

1982, he had begun learning Gaelic with a "course from Cape Breton which included a 331/3 LP record with a Gaelic version of 'Mary had a little lamb' in the mountains of Wyoming, where many Gaels had come for the sheep and cattle business." Meeting Alison Kinnaird, renowned harpist from Scotland, steeped in the Highland clàrsach tradition, at an Oberlin College, Ohio, workshop, inspired him to try his hand at teaching Gaelic on his return to Seattle. From his first group of two students in his living room in December, 1989, to twenty people crowding into his apartment in 1995; to enlisting the Gaels of Vancouver to come south and do all-day intensive sessions; to starting a waulking song group; to composing a mission statement for their newnon-profit organization; to organizing the choir; to planning the first Féis for Spring, 1998, and beyond, the Seattle Gaels have gone from strength to strength and are busily preparing for Féis Shiatail, 2002. In Richard Hill's own words—and I think they are fitting words with which to conclude :

Perhaps most importantly we have begun to see all this as an independent North American movement, deeply rooted in and respectful of the traditional idiomatic language and culture of the Highlands, but not bound to it.-----We have used the analogy of a sapling from the Mother Tree transplanted far away. If our energy, enthusiasm and love for all things Gàidhlig can help to generate a New Forest, we will all be overjoyed.

A PRELIMINARY LOOK AT THE STATE OF WELSH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN NORTH AMERICA

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Purpose

Most of the thirty-odd languages offered here at Cornell fall into the category of 'Less Commonly Taught Languages.' Among them, however, Welsh is easily the smallest, having far fewer native speakers worldwide than any of the others. Welsh ranks a mere 370th in the *Ethnologue* list of the world's languages by population (Grimes 1995). However, the fact that it is an LCTL, and a small one at that, is only one determinant of its pedagogical situation in North America. For one thing, it is far more likely to be familiar to North Americans than the vast majority of languages which outrank it on the *Ethnologue* list (including some—Telegu, for example--which exceed it in population by a factor of ten). For another, the number of North Americans with at least some interest in learning it is in fact quite out of proportion to its size. Both of these disparities hold of other Celtic languages too, of course, and are attributable in the main to extensive immigration from the Celtic countries during the 19th century.¹ The Celtic languages enjoy the status of 'heritage languages'—languages to which an immigrant population retains an emotional and cultural allegiance. In the case of the Celtic languages, this sentimental attachment has endured long after the immigrant population ceased to use the language, giving rise to a significant pool of potential adult learners. While individuals do occasionally arrive at an interest in the study of the Welsh through other routes—an interest in the structure of the language, for example (as in the case of the present author), or an interest in the music of the associated culture--the majority of students in Welsh classes, in my experience, are there because they identify themselves as Welsh-Americans, and perceive the language as a part of a heritage which they wish to reclaim.

The situation of Welsh language teaching and learning, however, also differs from that of other Celtic languages in certain respects. On the one hand, fewer than half as many colleges and universities offer regular classes in Welsh as offer classes in Irish. On the other hand, the demand for Welsh language instruction has been addressed by a number of grassroots initiatives outside of academic institutions, with the result that perhaps the majority of Welsh teaching and learning takes place in what we may term 'hedge school' environments—a development which seems to have been more robust in the case of Welsh than in the case of its Celtic cousins; while there were considerably fewer immigrants to North America from Wales than from either Scotland or Ireland, initiatives for Welsh language maintenance have achieved a degree of formalization and institutionalization here which in many respects exceeds that of the others. This is no doubt due in part to the fact that it was better established as a language of literacy, liturgy and literature prior the period of emigration. Thus, for example, the Welsh-American community is served by two large, multilevel, week-long residential summer courses in Welsh. There are still a few Welsh heritage churches in North America which on occasion offer services in the language. People still gather, locally and nationally, to sing Welsh hymns, the lyrics of which are well-known even to the many participants who know nothing more of the language than what is contained in them. There are two Welsh-American newspapers which carry language columns for learners, as well as an occasional letter to the editor in Welsh. In many regions, there are very active Welsh-American Societies (often called St. David's Societies), some of which sponsor Welsh classes. In short, the language continues to be recognized by self-identified Welsh-Americans, even exclusively Anglophone ones, as a central symbol of their heritage.

In this brief report, I hope to shed some light on the implications of this state of affairs for efforts to support the teaching of Welsh in North America. I will first give a quick overview of the historical background of Welsh here, followed by a few words on the demographics of Welsh learners and a catalogue of the organizations and institutions which exist to promote it. I will then report on the different types of

environments in which the learning of Welsh takes place, and I will attempt to identify a few recommendations for supporting this enterprise. I should note at the outset that this is offered only as a preliminary report, since it is not based on a systematic, formal study of the problem, and relies at many points on sketchy and often anecdotal information.

The Language²

Welsh is spoken by approximately 510,000 speakers in Wales, constituting approximately 18.7% of the total Welsh population (Davies 1993: 67). Speakers of the language, excepting only some young children, are universally bilingual. It exists as a community language primarily in areas of Northwest and Western Wales, where in some regions more than 80% of the population remains Welsh speaking. In the more urban southern part of Wales, including the capital Cardiff, the absolute number of speakers is as high as in the north, but they constitute a much smaller percentage of the total population. In these areas, interaction among native speakers occurs within relatively diffuse social networks, rather than in geographically coherent communities, and, in general, the language is much less salient. The overall visibility of Welsh for casual visitors has been considerably enhanced by public signage, which is now uniformly bilingual at least in Welsh speaking areas, though it is still possible to tour parts of Wales without encountering more than the barest evidence of the existence of the language. Political and cultural developments since the 1970's have markedly enhanced the use of Welsh in the media, education and public life and led to an increase in goodwill toward its use even among Anglophone residents, and increased interest in learning it as a second language. There is some preliminary evidence that these developments have helped to slow the rate of language loss.

Dialect differences exist among Welsh speakers but are relatively minor among educated speakers, and in no wise a barrier to intelligibility. They have, in general been accorded undue emphasis in teaching materials for second language learners. This statement extends to the much discussed differences between

'North Welsh' and 'South Welsh,' as well as the controversy over the merits and demerits of Cymraeg Byw ('Living Welsh')--an artificial 'compromise' spoken variety devised in the 1960's as a classroom standard. More substantial is the difference between the 'literary' and the 'spoken' registers. These are indeed strikingly divergent, but the differences are of no real consequence to the beginning learner. All texts these days teach some variety of 'spoken' Welsh, differing mainly in terms of whether they offer a relatively formal or a relatively casual, colloquial variety. Much written material is available in these 'spoken varieties, and in the relatively rare case in which a North American learner becomes sufficiently advanced to undertake scholarly essays and other works written in the literary language, an hour of class time spent discussing the differences between registers is usually enough to enable them to make that transition. Getting students to that level of proficiency is the real problem. In general, ongoing debates over the question of 'Which Welsh?' (North versus South Welsh, the Cymraeg Byw controversy, when to introduce Literary Welsh and the like), as important as they may be in pedagogical circles, are of relevance to North American learners only to the extent that students tend to become confused and discouraged by them when they are presented in a way which exaggerates their importance.³

The Context: Welsh Americans and their Institutions⁴

As noted, the sense of community among those who identify themselves as Welsh-Americans is promoted by a number of institutions of continental scope, as well as local and regional groups. There are two major Welsh-American heritage organizations--the National Welsh-American Federation (NWAFF) and the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association (WNGGA). The latter organizes the annual "National Gymanfa Ganu." Cymanfaeodd Canu ('songfests') are a traditional Welsh social institution, centered around the singing of Welsh hymns and other traditional songs. In fact, the National Gymanfa Ganu, attracting hundreds of people annually, has evolved into a very large celebration of diverse Welsh arts. The Welsh language is represented as well, although in a relatively minor way; two hour language workshops are offered at the beginning and intermediate

levels. Both of these organizations also provide support to a wide range of projects supporting Welsh American culture, including some involving language instruction.

The two monthly national newspapers serving the Welsh-American community, Y Drych and Ninnau Welsh-American community, are publications of high quality, which aim to keep their audiences informed not just of the activities of North American Welsh societies, but of current political and social developments in Wales as well, including prominent reporting of developments in the area of language and public policy. Each includes a (relatively small) amount of Welsh language material, but their main service is in fostering the sense of community among Welsh-Americans.⁵

In addition to these institutions, most states and provinces and many larger cities boast Welsh societies which serve as foci for Welsh cultural activities. These are of course most concentrated in the areas of most intensive Welsh settlement during the period of immigration. The degree to which these are involved in the promotion of the language varies, but some of them either sponsor language classes of their own (see below) or subsidize individual members who wish to pursue language study elsewhere. The few Welsh churches scattered around the continent (some of which offer occasional religious services in Welsh) also sponsor Welsh language classes (see below).

There are also a few North American booksellers specializing in Welsh books and learning materials, including the Harp and Dragon in Cortland New York and Books for Scholars in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Some of these institutions--Y Drych, the WNGGA, and Welsh churches--were founded in the 19th century,⁶ while others--Ninnau and the NWAFF--date from the 1970s or 1980s. This in turn reflects something about the demographics of Welsh learners in America.

The first constituency of aspiring Welsh learners on this continent consisted of second, third or fourth generation descendents of the Welsh speakers who immigrated in relatively

large numbers to North America, often settling in relatively coherent communities, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For such individuals, the interest in the language is often based on actual experience with it early in life—either hearing it used in the home, or participating in some cultural activity such as hymn singing or church services, for example, which incorporated it in some way. This population, as well as the cultural institutions dependent upon it, has dwindled sharply as the era of large-scale immigration has become increasingly remote. The second wave of interest appears to have begun in the 1970s, and may be attributed indirectly to the striking successes of Welsh language activism in Wales. The consequent rise in the prestige and visibility of the language played an inspirational role in the founding of *Cwrs Cymraeg*, Welsh Heritage Week and other new North American institutions, which in turn attracted a new generation of learners to its study. This younger group of learners is less likely to have had direct exposure to the Welsh language in a family setting, or through cultural institutions such as the *Gymanfa Ganu*, and their interest in the language is thus often built on a less concrete foundation—often nothing more than the discovery that their surname is of Welsh origin. They are also often more interested in progressing to fluency, rather than simply refreshing their childhood acquaintance with the language. Both of these populations are represented among the participants in such residential courses as *Cymdeithas Madog's Cwrs Cymraeg*, but there appears to be a gradual shift toward the second population as the former diminishes, and this has implications for curriculum planning.⁷

A Typology of Welsh Language Classes in North America

A. College/ University Classes for Credit.

Welsh is a non-state language. It is spoken only by a minority even in its indigenous territory, and its speakers are universally fluent in the language of the majority. It is by any standards, therefore, not only a small but a non-critical language, and from that perspective it is not surprising that there are relatively few colleges or universities on this continent which offer it,

notwithstanding its status as a heritage language. At the outset, though, it must be observed that even at this relatively formal end of the spectrum, precise figures are hard to come by. There are at present no dependable mechanisms for tracking figures on so basic a matter as which colleges and universities teach which LCTL's—much less such more specific matters as numbers of classes at given levels, or total number of students. The Linguistic Society of America used to list less commonly taught languages by institution in an appendix to its *Directory of Programs*, but this information was reported only for institutions which also happened to have programs in linguistics. The LSA directory (now only on the Web) no longer reports such information, instead referring inquirers to the site of the *Less-Commonly Taught Languages Project* at the University of Minnesota. The LCTL site and the North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers (NAACLT) do attempt to collect information on classes in Welsh (and other Celtic languages) through their websites, but rely on self-reporting by instructors. Thus, the information is liable to be incomplete, and potentially out of date. Searching for information on Welsh courses in the catalogues of academic institutions is rendered difficult by the fact that they are offered under the aegis of a variety of departments, often being housed in whichever department happens to be the home department of the individual who happens to have developed an interest in the language. (Needless to say, the problem of arriving at reliable figures is much compounded for courses of a less formal nature.)

The LCTL list for Welsh includes 10 institutions.⁸ We may compare this with the 27 listed for Irish, and the 10 listed for Scottish Gaelic. Since the database relies on self-listing, there are some omissions. Rio Grande University, for example, the home of the Madog Center for Welsh Studies, regularly offers first through third semester Welsh classes but is not listed in the LCTL list. Nor is the University of Pittsburgh, where, according to online course information, Welsh is offered at least through a fourth semester, or St. Michael's College/University of Toronto, which lists a one semester course. Drawing on both this source and online college catalogues, I have managed to identify 13 institutions in total which list regular Welsh classes. There may be

others which offer Welsh on at least an occasional basis, but the total number probably does not exceed 15. Eight of these institutions report themselves as offering Welsh instruction beyond the elementary level (Harvard, Cornell, Indiana, Brigham Young, Pittsburgh, Rio Grande, Cincinnati and Ottawa). Offerings at these institutions range from a two semester sequence in the language and additional courses in Welsh literature on up to a four semester sequence of language classes plus additional literature courses.⁹ At some of the remaining institutions, on the other hand, Welsh is limited to a single introductory class.

When it is offered as an academic subject, Welsh seems usually to be taught by professors for whom it is a secondary interest, often unrelated to the one which they were appointed to teach. As far as I can determine, only at four institutions—Ottawa, Harvard, Berkeley and Rio Grande—is Welsh language instruction offered by teachers appointed specifically in the area of Celtic languages, as a part of a program in Celtic Studies.¹⁰ Aside from these special cases, the primary appointment of instructors who teach Welsh at other institutions is often in an English/literature department, a linguistics department or a foreign language department. Most of these teachers (myself included) thus offer their Welsh courses as an overload, in addition to regular teaching duties in their home discipline. It would also appear to be the case that they are more typically adult second language learners of Welsh than native speakers, and their level of fluency in the language covers a fairly wide range. They are often trained as teachers of other languages, and thus aware of language teaching methodology. The fundamentally accidental and secondary nature of Welsh offerings in these cases serves to account for their tendency to disappear after a few years. Of the institutions listed in the 1995 LSA Directory of Programs as offering Welsh, only half still do.

Students in these courses are most often regular college/university students who take them as part of an overall academic program, though the courses are sometimes part of the institution's adult/continuing education offerings, and open to people other than regularly enrolled students. Even when it is a regular course for college credit, local residents not infrequently

request permission to participate informally (as in the case of my own classes). In my experience, most students coming to Welsh classes will already have studied some other foreign languages (necessarily so at Cornell, since our Welsh offerings are insufficient to satisfy the college's language requirement). In my classes, the students are typically of Welsh ancestry, but rarely do they have any prior exposure to the language.

Since students enroll in them for credit, courses in this category are not subject to the relatively high level of attrition found in less formal classes; once enrolled, students tend to stick it out until the end of the semester. Non-continuation after the first semester, however, is marked. It is not entirely accurate to think of the students as dropping out at this point; often, the ultimate objective of a student enrolling in introductory Welsh appears, in fact, to be a just enough exposure to the language to satisfy their curiosity about it and gain a sense of what it is like—not the attainment of fluency. For students who approach it with this limited goal, a single semester can be a sufficient amount of instruction. Even for those who do aspire to fluency, though, sustaining momentum in the face competing demands is difficult, and only a small percentage continue with Welsh long enough to achieve a practical level of control of the language.

In summary, except for a minority of cases, Welsh language courses are often 'hobby' courses for both teachers and students. This is an important consideration for any efforts directed toward enhancing the teaching of Welsh; the teachers involved often must devote most of their teaching time, as well as, e.g., travel funds for participation in professional activities, to their major disciplines; Welsh teaching is often a spare-time activity to which they cannot devote more time than they do. To be effective, therefore, professional support would need to be extended in a format which did not make undue demands on such resources.

B. Summer Residential Courses

Welsh learners in North America are quite fortunate to have at their disposal two professionally run and highly regarded week-

long intensive language courses, offering instruction at multiple levels for one week in the summer--Welsh Heritage Week and Cwrs Cymraeg Cymdeithas Madog. These rather remarkable institutions originated as grassroots responses to the dearth of other opportunities for Welsh language study in North America, and have managed to stay in existence for a few decades by now, and to maintain excellent standards of Welsh language instruction, as volunteer organizations with no support from or connections to academic institutions. Cymdeithas Madog courses focus more or less exclusively on language learning, while Welsh Heritage Week offers instruction in other areas of Welsh culture, including instrumental and vocal music and dance. I know of no quite comparable institutions serving other Celtic languages, or for that matter other heritage languages on this continent.

The Cymdeithas Madog courses, with which I am most familiar, move from one venue to the next each year, attracting 70-80 students each summer for a week of residential Welsh study, hosted by but not affiliated with a college or university. Students stay in college residences, and classroom space is rented from the college. Courses are offered at seven levels, from beginning to discussion-oriented classes for fluent learners. Language classes typically take up five hours per day for six days (Monday-Saturday), and there are extracurricular activities in the afternoons and evenings. Course organization involves a cooperation between a local organizing team which negotiates with the college for the use of its facilities and makes other necessary local arrangements and a standing board of directors, which sets curriculum, hires teachers, and awards scholarships. The board selects a lead teacher from among the excellent cadre of professional Welsh language teachers in Wales, and the lead teacher in turn brings with him/her a teaching team of two or three colleagues from Wales. These numbers are supplemented by an approximately equal number of teachers from North America.

The student population in these courses is typically much more diverse than college courses, representing a much greater ranges of ages, for instance. In addition to college age students, there are many senior citizens, and occasionally even students in their eighties. Among the merits of these courses is that, because

students can return to them indefinitely, it is possible to progress to fluency in them, unlike most university sequences. Further, because of the large numbers of students who participate, even the more advanced classes are of respectable size. The top class typically enrolls 7-9 students, whose average level of fluency, in my estimation, exceeds what one might expect in advanced level language classes at a university.¹¹ However, there is also a considerable contingent of students who are content with maintaining their language skills at the same level from year to year, and who accordingly return to the same intermediate level classes year after year.

The main drawback of such courses is of course the fact that they only meet one week out of the year, leaving the student to his/ her own devices for the remainder. Some students are in fact not interested in continuing the study of the language between courses. Those who do wish to do so typically resort to classes of the type discussed in the following two sections—viz. informal, non-academic Welsh courses, or 'classes of one.' This can prove to be an effective combination; the weeklong immersion experience is often sufficient to give the students the inspiration and momentum to stick with their language study through the intervening months. In fact, in a number of cases informal classes have arisen in locales where residential courses have just been held, in order to capitalize on such momentum.

Since the curriculum and most of the materials used in these residential courses are generated by professional language teachers from Wales, their teachers are far less likely to be in need of resource support than teachers in the other class types treated here. Cymdeithas Madog, in particular, has focussed strongly on curriculum development over the past several years, and, while new materials and methods are introduced as the teaching team changes, instruction takes place within the general framework of an integrated and proven curriculum.

C. Non-Institutional Courses

In this category are Welsh classes not affiliated with colleges or universities. These are typically held on weekends or during the evening, and are led by teachers for whom they are a spare-time activity, usually entirely unconnected with their employment. The majority of these are sponsored by Welsh Societies or churches. What sponsorship consists of varies from case to case. In some instances, classroom space is made available to the participants. In other cases, the benefits of sponsorship are limited to publicity for the course in newsletters, brochures and websites. Seldom does it seem to extend to remuneration of teachers, who in most courses of this type offer their services for free, out of love for the subject matter, thus representing the noblest face of the teaching profession. The courses are also offered at no cost to the students. There are at least some additional non-institutional courses which we may term 'private', since they lack nominal sponsorship by Welsh organizations. In terms of the profiles of their students and teachers, and their need for resources, they are not distinct from the sponsored ones, aside from the matter of publicity.

One class for which I have information meets three hours per week (in a single block on Saturdays). One to two hours per week is more typical. For one group meeting only once a month the teacher remarked to me that "keeping the language on our tongues and in our ears" rather than making linear progress toward fluency has become the goal. In at least three cases (the Colorado Welsh Society, the Toronto group sponsored by St. David's Chapel and the Ann Arbor group) instruction is offered at upper levels as well as beginning levels.

The teachers of non-institutional courses are not usually trained as language teachers, and, in general, since they are teaching on a purely volunteer basis, have less time than college teachers to devote to materials development and the like. As is the case with teachers of college Welsh classes, they are non-native speakers as often as not, with varying degrees of fluency. Since the courses are free and non-credit, there is a greater tendency toward attrition than in college courses. Some of my colleagues report an attrition rate as high as one third. These classes are typically held continuously for nine months out of the

year, from fall through spring. Again, there are no reliable statistics on the number classes of this type. (Partial lists, with contact information, are included in the events calendars of Ninnau and Y Drych, and posted on the Ninnau website.) As far as can be determined, they seem to be at least as numerous as university classes. The calendar of events in the most recent issue of Y Drych lists eight, in Phoenix, Tucson, Denver, Atlanta, Ann Arbor, Minneapolis, Toronto, and Delta, Pennsylvania.

D. The Teach Yourself Approach

We tend to think of language learning as an activity involving both students and teachers, if not classrooms, and accordingly, are likely to overlook—even to be dismissive of -- autodidacts. In fact, however, they are an important component of the Welsh language scene in North America. I would hazard a guess that the numbers of students of Welsh in teacher-lead classes of type C are exceeded, perhaps by a large margin, by students who attempt to learn Welsh on their own using teach-yourself materials. Here, of course, reliable statistics are wholly lacking; and the conjecture is based on nothing more than the apparently considerable popularity of the Teach Yourself Welsh book and tape set, for example, which is to be found in most major bookstores, perusal of the e-mail lists oriented toward Welsh learners, and talking with fellow students at the Cwrs Cymraeg courses about how they got started.

Welsh is perhaps easier than some languages for teach-yourselfers, given the regularity of its mapping from letter to sound and its relatively straightforward syntax. However, there are studies suggesting that ab initio self-instruction is in general not a very good way to acquire a language; the dropout rate is typically high and the resultant command of the language low (Jones 1998). Nonetheless, since it is likely that the majority of aspiring learners do not live reasonably close to one of the relatively few organized Welsh classes in North America, it is for many the only option. Indeed, my own study of Welsh began with a self-instructional set, though I had the advantage of being a professional language teacher and the successful learner of other languages by the time I undertook it. That self-instruction can achieve some level of success is reflected by the fact that first-time

students at Cwrs Cymraeg courses are not infrequently placed in level 3 classes, and occasionally higher, on the basis of prior self-study.

There are several different self-instructional courses available, and they are generally of quite high quality. However, finding out about them—what they are, how they differ, and where they can be acquired—appears to be a major problem for aspiring learners. These are among the most frequent questions posted to the Cymdeithas Madog website. Even with quality materials, efforts at acquiring a language on one's own are hindered by a lack of structure, reinforcement and information. Students working under such conditions have no externally imposed expectations to motivate them to maintain a regular study schedule. Without an opportunity to interact with other speakers, moreover, they lack the reinforcing experience of successfully carrying out social transactions in the language, as well as feedback which would help them gauge how they are progressing. The abstract and uncertain rewards of study under such circumstances can be highly discouraging. Finally, lacking a teacher, self-instructed language learners do not have convenient recourse to anyone who can answer the questions about usage and grammar that remain unanswered even by the most carefully prepared texts.

There are numerous recent developments involving the internet which have served to improve the situation of such learners. For example, there is an excellent online Welsh course, complete with downloadable sound samples, developed by Mark Nodine (see bibliography), and a number of e-mail lists (Welsh-L, Cymraeg-L) on which subscribers can pose questions about grammar and usage to more advanced learners, and to native speakers. These sites also give users an opportunity to attempt composing messages in Welsh. The internet has also simplified the task of tracking down resources. Finally, real-time BBC Welsh radio broadcasts, as Welsh as half an hour of daily television news, are now available over the web (and can be accessed from the main BBC page). These latter require a high-speed internet connection, however, and are of practical use only

to more advanced students (who can improve their listening comprehension strikingly by listening to them regularly.)

In spite of these developments, it remains the case that continued study of a language over the long term without the opportunity to use it for daily interactions requires an uncommon degree of discipline. On the other hand, it is possible to cite numerous cases of success involving students who have combined self-study with regular participation in a summer residential course, for example, as a periodic 'reality check.' It appears that at least occasional participation in a more formal learning situation can reinforce the progress made and motivate the student to maintain his/her regimen during intervening periods of self-study.

Summary and a Few Provisional Recommendations

The picture which emerges from the foregoing discussion is not at all complete, even with respect to such basics as how many people are teaching or learning Welsh on this continent, and how they are going about it. Nonetheless, a few general observations can be extracted from the sketchy information at hand.

- Whatever the number of teachers may turn out to be, it will be quite small—a few dozen, at the most. With very few exceptions, moreover, they are not full-time Welsh teachers. If they are employed as educators at all, it is normally to teach some other subject. Many receive no compensation for their Welsh teaching, but pursue it as an avocation and public service. This seems to be a relatively stable state of affairs, which will probably not change in the foreseeable future.

The small numbers of teachers and the limited amounts of time and resources they can afford to devote to this aspect of their activities impose some stringent parameters for recommendations about how to promote Welsh language teaching. First, it is not clear that the numbers approach the critical mass to sustain any level of professional organization, but if such organization is to be

attempted, it is crucial to take active steps to identify and engage as many of this small cohort as possible. This could be accomplished in part by sending inquiries and announcements to the Welsh learners' e-mail lists to which many of them already subscribe. Second, to be effective, any measures to provide professional support for these teachers must respect their limited resources. It is unrealistic, for example, to expect that they will attend workshops and conferences in large numbers. Such less demanding modes of interaction as newsletters, websites and e-mail lists are more likely to succeed.

•A major need among both students and teachers is information about such practical matters as what textbooks, readers, tapes and other materials are out there, what their merits and drawbacks are, and how to order them. Both groups would benefit, for example, from information sheets discussing the 'Which Welsh?' question (with appropriate reassurances). Similarly, assistance in identifying textbooks and evaluating textbooks would be useful. Thanks to the considerable strides in adult second language education in Wales, the choice of high quality teaching materials is a reasonably rich one, especially relative to the size of the language, but it is not easy for students to find out about them. The Teach Yourself Welsh book and tape set—a good package, but in fact only one of many—emerges as a default choice simply because it is the one routinely stocked by mainstream bookstores in North America. A listing of all current book and tape, sets along with brief reviews commenting, for example, on their usefulness as 'teach-yourself' texts, etc. would be a welcome service to students and teachers. For North Americans, finding out where to buy Welsh language works is also a challenge. Amazon.com does not list them, for the most part, and they are not carried by local bookstores. The number of suppliers of such material on this continent is small and dwindling. Ordering books from Wales is an unfamiliar and therefore daunting process to some teachers, as well as students, though the internet has made it somewhat easier. An information sheet on sources for Welsh books would again be well-received by both teachers and students, as would information on other resources (internet sites, digital radio and television broadcasts, residential courses here and abroad, and the like.)

•Several of the teachers I have talked to have expressed an interest in principle in sharing with others the teaching materials that they have generated, if there were a convenient means of doing so. A online materials exchange, accessible to self-taught students as well as teachers, would be a way of addressing this desideratum. The content would perhaps need to be monitored, to avoid difficulties with copyrights.

•A more comprehensive way for letting teachers publicize their classes would also be useful. The channels through which Welsh courses are normally announced—college bulletins, Welsh Society newsletters and the events calendars of the Welsh newspapers reach only a fraction of those potentially interested.

•More difficult to address is the complaint by both teachers and students of Welsh that teaching and learning the language in virtual isolation from its context not only results in a sense of unreality, or artificiality but seriously hinders the development and maintenance of fluency. This problem exists to a certain degree for all foreign languages in North America, but it is perhaps more acute in the case of Welsh because of its small size and minority status. Most Welsh students, and even some Welsh teachers, have not had the opportunity to spend time in Wales. The ideal solution to this dilemma would of course be prohibitively costly, but there more modest partial solutions might be feasible. The North American summer residential courses afford an opportunity for students to spend a week interacting with speakers (including native speakers) besides their teacher and classmates, and for teachers to brush up their fluency. There are, moreover, both full and partial scholarships available to defray the costs of attending these. Local Welsh societies also sometimes provide financial support to members wishing to study Welsh, and the national Welsh American organizations make grants available to individuals wishing to study in Wales. Welsh learners and teachers would benefit from a clearinghouse for information about such opportunities.

•Self-taught students should not be overlooked in efforts to support Welsh language learning. They are collectively a significant component of the cohort of Welsh learners, and, if they do not become discouraged in the early stages, they eventually find their way into regular Welsh language classes as students, and occasionally even as teachers.

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Notes:

* I would like to thank my fellow Welsh teachers, Kara Lewis, John Otley, Meredith Roberts, Trefor Roberts, Edgar Slotkin and Ronald Tatum, for sharing information with me about their Welsh classes.

¹ The persistence of such allegiance in the particular case of Welsh was no doubt reinforced by the additional cultural connection between Britain and America resulting from their shared use of English. It may also have been indirectly facilitated, ironically, by the fact that the Wales had already become extensively Anglicized by the time of this period of immigration. This meant that English as well as Welsh had become a second linguistic vehicle for the customary expression of Welsh cultural values (as it still is in Wales). Unlike other immigrants, therefore, the Welsh immigrants were not faced with having to give up a native language in favor of a new one with no history as a vehicle for the expression of their inherited culture. Thus, adapting to the linguistic situation in the new world was arguably less disruptive of cultural transmission.

² For short overviews of the current political and cultural situation of Welsh, see J. Davies (1993), and The Welsh Language Board (1999). For a discussion of the debate about Cymraeg Byw see Davies (1988).

³ Compare Weingartner (1989: 747). The relatively minor variations involved in these cases can evoke extreme reactions, on the part of those who prepare the materials as well as on the part of those who consume them. I will cite just a few examples: First, one publisher of instructional materials goes to the exorbitant effort of publishing them in two entirely separate versions—one teaching Northern Welsh and one teaching Southern Welsh. Second, a teacher recently reported on the

Welsh-L list that a prospective student decided not to take his Welsh class, preferring to take no Welsh at all than to use a text based on 'Cymraeg Byw,' against which she was apparently prejudiced by remarks she had heard.

⁴ A much more detailed and vivid account of these institutions and the people who participate in them, by now rather out of date but still reasonably current as a portrayal of the general state of affairs, is offered in Greenslade (1986).

⁵ Y Drych was, in fact, a Welsh language newspaper until roughly 1940. See Jones and Jones (2001) for discussion of its history. At this writing, it seems likely that the newspaper will soon cease publication.

⁶ See Weingartner (1989: 746) for a more detailed discussion of the demographics of Welsh learners.

⁷ This does not include an approximately equivalent number of institutions which offer medieval Welsh. I leave these out of consideration here. I note that at least two of the institutions listed in the LCTL project list (American University and Boston College) do not seem at present to have regular Welsh offerings. American University lists none in its online course descriptions, while Boston College lists Welsh as one of a number of languages in which classes may be offered "under certain special circumstances." Also excluded are institutions at which Welsh is listed as one of a number of languages available on a self-instructional basis. The NAACLT site lists no additional college Welsh courses beyond those mentioned in the LCTL list.

⁸Strictly speaking, Cornell does not belong in this group, since I offer only a one semester formal introduction to Welsh, but I encourage students to follow this up by participating in ongoing once-a-week Welsh conversation/reading groups, for which they can get a half-course credit, under the rubric of "Readings in Celtic Languages." By chaining several of these together over a couple of years, a few students have managed to achieve a fairly high degree of fluency. Most, however, drop out before this point.

⁹ Even in these programs, the primary focus tends to be on the Goidelic languages, with Welsh offerings considerably overshadowed by those in Irish.

¹⁰ In the Cymdeithas Madog summer course, the fact that some students return to the top class year after year even after achieving a high degree

of fluency has created a problem of articulation, since it results in a fluency gap between that level and the preceding level, which makes it difficult to move up through the ranks into the top class without outside study.