

Welsh Development Reflection

As evidenced in my Professional Learning Passport in the standard: 'Continuing Professional Learning, Welsh Language Skills' and the Subject Knowledge Development (SKD) tab for 'Welsh Language Development' since embarking on the PGCE in September 2019 I have sought to develop my Welsh language competence. Although I obtained an A* at GCSE for Welsh Second Language - which included speaking, writing and listening components - prior to commencing the PGCE I have not proactively practised my Welsh. Whilst I did consider that I lacked confidence in my oral capabilities, when I arrived in September, I was able to listen to Welsh conversations, for instance on the radio and generally comprehend the language.

Given my previous knowledge and experience in Welsh, I was allocated to Group Two where my Welsh tutor was Helen. I found Helen to be exceptionally helpful and clear. She commenced our Welsh sessions with an historical overview of the Welsh language and its increased prominence in the school curriculum and Welsh cultural priorities. Indeed, having previously worked at *The Welsh National Assembly* as a researcher, I was well aware of the bilingual ethos that the Welsh Government is trying to promote and was versed in communicating with colleagues using Welsh idioms and greetings.

After exploring the historical evolution of the Welsh language and its recent growth, Helen began to introduce basic every-day phrases that we could apply to informal and daily conversations. She clearly modelled correct pronunciation and revised the Welsh alphabet illustrating how various vowels should sound as well as the trickier consonants: 'll'. Along with other members of the group, I practised my oral pronunciation by completing various activities and engaging in various conversations with my PGCE peers. Increasingly, these activities gave us the opportunity to create more fluid dialogue through asking questions, clarifying and repeating other student's ideas and answers.

Most useful for teaching were our sessions on the time and classroom commands. Here, I had the opportunity to ask questions to clarify my understanding of Welsh time, especially the mutations with past and two and the more difficult 25 past the hour and 25 minutes to the hour. I compiled numerous handwritten notes, drawing a 12-hour clock to aid my understanding and completing numerous independent and group activities where we

needed to work out the correct time of various scenarios. Our sessions on the time were useful as we could see how we could apply this to the classroom and educational interactions.

This was also the case with classroom commands. Despite my foundational knowledge and understanding of Welsh ahead of these sessions, I had limited knowledge of classroom terminology and expressions. Utilising a power-point and extensive models, Helen taught us numerous key phrases to use in the classroom and Welsh words for various objects such as books, pens, desks and exercise books. Once again, since I learn through making notes, I compiled multiple handwritten notes and highlighted and underlined key aspects of the language and expression for me to remember and pay attention to. Indeed, I used these materials to create my script and power-point for the Welsh micro lesson, where I actively sought feedback from my tutor.

Subsequently, in PTE1, I was able to apply this learning when greeting pupils in and out of the class; when asking pupils questions; when giving directions and when identifying objects and concepts. Whilst I had some opportunities to practise my Welsh on placement, my principal subject was English and my allocated school and classes were EAL dominant (over 70%). Since numerous pupils were functional (and in some cases literate) in multiple languages, generally pupils' Welsh abilities were not in line with the Government age requirements and recommendations. Indeed, in English their reading and writing abilities were two to four years younger than their actual ages. Since pupils were still grappling with basic English, and many pupils were unable to convey straightforward ideas in writing, I was advised by my subject mentor not to overly complicate the lesson by using Welsh. I had also arrived at this conclusion after reflecting on my lessons and gaining familiarity with their capabilities.

Nonetheless, in consonance with the national guidelines and the school's Welsh language policy, I endeavoured to introduce basic Welsh expressions and include it whenever I could during the lesson. More often than not this was when I was greeting the class, taking the register and speaking to individual pupils who I knew had more confidence and proficiency in Welsh. Nevertheless, as indicated by my lesson planning (both daily and for sequences of lessons) and images of my power-point slides, throughout my placement I strove to incorporate and practise my new Welsh knowledge and enhance pupils' competence and

confidence with using the Welsh language. The success of this is indicated in some of my reflections. Over the course of the placement, I was able to extend my application of Welsh when I taught higher- ability groups and older ages. This was particularly the case with 8FY, 8I3 and 8I2.

As indicated in the interim report and mid-term review, my mentor recognised my efforts with Welsh, however, he set this as a target for PTE2 as he was aware that I didn't have ample opportunities to practise my Welsh in Fitzalan and the classes I was assigned to, and recognised that this was a component of my QTS evaluation. As instructed, I included Welsh language as one of my targets for PTE2. Upon arrival at PTE2, I asked staff numerous questions regarding their Departmental Welsh policy and approach. Given the various competencies and experience with Welsh, Staff elucidated various advice regarding the use of Welsh. Crucially, I was encouraged to use it when giving instructions; asking questions; handing out resources and being responsive to individual pupil's confidence and ability to communicate in Welsh. Thus, I was aware that in addition to using incidental Welsh that some pupils may interact (during 1:1 feedback time and monitoring) to a greater extent than others. I considered this to be an opportunity to develop my Welsh language proficiency, apply differentiation and to embody the bilingual ambitions.

Unfortunately, as the University is aware, my second placement was unexpectedly terminated prematurely. This meant that I was unable to develop my use of Welsh in the classroom how I originally intended. Nonetheless, when engaging in remote learning, I was able to revisit my Welsh notes and materials given by various tutors. I used this in conjunction with my reflections, plans and resources for PTE1 to complete the necessary evidence for my PLP. As you will see on the SKD tabs, I have described what various evidence is and how it relates to my learning. Crucially, when linking this evidence to the 'Welsh Language skills' standard, I have reflected on the application and specified how I will apply this experience to the future. This period of time has thus provided me with further opportunities to practice my Welsh and deepen my reflection on my previous usage.

Overall, I am satisfied with my Welsh language efforts and involvement in the Welsh sessions. Whilst I was due to complete my oral assessment in person at the University, I was unable to do this at the original date due to illness and then the circumstances of Covid 19. For this reason, I have recorded myself teaching a condensed lesson on a comprehension

passage of the Titanic. Although I recognise my oracy abilities are not polished nor advanced, I believe I have sufficient competence to utilise Welsh and encourage the use of Welsh among learners. I intend to continue to develop my use of Welsh through ongoing practise (putting myself out of my 'comfort zone') and attending training opportunities.