4ydd Gynhadledd Dysgu ac Addysgu

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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

‘Them and [uz]’: Language, learning and ownership

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Two years ago I introduced a new module, Discourses of Childhood and Education, into the Childhood Studies programme. Students with no background in language study were required to engage in detail with language structures and to analyse texts. The presentation will explore some of the challenges I faced and lessons I learned from the experience and will consider the ways in which this module will develop in the future. At the same time I have been working with colleagues in the PGCE team to develop the language awareness elements of their courses in order to serve the Welsh Government’s literacy agenda in schools.

Both of these experiences led me to reflect on ways of talking about language to people who are expert language users but who do not have the tools to discuss it. And if academics do not have the tools to discuss language, how can we help students to navigate the problems that they face as new academic readers and writers? Do we address the problem only in terms of a deficit? Do we only notice language when students have difficulty? Are we, as academics, sufficiently aware of our own language practices (our own literacies) to make them explicit to students?

The presentation will explore some perspectives on the language experience that students have in schools and ask some questions about how academic reading and writing skills can be built on that foundation.