to be.

In the second year of our research project, the three FE lecturers in our team planned and carried out small changes in their in-class uses of text, in Welsh and in English. These changes took account of some of the characteristics of their students' out-of-college literacies. For example, the Agriculture students in one course unit designed websites for small land-based businesses in Wales, with the support of Anwen Williams, their tutor.⁶ Most of the students created websites for the businesses they were already running. When the students had completed their project, Anwen Williams commented that she could see that her students were responding well to this innovation, 'not so much what from they said but from what they did'. They came to class on time and went straight to the computers each time,

⁶ For discussion of other examples of innovations in in-class uses of texts, see the volume based on the TLRP project on *Literacies for Learning in Further Education* and on our research project (Ivanič et al., 2009).

switched them on and consulted each other on particular aspects of the website design, drawing on each other's expertise.

The ways in which teachers and learners use and produce texts in classrooms is, of course, central to the learning and the meaning-making that goes on. We need to pay closer attention to the nature of the classroom texts that we employ and the practices that we associate with them. This is what the New London Group (New London Group, 1996; Cope and Kalantzis, 2000) refers to as the design aspect of pedagogy. These and other researchers (e.g. Hull and Shultz, 2002; Gee, 2004; Barton et al., 2007) have called for a fundamental shift in thinking about the role of literacy in learning across the curriculum, one that would take account of the rapid changes that have taken place in the contemporary communicative landscape.

This call for a new pedagogy, for this new communicative landscape, has particular resonance relevance for Wales, at a time when national strategies for the further development and consolidation of bilingual and Welsh-medium education are being devised for the post-16 sector. These processes of language policy implementation are taking place in a very different era from that when provision for bilingual education was being developed for the primary and secondary sectors. An important ingredient for the success of these post-16 language policy developments will be the nature of the bilingual pedagogy and the spaces that it opens up for young people to explore new ways of using Welsh, in different media, and in different styles and genres.

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