

## UCET Cymru - Speaking Notes

### 1. ITT's crucial part in the process

I would like to confirm what was said by David Egan and underline the crucial part the Initial Teacher Training sector has to play in relation to the themes you have in mind, which are developing education and training through the medium of Welsh and providing opportunities for children and people of all ages to learn the language.

I would also add to that the role that we have to play in the aim of nurturing effective bilingualism in Wales.

### 2. Why do we have such a crucial role?

It is evident one would imagine that the progress and success that exists at present in relation to learning Welsh as a second language in schools, and the success of the Welsh medium education sector, will not continue unless we have generation after generation of qualified teachers that have been trained specifically for the work and who possess the necessary language skills.

Our sector is a very very important link to ensure the continuation of the circle –the continuum – that is necessary to ensure the successful development of language policies within education from primary to secondary – to further education and higher education– and to feed back into the schools again.

### 3. Our work's challenge

Our work is challenging for a number of reasons:

- firstly, (as David Egan and others have mentioned) it is difficult to attract enough young people wishing to be second language or Welsh medium teachers, especially in some subjects, including Welsh itself.
- secondly, because of the lack of continuity that exists in Welsh education at present between primary and secondary, and secondary and further and higher education, and the complex linguistic situation that exists in Wales, those young people who are confident, fluent and accurate enough to venture into the Welsh sector are limited.

We must provide, not only for those students who strongly desire, or insist, on the right

to be prepared for the Welsh medium sector, but also for those that, although wanting to teach in a Welsh school, lack the confidence to present the language to others. It is important that we assist them to improve their skills in the language and to strengthen their confidence so that they are not lost to the English medium schools.

We also, of course, prepare students that are good learners to become Welsh curriculum leaders in English schools.

## 1. **ESCalate Project**

I am a member of a small project under Escalate's sponsorship – the Education subject centre for the promotion of education and learning – that considers the development of bilingual education within Initial Teacher Training institutions throughout Wales.

The project includes representatives from higher education institutions from all over Wales.

What is evident from the work done to date is that:

- students' needs differ because of their educational and language backgrounds
- the language context of the schools where they will be teaching in the long run varies from area to area

as a result, the way that the institutions meet the needs also differ, and the different institutions have a range of different schemes depending on their unique situations.

The types of factors affecting us are:

- variation from year to year in the numbers of students wishing to teach in the Welsh medium sector in different subjects – and from institution to institution
- variation in the nature and length of the courses
- variation in students' fluency in the Welsh language, and also to a degree in the English language
- the number of lecturers and tutors that can speak Welsh or are confident to teach through the medium of Welsh, and are capable or have the will to provide bilingual teaching materials
- changes in funding and sometimes lack of money to ensure staff and resources to meet the needs and extend the provision

The small project under ESCalate's sponsorship has begun to recognise the needs and

has started conducting research into ways of meeting the challenges that we have

For instance,

- to search for opportunities to develop bilingual education in the sector – that is, where teaching sessions happen in both languages with the Welsh and English medium students being taught together – even though this is not always acceptable of course.
- to search for successful ways of using information technology to attempt to improve and enhance the provision
- to start to push for more research into ways ahead for the future – in order to help institutions plan more effectively and to reach the range of needs that exist

#### 1. **When looking to the future:**

We aim towards training and educating fully bilingual teachers – teachers with the necessary skills to be able to contribute towards developing the increase and continuation of second language, bilingual and Welsh medium learning and to help complete the circle in the future. There is a great need therefore to:

- attract Welsh speaking students to become teachers
- assist them to acquire the specific Welsh language skills needed to be effective language teachers across a range of subjects
- ensure that the institutions have the staff and resources to be able to meet the challenge facing us
- support further research into the possibilities

challenge → financial support needed