

AG16: Agallamh le Marion NicAoidh: Teagasg Sgoil-àraich

Interview with Marion NicAoidh: Teaching at Nursery School

Presenter: Seumas Dòmhnallach (James MacDonald)



SEUMAS:

Còmhla rinn an-diugh tha Marion (Mòrag) NicAoidh, a tha ag obair ann an sgoil-àraich anns an Eilean Sgitheanaich. A Mhòrag, innis dhomh mun an obair agad.

MARION:

Tha mi ag obair aig sgoil-àraich an seo ann an Slèite. Tha aon duine deug againn, agus tha sin car beag seach an-uiridh nuair a bha naoi duine deug againn. 'S e obair gu math tlachdmhor a th' ann. Tha e spòrsail. Tha sinn a' dèanamh tòrr cluiche tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, 's obair ealain 's obair a ... a' cluiche a-muigh, 's a' cluich a-staigh geamannan 's ag ionnsachadh dhaibh ciamar a tha còir aca a bhith ag obair còmhla, ag obair mar buidheann seach dìreach a bhith ag obair leotha fhèin. An rud as toigh le clann mar as trice aig an aois sin 's e bhith a' falbh gu oisean leotha fhèin 's a' cluiche leis na dèideagan aca fhèin, ach anns an sgoil-àraich, tha sinn airson 's gum brosnach sinn iad a bhith am measg clann eile 's gum bi iad nas sòisealta agus gum bi iad ag obair mar buidheann - a' co-obrachadh.

SEUMAS:

Innis dhomh, ma-thà, dè an diofar a th' eadar sgoil-àraich agus cròileag?

SEUMAS (JAMES):

With us today is Marion MacKay, who works in a nursery school on the Isle of Skye. Marion, tell me about your job.

MARION:

I work in a nursery school here in Sleat. We have eleven in attendance, and that's quite a small number compared to last year when we had nineteen. It's an extremely enjoyable job. It's fun. We do a lot of play through the medium of Gaelic, and art and ... playing outside and playing inside games and teaching them about how they should work together, work as a group rather than just working by themselves. What a lot of children of that age like to do is to go away into a corner by themselves and play with their toys, but in the nursery school, we want to encourage them to mix with other children so they'll be more sociable and will work as a team - co-operate.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Tell me, what's the difference between a nursery school and a playgroup?

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MARION:

Cròileag, tha na pàrantan a' fuireach anns an àite còmhla leotha. Tha sin airson clann fo aois trì, so dh' fhaodadh leanabhan a bhith ann, agus na pàrantan, suas gu trì bliadhna a dh'aois. Tha ... Mar tè os cionn na cròileagan, tha thu a' feuchainn ri beagan cànan a thoirt seachad, chan e a-mhàin dhan an fheadhainn bheaga ach 's dòcha dha na pàrantan aig nach eil Gàidhlig. 'S tha thu a' feuchainn ri bhith ag obair tro-mheadhan na Gàidhlig fad na h-ùine - rud a tha gu math doirbh aig amannan - ach dìreach a' cluich 's an sàs ann an òrain. 'S e òrain as motha a bhios mise a' dèanamh, airson tha mi a' smaoinichadh gur e sin an dòigh as fhasa, agus 's e rudeigin a tha a' tighinn thugam gu math nàdarra co-dhiù.

SEUMAS:

Dè cho doirbh 's a tha e aire leanabhan aig an aois sin a chumail airson beagan uairean a thide?

MARION:

Gu math doirbh, gu h-àraid ma tha thu a' feuchainn ri bruidhinn riutha, gu h-àraid ann an cànan nach tuig iad, ach ma tha thu a' dèanamh rud, mas urrainn dhut a bhith car beòthail leis, 's a bhith a' bruidhinn - no a' seinn - airson an aire aca a chumail, no a bhith ga innse tro sgeulachd no tro phupaidean no rudeigin dhen t-seòrsa sin, uaireannan, tha sin ag obrachadh glè mhath.

SEUMAS:

Bheir dhomh eisimpleir, ma-thà, air an seòrsa rud a dhèanadh tu airson aire leanabhan a chumail.

MARION:

In a playgroup, the parents remain in the building with their children. That caters for children under the age of three, so there could be babies there, and their parents, up to the age of three. As the leader of a playgroup, you try to do a little language teaching, not only to the little ones, but also to the parents who don't speak Gaelic. You also try to work through the medium of Gaelic all the time - which can sometimes be difficult - but it's just a case of playing and getting involved in singing songs. I tend to mainly work through songs, because I think that's one of the easiest ways and it's something that comes naturally to me anyway.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

How difficult is it to hold the attention of a child at that age for a few hours?

MARION:

It's quite difficult, especially if you're trying to talk to them, and especially in a language they don't understand, but if you're doing something, if you can be quite lively, and speak - or sing - to hold their attention, or to teach them by means of stories or by using puppets or something like that, sometimes, that can work very well.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Give me an example, then, of the sort of thing you would do to hold a child's attention.

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MARION:

Uill, a h-uile madainn, tha iad a' dèanamh eacarsaich agus 's e *Madainn Mhath* an t-òran a bhios sinn a' cleachdadh airson sin, agus bidh iad fhèin ag innse dhòmhsa dè seòrsa gluasad a tha iad airson a dhèanamh. Mar eisimpleir, bha sinn a' bruidhinn mu dheidhinn na Geamannan Oilimpig agus an spòrs a bh' ann a shin, agus bha iad ag innse dhomh na diofar seòrsa spòrs a bha an sàs anns an Olympic Games agus bha iad a' sealltainn dhomh snàmh agus a bhith a' marcachd eich agus sin an seòrsa gluasadan a bha iad a' cleachdadh.

SEUMAS:

Thoir dhuinn eisimpleir dhen seòrsa òran a chuireadh tu feum air nad obair làitheil.

MARION:

Uill, 's e *Madainn Mhath*, agus tha sinn a' dèanamh beagan eacarsaich leis 's tha sinn a' tòiseachadh air an sèithear, agus tha sinn ...

SEUMAS:

Siuthad ma-thà, thoir dhuinn rann dheth!

MARION:

Tha sinn a' tòiseachadh le bhith a' dèanamh, *Madainn mhath*, *madainn mhath* Ciamar a tha thu fhèin an-diugh? Agus iad a' togail na casan aca, 's an uairsin suas gu na guailnean 's na cinn, 's an uairsin, tha iad a' faighinn àite dhaibh pèin, 's bidh mi a' toirt orrasan uaireannan a bhith a' taghadh dè an seòrsa gluasad a tha iad airson a dhèanamh agus a-rithist a bhith a' gluasad ris an òran, le buile na h-òrain.

MARION:

Well, every morning, they do exercises and we use the song, *Madainn Mhath*, (Good Morning) for that, and they also tell me what sorts of movements they want to do. For example, we were talking about the Olympic Games and the sports featured there, and they were telling me about the different sports that were part of the Olympic Games and they were demonstrating swimming and horse riding to me and those were the sorts of movements they were using.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Give us an example of the type of song you would use in your work.

MARION:

Well, one is *Madainn Mhath*, and we do a little exercise along with it and we start off on a chair and then we ...

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Go on, then, give us a verse of it!

MARION:

We start off by doing, Good morning, good morning How are you today? And they lift up their feet and then move up to their shoulders and heads and then they find a space by themselves and then I sometimes get them to choose what sorts of movements they would like to make and again we move to the song, in time with the song.

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SEUMAS:

Dè cho fìor 's a tha e a ràdh nach eil leanabh aig an aois sin a' coimhead air mar gu bheil e ag ionnsachadh cànan, nach eil ann ach pàirt dhen an ionnsachadh nàdarra aige?

MARION:

Uill, tha e gu math soilleir dhòmhsa gur e sin a tha a' tachairt, nach eil iad ach a' toirt a' chànan a-staigh fhad 's a tha iad ... fhad 's a tha iad a' cluiche, fhad 's a tha iad ag eacarsaich no bhith a' cluiche spòrs no a' dèanamh ealain no sìon sam bith. Tha thu a' faicinn gu bheil iad a' togail ... tha iad a' gabhail air bòrd an cànan a tha sin agus tha iad an uairsin ga chleachdadh a-rithist 's dòcha làrna-mhàireach 's tha iad a' cumail cuimhne air sin.

Agus, an dòigh sa bheil mise ga dhèanamh co-dhiù aig an sgoil-àraich, tha sinn a' dèanamh cha mhòr an aon rud gach latha sa mhadainn agus 's dòcha feasgar, 's mar sin, tha iad a' cluinntinn an aon rud gu math tric, 's tha mi a' smaointinn ma tha iad a' cluinntinn an aon rud gu math tric, tha iad nas buailtiche a cleachdadh. Tha mi a' smaointinn, aig aois òg mar sin, tha iad a' gabhail a h-uile sìon air bòrd. Tha iad nas dèidheil 's nas deònaiche, saoilidh mise, a bhith a' gabhail rudan air bòrd. Fiù 's a' togail inneal ciùil, no bhith a' dol gu dannsa no snàmh no sìon sam bith. Tha e an aon rud le cànan; ma bheireas tu dhaibh e aig aois gu math òg, tha mi a' smaointinn gu bheil iad gu math deònach. Chan eil iad a' faicinn na h-aon chnapan-starraidh 's a tha 's dòcha inbheach a' faicinn.

SEUMAS:

Seadh. Nach eil e na chus trioblaid ged a bhiodh leanabh agaibh a tha a' tighinn 's dòcha bho dhachaigh anns nach eil Gàidhlig an coimeas ri clann a tha a' tighinn bho dhachaighean anns a bheil Gàidhlig? Tha an fheadhainn aig nach eil a' Ghàidhlig anns an dachaigh a' leantainn an uile?

SEUMAS (JAMES):

How accurate is it to say that a child of that age doesn't see it as learning a language, that it's just a part of normal learning for them?

MARION:

Well, it's very clear to me that that's exactly what happens, that they are just taking the language in while they are ... while they are playing, while they are exercising or taking part in sports or doing art or indeed anything. You see that they pick up, that they take the language on board and then they use it again perhaps the next day and they remember it.

And the way I do it, at least in nursery school, we do pretty much the same things every day in the morning and perhaps in the afternoon, so they hear the same words quite frequently, and I believe that if they hear the same words regularly, they're more likely to use them. I think that, at such a young age, they take absolutely everything on board. They're more keen and more willing, I believe, to take things on board. Even learning a musical instrument, or going to a dance or swimming or anything like that. It's the same with language; if you give it to them at a young age, I think they are quite willing. They don't see the same obstacles as perhaps an adult would.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Right. Isn't it a lot of trouble for you if you have a child who comes from a home where they don't speak Gaelic as opposed to children who come from Gaelic-speaking homes? The ones who don't speak Gaelic at home follow just the same?

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MARION:

Tha iad a' leantail, 's tha feadhainn aca uabhasach math gu togail an cànan dìreach mar sin, agus tha fear beag agamsa an-dràsta, 's tha e dìreach mìorbhaileach. Chan eil càil ... Chan eil Gàidhlig aig gin dhe na pàrantan aige 's chan eil Gàidhlig sa dhachaigh no san teaghlach, ach tha e cho tuigseil. Tha e dìreach ... Tha mi cho pròiseil às gu bheil e a' togail na tha seo de chànan ann an ùine gu math goirid san latha. Chan eil againn ach dà uair gu leth gach madainn, ach tha sinn a' leantail ùidh na cloinne cuideachd. Tha sin cudromach. Ma tha iadsan ag iarraidh a bhith an sàs ann an saighdearan no armachd no *Toy Story* no rudeigin dhen an t-seòrsa sin, feumaidh tusa iadsan a leantail agus a bhith a' bruidhinn ... a' cur Gàidhlig ris na faclan is àbhaist dhaibh a bhith a' cluinntinn ann am Beurla.

Mar as trice, tha ... Tha sinne air a bhith gu math fortanach an seo ann an Slèite agus tha tòrr dhe na pàrantan, tha a' chuid as motha dhiubh, tha mi a' smaointinn, tha Gàidhlig air a bhith aig cuideigin anns an teaghlach agus tha sin fhèin gar cuideachadh. Dh'fhaodadh tu a dhol chun a' phàiste ud agus a bhith a' sealltainn iadsan mar eisimpleir 's dh'fhaodadh iadsan am freagairt a thoirt dhut, 's an uairsin tha càch a' faicinn, "O, seo a tha fainear dhith," so tha iadsan a' leantail mar gum bitheadh. Tha sin air a bhith gu math soirbheachail dhòmhsa.

Ach fiù 's dìreach a' gabhail ùine 's a' dol thairis air. Mas e 's gu bheil thu a' dol a bhith an lùib peantadh, ag innse dhaibh na h-uidheaman a dh'fheumas iad agus a' sealltainn dhaibh. 'S e seo an rud, a bhith a' sealltainn am bruis ... Nuair a tha thu a' bruidhinn air bruis, gu feumadh tu a bhith a' sealltainn bruis dhaibh, fiù 's diofar chànan airson aparain agus am bruis tana agus am bruis a tha gu math tiugh. Ma tha iad a' faicinn rud, tha iad ga ghabhail air bòrd.

MARION:

Yes, they follow, and some of them are very good at picking up the language like that, and I've got one little lad just now who is absolutely wonderful. There's no ... Neither of his parents speak any Gaelic and there's no Gaelic in the home or in the family, but he understands so well. He's just ... I'm so proud of him that he's learning so much of the language in so little time each day. We only have two and a half hours each morning, but we cater for the children's interests too. That's very important. If they want to play soldiers or weapons or *Toy Story* or something like that, you have to play along with them and to speak ... to use Gaelic words instead of the English words they are used to hearing.

More often than not ... We've been extremely lucky here in Sleat and a lot of the parents, most of them, I think, have had someone in their family who spoke Gaelic and that's a great help to us. You could go to that child and use them as an example and they can give you the answer, and then the other children see, "Oh, that's what she wanted," so they follow that example as it were. I've had a lot of success like that.

But even just taking the time to go over it. If you're going to start painting, you tell them what equipment they're going to need and show it to them. That's the thing, to show them the brush ... When you're talking about a brush, you have to show them a brush, even different terminology for aprons and the fine brush and the larger brush. If they can see something, they take it on board.

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SEUMAS:

Tha thu air a bhith a' dèanamh na h-obrach fad deich bliadhna, thuirt thu.
Tha e follaiseach gu bheil e a' còrdadh riut.

MARION:

Tha. Tha. 'S toigh leam a bhith cruthachail. 'S toigh leam a bhith am measg a' chlann agus a bhith gam brosnachadh 's tha sin a' toirt tlachd dhòmhsa. 'S e obair gu math cruthachail a th' ann cuideachd dhòmhsa agus tha e a' toirt ... Tha e gu math tlachdmhor.

SEUMAS:

A Mhòrag, tapadh leat.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

You said you've been doing this job for ten years. It's obvious that you enjoy it.

MARION:

Yes. Yes. I enjoy being creative. I like to spend time with the children and to encourage them and that gives me pleasure. I find that it's a very creative job and it gives me ... It's extremely enjoyable.

SEUMAS (JAMES):

Marion, thank you.