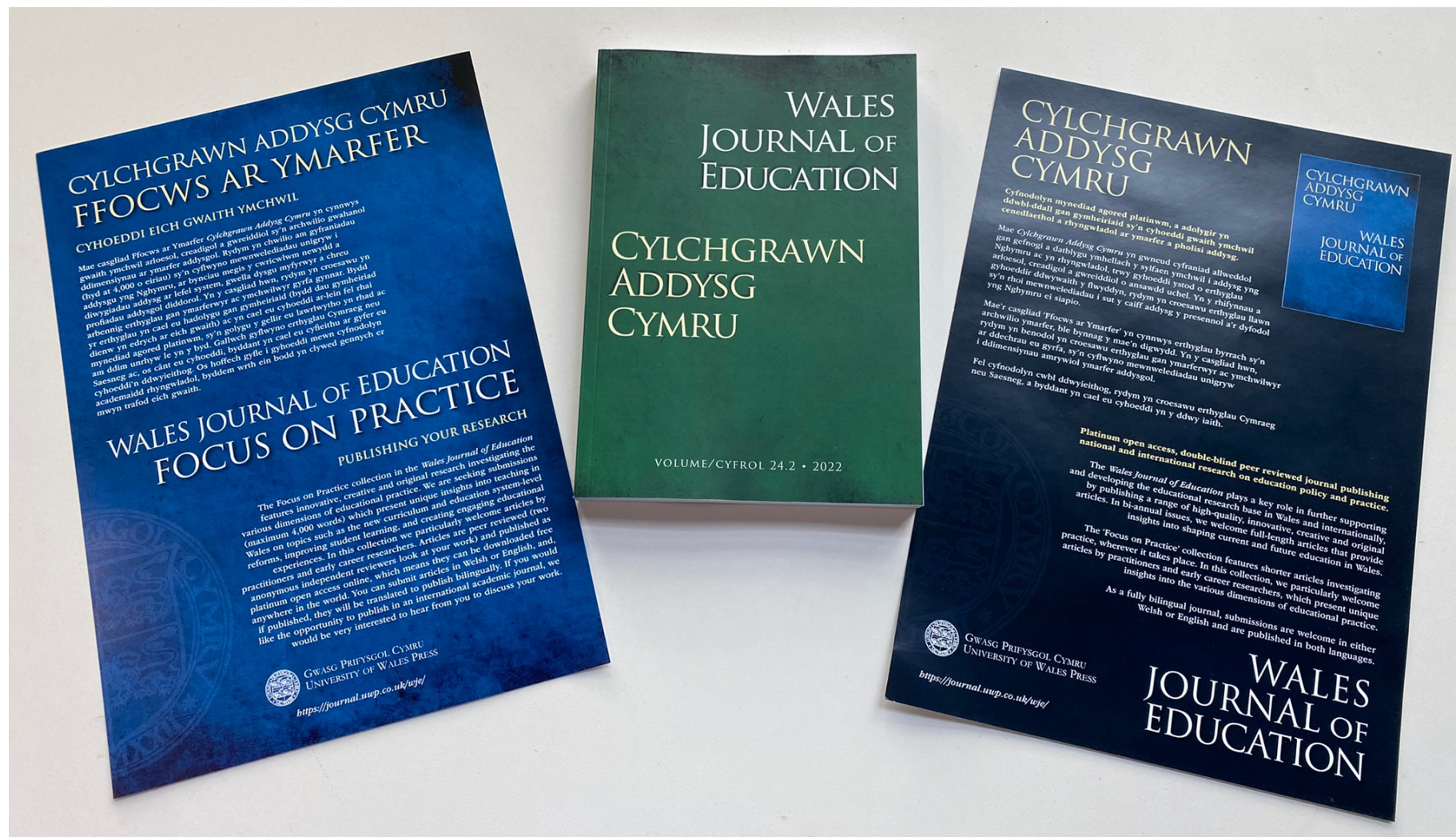


Writing for *Focus on Practice*

Professor Gary Beauchamp

Editor – Wales Journal of Education

gbeauchamp@cardiffmet.ac.uk



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EDITORIAL

Editorial: Education research *in* Wales, *from* Wales, and *for* Wales

Authors: Gary Beauchamp (Cardiff Metropolitan University) [✉](#), Enlli Thomas (Bangor University), [Tom Crick](#) [id](#) (Swansea University)

Basics

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Author (Year) “Title”, *Focus on Practice* (Wales Journal of Education), doi:

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Focus on Practice

Aims and Scope of *Focus on Practice*

Focus on Practice aims to provide short (2,500 word maximum), academically rigorous articles that can inform educational practice, with ideas from Wales and around the world. Articles can be submitted in Welsh or English. Articles are peer-mentored and feature innovative, creative and original research from practitioners, professionals and researchers investigating the various dimensions of educational practice.

We encourage contributions from practitioners and researchers at all stages of their career and from anywhere in the world.

Submission Guidelines

The *Focus on Practice* collection welcomes high quality, original manuscripts that represent a broad array of methods, theories and paradigms/discourses associated with educational research.

Submission Length Guidelines

- Research Articles: 2500 words (excluding references and abstract)

Submissions representing eclectic and experimental approaches to research methods and outcomes are welcome, and this WJE collection encourages submissions from authors who are new to contributing to public conversations of educational practice.

2,500 words maximum – recent change

Structure

Please use the following headings when submitting your work. Word counts provided are for guidance only:

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(150 words,
not included
in overall
word count):**

A brief summary of the submission and keywords, to answer the following questions (**these are not required headings - but could add to structure, then delete**):

Why was the study undertaken?; What is already known?; How was the research conducted and analysed (methods, sample, method of analysis, etc); What does this article add?

Who? What? Where? Why? How?

ABSTRACT

In the new Curriculum for Wales (*Cwricwlwm i Gymru*) which is phasing in from September 2022, the concept of ‘cynefin’ (‘the place where we feel we belong’) is core to developing children’s understandings of place and identity. While cynefin has long been considered in a wider cultural and heritage context in Wales, it is not yet clearly understood. This article explores four primary schools in Wales. The article explores children’s understandings of what cynefin means to them. Themes of people, place, activity, and emotions/feelings emerged, which interconnected in multiple, non-linear, and unique ways, indicating the importance of nuance in primary-level curricula design.

131 words

Who? What? Where? Why? How?

1. Introduction (150 words):

This section introduces:

- the topic of investigation;
- the aims of the research;
- the context in which your research takes place and;
- why the study is needed.

2. Literature (500 words):

This section provides a review of literature relevant to the topic of investigation and demonstrates your knowledge of the field.

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Beauchamp, G. and Parkinson, J. (2008) 'Pupils' attitudes towards school science as they transfer from an ICT-rich primary school to a secondary school with fewer ICT resources: Does ICT matter?', *Education & Information Technologies*, 13(2), pp. 103–118. doi:10.1007/s10639-007-9053-5.

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3. Methods (750 words): **save words – consider readers research literate**

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- **Ethics:** This section describes the measures taken to ensure the research was conducted ethically, particularly regarding the rights and general welfare of participants - it should include academic citations – n.b. how informed consent was gained (including with children)
- **Sampling Procedure and Description:** This section describes the process of generating the sample participating in the study, as well as a detailed description of the various characteristics of the sample that are appropriate and relevant to the topic of research.
- **Data Generation & Analysis:** This section describes in detail the methods used in generating, analysing and interpreting data used in the study.

Sampling and sample

To explore primary pupils’ perceptions of cynefin, a purposive, convenience sample of 67 pupils aged 7–10 years from four primary schools, geographically spread around Wales, was recruited through existing university networks (see Table 1):

Table 1. Sample.

School code	Location	Language	School year group (Pupil ages)	Pupil sample
C	South Wales	English	5 (9–10 years)	19
A	West Wales	English	3 (7–8 years)	10
W	North-east Wales	English	3 (7–8 years)	17
T	South-west Wales	Welsh/Cymraeg	4 (8–9 years)	21
Total				67

Method

To explore pupils’ unique and nuanced perceptions of identity, culture and belonging, the study adopted a qualitative approach. As a starting point for this work, the sample of pupils were considered to be ‘experts in their own lives’ (Clark and Statham 2005, 460). As such, the

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views, which were structured around her with sensitive : their images and s for their choices

photographs as a stimulus for talk...which can be used by pupils’ (Cooper 2017, 625), provided an appropriate ‘participant-driven approach’ (Vigurs and Kara 2017, 515) that is suitable for use with primary age pupils (Shaw 2021). With this method, images are used as the stimulus for interviews to enable participants to ‘describe to the researcher the meaning and significance of their images as well as their perspectives and understanding thereof’ (Joubert 2012, 454).

To generate the pictures for use in the interviews, the sample pupils (who were all confident users of technology) utilised existing school equipment such as iPads and computers. In their role as co-researchers, the classroom teachers embedded the collection of images as a classroom or homework task with opportunities for the pupils to collect images at home, within their local community, or from image searches in the classroom.

Ethics

Ethical approval was granted by Aberystwyth University’s Ethics Panel for all university partners. Informed consent was sought from parents and practitioners and, most importantly, from the pupils who participated. The final ethical considerations related specifically to visual data. As the image collection was predominantly embedded in classroom activities, or under parental supervision through homework, there was little danger of the pupils accessing inappropriate images. In addition, if any inappropriate images were provided by the pupils,

there were clear protocols in place through university and school policies to handle such a situation. As all interviews took place in school settings, there was an added layer of protection.

Data collection

Four members of the research team undertook data collection through small group interviews, with a maximum of four children in each group. The interviews were conducted in three schools by members of the research team, but a researcher was unable to visit one school due to their prevailing post-COVID visiting rules. In this case, the interviews were conducted by the classroom teacher using the same agreed prompts. Whilst the data from this particular school was arguably comparatively limited, because it was not possible for a researcher to prompt for more detailed responses, it was still included in the overall dataset for analysis.

All the pupils showed their chosen pictures during the interviews, either in print form or on a tablet. The interviews, which were structured around the prompts, began with sensitive questions about the images and their meanings, followed by snaring associated stories and/or experiences.

Data analysis

The images used in this study were ‘neutral tools in the research process’ (Lipponen et al. 2016, 937), in the sense that no attempt was made to read further meaning into the images by analysing them. The main data source was therefore the ‘voice’ of the pupils in the interview transcripts. The analysis followed a hybrid (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006) approach to thematic analysis to ‘understand the situated nature of participants’ interpretations and meanings’ (Ezzy 2002, 81). The analysis followed Nowell et al.’s (2017) approach to qualitative analysis to achieve ‘trustworthy’ outcomes as a team. Members of the research team met after each stage of the data-gathering, for discussion and debriefing, to agree on the coding generated through their analyses. This approach allowed for ‘open coding’ and involved ‘a constant moving back and forward between phases’ (Nowell et al. 2017, 4), using diagramming as appropriate to develop iterations of a final model. Other members of the research team provided externality to the analytical process, particularly in developing iterations of the final model.

4. Results and discussion (1,000 words):

This section describes the outcome and/or results of the research and how this relates to previous literature you outlined in the literature review.

It provides an **interpretation** of the findings through careful consideration of the evidence and theories discovered in the review of the literature.

You can present all the results first and then discuss, or outline a result and then discuss – use headings if you want to but signpost at start of

section:

Discussion and findings

As no significant differences in findings were identified between the schools, they are reported as a whole. The analysis generated four key themes that outline what shaped the pupils' sense of cynefin:

- (1) People
- (2) Place
- (3) Activity
- (4) Emotions/feelings

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- (3) Activity
- (4) Emotions/feelings

In addition, we identified three dimensions to each theme, which were initially categorised as micro, meso and macro. The term macro, however, which implies coverage of larger societal issues such as ideology, cultures, social norms, policy and so on (Piskur et al. 2022), presented some challenges due to its lack of connection to the pupils, who reflected much more personal concerns. In this context, Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 7–8) concept of *exo*-systems seemed to better represent a larger scale whilst retaining a personal connection, where a child 'may never enter, but in which events occur that affect what happens in the person's immediate environment'. The dimensions explored in this study are hence described as:

- Micro: home and immediate family .
- Meso: local community, including school, clubs, places of worship, family living locally .
- Exo (akin to visits).

The four themes ar interact on multiple voice quotes from tl by a code (e.g. CG4 be incorporated into non-linear interact

Theme 1

During the data collection process, the pupils were encouraged to create or find and share photographs of places/things that were important to them. The pupils were told not to photograph or use pictures that contained people. Such connections clearly shaped their perceptions of cynefin and what they considered to be important to them. On a micro scale, these were reflected by the importance of immediate family, often prompted by choosing pictures of their homes. Typical quotes included:

I feel safe. It is the people. When I spend time with my family. (WG9)

I love my home because all my favourite family members are there. (CG1)

The importance of wider family at a micro level is demonstrated by the following interview extract:

Pupil: The picture is my Nana's house. And I was it. It's a place where I feel safe. I guess it feels like my house. And I feel really safe.

Interviewer: So tell me about your picture. Why that place is really important to you?

Pupil: It is my Nana's house. And when I was born, she always used to look after me and take care of me and every time we go there, she always spoils us. We always go there at Christmas and after school. (WG1)

At a meso level, the pupils highlighted the importance of people outside of their family and friends. For example, those who framed their responses using cynefin as a concept noted that members of the local community, such as teachers and sports coaches, as well as famous, religious and inspirational figures, shaped their sense of cynefin:

I feel happy, because if [name of football team] score goals he [dad] would lift me up. And we would all shout and we would be very happy if [name of football team] won the match. (WG7)
I chose the (local monument) because [it] is really important to our school and community. (CG2)

At an *exo* level, pupils also chose pictures that reminded them of memories of special people that they were not able to see frequently, including the significance of people who

in souvenirs captured in the pictures. This suggests that 'belonging to a place becomes one and the same as belonging to a group of people' (Antonsich 2010, 649).

Theme 2

More specifically, we found that Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 3) conception of an ecological environment as 'a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls' was particularly suitable, so it provided the starting point for the framing of a model. It is worth noting, however, that our model does not reflect Bronfenbrenner's later work (particularly the concept of time) because this study focused on a moment in time, rather than on time as developmental processes. This was seen as unproblematic because, as Tudge et al. (2009, 207) point out, 'Bronfenbrenner never implied (let alone stated outright) that every aspect of the model had to be included within any study'. In our new model (Figure 1), the outer 'doll' is cynefin, with emotions/feelings, and then people, place and activity nested within it. It is important to note, however, that the boundaries between

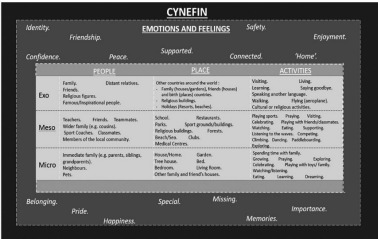


Figure 1. Model of cynefin for primary school pupils in this study.

'dolls' or elements of the model are porous, and are thus represented by dotted lines., we suggest that people, place and activity on their own do not represent cynefin, unless they generate an *affective* response (feelings/emotions). In this model, words from the pupils are used to represent the range of emotions reported, but we do not try to link

rate a sense to create an cynefin.

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6. Acknowledgments (not included in word count):

for example, any funding you may have received or people who took part in the study or helped you in the research process.

e.g. MA

7. References (not included in word count)

Use Harvard format, with entries in alphabetical order, as the following examples:

No bullet points

Abram, D. (2010). *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*. New York: Vintage Books.

Jardine, D. W. (1992). Immanuel Kant, Jean Piaget and the rage for order: Ecological hints of the colonial spirit in pedagogy. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 24/1, 28–43.

United Nations (2021). World on the verge of climate ‘abyss’, as temperature rise continues: UN chief. 19 April 2021. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1090072> (accessed 26 April 2021).

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... being against is not enough. We also need to develop habits of constructive thinking.

Edward de Bono

— Highlighting inadequacies of previous studies

Previous studies of X have not dealt with ...
Researchers have not treated X in much detail.
Such expositions are unsatisfactory because they ...
Most studies in the field of X have only focused on ...
Such approaches, however, have failed to address ...
Previous published studies are limited to local surveys.
Half of the studies evaluated failed to specify whether ...
The research to date has tended to focus on X rather than
published studies on the effect of X are not consistent.
Smith's analysis does not take account of ..., nor does she examine ...

The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.
Most studies of X have only been carried out in a small number of areas.
However, much of the research up to now has been descriptive in nature ...
The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.
Research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of ...
However, few writers have been able to draw on any systematic research into ...
Short-term studies such as these do not necessarily show subtle changes over time ...
Although extensive research has been carried out on X, no single study exists which ...
However, these results were based upon data from over 30 years ago and it is unclear if ...
The experimental data are rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about ...

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'Beyond Being Nice': A model for supporting adult ESOL learners who have experienced trauma

Larysa Agbaso, Mental Health Foundation in Wales, Coleg Gwent
Gabriel John Roberts, Cardiff Metropolitan University

ABSTRACT

Forced migrants join ESOL classes to learn a language. The process of acquiring a new language can be negatively affected by psychological trauma intensified by forced migration stressors. To deepen understanding of the reality, via semi-structured interviews and online surveys, this mixed-methods study attempts to provide an insight into the experiences of ESOL teachers working with forced migrants in Wales who may have experienced trauma, and strategies that teachers employ to tackle the challenges. The study reveals that teaching ESOL is, at times, inextricable from mental health. However, the majority of the respondents are not trauma-trained and prioritise creating safety in the classroom by investing in good relationships and applying moral values. There is a space for trauma healing in the ESOL classroom whilst the evidence-based practices that could have facilitated it are not widely applied. The study recommends redesigning ESOL courses to be trauma-responsive using a co-production approach by involving those with lived experience.

Keywords: ESOL, Refugees, Trauma, ELT, Mental Health, English as a Second Language, Refugee Education, Asylum Seekers, Sanctuary

1. Introduction

The end result



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Larysa Agbaso and Gabriel John Roberts

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