

Workbased learning and skills in the medium of Welsh

This briefing has been produced by the CADCentre UK LTD following a request by the Members' Research Service for use by the Bilingualism Rapporteur Group at the National Assembly for Wales.

The CADCentre's experience has been identified as an example of good practice by the Welsh Language Board. This is on two fronts; as an SME as well as a bilingual service provider.

This briefing is planned to be presented to the members of the Bilingualism Rapporteur Group on 1st December 2010 at The CADCentre UK training centre, Wood Street, Cardiff.

Also included in this presentation are the views of some employers and learners who are receiving learning and skills in the medium of Welsh through learning programmes delivered by The CADCentre and funded by DCELLS. The learning programmes are; Apprenticeships in ICT and the Welsh Bacalaureate in ICT. The participating employers are Carmarthen County Council, Celtech Consultancy Ltd in Caerphilly and The Farmers Union of Wales in Aberystwyth.

For further information, contact Ali Anwar – MD, 02920 666161, ali@cadcentreuk.com

Introduction:

The CADCentre UK is an independent bilingual workbased learning and skills provider. In Wales it operates from offices in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Aberystwyth and Bangor. In England it operates from offices in Bristol, Swindon, Reading, London and Birmingham. It has been in business since 1989 and employs 135 full time staff. It delivers learning and skills programmes to 2,300-2,500 learners a year.

The CADCentre is a specialist provider in ICT, Engineering, Business Administration and Customer Service. It provides WAG and SFA funded learning programmes to the out of employment Youth and Adults learners and to the employed status learners.

It is an approved learning and skills provider by DCELLS in Wales and the Skills Funding Agency in England. It was awarded Grade one during its inspection by Estyn/Ofsted in 2007.

The Welsh at Work Scheme:

This scheme has been developed by The CADCentreUK to promote recognition of Welsh as a skill in the workplace. Also to develop and deliver high quality learning and skills programmes through the medium of Welsh in the workplace.

What is available:

Learning and skills programmes including the Apprenticeships schemes in ICT, Business Administration and Customer Service .

Scheme Launch:

The scheme was launched in the Senedd on the 18th November 2008 by Alun Ffred Jones AM- Minister for Heritage. The event was sponsored by Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM- Presiding Officer.

The Launch went well and had good media coverage. Over a 100 guests attended the evening from organisations representing the public, private and voluntary sectors.

During February 2009, Ali Anwar , Managing Director of the CADCentre presented briefing sessions on this scheme to the Assembly Members with the portfolios of education and heritage across all political parties.

The Scheme aims to:

- Give organisations the choice to develop and enhance the skills and knowledge of their workforce bilingually.
- Help organisations to develop a bilingual culture in the workplace by encouraging all employees to use the welsh language in their working day to day activities and to be confident to communicate with their customers in English and Welsh.
- Help organisations to motivate and develop a workforce which is bilingually multi skilled and can adapt to the challenges of the future.

Learner's participation:

Since starting the scheme in November 2008 to the present time we had the following:

120 learners started, 38 left, 31 completed their learning schemes (82%) achievement rate.

Our target for the remainder of this contract year, ie to end July 2010, is to increase the total number of participating learners to 200.

Scheme's Funding:

The scheme receives funding from The Welsh Assembly Government -DCELLS under the Apprenticeships and SkillBuild schemes .

What has been achieved so far:

Since the launch of the scheme in November 2008 the CADCentreUK has achieved the following;

- High quality support and training materials in the Welsh language have been developed to meet the requirements of the learning and skills programmes.
- Qualified assessors and trainers in each region of Wales are available to deliver the scheme.
- Delivery at a national level covering all regions of Wales; Bangor, Aberystwyth, Swansea, Cardiff and Newport
- 120 learners from organisations representing the public, private and voluntary sectors are participating in the scheme. 38 learners left, 31 completed their learning schemes (82%) achievement rate.
- The scheme was promoted at the IWA Business Awards 2010, Skills Wales 2010 Exhibition and the National Eisteddfod 2010.

This is a summary of the CADCentre's views on the following themes raised by the Members' Research Service. These views are to be discussed with the members of the Bilingualism Rapporteur Group on 1st December 2010 during their planned visit to the CADCentre offices in Cardiff:

Can it give details about its views on the role and importance of vocational training in developing bilingual workforces, including details about its own courses and successes?

Vocational Training schemes are based on well established delivery programmes with major input from employers in the content and the process of delivery. They provide the learner and the employer with a good opportunity to update existing skills and learn new skills in a constantly changing technological environment.

The CADCentre's approach is to deliver learning and skills programmes through the medium of Welsh. This is particularly important if the intention is to develop a bilingual workforce equipped with work skills, terminology and nomenclature in the medium of Welsh which is often absent from the learner's work experience. This can lead to lack of confidence and a tendency to switch to English in new situations as well as a general lack of literacy in Welsh.

Using our workbased approach delivers a purposeful improvement in Welsh language standards amongst the workforce. The new Welsh language terminology and linguistic skills are delivered as part of a skills based framework.

What are its views on comments that there is a lack of continuity from the education system into the workforce in terms of Welsh language skills and does it have any ideas on how this could be addressed?

There is often a gap in the Welsh language experience as pupils leave Welsh speaking schools and areas to follow courses in HEI. This is then carried forward into the workplace because new skills learned in higher education are usually the ones used at work.

There is a tendency for businesses in Wales, especially the larger ones, to operate in English, even though they may have a number of Welsh speaking staff, because they “mainly” deal with a UK, including Wales, market in which the dominant language is English.

This means that these Welsh speaking staff are always immersed in an English only environment from the start of their employment experience and linguistic patterns and habits are therefore set at an early stage within the employment. This is reinforced by the need to learn new skills and procedures and to work with senior members of staff within the company’s organisational structure.

Workbased documentation, the visual environment and IT based resources are mostly in English which makes working entirely through the medium of Welsh an impossibility and there is a tendency therefore to deal with these matters in English as the easiest and quickest option.

The CADCentre approach in delivering learning through the medium of Welsh breaks down these barriers by encouraging the use of the language in a business environment, delivering the specific skills that are needed for creating and maintaining Welsh language documents and encouraging a bilingual approach to communications and discussions.

Has it had any difficulty in recruiting Welsh-speaking staff, how has it gone about doing this, and what training and development opportunities does it offer its employees in terms of language skills?

We do have difficulties in recruiting Welsh speaking staff particularly tutors and assessors .We advertise the vacancies through specialist agencies. These difficulties appear less severe in Aberystwyth and Bangor. These staff need to have the combination of technical skills as well as being proficient in the language. These staff undergo Continuous Development. Welsh speaking staff recruitment, retention and development are a major cost for our operation.

Does it have any views on the role of the sector skills councils with regard to developing bilingual workforces?

We work closely with the sector skills councils on issues relating to the development of the qualifications, national standards and employers needs. They are supportive of our bilingual scheme. We are not sure of their targets and plans regarding the development of a bilingual workforce.

Would the CADCentre UK agree that some employers see the Welsh language as an arbitrary characteristic rather than a skill that benefits their business and the economy?

Historically this has been the case, however we are experiencing an increasing awareness in large sectors of the business community that the language is of benefit to an organisation, both culturally and financially, in terms of better business prospects, customer loyalty and staff retention. This would hopefully become more common if the number of active Welsh speakers increases

How does the CADCentre UK receive support from the Welsh Language Board and what are its views on the services that the Board offers to businesses?

We have worked closely with the WLB in Cardiff to develop our Welsh Language strategy. We received approval to the “investors in Welsh” scheme which gave us more confidence in the delivery of our services in Welsh. The relationship with the WLB has been positive, we gained access to expert advice and support.

We also received support from the WLB during the promotion of the Wales Business Awards 2010. This annual event is organised by the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA). We have created and funded the “Welsh at Work” award to promote the use of Welsh in the workplace.

We do receive positive feedback from businesses receiving WLB services particularly interest in providing advice on issues related to translation, staff learning Welsh and developing a Welsh language strategy.

It seems that many consumers lack the confidence to use the Welsh language in engaging with businesses and organisations. Has the CADCentre UK had any direct experience of this issue?

The problem arises due to three factors.

1. Consumers are unaware of the ability of a company to respond to their queries in Welsh and therefore take the easiest and quickest option which is to communicate in English. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of a separate Welsh language telephone number or point of communication.
2. There is a general lack of confidence (probably due to lack of daily usage) amongst the Welsh speaking population in areas where Welsh is the minority language.
3. There is a general lack of Welsh language use in the built and visual environment, in the media and business. This establishes English as the 'normal' means of communication and Welsh as a social language for use with acquaintances, friends and family. This is more obvious in areas where Welsh is the minority language but does prevail to a certain extent

Learner's Views:

This is a summary of the views of a learner who is receiving learning in the Medium of Welsh. These views are based on the following themes that raised by the Members' Research Service. These views are to be discussed with the members of the Bilingualism Rapporteur Group on 1st December 2010 during their planned visit to the CADCentre offices in Cardiff:

Name:	Karen Louise Jones
Previous Achievements:	Apprenticeship Scheme in ICT Level 2 (in English)
Currently in Training:	Progressed to Apprenticeship Scheme in ICT Level 2 (in Welsh)
Start Date:	13 th of July 2009
Language:	First Language Welsh- Educated in Welsh from age of 4.
Primary School:	Ysgol Gynradd Trimsaran
School:	Gwendraeth Grammar School (Bilingual at the time)
Organisation	Carmarthenshire County Council
Job Title:	Additional Learning Needs Systems Officer

Additional Information:

Karen works for an organisation – Carmarthenshire County Council, where Welsh is promoted and valued throughout. Karen has achieved a Welsh O' Level and she has two children who have been educated through the medium of Welsh in order to promote the language. Karen supports the Welsh Language, and is pleased to work for an organisation which promotes Welsh in addition to English in the workplace.

Why did she feel the need to learn Welsh for use in the workplace and what benefits does she believe this will bring, both personally and to CADCentre UK?

I am a fluent Welsh Speaker, and I use Welsh on a daily basis in my workplace and it is actively promoted as a part of our work culture and I am happy to continue to use my Welsh for my training and my job. I did not need to learn Welsh but think it is important that people have a basic understanding in Welsh (basic if not more of the language). One of my colleagues does not speak Welsh and customers always ask to speak to a Welsh speaking member of staff as they are more comfortable to be dealt with in the Medium of Welsh. I have taken it upon myself to improve my writing skills to correspond and respond to them in Welsh through letters and forms. Verbally on a daily basis and written is ongoing if not daily it would be every other day.

How has she been supported by CADCentre UK in learning the language and how important or vital has this support been?

I have been supported throughout the training from a Welsh speaking CADCentre trainer. I have been offered training manuals through Welsh which has been vital in completing set tasks. Because Welsh is my first language it has been a support to me to have a Welsh speaking trainer. I have been supported throughout my training and I have been taught through the medium of Welsh and produced the required evidences for my portfolio.

Does he/she feel confident enough to put the Welsh language skills she has gained to use in the workplace?

Definitely, I am a confident Welsh speaker, both verbally and written. I have often translated basic letters and forms and other documents. I use it for written purposes on a regular basis. I am not frightened to check my grammar and language and seek guidance.

Does she believe businesses appreciate and place enough emphasis on the Welsh language as a distinct skill?

Definitely for my organisation, and in particular Carmarthenshire, because it is primarily a Welsh speaking County, and Welsh is promoted throughout by introducing a bilingual policy, where written materials are produced bilingually to the community we deal with. We also encourage correspondence in Welsh and in English. The Council also offer Welsh lessons for staff in the Council which is aimed at both beginners and intermediate learners. This shows the importance of Welsh in the workplace.

What are the views of other employees about her decision to learn Welsh (including non-Welsh speakers and fluent speakers)?

As my supervisors are Welsh speaking they depend on me to write and read Welsh for them ongoing. My colleagues and employers appreciate the value of staff that can produce bilingual material and training through the medium of Welsh.

Employer's and Learner's Views:

This is a summary of the views of an employer and a learner who are receiving learning in the Medium of Welsh. These views are based on the following themes that were raised by the Members' Research Service. These views are to be discussed with the members of the Bilingualism Rapporteur Group on 1st December 2010 during their planned visit to the CADCentre offices in Cardiff:

Employers Name: Celtech Consultancy Ltd, 18 Charles Street, Caerphilly, CF83 3AQ

Website: <http://www.celtech.org.uk/>

Contact Name: This section has been completed by Mr Wes Evans – Managing Director

- How do you see the bilingual vocational training offered by CADCentre being beneficial to you and your business?
- *The training has improved Lowri's confidence in using the Welsh language which in turn improves our overall performance in offering a bilingual service.*
- What are the main difficulties facing businesses in trying to provide services in Welsh?
- *The cost involved is the main difficulty. Continuity is also an issue, some Welsh speaking staff may have better language skills than others.*
- Is there a lack of consumer confidence limiting use the Welsh language
- ?
- Is the demand for Welsh language services balanced against the practical ability to offer them
- *I can only comment on our business service and my opinion is that the cost involved with offering a bilingual service far outweighs the demand.*
- Describe the promotion and visibility of any Welsh language services that are available.
- *We have very few Welsh speaking clients and our consultation service is not yet offered bilingually, however if our clients requested correspondence in Welsh this wouldn't be a problem as Lowri can provide a translating service for the surveyors. We have also discussed the possibility of translating our website, which may prompt new business.*

Learner Name: Lowri Butler

Job Title: Administrator,

Company: Celtech Consultancy Ltd, 18 Charles Street, Caerphilly, CF83 3AQ

Website: <http://www.celtech.org.uk/>

Start Date: 10th June 2008 End Date: 11th June 2010

Completed an Apprenticeships Scheme in ICT at Level 2 and Level 3 including the following qualifications:

NVQ for IT Users Level Two, NVQ for IT Users Level Three, Advanced Diploma for IT Users Level Three, Key Skill Communications Level Two and Key Skill Application of Number Level Two

- Why did she feel the need to learn through the medium Welsh for use in the workplace and what benefits does she believe this will bring, both personally and to CADCentrek?
- *My main motivation for conducting the course in Welsh was to regain some confidence using the Welsh language on a day to day basis.*
- How has she been supported by CADCentrek in learning through the language and how important or vital has this support been?
- *I have received support in the medium of worksheets and conversations with my tutor. This has been vital as increasing the use of my Welsh increase my confidence using it in the work environment.*
- Does she feel confident enough to put the Welsh language skills she has gained to use in the workplace?
- *My language skills may not be as polished as they were 10 years ago. However I'd like to think clients requesting a bilingual service would credit the business for trying rather than scrutinising my Welsh language skills. So yes I would feel confident enough to use it in the workplace.*
- Does she believe businesses appreciate and place enough emphasis on the Welsh language as a distinct skill?
- *I do believe the business recognises the Welsh language as a distinct skill. Being the only Welsh speaker I am acknowledged as an asset in the business especially with the interchangeable legislation and talks of making bilingual services compulsory for the private sector as well as the public sector.*
- What are the views of other employees about his/her decision to learn through the medium Welsh (including the opinions of non-Welsh speakers and fluent speakers)?
- *Other employees are supportive and often intrigued by the use of the Welsh language.*

Learner's Views:

This is a summary of the views of a learner who is receiving learning in the Medium of Welsh. These views are based on the following themes that raised by the Members' Research Service. These views are to be discussed with the members of the Bilingualism Rapporteur Group on 1st December 2010 during their planned visit to the CADCentre offices in Cardiff:

Name: Aaron Hirrons

I am eighteen years old and a full time learner on the ICT Welsh Baccalaureate scheme at intermediate level. I am based at the CADCentre's training Centre in Swansea. I started the course last September 2010 and due to complete it next June 2011.

I have learned to speak Welsh as a second language in the Llangadwg comprehensive school. I sat a GCSE for second language Welsh in 2008 and received a C grade.

My use of Welsh is infrequent. I only speak Welsh at home with my grandfather because I do not feel very confident.

I intend on learning some parts of the course in Welsh to allow myself to practice my reading and writing skills and gain confidence in the language.

Why did he feel the need to learn Welsh for use in the workplace and what benefits does he believe this will bring, both personally and to CADCentre UK?

I think it is important because I have been brought up in Wales and it is a way of preserving our Welsh Heritage. I also see it as a way of boosting my confidence as I don't have the opportunity to use Welsh much elsewhere and I think with the language it will help in getting a job as not many other people speak Welsh in Swansea.

I think that by studying in Welsh it will prove to employers that I can work in Welsh and if a company is offering jobs, and their customers speak Welsh it will improve my chances of getting the job.

I am not sure what the CADcentre would gain from having me learning in Welsh.

How has he been supported by CADCentre UK in learning the language and how important or vital has this support been?

I have been encouraged from the beginning to use Welsh wherever I am comfortable as originally I had opted to do everything in English. I have been shown and given access to software that helps me with mutations and spelling and this will improve my confidence in using Welsh in the workplace.

Does he feel confident enough to put the Welsh language skills he has gained to use in the workplace?

I am fairly confident about it but I would consider myself as having a basic level of understanding and wouldn't be comfortable using only Welsh in the workplace. I would definitely give it a go though.

Does he believe businesses appreciate and place enough emphasis on the Welsh language as a distinct skill?

I've not had much experience working with a company that places specific emphasis on Welsh but I know that there are initiatives around all of the time that promote Welsh and I think that most companies would see it as an advantage to have their employees speaking Welsh and this is why I have chosen to learn part of my course in Welsh.

What are the views of other employees about his decision to learn Welsh (including non-Welsh speakers and fluent speakers)?

Some of the other students have agreed with my decision and supported it. Some of them have even joined me in wanting to do parts of the course through the medium of Welsh to help boost their confidence and their cvs.