

Welsh Self-Reflection

Throughout the course of my time studying via the PGCE Primary pathway I have had significant opportunities to engage with the development of my Welsh language, particularly in a classroom environment.

University Led Welsh Lessons

The university provided a series of Welsh lessons that were catered to our individual needs and prior understanding of the Welsh language. Being placed in a group of learners with a similar ability to me gave me confidence to include myself in the sessions by offering answers and responses to questions bilingually.

The sessions acted as a necessary refresher of the Welsh language, in particular with pronunciation and mutations.

I was able to integrate myself fully into this learning environment and keep enthusiastic about developing my understanding of Welsh in the classroom.

In addition to gaining confidence with my pronunciation and mutations lots of emphasis was placed upon the specific language practitioners engage with incidentally in their classrooms. As such, I began to build the foundations of being able to integrate bilingualism into my practice.

Welsh Lessons Taught

I took the opportunity to teach Welsh lessons during my PTE 1 placement.

While in year 4 a peripatetic teacher was brought in to teach Welsh, however we coordinated so that I was able to take the class for a session.

My lesson centred around 'y tywydd', I wanted the learners to develop their confidence of using Welsh phrases to talk about the weather and to enhance their bilingual conversational skills.

The session focussed on creating a bar graph of their classes' favourite kinds of weather. The learners had to ask each other what their favourite weather was and create a bar graph with the data they collected.

Giving the students the opportunity to converse in Welsh with each other proved to be successful gave a sense of ownership over their learning.

Learners had to organise themselves to ask their peers about their favourite weather in Welsh and collate the data appropriately.

A common complaint I found in KS2 from the students was that Welsh was not a necessity for modern day life. To combat this, I conducted lessons such as the one already described where I incorporated additional aspects into the sessions, like numeracy.

Incidental Welsh in the Classroom

Despite the lack of availability for me to teach a 'Welsh lesson' I engaged with alternative Welsh learning environments such as; involving myself with 'helpwr heddiw', singing 'sut mae tywydd heddiw' with learners every morning in the foundation phase, and leading 'check-out' sessions on a Friday afternoon where students were encouraged to dialogue bilingually.

At the beginning of my practice I found it difficult to incorporate the Welsh language incidentally in my sessions.

After a weekly review with my class mentor I realised this came as a result of my confidence. I had the knowledge, understanding, and a strong grasp on the Welsh language from my time studying it at A-Level to embed it in my lessons. The only thing stopping me was my lack of confidence.

As a result of this I had a series of targets set around the development of my incidental Welsh that included; using more incidental Welsh in the classroom, taking up 'helpwr heddiw' duties, engaging with teaching a full welsh session.

As my time on placement increased, I realised these needed to be ongoing targets and were not a quick-fix responsibility. These are still targets that I have today and will continue to develop throughout my teaching career.

Once I became more confident with using incidental Welsh in the classroom I strove to include as much incidental Welsh as possible in my sessions. This

included commanding students to complete a task and asking them to respond in Welsh to a question I knew they had the ability to answer.

By the end of PTE 1 Welsh became commonplace for my practice through the use of incidental conversation. I found it a lot easier to integrate in the foundation phase as a result of the nature of the environment; there were a lot more opportunities to speak Welsh, singing 'sut mae tywydd heddiw' every morning is a good example of this.

This being said, I understand that there is a time and place for the appropriate inclusion of incidental Welsh. When I found my confidence to use it during my sessions, I began to include it in the success criteria or when giving important direct instructions. This led to confusion and work being completed incorrectly on a few occasions.

When the incidental Welsh became overpowering in my lessons, students tuned out; the lesson commands were being ignored because of a lack of understanding and overwhelming the learners with too much vocabulary, and, despite Welsh being used frequently, it was soon forgotten by the students.

Taking a step back to reflect upon this, I realised it is better to use Welsh incidentally when it is most appropriate, and frequently, as long as the phrases that are used frequently are repeated.

This should ensure students have a better understanding of what I am saying because the phrases will become more common to them.

Welsh in My Practice

At the beginning of my time in school on placement Welsh was not at the forefront of my planning, preparation, or delivery of sessions. This was because of a multitude of reasons; I was not confident enough in my own abilities to use it incidentally, I thought there were more important aspects of my practice to develop as a foundation, and I did not understand the importance of Welsh apart from a Welsh lesson.

Now, Welsh is integral to my practice, a foundation that cannot be ignored until a 'Welsh lesson'. Towards the end of my placement learners were in a

bilingual environment that made time for commonplace phrases, commands, and praises embedded within the heart of each session.

This practice was furthered by taking the ethos into the playground on duty time, before lesson time in the morning, and as a way to compress the day at home time.

I understand that, to have learners who are ethically informed citizens, Welsh needs to be a foundational aspect of my practice as a teacher.

To give learners a once-a-week refresh of only the necessary Welsh literacy skills is to sell the curriculum short.

I have found that giving the learners a holistic outlook on Welsh in a daily school environment contributes to the normalisation of bilingualism and an increased confidence navigating the Welsh strand of the curriculum.

I have found this to be true seeing the differences in the incorporation of Welsh in KS2 compared with the more comprehensive approach found in the Foundation Phase.

I now feel a lot more confident to use the Welsh language in my sessions and have a better understanding of how to use it appropriately in the correct contexts so that it enhances learning instead of becoming a repetitive routine. I intend to carry these ideologies with me throughout my practice, constantly refining and renewing them for the benefit of a bilingual classroom.

Welsh Portfolio Contents

1. PTE Welsh Lesson Plan

- 1. A lesson plan from PTE of a Welsh session I taught on 'Y Tywydd'. This includes links to the curriculum, the lesson contents, and a session reflection form.*
- 2. The accompanying PowerPoint for my 'Y Tywydd' lesson. This was taken from Twinkl but heavily adapted for the purposes of my session.*

2. Self-Reflection

- a. A self-reflection*

3. Various Welsh Lessons

- a. Bookmaking in year four where learners were encouraged to write their story in Welsh.*

4. Journal Entries

- a. & b. journal entries from PTE made by class mentor specifying my engagement and improvement with Welsh*

5. Formative Assessments

- All attachments are examples of formative assessments completed during the course of Welsh lessons at university.*

The video evidence of my Oral Welsh skills conducted as a lesson was recorded at the university in front of a small group, recorded and marked by a lecturer.