

Scots language
and culture
Teacher CPD
Unit 5 Tutorial

Bruce Eunson, Education Scotland

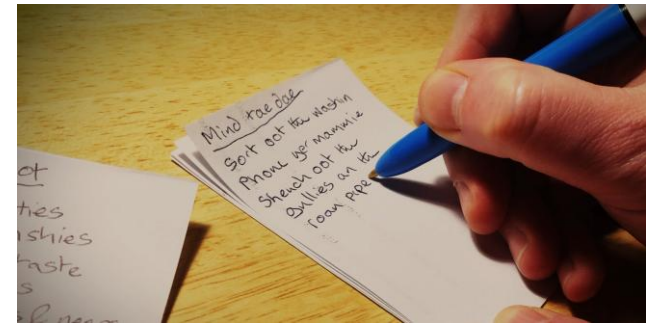
Jamie Fairbairn, Banff Academy

Sylvia Warnecke, The Open University

Whaar wir been sae far...

Unit 4: Scots and social studies at secondary school

In this unit by Jamie Fairbairn you explored the benefits of engaging with Scots through Social Studies at secondary school but also have the opportunity to transfer what you are learning here to the primary context and to other subject areas. You will investigate the numerous opportunities for learners to explore Scots in the context of study in Geography, History, Modern Studies, Scottish Studies, Scots Language and Social Studies. In this unit you focussed on Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels 3-6 and will find out about the SQA Scots Language Award. You will consider the benefits of making links across the curriculum through the study of Scots, and the benefits of engaging with Scots for pupil self-esteem.



Key learning points

- to learn about using Scots language through Social Studies
- to write lesson plans for using Scots in a lesson in your subject area with possible cross-curricular links
- to build upon your knowledge and experience and further develop your classroom skills with a focus on Scots language and culture
- to find out about the SQA Scots Language Award as a means of accreditation for your pupils' study in Scots

Quotes from your work:



We looked at the BBC weather symbols and worked out what each symbol meant in English.

I then gave the pupils a word bank of a range of different weather and asked them to find suitable Scots versions for the symbols. If there were different Scots words we had a brief discussion about being able to use different words to mean the same thing. I then gave the pupils a printout of Moray (they initially identified it as Italy - but that particular issue seems beyond the scope of Scots language teaching to solve) and they had to draw on their weather symbols and label it with an appropriate Scots word.

Their forecasts could be completely unrealistic so long as there were Scots words. The more confident ones were then invited to 'present' their forecast to the class.

I was pleased with the balance I achieved between providing challenge but in an appropriately scaffolded way. The task was simple but fun - something which engaged the pupils. At the same time, it was relevant to their wider learning and built on the more scientific-based learning in Geography (e.g. how landscapes affect rain etc).

As a stand-alone lesson, it worked well. How I would progress this into a series of lessons would be to relate the weather vocabulary to the likes of creative writing (setting especially). I could also make links to placenames (either the history behind them or the geographical significance) and we could co-create a shared creative world in which to set each pupil's piece of writing. That element of fun and creativity through new language really appeals to me - playing with Scots to improve pupil confidence at the same time as their knowledge of it.

What was especially motivating about this unit was a shift in my own mindset: rather than viewing Scots as something to be taught, I began thinking about how to teach with Scots, no matter the specific subject. My own developing confidence and the possibilities demonstrated throughout the unit helped me to reimagine how Scots could have a meaningful place within our curriculum. With that in mind, I'm heading into the next three units with a more experimental approach around how Scots can be threaded throughout the curriculum, rather than just bolted on.

Quotes from your work:



As we explored poetry for Burns Night, the children became linguistic detectives. Through careful listening and decoding unfamiliar words, we compared Ayrshire Scots with Shaetlan dialect, noticing similarities and subtle differences. It was a joy to see them recognising that language carries history and identity, and that both poems connected deeply to place and culture.

There is something remarkable about sharing a poem written over 250 years ago in rural Scotland and realising it is still read and studied across the world today. One of the bairns said they found that 'Mindbowing!' Because agriculture and crofting are such an integral part of life here, the bairns could relate to the scenario immediately — even if the setting belonged to another time. The themes felt familiar to the class, grounded in the everyday. Both poems centre on the simple observation of a mouse. Poetry about animals is appealing for children, animals are often viewed as safe and comforting. This can also help children make sense of their world, develop empathy, and use their imagination more freely.

The bairns quickly identified that both poets had drawn inspiration from ordinary, everyday experiences. They recognised Burns' sympathy for the mouse, while also noting that the moose in the hoose in Tait's poem was perhaps a less welcome visitor! I loved when one of the bairns suggested the author sounded quite "tirn" at the peerie moose, such a great descriptive word. Moments like that feel special — when children not only understand the text but engage with tone and perspective in their own words. What struck me most was their ability to be quite empathetic. They were able to relate to both authors and understand both sets of circumstances.

I think it was important that meaningful time was spent reading aloud. Hearing different dialects spoken helps normalise variation in language and encourages appreciation rather than judgement. I thought they would probably find the Shaetlan poem easier, which they did, but was heartened that they also enjoyed *To A Mouse*, appreciating the linguistic diversity in Scots. The class were able to understand context and pick up on sound patterns, which sharpens reasoning and interpretative skills. It often makes meaning clearer too, as dialect/local language frequently feels more natural when heard than when silently decoded.

Quotes from your work:

A short review of the work as the unit lead within the field of social sciences will lead to this argument that, likewise, the topic of mental health, even within a vocational context, can be more fully understood when candidates have the opportunity of using Scots.



Scots can be raised as a linchpin in Inter Disciplinary Learning (IDL). Scots has value and relevance helping pupils and Further Education (FE) candidates to engage more fully in diverse academic and vocational subjects. Upon reflection of Unit 4, it was clear that the use of Scots over such diverse social subjects as explored in the Unit content; Geography, History, Politics and Media not only has potential but has a distinct benefit to the pupils. I found the Ordnance Survey resource particularly interesting and explored many entries; loan meaning 'right of way for stock to common grazing, lane, small common ground.' 'Mains, home farm on an estate.' I had never thought of checking mains when I first read *Sunset Song (A Scots Quair)*. Likewise, 'neuk, corner, projecting point of land into the sea, a remote place' (Ordnance Survey, 2019). Being a weegee I had kind of just glossed over such words and yet they add so much to visualise the setting. It is clear to me that Scots has many benefits to our candidates. As has already established that they respond positively at an emotional level (Unit 2 Application Task) to fiction written in Scots, therefore, I am keen to adopt increasing levels of Scots as the language of instruction across other subjects. When the Mental Health Units are delivered, it is, I feel, particularly ripe for drawing upon Scots. During this unit we explore language. Up to now that has been within a 'labelling' context whilst drawing upon Symbolic Interactionism see (Rogers & Pilgrim, 2021). I am keen for our candidates to draw upon the Scots words related to mental health they can allow us to delve more deeply into contemporary attitudes towards mental health, distress and wellbeing.

Breakout
Rooms
and sharing
thoughts so
far



Whaar tae nixt...?



Unit 5: Scots language in Literature and Creative Writing

This unit by Pauline Turner allows you to explore the rich diversity and creativity of the Scots language through a wide range of literature before applying resources and techniques to your own teaching of creative writing using Scots.

Contemporary Scots is written in the manner in which it is spoken and since there are multiple dialects, each with their own distinct grammatical and syntactical features, it is important for learners to listen to the sounds, intonation and rhythm of the words, as well as the way in which sentences are constructed. Therefore, listening and reading texts aloud as often as possible is a fundamental part of the creative writing process irrespective of the related reading and writing level within the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).



Scots language and culture teacher CPD:
next dates for your diary

Unit 5:	3. Tutorial	
	4. Application 5. Community Link	Submit Application task in the course forum by Saturday
	6. Research on teaching Scots language 7. Professional Recognition Reflective Task	Submit Professional Recognition blog post by Saturday