

This document provides a translation of correspondence received from an Individual

TRR 03

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i'r [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar gyfer yr [ymchwiliad i recriwtio a chadw athrawon](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) on the [Inquiry into Teacher recruitment and retention](#)

Ymateb gan: Unigolyn
Response from: Individual

I saw the call for evidence and thought it might be of interest for me to share my experience.

After completing a degree and a range of postgraduate degrees I decided to become a teacher and pursue a teacher training course in 2013-14. I probably would've done it regardless – a lot of my family are teachers, including my mum, and I felt passionate about how important teaching was as a way of contributing to society – but there was also a £10k grant available for the specific subject I was studying (Welsh), which meant that taking the course would basically cost me no money as the grant would be enough to sustain me during that year (also giving me the opportunity to complete my PHD), and then leave me with nothing to lose if I decided not to keep going.

I had a mixed experience during the teacher training. I saw many teachers working hard under difficult circumstances to inspire and to perform miracles with some children. I also saw a lot of cynicism from teachers who had had enough and had no confidence in the system.

I then got a permanent job at a secondary school in xxxx xxxx Wales. However in about six weeks, I had resigned. The reasons at the time were

- I felt that I was only teaching children to pass exams. My subject was Welsh and the school in question was one that had good results (2nd language). However, the children in the year 11 class - who had therefore been studying Welsh for at least 5 years - were unable to respond in Welsh to simple oral questions (what is your name etc) or deal with any type of text that was not fully scripted. The school didn't teach them to speak Welsh and this didn't fit at all with the way I had been trained to teach or the reason I wanted to be a teacher.

- I raised this with the head of department but her response was "just teach them to pass the test, if they want to speak Welsh they can study it in college".

- The evidence for the effectiveness of homework is mixed at best. What it mainly does is create marking work for teachers. We can reduce these expectations as well.
- It is silly to expect schools to be responsible for every aspect of education; is a formal qualification the best way to teach everything?
- Teachers should not be expected to do things like "being on lunch/bus duty" or other things beyond the core of their role as educators. Teachers are not childcare providers.
- Pay more money to classroom assistants. They are such a help to teachers.
- "Main streaming" - if you want to improve skills in X, then giving X lessons is the way to do this, not expecting e.g. maths teachers to convince children of the importance of eating healthily while expecting PE teachers to ask children to do sums.
- Cut back on the compulsory elements of the curriculum eg the Welsh baccalaureate. There may be some benefit to be shown in each subject but with limited time and attention, what are our priorities? In a similar vein the question must be asked whether the Welsh language as a compulsory subject for all children in English-medium schools is, in fact, helping the language? There is little evidence that it creates confident speakers and can undermine Welsh education. Resources could be focused on those who really want to learn the language.

Obviously I have not been involved in education for quite some time now so there may be more recent evidence of further use, but if my vague impressions are of any use, then that must be worth something.