

## Case Study – Camau Courses

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We found out about the **Camau** project at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Cardiff 2019. I saw that there was a stand promoting a Pre-school Welsh language scheme in the workplace. I chased it up through our Mudiad Officer, Olwen Jones, who contacted the company 'Sbectrwm'. I then kept emailing them to ensure we did not miss out on the opportunity.

Cylch Yn Yr Ysgol is based in Builth Wells and we really struggle to recruit Welsh speaking staff. Nearly all our children come from English speaking homes and some have already confirmed that they will be attending English medium schools. We had 4 staff when the **Camau** scheme was running - 2 high level learners and 2 beginners. When recruiting staff, we had found that we needed to provide

support for staff to learn or refresh their Welsh. This helped with recruiting and assure that we did not have to close the setting. All staff had previously attended evening sessions through Learn Welsh in Mid Wales (Aberystwyth University) at their own expense and in their own time. The Cylch then secured Lottery funding to pay for staff to attend a year-long evening class at their relevant level.

Prior to our current Mudiad Officer, Olwen Jones, we had a period of no support officer being in place. Our Powys advisory teacher, who supports the setting, is also not a Welsh speaker. The Cylch staff were therefore worried that this lack of Welsh would impact on the children's skills and would be raised by Estyn when inspecting. This really lowered staff confidence. Menter Iaith were very supportive and would come in to engage with the children once a term to support us and introduced us to Welsh apps etc.

Pre-Covid, Olwen from the Mudiad would come in termly to engage with the children and is still supporting us with translation etc via online methods. We also moved 3 years ago into the Primary school and the Foundation Phase teaching staff supports us with translating, loaning resources etc despite us being a separate entity. Our Play Leader accessed the Open University Welsh for beginners' course and all staff attended "Cymraeg gyda'r Teulu" weekly for a year, unpaid and in their own time.

We started **Camau** around September 2019 till December 2019. After we finished **Camau** we were awarded the Mudiad's 'Croesi'r Bont' Scheme, and this is now carried out virtually due to Covid.

The impact of **Camau** was huge. Our tutor, Wendy Doel, was lovely and really made us feel relaxed as all staff were very anxious about being observed face to face. Everyone soon became more confident to "have a go". Nearly all staff feared using the Welsh they knew in real life situations, and Wendy gave us the confidence to do this by being encouraging and positive. We all needed someone present with us to give us a nudge to dive in and use what we know. Wendy praised us for trying and made us aware that we could speak more Welsh than we actually believed. For us, this course was ideal as it was delivered in "real time".



Wendy came into our setting each week and engaged with us in different activities alongside the children and modelled vocab or language patterns that we needed there and then. All the Welsh being relevant to the children, covering the necessary vocab etc that we would need i.e. Golchi dwylo! We even went out for walks etc into differing environments in our community. Wendy would ask what our themes were and email us the vocab beforehand, so we could familiarise ourselves with the words and language patterns. At times, she would also take staff aside and individualise their learning as needed. We found from verbal feedback from parents that they were noticing an improvement in the amount of Welsh their child was using and more parents made a choice for Welsh medium education when transitioning to Primary. Wendy encouraged us to rely more on body language and

visual cues, which was very effective, in accordance with the principals of the 'Croesi'r Bont' scheme.

The course was relevant to us in the workplace. It allowed staff to access the training during their working hours as we don't have sufficient cover to release staff to attend training. Also the course being free made a difference because as a charity, we don't have the funds to pay for long term courses. Best of all - our Welsh and confidence improved!

Most challenging thing was to tackle the staff's confidence to use Welsh. Also the lack of opportunities to speak Welsh outside of the setting in our community as our area has few Welsh speakers, as well as the time and money for staff to attend training.

Powys Education Authority highlighted us as a Welsh medium setting that needs to develop staff Welsh language and have given us a development plan and paid for us to participate in 'Croesi'r Bont'. This has been impacted by Covid as it is currently done virtually, therefore there are new and different challenges without a trainer in the setting with us each week.

We would love to have continuation of **Camau** scheme in the setting - we felt it was very beneficial and relevant and couldn't have asked for a better tutor. Diolch Wendy Doel!

