1900276

Welsh Language Reflection

Background

Before I enrolled in my PGCE course I would say that I had minimal Welsh language skills, despite having been schooled in Wales. This may be partially due to having attended school before the Welsh GCSE was made mandatory resulting in limited contact with the language. This is also compounded by the fact that I live very much on the Welsh border with England, where the Welsh language is rarely spoken. I was familiar with greetings and a few phrases but can see now that my pronunciation was inaccurate.

Personal Progress

I have attended the Welsh sessions offered by the university and as a result have more of an understanding of the history of the Welsh language, its decline and its revival. My opinion of the Welsh language has somewhat changed and I better appreciated its value in the heritage of Wales and the identification of the Welsh.

Attending sessions focused on the Welsh alphabet helped me with my pronunciation, especially vowels. I feel I am far more capable of deducing the pronunciation of place names, which is something I have previously struggled with. This is particularly useful as a geography student as I aim to use local case studies to illustrate geographical concepts and it is important for me to get the pronunciation right. I have found that these lessons have also reminded me of some of the Welsh I was taught in school.

I have tried to personally improve my Welsh language skills using the different resources available to me. I have purchased and am working through a WJEC GCSE Welsh Language book (Figure 1). I have also installed a language learning app (Figure 2) onto my mobile phone which I have been using to improve my Welsh.

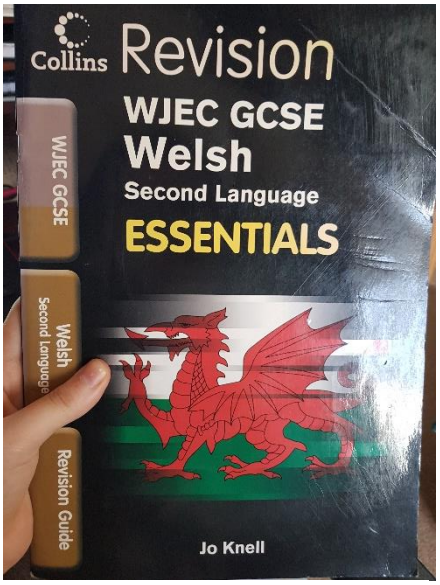


Figure 1- The GCSE Welsh book I purchased to begin improving my Welsh.

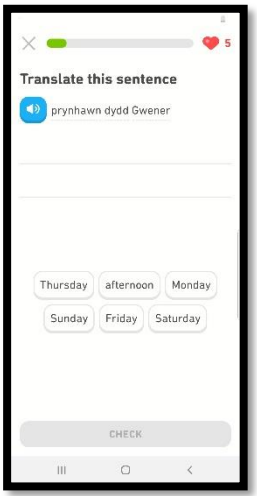


Figure 2- An example from the Welsh language learning app I have been using.

When I am unconfident pronouncing a word or phase I write down the phonetic sounds and practice until it feels more natural.

Classroom use

I greet students into the classroom using Welsh phrases such as: “Bore da/Prynhawn da/croeso /shwmae”. I have noticed that some students great me back in Welsh. Once settled, students answer the register in Welsh (yma) following the instruction “Siarad Cymraeg am y gofrestr”. I sought help from the Welsh PGCE student to use and pronounce this phrase correctly.

Within my lesson presentations, on my title slide the date is always displayed in Welsh (Figure 3). I ask students to write the Welsh date into their books.

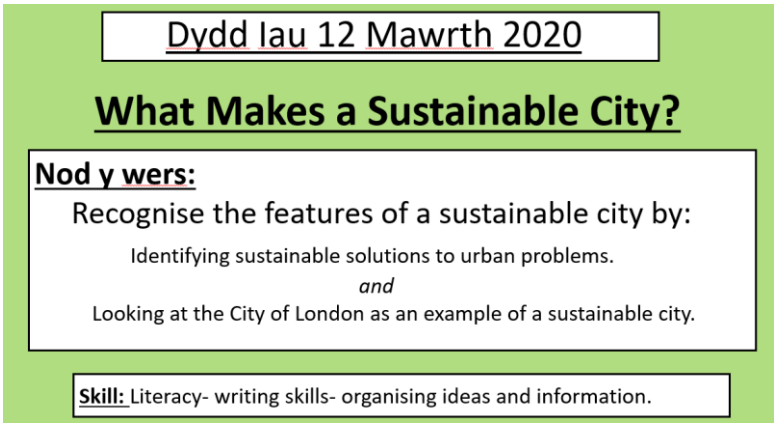


Figure 3- An example of one of the title slides I have previously used include Welsh language input.

I praise students in Welsh using “gwych/da iawn” etc. I also use “diolch” to thank students, instilling not only Welsh language skills but also common courtesy. I also give simple instructions in Welsh such as “dim siared/eisteddwch/dewch I mewn”.

I have also utilised my first placement school’s Welsh policy and have awarded students ‘Siarad Cymraeg’ achievement points when they have used Welsh within my lessons. Students respond well to this; they see it as an easy achievement point and it definitely gets them to use more Welsh.

As some of the students have a wider knowledge of the language than I do I sometimes ask them for help (I.e. What’s Tuesday in Welsh again?). I hope that this will help reinforce their own knowledge and display to students that its ok to ask others for help if you’re not 100% sure about something.

Welsh Framework Assessment

For the Welsh framework assessment, I took 10 minutes from the beginning of a lesson I had previously taught to a year 8 class (Figures 4&5) . To prepare for the assessment I rehearsed my pronunciation of praise terms and sought advice from a welsh speaking lecturer to pronounce “cywir neu anghywir”, which was the title of the starter task I had developed. The title slide contained the Welsh I have present at the beginning of any presentation I create and I asked the ‘students’ to answer the register in Welsh, as I would in any lesson.

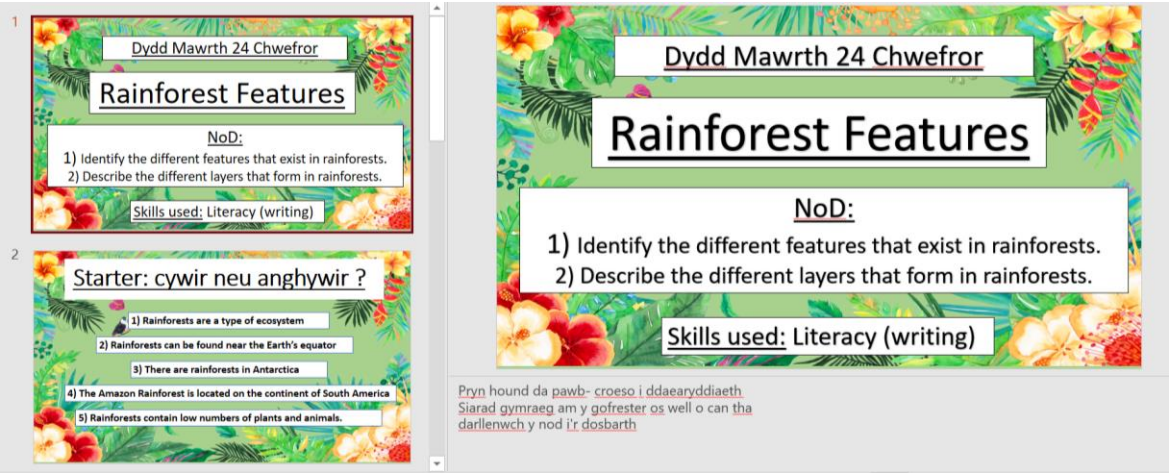
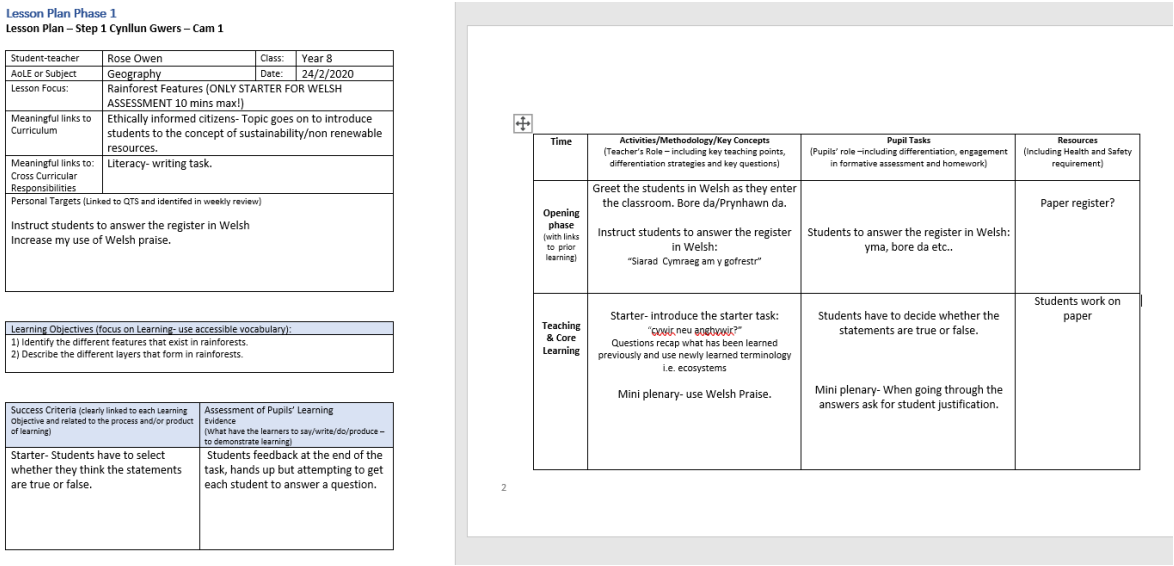


Figure 4- The presentation I used for the Welsh Framework assessment including the title slide, the starter task and my own slide notes.



Lesson Plan Phase 1

Lesson Plan – Step 1 Cynllun Gwers – Cam 1

Student-teacher	Rose Owen	Class:	Year 8
AoLE or Subject	Geography	Date:	24/2/2020
Lesson Focus:	Rainforest Features (ONLY STARTER FOR WELSH ASSESSMENT 10 mins max!)		
Meaningful links to Curriculum	Ethically informed citizens- Topic goes on to introduce students to the concept of sustainability/non renewable resources.		
Meaningful links to: Cross Curricular Responsibilities	Literacy- writing task.		
Personal Targets (Linked to QTS and identifed in weekly review)	Instruct students to answer the register in Welsh Increase my use of Welsh praise.		

Learning Objectives (focus on Learning- use accessible vocabulary):
1) Identify the different features that exist in rainforests. 2) Describe the different layers that form in rainforests.

Success Criteria (clearly linked to each Learning Objective and related to the process and/or product of learning)	Assessment of Pupils' Learning Evidence (What have the learners to say/write/do/produce – to demonstrate learning)
Starter- Students have to select whether they think the statements are true or false.	Students feedback at the end of the task, hands up but attempting to get each student to answer a question.

Time	Activities/Methodology/Key Concepts (Teacher's Role – including key teaching points, differentiation strategies and key questions)	Pupil Tasks (Pupils' role –including differentiation, engagement in formative assessment and homework)	Resources (Including Health and Safety requirement)
Opening phase (with links to prior learning)	Greet the students in Welsh as they enter the classroom. Bore da/Prynhawn da. Instruct students to answer the register in Welsh: "Siarad Cymraeg am y gofrestr"	Students to answer the register in Welsh: yma, bore da etc..	Paper register?
Teaching & Core Learning	Starter- introduce the starter task: "cywir neu anghywir?" Questions recap what has been learned previously and use newly learned terminology i.e. ecosystems Mini plenary- use Welsh Praise.	Students have to decide whether the statements are true or false. Mini plenary- When going through the answers ask for student justification.	Students work on paper

2

Figure 5- Lesson plan for Welsh Framework Assessment

To work on

I have very little knowledge of subject specific terms. Although I have learned the Welsh word for Geography (Daearyddiaeth) and I know the Welsh names for some landforms (bryn, afon, mynydd) I feel I cannot use these terms naturally within my lessons.

I have begun to notice the spelling of words change depending on what word/s they are followed by. Usually, I can still translate the meaning however I have little understanding of why these changes occur which affects my ability to write in Welsh as I do not anticipate these changes.

Although improving; my spelling in Welsh is still often inaccurate. As aforementioned I have learnt to say Daearyddiaeth but I still find myself searching for the spelling. Although I have learnt that Welsh is a phonetic language, I still lack confidence in spelling less frequently used words.

I also need to continue developing my pronunciation. Although this is an area where I feel I have shown the most progress, there is still plenty of room for improvement. As I have very little contact with fluent welsh speakers, it is hard to develop conversational welsh.

Future recommendations for self

My next target is to learn the months in Welsh, so that I can confidently write the date on the board without having to check spelling. I will continue to use the Welsh learning app I have downloaded and will practice writing out the words to improve my written fluency.

When it is possible, I will look to incorporate Welsh language into classroom displays, using this as an opportunity to use more geography subject specific terms. By linking these phrases to the images in the display it might help myself and my pupils become more familiar with these terms.

Depending on the current situation (Cornona) and my available finances, I will consider looking to attend official classes to increase my contact with Welsh speakers. Without actually having the opportunity to speak Welsh with others I think it will be difficult to make any meaningful progress, at least conversationally, in the language.