

e-Sgoil's Innovative Approach to Gaelic Learning

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CAMPBELL - Renewing Indigenous Languages

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This paper demonstrates how e-Sgoil uses technology and experience of remote teaching to grow Gaelic. It aims to show the effectiveness of remote teaching approaches and partnership-working in developing resilience in teaching capacity – an issue that has hampered Gaelic Medium Education. It also demonstrates how e-Sgoil's responsive and reactive approach has enabled it to capitalise on the recent move to online learning, thereby driving forward innovative approaches to Gaelic learning. e-Sgoil was established in the Western Isles in 2016 as an online school to provide equity of curricular choice for pupils in remote, rural communities. The vast majority of lessons are live and interactive. e-Sgoil provision ranges from age 3 to adulthood, with uptake from across Scottish and international settings. Recent Early Years inputs alone saw uptake from over 50 centres. Provision is designed in consultation with learners, parents and communities as well as statutory organisations, e.g., Education Scotland and Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Impact is measured through attainment and achievement data, profiling of individual learner journeys, case studies and learner testimony, all of which demonstrate continuity in language-of-choice learning. Linking language to economic, cultural and social opportunities is a central driver in expanding the use of Gaelic; a key focus therefore has been on embedding language-rich, applied learning subjects such as Foundation Apprenticeships, music and art into the curriculum. Facilitation through e-Sgoil by creatively integrating technology with language learning and collaborative working between key stakeholders allows for the maximum use of resources to strengthen Gaelic as a community language.