

ECIE5004

**Celebrating Language and Culture
Belonging to Wales**

E-Portfolio

Student Number: 2118579

Table of Contents

Rationale – p.4-p.5

The significance of St. David's Day – p.5-p.6

Setting the date – p.6

Inviting Participants – p.7

Judging Criteria – p.7

Promotion – p.7

Activities Leading up to the Ceremony – p.7-p.8

Guest Speakers – p.8

Collaborative Projects – p.8-p.9

The Day of the Ceremony – p.9-p.10

Impacts on the Social Community – p.10-p.14

Alignments with WAG Policies and Donaldson
Successful Futures – p.14

National Curriculum (2022). – p.14-p.15

Curriculum Cymraeg – p.15

Language Acquisition – p.16-p.17

Cultural Engagement – p.17

Theoretical Framework – p.18-p.23

Conclusion – p.24-p.26

Reference List – p.27 – p.28

Appendix – p.29 – p.30

Rationale

The Welsh language is integral to Wales's identity, culture, and history. In an era where globalisation threatens local languages, schools must be at the forefront of promoting and sustaining the Welsh language. One of the most effective and culturally enriching activities we provide at the primary school where I work is the annual chairing of the school Bard, which takes place annually on St David's Day. This portfolio discusses the rationale for this activity, its alignment with educational frameworks, the significance of schools in sustaining the Welsh language, and a critical evaluation of the activity itself. This activity promotes the Welsh language and instils a sense of pride and belonging, encouraging students to engage with their heritage meaningfully.

The Welsh language, a vital part of our cultural heritage, plays a significant role in Wales's identity and community spirit. Educators are responsible for promoting and preserving this language within our settings. One impactful activity that fosters the use of the Welsh language is the annual

chairing of the school Bard, celebrated every St David's Day. This portfolio outlines the significance of this event, the activities involved, and the broader impact on promoting the Welsh language within our school community.

The Significance of St David's Day

St David's Day celebrated on March 1st, is a day of national pride in Wales, honouring the country's patron saint. It serves as an opportunity to celebrate Welsh culture, traditions, and, importantly, the Welsh language. Activities like performances, food, and traditional clothing like daffodils and leek mark the day. In our school, we take this celebration a step further by holding the annual chairing of the Bard, which encourages students to engage with the Welsh language creatively and meaningfully. The Bardic Chair ceremony is a traditional Welsh event that recognises and celebrates our school's students' literary talents. Students are invited to compose and present their poetry in Welsh during this ceremony. The event culminates in selecting a

Bard for the year, who is awarded the Bardic Chair, symbolising their achievement and fostering a sense of pride in the Welsh language. The primary objective is to encourage students to use the Welsh language actively in their creative expressions. The event aims to inspire students to explore their creativity through poetry and storytelling in Welsh. The ceremony strengthens bonds and promotes cultural pride by involving the entire school community. The event serves as a reminder of our rich Welsh heritage, instilling a sense of belonging among students. The planning of the Bardic Chair ceremony begins months in advance, ensuring that all aspects run smoothly. Here are the key steps involved in the planning process:

Setting the Date

The ceremony is scheduled for St David's Day, aligning with the national celebration.

Inviting Participants

Students from various year groups are invited to participate by composing and submitting their original Welsh poetry.

Judging Criteria

A panel of judges, including Welsh language teachers and local poets, will evaluate the submissions based on creativity, language use, and presentation.

Promotion

The event is promoted through school assemblies, newsletters, and social media to encourage participation and attendance from parents and the wider community.

Activities Leading Up to the Ceremony

Our Criw Cymraeg organises activities to prepare students for the Bardic Chair ceremony. Our Criw Cymraeg is a group of pupils who oversee the progress of the Welsh Language Charter in the

school. They provide Welsh Language Workshops.

These workshops, led by Welsh language teachers, focus on poetry writing, language structures, and cultural themes. Students learn about traditional Welsh poetic forms, such as cyghanedd (alliteration) and englyn (a type of stanza). (Baker, C. 2011)

Guest Speakers

Local poets and authors are invited to speak to students about the importance of the Welsh language and share their experiences. This inspires students and emphasises the language's relevance in contemporary literature.

Collaborative Projects

Students work in groups to create bilingual posters and presentations about Welsh culture, history, and notable Welsh writers. This activity promotes teamwork and further encourages the use of the Welsh language.

The Day of the Ceremony

On St David's Day, the atmosphere in the school is filled with excitement and anticipation. The ceremony is held in the school hall, decorated with Welsh flags, daffodils, and student artwork.

Here is how the day unfolds:

- 1. Opening Ceremony:** The event begins with a warm welcome from the headteacher, who emphasises the significance of the Welsh language and culture.
- 2. Performance:** Students showcase traditional Welsh music and dance, creating a vibrant atmosphere. These performances celebrate Welsh culture and engage students who may not participate in the poetry competition.
- 3. Poetry Presentations:** The day's highlight is the poetry presentations. Students recite their original works in Welsh, demonstrating their creativity and language skills. The judges listen attentively and score each performance based on predetermined criteria.

4. Announcement of the Bard: After all the presentations, the judges deliberate, and the excitement builds as the head judge announces the winner of the Bardic Chair. The chosen Bard receives a ceremonial chair and a prize, such as a book of Welsh poetry or a gift voucher for a local bookstore.

5. Closing Remarks: The ceremony concludes with closing remarks, celebrating all participants and encouraging students to continue using the Welsh language daily.

Impact on the School Community

The Bardic Chair ceremony has far-reaching impacts on the school community:

1. Increased Welsh Language Usage: Students who participate in the event often become more confident using the Welsh language in and out of the classroom.

2. Cultural Awareness: The ceremony raises awareness of Welsh culture, fostering student heritage pride. It encourages them to explore other aspects of Welsh culture, such as music, art, and history.

3. Community Engagement: Parents, local community members, and school governors are often invited to attend the ceremony, strengthening community ties. This involvement creates a supportive environment for students to thrive in language development. Schools act as community hubs, bringing together families and residents. By engaging the community in events like the Bardic Chair ceremony, schools help develop a sense of collective responsibility for preserving the Welsh language.

4. Lifelong Appreciation: The event plants the seeds for a lifelong appreciation of the Welsh language and culture, encouraging students to engage with their heritage beyond their school years.

5. Role Models: Teachers and staff who actively promote the Welsh language serve as role models for students. Their enthusiasm and commitment can inspire students to fully embrace the language and culture.

Organising an event of this scale requires careful planning and resource management. Establishing a dedicated organising committee helps streamline the process and ensure all aspects are covered. Ensuring the event is inclusive for all students, regardless of their Welsh language proficiency, is crucial. We encourage submissions in varying levels of Welsh and support those who may need it. To further enhance the impact of the Bardic Chair ceremony in promoting the Welsh language, several future directions could be considered:

1. Expanding Participation: Explore ways to include more students, such as creating

categories for different age groups or language proficiency levels, ensuring everyone feels welcome to participate.

2. **Collaborating with Local Writers:** Establish partnerships with local Welsh writers and poets to provide mentorship opportunities for students, enhance their learning experience, and foster community connections.
3. **Integrating Technology:** Use technology to create multimedia presentations of the poetry submissions, allowing students to showcase their work innovatively, such as videos or digital storytelling.
4. **Encouraging Year-Round Engagement:** While the Bardic Chair ceremony is a significant event, promoting Welsh language activities throughout the year, such as book clubs, writing competitions, or Welsh language days, can sustain interest and engagement.

Alignment with WAG Policies and Frameworks and Donaldson Successful Futures

This framework emphasises the importance of developing children's skills and knowledge in a relevant and meaningful way. The Bardic Chair ceremony aligns with this vision by fostering creativity, critical thinking, and communication skills in Welsh and English. It encourages students to explore their identities and express themselves, which is central to the Successful Futures framework. (Donaldson, G. 2015)

National Curriculum 2022

The new curriculum strongly emphasises the Welsh language as a fundamental aspect of students' education. (National Assembly for Wales, 2021) The Bardic Chair ceremony supports this by providing a platform for students to use Welsh creatively, thus enhancing their language skills while engaging with Welsh literature and poetry.

Curriculum Cymreig

This curriculum framework ensures learners understand their cultural heritage and the Welsh language. The Bardic Chair ceremony is a practical application of Curriculum Cymraeg, allowing students to engage with their cultural roots through poetry, storytelling, and performance in Welsh.

The Role of Schools in Sustaining the Welsh Language Schools play a pivotal role in sustaining the Welsh language and its cultural, historical, and geographical features. As educational institutions, they are responsible for imparting knowledge and values that shape students' identities. (Welsh Government. 2020)

Language Acquisition

Schools provide an environment where students can develop their Welsh language skills through structured learning. (Willis, J. 2018). This includes speaking, writing, and understanding the nuances of Welsh culture and history. Exposure to Welsh vocabulary and grammar structures enriches students' linguistic repertoire, making them more versatile in their language use. Engaging with Welsh texts helps develop reading and writing skills, fostering a deeper understanding of language mechanics that can transfer to other languages. Learning Welsh in a cultural context aids comprehension and retention as students connect language with local traditions, stories and history. In past experiences, I have noticed that our students feel a sense of pride and motivation when learning their native language, which has led to a more positive attitude towards language learning in general. Overall, incorporating Welsh into the educational framework supports language acquisition and encourages a broader appreciation for linguistic diversity. (Gwynne, P. (2020) pp. 45-59).

Cultural Engagement

Events like the Bardic Chair ceremony foster a connection to Welsh culture, encouraging students to appreciate their heritage. By participating in such activities, students gain a sense of pride in their language and culture, which is essential for its preservation. Bilingualism can enhance cognitive skills and improve problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking. Fluency in Welsh can also open job opportunities in the future. Mastery of multiple languages improves overall communication skills, benefiting students personally and professionally. Learning Welsh in school supports language skills and personal and social development through cultural engagement.

Theoretical Framework

The Bardic Chair ceremony can be analysed through various learning theories. It allows students to create poems, fostering a deeper understanding of the Welsh language and culture through personal expression. The ceremony encourages collaboration, peer feedback, and communal celebration, making the learning experience more impactful. Its hands-on nature allows students to engage actively with the Welsh language and its cultural significance. (Allan, M. 2019)

The Bardic Chair ceremony generates high levels of enthusiasm and participation among students.

The opportunity to perform in front of an audience encourages students to take pride in their work. The event fosters creativity, allowing students to express their thoughts and feelings in Welsh. This creative outlet is crucial for language acquisition and cultural engagement. The ceremony brings together students, teachers, and families, fostering a sense of community and shared cultural identity.

While the event is well-received, there is room for improvement in ensuring all students feel included, regardless of their proficiency level in Welsh. Offering tiered categories or additional support for less confident speakers could enhance participation. Implementing a more structured feedback mechanism from participants could provide valuable insights into their experiences and areas for improvement. While the Bardic Chair ceremony focuses on poetry, integrating it with other subjects, such as history or geography, could enrich the experience and provide a broader context for students. No improvement is needed, and despite potential areas for improvement, the Bardic Chair ceremony is highly effective in promoting the Welsh language and engaging students. Its cultural significance and the joy it brings to participants and the community are invaluable. Any changes should be approached carefully to maintain the integrity and spirit of the event. Analysing the Bard ceremony through various learning theories can provide a comprehensive understanding of how individuals engage with and learn from this cultural event.

Some prominent learning theories can be applied:

1. **Constructivism:** This theory posits that learners construct their understanding and knowledge through experiences. The Bard ceremony, rich in storytelling, music, and performance, allows participants to actively engage with the narratives and cultural significance, leading to personal interpretations and connections.
2. **Social Learning Theory:** Proposed by Albert Bandura, this theory emphasises learning through observation and social interaction. During the Bard ceremony, individuals learn by watching performers, participating in communal activities, and engaging in discussions, reinforcing social bonds and cultural values.
3. **Experiential Learning Theory:** David Kolb's model focuses on learning through experience. The Bard ceremony is a hands-on

experience that allows participants to immerse themselves in cultural practices, thus facilitating learning through active participation, reflection, and application of knowledge gained from the event.

4. Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT):

This theory emphasises the role of cultural and historical contexts in learning. The Bard ceremony can be viewed as an activity system where cultural artefacts (like songs and stories), community practices, and historical narratives come together, influencing how participants learn about their heritage.

5. Transformative Learning Theory: Jack

Mezirow's theory suggests that learning involves a change in perspective. The Bard ceremony may challenge participants' preconceived notions or beliefs, encouraging them to reflect critically on their experiences and leading to personal growth and transformation.

6. **Connectivism:** In today's digital age, connectivism recognises the role of technology and networks in learning. Suppose the Bard ceremony incorporates digital elements (like social media sharing or online discussions). In that case, it expands learning beyond the physical event, fostering connections and ongoing dialogue among participants.
7. **Multiple Intelligences Theory:** Howard Gardner's theory suggests individuals have different intelligences. The Bard ceremony appeals to various intelligences—linguistic (through storytelling), musical (through song), interpersonal (through community engagement), and intrapersonal (through personal reflection)—catering to diverse learning styles. By applying these learning theories, we can appreciate the multifaceted nature of the Bard ceremony as a rich educational experience that fosters cultural

understanding, personal development, and community engagement.

Conclusion

The annual chairing of the school Bard on St David's Day is a robust activity that promotes the Welsh language within our school community. Through poetry, creativity, and cultural celebration, we inspire students to embrace their heritage and become active participants in preserving the Welsh language. Educators must continue fostering this love for the language, ensuring it thrives for future generations. By engaging students, families, and the community in meaningful ways, we can create a vibrant Welsh-speaking environment that celebrates and honours our rich cultural identity. This event contributes significantly to preserving the Welsh language. As schools continue to play a crucial role in sustaining this rich heritage, activities like the Bardic Chair ceremony will remain essential in fostering a love for the Welsh language and culture among future generations.

The chairing of the Bard at our school is a vital celebration of our Welsh heritage, intertwining language, culture, and community spirit. This

annual event fosters a deep appreciation for the Welsh language among students and serves as a powerful reminder of our rich cultural history. By encouraging creative expression through poetry and storytelling, the Bardic Chair ceremony empowers students to engage with their roots, instilling a sense of pride and belonging. The significance of this event extends beyond the classroom, as it unites families, local poets, and community members in a shared celebration of Welsh culture. It acts as a bridge, connecting generations and reinforcing the importance of preserving our linguistic heritage in the face of globalisation. Furthermore, the Bardic Chair ceremony aligns with educational frameworks that promote creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness, ensuring that the Welsh language remains a living, dynamic part of our students' identities. (Hawkes, D. (2017) pp. 24-36). As we continue to champion this tradition, we not only celebrate the achievements of our students but also commit ourselves to the ongoing promotion and preservation of the Welsh language and culture. The chairing of the Bard is

more than just an event; it is a commitment to nurturing a vibrant Welsh-speaking community that honours and celebrates its heritage for future generations.

Reference List.

Allan, M. (2019) Welsh Language and Culture in Education: A Guide for Teachers. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

Baker, C. (2011) Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. 4th edn. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Donaldson, G. (2015) Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Gwynne, P. (2020) 'The Role of Schools in Preserving Local Languages: A Case Study of Welsh', *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 8(1), pp. 45-59.

Hawkes, D. (2017) 'Cultural Heritage and Identity: The Importance of the Welsh Language', *Welsh Studies Review*, 12(2), pp. 24-36.

National Assembly for Wales (2021) *Curriculum for Wales: Framework for the New Curriculum*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales.

Welsh Government (2020) *Welsh Language Strategy: A Million Welsh Speakers by 2050*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Willis, J. (2018) 'Engaging Communities in Language Preservation: The Impact of School-

Based Programs', International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 21(3), pp. 299-315.

Appendix



Bard of Brynmill
Poetry Task.pptx



the bard of
brynmill.docx



The Bard Ceremony



Example of artwork

Welsh Folk Dancing Practice

