

Roatch Global Lecture Series on Social Policy and Practice

2005

*Celtic Culture, Confidence and Credibility:
Implications for Minority
Language Retention in Arizona*

Presented by
Agnes Rennie

April 22, 2005

*With gratitude
to Mary Roatch
The present*



The John F. Roatch Endowment was created by gifts made to the university by John and Mary Roatch. The endowment provides support for the Global Lecture Series on Social Policy and Practice, organized through the Office of the John F. Roatch Distinguished Community Service Scholar. We thank Mary for her continued support and her son David for his enthusiastic participation in the endowment's activities.



Celebrating
John F. Roatch's
The memory
Legacy



Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The John F. Roatch Lectures on Social Policy and Practice have become an important part of the ASU scholarly discussions. Through the years, renowned international academics and practitioners have added a global perspective to important topics in the Arizona community dialogue. In the spirit of our donor, John F. Roatch, our speakers give generously of their time and knowledge. This year, we were pleased to welcome Agnes Rennie, MBE, who has been an activist in the area of language and culture maintenance in the Gaelic speaking communities of Scotland.

Agnes emphasized the importance of place, local culture and language, tradition and the arts in the making of a healthy community. The value on native tongue in the development of identity was her clear theme. Using examples from her own family and croft in Lewis, Scotland, she helped us reflect on the importance of language maintenance in our own milieu. While our common language, English, binds us together and serves us well for global dialogue, our traditional languages give us the means to view and affirm our different cultural legacies. Agnes's message was clear—languages are an asset to be maintained and cultivated; they are too valuable to be discarded.

The perspectives of our Arizona respondents added relevancy to Agnes's message. Tim Hogan and Terry Wiley asserted, from different vantage points, how important the teaching and learning of English is in our public education. If we want to facilitate language acquisition for various populations, we must refrain from suppressing other languages. Rather, we must fund our educational system in ways that are appropriate and enhance the acquisition of linguistic tools among our children.

In memory of John F. Roatch, and celebrating the tenth anniversary of our lecture series, Mary and her son David Roatch and members of their family joined the community audience at a reception hosted after the lecture. I want to take this opportunity to thank, again, John and Mary Roatch for having had the foresight to make these yearly events possible. I also want to express our gratitude to Agnes Rennie for her generosity and to Tim Hogan and Terry Wiley for their valuable contributions. Warm thoughts and appreciation is extended to Kathy and Leonard Wood who further enlivened the event with wonderful Celtic bagpipe music. Finally, I want to acknowledge the kindness and support of Bill Verdini, interim dean, who is leaving Extended Education to return to his faculty position in the College of Business.

We are pleased to offer the full text of Agnes Rennie's lecture and, by kind permission, some poetry she used to convey the rhythms of the Gaelic and its artistic traditions. Disseminating our guest lecturers' ideas is an important part of the Office of the Distinguished Community Service Scholar in the College of Extended Education. We serve the Phoenix and Arizona community by sharing and applying the knowledge derived from scholarship to current concerns.

With best wishes,

Emilia E. Martinez-Brawley
John F. Roatch Distinguished Community Service Scholar



I first met Agnes Rennie nearly ten years ago in a community development conference in Australia. In a milieu where economic development is a paramount subject of conversation, Agnes talked about social and language development. Her feelings for the value of place, culture, and dual language as pillars in the development of children and in the improvement of society reflected mine. I believe then, as I do now, that her message has much to offer in Arizona. Our Hispanic culture and language must remain alive not as substitutes for the global value of the English language but as valuable additions to it. Spanish must be taught, learned and valued. It is an asset for all.

– Emilia E. Martinez-Brawley



Agnes Rennie, MBE

Chair, *Pròiseact nan Ealan*, National Gaelic Arts Agency
 Vice chair, *Bord na Gàidhlig*, the Gaelic Language Board
 Broadcaster, Gaelic BBC radio and TV

AGNES RENNIE is a community practitioner with many years of experience in assisting community-led development in the Islands of Harris and Lewis in Scotland. She works as a regular presenter on Gaelic TV and current affairs radio programs. In 2001, Agnes received an MBE (Member of the British Empire), an honor bestowed by the Queen for her services to the crofting community. Crofts are small parcels of land where local people maintain traditional agricultural and creative practices.

She is deeply committed to the community she lives in and to the Celtic culture and Gaelic language. Agnes was the Crofters Commissioner for Lewis and Harris for ten years, a position that involved working with community development across the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, at the policy and delivery levels. As a member of the Highlands and Islands Consultancy Group, she has worked with public agencies and community groups. She has been involved in adult education through the formal and informal sectors for several years and is currently working to validate language skills within the context of vocational qualifications. Agnes has also been very interested in the arts in local communities.

She chairs the board of *Pròiseact nan Ealan* (the National Gaelic Arts Agency) and is vice chair of *Bord na Gàidhlig* (the Gaelic language board). Agnes was recently elected to the board of *Urras Oighreachd Ghabhsainn* (Galson Estate Trust), an organization established to purchase land for the community under the auspices of the new Land Reform Act. She was a founding board member and latterly chairperson of *Iomairt nan Eilean Siar* (Western Isles Enterprise).

Agnes is a graduate of the University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen College of Education, and lives with her husband and two daughters on her native croft in Lewis.

Scenes from the Lecture



Celtic Culture, Confidence and Credibility

Implications for Minority
Language Retention
in Arizona

April 22, 2005



*Thoir a-nuas dhuinn na coimnlearan òir
'S annta càraibh na coinnlean geal, cèir
Lasaibh suas iad an seòmar a bhròinn
Taigh aire seann chànan a' Ghàidheil
Se siud o chionn fhad' thuirt an nàmh
Ach fhathast tha beò cànan nan Gàidheal*

*Bring out the golden candlesticks
And set up the white wax candles
Light them up in the room of mourning
Hold a wake for the ancient tongue of the Gael
That is what the enemy once said
But the language of the Gael lives on*

— (Macfarlane, 1973)

I have a poster on my study wall of a Namibian woman farmer. The poster was produced by Oxfam and simply says

our culture
our freedom
our rights
our family
way of life
are all rooted in our land

I look at this poster most days and wonder at the simplicity of the statement and marvel that such a statement by a woman who lives thousands of miles from me could hold such a resonance. I would like to explore in the following paper how these elements are just as inextricably linked for me as a woman farmer living in the Hebrides of Scotland.

HOW THE STORY BEGAN

The story of Scotland's Celtic culture is part of the great story of the Celtic languages of Europe. Historians now believe that as long as 5,000 years ago the nomadic Celtic tribes started to move from east to west across the great continent, finally reaching the islands of Britain. As the people settled in their own distinct communities, the languages developed into what we now know as Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish, Manx and Breton. As recently as 500 years ago, about half of the population of Scotland spoke Gaelic and even 150 years ago there were still 250,000 speakers. By this time, the Gaelic speaking community was mainly established in the north and west highlands in the areas north of Perth. According to the census of 2001, the number of native Gaelic speakers has now declined to 65,000, or just 1% of the population of Scotland. Most of these speakers live in what is now known as the Gaelic Heartland, the communities of the Hebridean Islands that lie off the northwest coast of Scotland. A large number are also dispersed across the country with significant numbers in the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

My own personal story has been part of the bigger story and I will relate it to exemplify how language and culture and community confidence are so inextricably connected. My family has lived in the islands for countless generations and I now live with my husband and daughters on the small farm (known specifically in Scotland as a croft) that my parents and grandparents lived on since the croft system was established circa 1924.

Around the middle of the 1800's, the Island of Lewis was bought by Sir James Matheson, one of the senior partners in the merchant company of Jardine Matheson, who had made their fortune trading in opium in Hong Kong. Matheson planned to earn some financial return on the money spent on the island, and the people were expendable where they did not fit the plan. (*MacKenzie, 1994*) The whole of the village of Galson was cleared of everybody who lived there in 1863 as part of the process of clearance that was occurring all over the Highlands of Scotland at the time.

The process of "clearances" was ruthless and complete. Every living soul in a village had to go and if this could not be achieved voluntarily then whatever force was required would be employed. Most of the people of Galson gathered their meagre belongings and joined an emigrant ship that took them across the Atlantic to Quebec in Canada. The land in Galson was then let as a sheep farm to a tenant farmer who moved into the island. Occasional skirmishes between the farmer and people from the neighbouring villages became a regular feature of the next forty years until matters came to a head after the First World War. Having seen the horrors of the trenches, the returning servicemen were not about to take no for an answer to their demands for land, and eventually the Government of the day realised that the demands of the crofters had to be listened to. The civil war in Ireland in 1917 undoubtedly helped Gladstone's Government to reach this decision and, in 1924, the farm was broken into crofts. (*Hunter, 1978*)

My maternal grandparents and my paternal grandparents were allocated crofts and the latter is the croft where my family still lives.

At the end of the 19th century another event took place that was to have a profound influence on the cultural history of the Gaelic-speaking communities. The 1872 Education Act of Scotland legislated to provide free education for children throughout Scotland. A programme of school construction was embarked on that resulted in a legacy of school buildings that still function as schools in many parts of Scotland. There was, however, within the Act a clause that determined that English should be the language of the classroom and this was adhered to assiduously by generations of determined teachers, many of whom were themselves Gaelic speakers. Children came to school as monoglot Gaelic speakers and from day one were taught in English, and heaven forbid they be caught using one word of Gaelic in the classroom. If they were, then they were punished and, in the 1930s, my own mother was belted with a leather strap for speaking Gaelic whilst she was in primary school.

The effect of this regime was two-fold. On the one hand it produced generations of well-educated children who remarkably, despite their often negative school experience, extolled the virtues of a good education to their own

children. On the other hand it produced generations of children whose own cultural heritage was negated in every way possible: the language of teaching was English, they were not taught to read or write in Gaelic, they were not taught anything about their own culture or history, and they were being actively encouraged to turn their backs on the language if they wanted to "get on" in life.

In a report to the Scottish Parliament in 2000, John Alick MacPherson wrote:

It is a tribute to its tenacity, if not a miracle, that Gaelic has survived thus far. The language has suffered from stigmatisation and from attrition. Within an overall ideology of linguistic assimilation—and the stranglehold of a dominant language—Gaelic has been neither an official nor a promoted language. At worst it was discouraged, sometimes by restrictive legislation including education acts. At best it was tolerated by the authorities. The history of the Gaelic language has been a chronicle of dereliction; official negligence; malicious intent; deliberate denial; and—perhaps most damaging of all—benign neglect.

(MacPherson, 2000)

THE GAELIC COMMUNITY TODAY

As John Alick MacPherson said in his report, it is a miracle that Gaelic has survived. Yet the language has not survived as a poor replacement for a previously rich culture; instead, despite the declining number of speakers, it has survived as a vigorous and creative force that extends across the whole of Scotland. Gaelic culture is without a doubt one of the mainstays of Scottish identity. We have used it to name our landscape, it has done and continues to inspire some of our greatest poets and visual artists, and musicians and singers draw from a rich legacy of material and are still adding to that body of material. Gaelic culture has provided many of the Scottish national emblems which identify the country all over the world such as kilts, tartan, bagpipes and some suggest even whisky.

The language is still spoken and, most remarkable of all, where parents demand it children can now be taught through the medium of Gaelic. Since the first Gaelic medium school was opened in 1985 with 24 pupils there are now some 2,000 pupils in 65 schools across Scotland being educated in Gaelic. There is also a vibrant preschool movement that, until recently, was mostly run by parent volunteers but has now been incorporated into the formal preschool system. This has grown from no provision 30 years ago to more than 200 across Scotland today.

The influence of national curriculum in this situation is enormous and, as has been the case in Britain in recent years like America and elsewhere, the emphasis on standardisation and testing does not encourage or even

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create space for minority cultures. The effect of this can be far-reaching and, even where legislation is introduced to encourage space for the "local" culture, the greater pressure of meeting national tests together with the lack of resources will see many teachers not using this opportunity as has happened, for example, in Norway.

There are some good examples of countries that have recognised the need for the curriculum to acknowledge place-based learning as a key component in the curriculum and not simply an optional extra after all the "real" subjects. New Zealand, as part of the effort to integrate the Maori, has given high priority to local culture and other learning activities. This policy is reinforced by ensuring that new teaching graduates, whether Maori or not, are equipped to deliver the cultural components of the curriculum.

In Scotland, the First Minister Jack MacConnell delivered his St. Andrews Day speech in 2003 and chose culture as his theme. He spoke of the citizen's "right to access cultural participation and excellence." Since then, Local Government Authorities have been asked to prepare local cultural plans, and a commitment has been made that all children of primary school age will access music tuition for a minimum period of two years.

Coincidentally, also in November 2003, the Scottish Arts Council launched its first-ever Gaelic Arts Policy. (*Gaelic Arts Policy, 2003*) This was the result of considerable lobbying by the Gaelic Arts sector but also acknowledged the steady growth in Gaelic cultural activity during the previous 15 years. In his foreword to the policy document, Graeme Berry states that "a consistent theme has arisen during the discussions that have informed the policy: the vital and central relationship of language and the arts to national culture and identity."

Scotland is now a country of wide cultural diversity reflecting the many people from all over the world who have chosen to make their home here. Rightly, there are increasing efforts to reflect this diversity in all sections of Scottish life. The actions of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Arts Council have to be seen against a context where Gaelic is an autochthonous language only of Scotland. The 1998 Sproull Report states:

Gaelic arts and cultural activities appear to be making a substantial contribution to many of the main objectives set by public agencies dedicated to economic, social and linguistic development in the area. These include direct and indirect employment and output creation, the encouragement of tourism, the creation of business opportunities, the raising of self-confidence, and local attachment to an area historically plagued by out-migration. (*Sproull & Chalmers, 1998*)

It is only right, then, that after hundreds of years of political neglect the Scottish Parliament is now moving a Gaelic Language Bill through the final stages of consultation. The Bill is not perfect, and there are many language activists who consider it a weak piece of legislation compared to what is actually required. Nevertheless if, as it looks increasingly likely, the bill becomes statute in June of 2005, the first-ever Gaelic Language Act will be passed and will empower *Bord na Gaidhlig* (the Gaelic Language Board) to act on behalf of the Scottish Parliament to protect and progress all matters relating to the language.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

I have spent a lifetime working in grassroots community development. I have been privileged to work in my own home community and in communities across Scotland, with community groups and organisations of all kinds.

It has become clear to me that, irrespective of financial incentives, if a community is not clear of its own development agenda and confident of being able to realise that, then development will not happen. Or, if activity does result from outside intervention, it is unlikely to be sustainable in the long term.

I have observed how over the last twenty-five years small initiatives within communities have seen a blossoming of related activities in similar communities. One good example of this has been the growth of community organisations in the voluntary sector where local people are inspired by activity in a neighbouring community to take charge of a situation in their own locality. Of course there is no one answer to this, but there is certainly a link between this progress and the health and vitality of any community. When a village has lost most of its young people, has mainly elderly people left, has gradually had to abandon the traditional occupations due to lack of young people to assist with physical work, has no young people to reinvigorate the social life of the village, and as individuals have always been denied the worth of their cultural heritage, then that village and every individual who lives in it is being denied the most basic foundation on which they could have built a future.

I occasionally work in an office where there is a cartoon on the wall where the teacher asks the class, "What do you call someone who speaks two languages?" "Bilingual," came the reply. "And what do you call someone who speaks three languages," she asked next? "Trilingual," came the reply. "And what do you call someone who speaks one language?" "British," was the unfortunate reply to that. The cartoon always makes me smile, but there is a bitter truth hidden in its humour.

Later, I will describe some specific examples of initiatives that I have seen in action and the way in which they have affected the confidence of people, but now I would like to return to education and how our first encounter with the education system can have a profound effect on self-esteem and self-confidence. Our two daughters both attend Gaelic medium schools and have been educated in their first language since they started school. Their first language is Gaelic and Gaelic is the language of the home and of their extended family on their mother's side. It is still, remarkably, also largely the language of the community we live in. As such, they are completely at ease with speaking two languages from preschool. As a teacher friend once said of her bilingual class, "They have two windows on the world, where others only have one."

These modern Gaelic-speaking children sit down in Galson and watch satellite television and listen to the same pop music as their peers in Glasgow and London and even in Phoenix. Their pop icons are Greenday and Anastacia, Scooby Doo is the same wherever you watch it, and the latest fashions are probably set by the same trendsetters. They also learn to play traditional fiddle and the stories

behind the tunes, they learn Gaelic songs and dance, they act in their Gaelic dramas and they do all of this as confident citizens of a global community. They are not taught to "get on and get out;" instead, they are encouraged to be confident young people, proud of their heritage and aware of their place in the international community. These are the young generation who are now choosing to pursue their post-school education in the modern setting of the University of the Highlands and Islands and, having done so, many are then choosing to stay and work in their own communities. I use the word "choosing" very deliberately here because I do not subscribe to the view that you can engineer the future of a community by forcing young people to stay anywhere. The important thing here is choice that includes an option to stay where before there was none.

A recent report from Highlands and Islands Enterprise network suggested that no project will have greater impact on the regional economy than the creation of the University of the Highlands and Islands. (*Annual Report, 2003a*) The option of choosing a higher education course within their own community is vital for young people, but equally it contributes economically and intellectually to small communities that have been traditionally deprived of such opportunities. At a very superficial level, it is possible to justify the investment in a new educational infrastructure by forecasting the number of students who will benefit educationally as well as the jobs created to deliver that education. I wish to suggest that the economic investment is justified to a much greater extent by the contribution the institution makes, through its 15 campuses and 110 local learning centres, across the Highlands and Islands, adding to the growing confidence of these communities.

That same choice is echoed in the general population in many of our communities. At the same time as we lament the decrease in population figures and the impact this will have in the future, we have to recognise that many people live in these communities now because they have chosen to do so. Whereas historically most of the population stayed because they had no choice, the communities of the Highlands and Islands now live here because they have chosen to stay or to move here from other parts of Britain. This choice is often based on factors that include quality of life, a clean environment, and a recognisable and rich cultural heritage. A recent study showed that there are indirect consequences of attachment to place such as the desire of young people to continue to live and work in their home area and the building of community self confidence. (*Chalmers, D., 2003*)

Despite many similar examples it is, however, very much more difficult to provide hard targets to satisfy public and business investment in the fields of arts and culture. Initiatives that enrich and inform our lives can also often lead to the creation of jobs in the process. There is, however, a continued tension between the process of sustaining cultural integrity on the one hand and exploiting

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economic opportunities where they present themselves. This tension has never been fully resolved and the crass representation of the caricature Highlander is not something that the modern Gael is ever comfortable with. Compare this with the Appalachian hillbilly who is represented as drunken, lazy, and aggressive or the Hispanic who is portrayed similarly. Fortunately, the modern Gael does not rely on the caricature representation of others; and performers, writers and visual artists live in and are inspired by their Celtic heritage and share that inspiration on a world stage.

EXAMPLES OF ACTION

I would like to describe some initiatives that demonstrate in different ways the many diverse ways in which cultural activities can inform and enrich. Each of the projects has originated in or been developed from community experience and whilst some continue to operate at the heart of the local community others have grown and their impact is now being felt far beyond where they were first conceived.

Comann Eachdraidh Nis (Ness Historical Society) was the brainchild of a local community worker in the Ness area of Lewis. She had been visiting in the United States and had seen the work of the FoxFire project where young students had been encouraged to gather stories of local history from local elders. They were so inspired by their research that for many it not only informed them of their own local history, but it also changed their attitude to the possibilities of school having a meaningful purpose. *Comann Eachdraidh Nis* employed six young people on a project funded through a government programme to provide work for unemployed people. The initial application was greeted with derision by the programme administrators. Up until then, all their applications had been for projects to do real work like building roads and stock pens and it was very difficult for them to envisage a historical project achieving any worthwhile outcomes. Eventually the project was approved, and as a new graduate I was appointed to supervise the team. It was an educational experience for me on a par with my years at university and during that first year we set down the building blocks for an organisation that still plays an important role in the community twenty-five years later. It has also been copied and remodelled to suit countless other communities across the Highlands and Islands. Remarkably, it has also been taken back across the Atlantic by a visitor from The Highlander Research Education Centre in Tennessee who was inspired by her visit to *Comann Eachdraidh Nis*.

Feisean nan Gaidheal (The Festivals of the Gaels) began with a small gathering on the Island of Barra some twenty-five years ago. It was organised by a group of parents, with support from the local priest, in frustration at the lack of traditional music, song, and dance tuition in the schools. The festivals are mostly held each summer during the school holidays and have grown to thirty-seven separate events all over Scotland. In 1996, a study of the *fèis* movement identified three key characteristics. First, the centrality of the community in each *fèis* because they matter deeply and are fuelled and directed by voluntary commitment. Secondly, the important role of Gaelic as the source of the culture and its meanings. Thirdly, a very high quality of performance given that many of the best musicians are involved at all levels. (Mataraso, F., 1996)

Countless young people have enjoyed first-hand experience of the arts through their involvement in the *fèis* movement, and irrespective of ability, the noncompetitive nature of the *fèis* makes the experience worthwhile for all participants.

Proiseact nan Sgeulachdan (The Storytelling Project) was started three years ago by *Proiseact nan Ealan* (The Gaelic Arts Agency) and is mainly based in the Hebrides. The project coordinator organises informal events involving storytelling and occasional singing where everybody participates and there are no professional performers. The experience is mainly social, but is intrinsically cultural in content. Possibly the most powerful aspect of it so far has been the creation of opportunities to link tradition bearers with school pupils, to share stories and relate experience. Some of this activity was recorded by the children themselves in paintings and drawings and was later displayed at one of the island art galleries.

Leabhar mor na Gaidhlig (The Great Book of Gaelic) is a book and an exhibition containing one hundred pieces of Scottish and Irish Gaelic literature and one hundred specially commissioned pieces of art by Irish and Scottish artists. The *Leabhar Mor* project also includes a specially developed education pack and a Web site, and countless literary and other events have taken place around the exhibition wherever it has been situated. The *Leabhar Mor* was produced by the Gaelic Arts Agency and, as well as its Scottish and Irish venues, it is expected to tour to several European countries, Canada, and America in due course. During its first showing in the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art, it was described by the Independent newspaper as "a brilliant bridge between tradition and modernity. The loveliest fruits of the Northern Ireland peace process thus far." The latter statement is becoming a reality with the exhibition currently on show in Cork and soon to be displayed in the Ulster Museum in Belfast.

Crofting Community Trusts have grown in number over the last twelve years. In 2003 alone, over thirty community land purchase initiatives were successful. As I described earlier, crofts were small tenant farms created by Act of Parliament to provide an increasingly restless community with homes, and to prevent the possibility of revolution. The 1886 Crofters Scotland Act also provided all crofters (as long as they remained tenants) with security of tenure. That law remained largely unchanged until 2004 when the Scottish Parliament passed the Land Reform Scotland Act. Amongst a number of significant clauses the one that allowed crofting communities to buy their own land was the most controversial and the most exciting. Galson village where I live is part of Galson estate, and in November last year I was pleased to be elected by public ballot to become a member of the Trust established to purchase the land back for the community. The ready support from the community for the Trust to proceed with the purchase of this estate is a reflection on the confidence and leadership that now exists within the community.

BRING OUT THE GOLD CANDLESTICKS ...

I began with a quote from the great Gaelic poet Murdo Macfarlane who wrote some of the most hauntingly beautiful Gaelic songs of the 20th century as an emigrant in Canada in the '20s. He returned to Lewis and was steeped in the culture of the islands and by the 1970s, although an elderly man, recognised the importance of the young if the Gaelic community was to survive. He started writing popular songs designed to entertain, to record a passing way of life and, most important of all, to inspire. The gold candlesticks are still in their cupboard and will remain there whilst new generations of young people emerge as tradition bearers of a new age.

We cannot escape the global assault of satellite television and electronic media in its many forms. We can, however, acknowledge the importance of sustaining minority and regional cultures and the benefits of teaching young people to be proud of their cultural heritage. They do not have to get lost in the homogenised porrage that is satellite mid-Atlantic pop culture. They can enjoy and participate in this, but grow to be confident young citizens who know who they are and where they come from.

On the other hand, Gaelic language broadcasting has contributed both energy and resources to the process of language development during the last 20 years. There is no doubt that television is one of the most effective tools to reach young people, and the opportunity both to participate and view their peers in the medium that they know best is very powerful. Equally, for the community generally, Gaelic television, and radio in particular, have encouraged comment and debate on matters that are at the heart of the development process in their community.

The leading Development Enterprise agency in the Highlands and Islands recently stressed that economic and social progress go hand in hand. This means that the challenges of generating employment and learning opportunities, stimulating entrepreneurial activity and building community confidence are not separate. According to the report, they are all interconnected and support each other. (*Annual Report, 2003b*) The challenge for those of us engaged in community development activity, whether at the policy level, the agency level or the grassroots delivery level is to ensure that we continue to recognise the importance of this interconnection. A culture preserved as some kind of museum piece is dead. We have to cherish and sustain cultural heritage that inspires individual and community confidence and know that the return on investment in related activities is not measured on a balance sheet but in the well-being of the people. The community I know best is, of course, my home community in Scotland, but one of

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the great privileges of working in community development today is that we can share that experience and learn from others in communities all over the world. I will conclude with some questions to my respondents on the experience in Arizona:

- Is there recognition of the correlation between cultural identity and individual confidence and self-esteem?
- Does the education system in general, and the primary curriculum in particular, ensure that young people have their cultural heritage acknowledged and honoured?
- Does the education system ensure that the wider community understands the value of cultural heritage and the contribution this makes to the well being of all communities?
- Are cultural projects resourced adequately with an understanding of the true value of investment in projects that celebrate cultural heritage and artistic achievement?
- And, finally, can we put the gold candlesticks away because as a society we do celebrate and gain enrichment from our many different cultural experiences?

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A Man in Assynt (excerpt)

in Norman MacCaig 1910 – 1996
Collected Poems



*Who owns this landscape?
Has owning anything to do with love?
For it and I have a love-affair, so nearly human
we even have quarrels.—
When I intrude too confidently
it rebuffs me with a wind like a hand
or puts in my way
a quaking bog or a loch
where no loch should be. Or I turn stonily
away, refusing to notice
the rouged rocks, the mascara
under a dripping ledge, even
the tossed, the stony limbs waiting.*



*I cant pretend
it gets sick for me in my absence,
though I get
sick for it. Yet I love it
with special gratitude, since
it sends me no letters, is never
jealous and, expecting nothing
from me, gets nothing but
cigarette packets and footprints.*

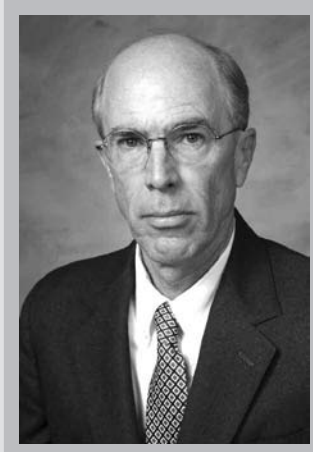
*Who owns this landscape?—
The millionaire who bought it or
The poacher staggering downhill in the early morning
with a deer on his back?*



*Who possesses this landscape?—
The man who bought it or
I who am possessed by it?*



Respondent Timothy M. Hogan



Timothy M. Hogan

Executive Director

Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest

As a lawyer attempting to secure adequate state funding for language acquisition in Arizona, I see strong parallels between the story told by Agnes Rennie and the history of language acquisition in Arizona. Of course, the problem is that in Arizona we're about 130 years behind Scotland's treatment of Gaelic in government and public schools.

According to Ms. Rennie, it was in 1872 that the Education Act of Scotland was enacted which established free education for children throughout the country. However, the Act also determined that English should be the language in the classroom and that Gaelic was banned and its use punished.

Arizona's recent history provides a striking parallel. In 1988, Arizona voters approved a ballot initiative establishing English as the official language of the state for purposes of voting, public schools and all government functions and actions. The initiative further required the state to take all reasonable steps to preserve, protect and enhance the role of English and prohibited the state from using or requiring the use of languages other than English. In school, the initiative allowed the use of another language only to assist English learners to the extent necessary to comply with federal law, and allowed instruction in a language other than English to provide as "rapid as possible a transition" to English.

It took ten years but the Arizona Supreme Court finally declared the official English initiative unconstitutional. That hasn't stopped the state legislature from trying to reverse that court decision by making minor changes to the initiative. The legislature is currently considering a proposal to a slightly revised English Only proposal, which would go to voters for their approval in 2006.

A related measure was approved by Arizona voters as Proposition 203 in 2000. That initiative established sheltered English immersion as the methodology for English acquisition in Arizona's public schools. The same initiative repealed bilingual, English as a Second Language and bilingual/bicultural programs as alternative methods for teaching English language learners in Arizona's schools. Whatever the merits of English immersion as an educational methodology, its adoption in Arizona speaks volumes about how we as a state view the ability to speak, read and write a language other than English. Instead of viewing that ability as a resource that should be cultivated and preserved, Arizona's approach seems to be one of suppression and exclusivity.

The sad fact is that although our laws demand English and English Only, the state has never provided the funding for English language learners to actually become proficient in English. In 2000, a federal judge ruled that the state's system for funding English language programs was arbitrary and unrelated to their cost. A recent study authorized by the legislature indicates that funding should be increased by about five times its current level in order for effective English acquisition programs to be put in place and delivered to students. So far, the legislature has balked and is under threat of court sanctions if it doesn't comply by the end of the current legislative session.

As a result, non-English proficient students in Arizona have the worst of both worlds. The state wants to suppress their native language and won't provide the funding necessary for them to learn English. The consequences are predictable. English language learners fail the AIMS test at two to three times the rate of their English proficient peers.

To be sure, Arizona is not Scotland and it's not hard to explain the differences in attitude toward native languages between here and there. What is difficult to explain is our failure in Arizona to view non-English language students as assets who can add value to our education system. Instead of figuring out how to distinguish the languages that those students bring to school, we should be trying to establish a language system that takes advantage of multiple languages and shares them with other students.

But there is hope. Agnes Rennie's story is cause for optimism and teaches us that meaningful change must start at the grass roots level and in Arizona there are many who share the view that language diversity can enrich the lives of all students.



Respondent Terrence Wiley



Terrence Wiley

Director, Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

College of Education

Arizona State University

Co-Director, Language Policy Research of the Educational Policy Studies Laboratory

Agnes Rennie's excellent discussion of efforts to maintain and promote Celtic, an indigenous language of the U.K., should give us pause regarding the condition of heritage languages and language education in the U.S. and Arizona. First, consider a few facts about language diversity: About one-in-four Arizonans can speak a language other than English compared to two-of-five in California and less than one-in-five nationally. Arizona, like many states also, has a rapidly growing Latino and Spanish-speaking population.

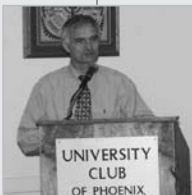
How well do current educational policies in Arizona and the U.S. embrace and build on language diversity as a resource? Arizona's Proposition 203 restricts bilingual education and delays the opportunity to develop languages other than English for children who already speak them. The current political clamor by some to make English the official language and restrict services in other languages is misguided because most of those who speak other languages either speak English or are trying to learn the language. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, nearly 98% of those who can speak other languages also speak English at some level. Although Arizona has one of the largest Native American populations in the U.S., Native American languages are being lost at an alarming rate. Given the restrictions of Proposition 203, many students are deprived of an opportunity to maintain their heritage languages.



What is the effect of the lack of emphasis on language learning for the monolingual English-speaking majority? Nationally, only 31% of the elementary schools attempt to teach languages other than English at all, and most of the schools that do only try to "expose" students to other languages. Only one-in-five of schools that teach other languages try to develop proficiency in them.

The situation in the upper grades is not impressive either. Of the languages taught in grades 7-12, with the exception of Spanish, many are languages that are declining in the general population, as French and German are. Meanwhile, many of the rapidly growing immigrant languages and languages of global importance are scarcely being taught (Wiley, *in press*). Mandarin Chinese, for example, it barely registers among the foreign languages being offered. Even in the case of Spanish, most of the Spanish is being offered as a "foreign" language, despite the fact that there are more than 28 million speakers of Spanish in the U.S., which makes this country the fifth largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world!

In college, foreign language enrollments, as a percentage of total enrollments, decreased dramatically from 16% in 1965 to 8% in 1994, where they have remained since. "But more telling, enrollment in the languages considered critical to national security, including Chinese, account for less than 10 percent of these enrollments, according to the National Foreign Language Center.



Where does this leave us? The U.S. and Arizona are missing important opportunities to develop and build on the languages of those among us who speak other languages. In the 21st century, who among us will be able to communicate in languages other than English in the global economy? Better that we see the rich linguistic diversity of the U.S. as a resource upon which to build rather than as a deficiency.

Sources:

www.language-policy.org, downloaded 07/05/2005

Rhodes & Branaman, 1997

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