



# ***Coinnichidh na Daoine far Nach Coinnich na Cnuic***

Adult Gaelic Learners in Nova Scotia Research and Findings

Research and Report by Bernadette Campbell

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# Executive Summary

Inspired by voices of adult Gaelic learners, the experience with learning Gaelic within the community was explored in this report. Adult Gaelic learners have benefitted from the efforts made by Gaelic champions and community organizations who have ensured Gaelic programs were offered across Nova Scotia over the years. Since 2004, Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) methodology has evolved and has been embraced by many Gaelic instructors and learners as a preferred modality for Gaelic transmission in community classes and immersion programs.

***Over the past 13 years, the Office of Gaelic Affairs (OGA) in partnership with community groups has made significant and strategic investments in Gaelic learners and instructors, working to support the development of a more systematic approach to language acquisition.***

The OGA has enabled community groups to apply for funding for planning, training and delivery of Gaelic sessions in the province. In reviewing the OGA community program reports, it is noteworthy that fellowship, song, story, music and acceptance were as important to the learners as was Gaelic instruction through GaB. From the outset, GaB instructors have supported the uptake in the number of classes offered across the province.

The adult Gaelic learners in this research have told a story of commitment of time and means, and especially their hunger for Gaelic language. Not only has the learners' investment in Gaelic produced rich personal narratives but also demonstrates how Gaelic culture enriches the lives of Nova Scotians.

Since the introduction of GaB, learners have clearly stated that GaB played a significant role in their learning. Learners have made a life-long commitment to learning Gaelic often motivated by a desire to connect with community and a desire to reclaim one of Nova Scotia's heritage languages. The number of Nova Scotia Gaelic learners has grown through the years; with over 500 learners actively participating in community classes, mentorship programs, Colaisde na Gàidhlig | The Gaelic College and Baile nan Gàidheal | The Highland Village programming, along with the NS government employee Gaelic language-learning sessions. Often learners subscribe to more than one program during a year, some actively learning for 5 or more years, reflecting the investment of personal resources in their quest to speak Gaelic.

Questions have arisen around best practices for learning Gaelic, and the strategies that may facilitate fluency. With support from the

Office of Gaelic Affairs, research was conducted into who are Nova Scotia's adult Gaelic learners and what do their voices tell us about their learning journey. Twenty-one learners participated in this research and shared their experiences learning Gaelic through GaB. A broad demographic of learners participated. The participants outlined their level of fluency, their preferred learning environment, the kinds of Gaelic learning programs they have participated in, and the sort of program they would like to incorporate into future Gaelic programming. The qualitative research included surveying

and interviewing 21 learners.

By surveying and engaging in interviews, a deeper understanding of the experiences of learning through

Gàidhlig aig Baile was revealed and the participants' Gaelic learning story was illuminated.

Overall, the research participants described the GaB methodology as a tool that early in their learning journey brought them closer to fluency. Approximately 43 percent of the research participants have reached functional fluency (or more) and others credit GaB instructional practices as key in their success while moving through the emergent learning stages, from beginner to intermediate. However, their responses also highlighted questions around program consistency, and the optimal time to officially introduce reading and writing.

Learners were clear, their suggestions could be summarized in two main points:

1. understand the needs of the learners and the learning groups and
2. create a Gaelic only learning environment.

The research participants' views on GaB demonstrated that they are considering the best methodology that matches their learning needs. Further mapping out of a learning pathway, may be helpful in planning for GaB and other research-based language learning methods.

Most participants expressed an interest in participating in future

***Learners spoke about a deeper connection with Gaelic, their voices suggested that Gaelic language and the inherent sense of identity that accompanies it, is changing their world view.***

programming that offers GaB immersion. The learners shared that their preference would be 25 hours of immersion programming in a week and up to 2-4 weeks of live-in immersion. More research is required to determine if online GaB offers quality learning experiences.

The learners have stressed the importance of culture, fellowship, elders, and community. Exploring the benefits of learning heritage languages may bring us closer to understanding what Gaels naturally were drawn to for comfort and support, besides basic food and shelter, a Gaelic community.

Creating safe learning spaces where a learner is able to lessen their inhibitions and speak Gaelic was recognized as a key piece in acquiring the language. The research participants stressed the need to stay in Gaelic, and the development of Gaelic relationships as essential to improving their confidence and fluency. The learners stressed finding opportunities to integrate Gaelic into daily routines as essential. Singing was a preferred technique for learning Gaelic. Dances, céilidhs (visits), milling frolics, song and story sessions and other Gaelic cultural events have made the voice of the learner audible.

Gaelic speakers have been enriching Nova Scotia's communities, institutions, work places, families and friendships for a very long time. The corpus of Gaelic songs, stories, music, sound recordings, and more recently books and films have permitted learners and other Nova Scotians to avail of this weighty cultural experience. The research participants demonstrated how Gaelic offered them a better version of themselves. The 21 voices in this research paper believe that learning Gaelic has positively impacted the way they think.

*From the interactive research, emerges the question, where might Gaelic language and culture fit into the lives of our new generations, our new ancestors?*

## Acknowledgements

This report was inspired by the voices of the adult Gaelic learners who participated in this research. Their stories and comments provide a deeper insight into learning Gaelic in Nova Scotia. I am grateful for participants candour and their desire to share their learning journey with me. I would also like to thank Frances MacEachen and Lewis MacKinnon of the Office of Gaelic Affairs, for supplying numerous GaB reports, and OGA data on the learner projects, and for reading and commenting on the drafts of this report.



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# *Coinnichidh na Daoine far Nach Coinnich na Cnuic:*

## *Adult Gaelic Learners in Nova Scotia Research and Findings*

*“I was always bumming Gaelic”*

These words said with a sense of humour from a participant in this research project evoke a sensation of scrounging, begging or borrowing, as if something was missing; as if he was hungry for Gaelic. His words take us to the Port Hawkesbury Pulp Mill in the 1970s, where many of the men who worked there were Gaelic speakers. Often occurring in secret, their conversations reminded this participant of his father and grandfather speaking Gaelic when he was a child and a young man. There were very few Gaelic crumbs a young lad could consume or chew on as Gaelic was not often transferred to children or youth. When the research participant described his history with Gaelic, it elicited a desire to reclaim what he instinctively knew he needed as nourishment. This research is a banquet of stories into the motivations and the endless work Gaels and Gaelic learners have committed to learning Gaelic and their efforts of reclaiming part of Nova Scotia's cultural heritage.

### *Introduction*

Reclaiming Gaelic is seen as a life-long goal for many who participated in this research project. While incorporating a qualitative research approach, specifically through surveys, interviews, and even some intimate conversations, I was able to capture the deep-rooted views of adult Gaelic learners in Nova Scotia. The personal exchanges found within this paper, highlight the adult Gaelic learners' journey in acquiring Gaelic: it explores their attitudes and beliefs about Gaelic, the underlying motivations for learning Gaelic, their commitment to fluency and how integrating Gaelic language and culture gives voice to them as Gaels.

Adults Gaelic learners have been gathering in community halls, schools, libraries, and in homes across Nova Scotia for many years. Volunteers in Sydney, Boisdale, Red Island, Iona, Westmount, Inverness, Port Hood, Port Hawkesbury, Grand Mira, Sydney, Judique, Creignish, South West Margaree, Antigonish, Pictou, New Glasgow, Halifax, and in other communities have organized and created opportunities for adult learners to congregate and learn Gaelic. Gàidhlig aig Baile, referred to as GaB, is often the preferred method for delivering Gaelic instruction to adult learners. The dedicated group of adult Gaelic learners in this research project have been committing time, means, and “their hunger” for the language.

Questions have arisen around best practices for learning Gaelic, and whether there may be a strategic learning plan that could

facilitate functional fluency with the eventual incorporation of Gaelic reading and writing. Adult Gaelic learners are reviewing and shopping their options in order to learn Gaelic within a Nova Scotia context. The local universities (St. Francis Xavier University, Saint Mary's University, and Cape Breton University), and CnG | The Gaelic College offer Gaelic university credit courses. CnG | The Gaelic College's Atlantic Gaelic Academy and a private online Gaelic program, Explore Gaelic (Angus MacLeod and his associates); have offered a variety of additional Nova Scotia Gaelic learning options. Presently, Zoom has opened up the possibilities for learning Gaelic in a global context. In reviewing the early history of the GaB programs (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), and also reading the summaries of the Gaelic learner's story (Appendix 3 and 4), one could conclude that diverse language programming exists across Nova Scotia. This research reveals that the cost for programming varies and the opportunities to learn Gaelic in-person within communities has diminished across the province. Certainly, it seems, there is no better time to explore who are the emergent adult Gaelic learners in Nova Scotia, and what are their aspirations and understandings specific to learning Gaelic?

As the Office of Gaelic Affairs (OGA) has been a leader over the past 14 plus years in supporting both Gaelic community learners and instructors, this research project has been sponsored by the OGA in order to learn more about the experiences and needs of the adult Gaelic learner. The adult Gaelic learners' journey was captured, especially the learners' experience with GaB, their special connection and motivation for learning Gaelic, their learning preferences and goals, their successes and obstacles on the journey, their beliefs around identity and Gaelic language, and how their persistence brought them to critical points along their language learning journey. Interviews were conducted with learners and the transcription of the interviews conveys the learners' voice. The qualitative data found in this paper highlights the most pertinent segments from the transcribed recordings. These segments have been compiled and collated into themes and placed in the appendices (see Summary of Interviews, Appendix 4).

Twenty-one learners participated in the research and openly shared their personal learning journey. Four of the Gaelic learner participants are presently instructors. A broad demographic of learner participants were included in the research (see results of the Survey of Adult Gaelic Learners - Appendix 3). The participants outlined their level of fluency, their preferred learning environment, the kinds of Gaelic learning programs they have participated in, the time committed to learning Gaelic and the sort of program they would like to incorporate into their

learning plan to further their Gaelic skill sets. This data could offer further insights into the learners' metacognition (awareness and understanding of one's own thought processes) about learning Gaelic and possibly inspire new learners to map out a language learning plan.

## History of Nova Scotia's Gàidhlig aig Baile

The recent history of adult Gaelic education stretches back almost two decades in Nova Scotia. GaB is inspired by the Total Immersion Plus (T.I.P.) Methodology brought to Nova Scotia by Fionnladh MacLeòid | Finlay MacLeod of Scotland through training sessions offered in 2004 and 2005. MacLeòid was invited to Nova Scotia by Frances MacEachen, Gaelic Cultural Officer, Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage and Seumas Watson, Nova Scotia Highland Village. MacLeòid drew on the work of Leanne Hinton and others involved in indigenous language renewal and the principles of Dr. James Asher's Total Physical Response. Some of the principles of T.I.P., later adopted as GaB in Nova Scotia, included having students learn in an immersion environment with no translation from Gaelic to English and no Gaelic reading and writing in the initial stages. The aim is to facilitate learners in coming to speak Gaelic where communication is aided by body language, over articulation of words and phrases, repetition, and props. There is a focus on creating a stress-free environment and, when possible, classes are held in the home or community setting. Am Blas Againn Fhìn report stated, "Enthusiasm for the T.I.P. methodology was evidenced by how quickly a course was organized after MacLeod's first training session (January 2005 in Christmas Island)."<sup>1</sup>

The introduction of the Gaelic Activities Program of the Nova Scotia government enabled community groups to apply for funding for planning training sessions, and Gaelic language classes. MacLeòid was brought back for training in Halifax in the Spring of 2005 and more Gaelic immersion classes sprang up with more than 200 learners across the province. A new organization, FIOS (Forfhais, Innleachd, Oideas, Seirbhis | Education, Intellect, Instruction, Service), was formed to support Gaelic community-based immersion programming in Nova Scotia.

When the Office of Gaelic Affairs (OGA) was officially opened in 2007, it continued to support and invest in GaB development and classes. In consultation with FIOS, Frances MacEachen of OGA produced a report, Am Blas Againn Fhìn, in 2008, which was presented to community in a planning session shortly after. OGA commissioned Seumas Watson to review the report Am Blas Againn Fhìn and the meeting results and he provided recommendations for a strategic approach for GaB development.

In his paper, Refining and Growing a Community-based Gaelic Immersion Methodology for Nova Scotia: Comments and

Suggestions for a Strategic Approach, he deduced that

*"drawing on cultural markers in planning for language renewal can foster legitimate local identity."*<sup>2</sup>

In the report, Seumas Watson, a leader in many Gaelic provincial initiatives, outlined the strengths of the Nova Scotia Gàidhealtachd: geographical origins in Gaelic Scotland, a kinship network, religious adherence, local economy, social customs, history of settlement, dialect, musical expression, story corpus, song corpus, and foodways. Watson concluded that "minority languages without their cultural anchors is a difficult pathway for achieving social relevance in the larger speech community".<sup>3</sup>

*Four core priorities were suggested by Watson:*

1. Create a unified vision for community-based immersion (for Gaelic language acquisition)
2. A Nova Scotia adult immersion methodology (that is research-based)
3. Tutor training and supply (tutors with high degree of fluency and methodological skills are required)
4. Representative teaching aids and resources (materials such as: Sruth nan Gàidheal collaborations had become significant learning tools, and then later, An Drochaid Eadarainn, Am Bràighe on-line, and others became additional resources for instructors and learners).<sup>4</sup>

In response to this consultation, Frances MacEachen of OGA, in cooperation with Seumas Watson created the Bun is Bàrr Mentorship Pilot. The goal of Bun is Bàrr is to help create fluent Gaelic speakers who are knowledgeable of Nova Scotia's Gaelic tradition and motivated to learn, enjoy, teach, share and champion Gaelic Nova Scotia.

*Bun is Bàrr seeks to achieve two objectives concurrently:*

1. Transmission of Gaelic language through culture.
2. Re-integration of Nova Scotia Gaelic expression, such as song and story, into the social life of Gaels.

The Pilot was launched in January of 2009 and continued in two parts, after which the team met to revise the Bun is Bàrr curriculum. Bun is Bàrr has continued, in various iterations, until present day.

<sup>2</sup> Refining and Growing a Community-based Gaelic Immersion Methodology for Nova Scotia: Comments and Suggestions for a Strategic Approach, 2008

<sup>3</sup> Refining and Growing a Community-based Gaelic Immersion Methodology for Nova Scotia: Comments and Suggestions for a Strategic Approach, 2008

<sup>4</sup> Refining and Growing a Community-based Gaelic Immersion Methodology for Nova Scotia: Comments and Suggestions for a Strategic Approach, 2008

<sup>1</sup> Am Blas Againn Fhìn, 2008

Gaelic Affairs' work on GaB continued with Kathleen Reddy of Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-Bhaile | Gaelic Language School of Halifax preparing a draft six-week GaB curriculum and Frances MacEachen convening a planning group for a Céilidh House Meeting, which was held in January of 2009. Here 27 members of the Gaelic community came together to discuss ways to advance Gàidhlig aig Baile, Nova Scotia's own community-based language learning system. The following vision, growing Gaelic language and culture in and through communities and guiding principles were crafted from the discussions.

### Guiding Principles

1. Gaelic is the language of the learning experience.
2. Learning environments are:
  - In multiple settings
  - Supportive
  - Encouraging
3. The learning experiences are:
  - Relevant to Nova Scotia Gaelic culture
  - Intergenerational
  - Experiential
  - Contextual
  - Supportive of different learning styles
  - Based on current research and community experience
  - Offering opportunities for repetition without repetitiveness
4. Tutors are:
  - Adequately supported
  - Responsible for ongoing assessment and evaluation
  - Sharing best practices with other tutors and program deliverers
  - Exploring and utilizing local resources
5. Learners are:
  - Responsible for their own learning
6. Tutors and learners together are:
  - Engaged in assessing measurable outcomes
7. Learning opportunities are accessible; a lack of funds shall not preclude participation

*In addition to these principles, the working group identified two needs:*

1. To identify how Gàidhlig aig Baile programs will be coordinated
2. To identify who is responsible for ongoing support for community organizations which implement Gàidhlig aig Baile programs and celebrate success.

Seumas Watson's subsequent commentary on the vision

statement, which was motivated from Growing Gaelic Language and Culture in Communities, indicates how central community is to the delivery of GaB.

*"Gàidhlig aig Baile is a vehicle for language transmission, but more than just classes and learning materials. Its philosophy embraces a social framework of planning, co-operation and innovation. To this end, I believe, the vision statement's simplicity encapsulates the goals which we all wish to see realized. If word tinkering is appropriate here, a suggestion might be that the vision statement read something like this: Growing language and culture in, by and with communities. "<sup>5</sup>*

In May 2009, the Office of Gaelic Affairs organized another weekend gathering at the Gaelic College, *Cruinneachadh nan Taoitearan* (Tutors' Gathering). The event, attended by Gaelic tutors, university professors and public school educators as well as community organizers was held entirely in Gaelic and included presentations by educators such as: Hector MacNeil, Stacey MacLean, Jim Watson, Shannon MacMullin, Beth MacNeil, Ronald MacKenzie, Bernard Cameron, and Angus MacLeod. Twenty-three people attended the weekend event, and at the end the Gaelic instructors discussed and created a list of best practices (see Appendix 5).<sup>6</sup>

To further develop GaB programs, OGA hired a field officer, Goiridh Dòmhnallach | Jeff MacDonald in 2010. Between 2010-2020 Gàidhlig aig Baile developed as a model for language transmission in the province. Curriculum, lessons, resources, and assessment tools were developed. *Leabhar-lùil do Thaoitearan Gàidhlig aig Baile - Gàidhlig aig Baile: Tutor's Guide* was produced by Goiridh Dòmhnallach of the Office of Gaelic Affairs between 2012-2013. Successive work on GaB continued between 2013-2016 where a panel was formed with Bernard Cameron, Catriona Parsons, Goiridh Dòmhnallach, Kathleen Reddy, Tonya Fry and Lewis MacKinnon as members. The panel's goal was to clarify GaB principles, develop an assessment process for instructors, and to create curriculum.

Since the fall of 2016, Sgioba nan Taoitearan do Gàidhlig aig Baile/The Gàidhlig aig Baile Tutor's Team was formed; facilitated and supported by the Office of Gaelic Affairs. Presently, an Sgioba (The Team), comprises 10 Gaelic community members who have expressed an interest in further advancing their Gaelic language and teaching skills with a focus on the delivery of quality learning experiences to Gaelic learners. The OGA highlights the priorities of monthly meetings as follows: enhancing language skills through Gaelic Nova Scotia's storytelling traditions, assessing and incorporating best teaching practices, and exploring theme-based language learning approaches with a guiding curriculum.

Another initiative that has supported Gaelic learners is *Daltachas* (Fosterage). Administered by the OGA and delivered

<sup>5</sup> Céilidh House Meeting for Gàidhlig aig Baile, 2009

<sup>6</sup> *Cruinneachadh nan Taoitearan Report*, 2009



by Gaelic instructors. This mentorship program's goal is to expand learners' speaking and comprehension abilities. The intention of this program is to expand participants' language foundation, and prepare them for more advanced programming, such as Bun is Bàrr and Stòras a' Bhaile | Gaelic Folk Life School.

## Gàidhlig aig Baile | Gaelic in the Home

Secondary research from OGA reports is found in Appendix 1. The summary below offers a greater understanding of some of the GaB programs offered over the past 15 years.

Gaelic classes were supported through government investments since 2005 (Appendix 1). *Am Blas Againn Fhin* highlights some of the classes offered prior to 2007. The Office of Gaelic Affairs summarized GaB classes, funded through GLIC, in Nova Scotia between 2009-2010 (Clasaichean na Coimhearsnachd 2009-2010). At that time, it appeared that Gàidhlig aig Baile had been widely adopted by many Nova Scotia community-based Gaelic classes for 4-5 years.

Appendix 1 indicates that between 2009-2010 throughout the province, there were twenty GLIC (Gaelic Language and Culture in the Community) program funded classes across 12 communities that employed 33 instructors who taught 221-228 learners (a ratio of 1 instructor per 7 learners). Approximately 775-797 hours of GaB instructional hours were offered that year (25 hours per instructor). Appendix 1 maps out the community group locations, attendance, number of instructors, instructor hours, the cost of the classes and the financial support from the OGA's GLIC program.

While the total cost of GaB programming is not reported in Appendix 1, there's evidence that the OGA had offered substantial financial support and expertise specific to GaB. In fact, during that time, \$38,450 was the total amount provided by the OGA to support GaB classes. On average that is approximately, \$50 per hour of instruction. The communities would also have leveraged their own financial resources through class registration fees and in-kind supports (e.g., space, coordination, and resources).

**Observation:** This data provides evidence of a significant uptake by community organizations, at that time, suggesting a great deal of commitment and involvement by learners and organizers. It appears the GLIC program had been instrumental in supporting community-based learning programs. However, Appendix 1 does not offer information about local fundraising for GaB programs where additional supports might have helped with costs for coordination, rentals, instructors, etc. One might also assume that the instructors available and/or actively instructing, at that time, had developed more experience and engagement in the GaB methodology.

Additional secondary research for this project involved reviewing 11 GLIC and Dian-oideas na Gàidhlig (Gaelic Intensive Immersion) final reports between 2012-2019, found in Appendix 2. The 11 reports selected showcase a variety of community programs and do not represent the full number of OGA funded programs offered across the province between 2012-2019. The data extracted from the reports highlighted the number of participants, the cost of programs, program description, and the overall comments made by the coordinators, with suggestions for future programming.

Programs varied in size, cost, and description, and most conveyed that GaB was the methodology used. The trained GaB instructors were an asset to the program delivery ensuring programs were offered across Nova Scotia. In many cases, more than one instructor was hired to support community classes. In this review, a total of 24 instructors were hired as well as 6 or more Native Gaelic speakers supported the delivery of the 11 community Gaelic programs. This data suggests there was a slight increase in the instructor-learner ratio compared to the 2009-2010 review. Specifically, from the data in Appendix 2, approximately 157 learners were identified as participating in Gaelic programming, which suggests a ratio of 1 instructor for 6.5 learners, compared to 1:7 in earlier GLIC programming (Appendix 1). Native Gaelic speakers were commonly included expert Gaelic resource persons at community Gaelic sessions. When Native Gaelic speakers were not present, recordings or sound files of the tradition bearers were often included in classes.

**Observation:** From the OGA reports, it appeared that many native Gaelic speakers attended the earlier GaB sessions. Generally the community protocol was that the native Gaelic speakers did not pay fees to attend GaB classes, and were often paid a stipend. Again, in the 2012-2019 reports, it is evident that Native Gaelic speakers were included in community programs. Native Gaelic speakers provide expertise, Gaelic cultural context and a richer experience for the instructor and learners. Today, the opportunity to learn with Native Gaelic speakers is extremely limited. To ensure that quality programs include Gaelic elder perspectives, it may be important to consider how the reality of elder loss can be integrated into future programming such as Bun is Bàrr and/or Stòras a' Bhaile.

In reviewing the documents, distinct features of the classes were evident, specifically, accessibility, tips for programming and the successes of the program. The data showcased that the projects had their own characteristics, specifically, the class location, attendance, number of instructors, instructor hours, cost of the classes, description of the programs, and the financial support received from the OGA's GLIC and Dian Oideas program. A summary, of the final reports found in Appendix 2 represents a cross section of the individual characteristics of the Gaelic language programs. In examining the summary reports, there is evidence of the creative aspects of the community Gaelic

programs and the successes experienced delivering Gaelic classes. Notably, in viewing this data, the evolution in the length of time for classes changed over time. It seems that in 2004-07, 2-3 hour classes were often held at least 2 times a week for 8 to 10 weeks. The 2012-2019 reports suggested weekly classes and week-long immersions had become the norm.

**Observation:** *Instructor availability may have played a factor in the shift in commitment to more intensive learning time frames. Also instructors employment may also have made weekend immersions or week long immersions a better fit with learners and instructors' schedules.*

According to the reports, it seems that the characteristics of the GaB classes and Gaelic programs evolved to match the specific community of learners and instructors. Programs offered: night classes, song classes, translation sessions, céilidhean (visits) and Gaelic immersions.

**Observation:** *It seems that a sense of fellowship was a priority by some groups and for others an immersion was a priority. The specific description of the programs was not found in the project closure reports, rather the highlights and the summary of the programs. The reports did not describe how the GaB methodology was delivered in the various settings.*

## Highlights of OGA Final Reports 2012-2019 (see Appendix 2)

What follows are highlights from ten GLIC Project Closure Reports & one Dian-Oideas na Gàidhlig Report, 2012- 2019.

- The data revealed that \$14,394 was spent by GaB learners (not including their travel expenses), \$8,670 represented the in-kind support, and \$28,440 was the funding offered through the OGA. All programs rely on in-kind community resources (e.g., venue, food, administration, guests, teaching supplies, teaching props, etc), registration fees, and the OGA funding programs. When averaging contributions to community programs, 17% in-kind contribution, 28% tuition fees, and 55% from GLIC financial resource and support.
- Fees were approximately \$93 per learner for the GLIC and Dian-Oideas na Gàidhlig programs.
- The hours varied within the programs, but generally 30 hours of Gaelic instruction was delivered per program.

- Six programs were held as evening classes, two programs were on weekends, two programs were a combination of weekend and evening. Almost all were immersion programs.
- Variation in number of GaB learners per application, from 8 learners to up to 38 in the Halifax area. The learning program suggests the average class size to be 8-10 learners in a group.
- Eight of the eleven programs reviewed indicated that they incorporated Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) methodology.
- Six programs indicated they incorporated Native Gaelic speakers and/or sound files.
- Learning environments varied; community buildings, homes, and field trip settings. Three programs were offered in a home setting. The home as a learning setting was preferred.
- All programs incorporated Gaelic cultural content (e.g., stories, song, skits, and music)
- Most programs made a practice of including conversational Gaelic.
- Community programs seem to reflect the community's resources and their desire to individualize their GaB program. While the programs focused on GaB instruction, the communities' unique group of learners and program design was evident (e.g., some included song workshops, some had céilidhss, some visited elders, some attended a funeral of a Gael, some gathered for coffee, some included field trips, some were proud to have their local Gaelic cultural content, some raised the flag of the Gaels with pride, some loved the home setting, and for some their local library or firehall served them well).

## Suggestions from OGA Project Closure Reports 2012-2019 (see Appendix 2)

- Winter weather and unexpected events (Covid-19) impacted attendance and even cancellations; travel and expected events are considerations for scheduling and program completion.
- Instructor availability is always a consideration for scheduling.
- Pre-register and pay in advance in order to secure attendance and anticipated registration fees.
- Connecting with neighbouring GaB community programs was indicated as important; possible competition for the same learners could complement each other's program.

- More time needs to be allocated for regular program planning, especially when instructors are looking at setting up successive weeks of immersion.
- More time on learner orientation, get to know learners' language needs, ensure learner engagement, and GaB principles are supported.
- Special consideration for the Beginner learner, possibly a more in-depth GaB orientation.
- Support learners so that they develop their own individual Gaelic language learning plan.
- Feedback from learners was suggested; setting up an advisory group or ongoing learner-feedback system.
- Use of social media to advertise classes and to stay in contact with learners from program to program.
- GaB methodology attracts more Gaelic learners and classes should be relaxed and fun.
- Continued use of sound files from Sruth nan Gàidheal, An Drochaid Eadarainn & Cainnt mo Mhàthar.
- Budget and time adjustments are common aspects of planning.
- Many felt their program met expectations, and wanted more of the same (see Appendix 2):
  - We would not do anything different
  - We would like to do the same thing again next year
- Positive comments about community programming was found in reports: (see Appendix 2):
  - Our class enjoys lasting bonds from our journey together
  - Our local dialect and locally composed songs and stories form the basis of the curriculum and NS Gaelic identity
  - Students left the workshops energized vowing to speak in Gaelic more often
  - Participants reported to have had greater appreciation for the other learners

## Gàidhlig aig Baile and Adult Gaelic Program Observations

**Observation:** As discovered from the project closure reports, participants' satisfaction derived from learning Gaelic was discernible. The learners' comments suggested the role of fellowship, within a community, as a significant motivator. The comments also suggest language reclamation, confidence, and a Gaelic way of knowing lead learners through the challenges associated with language learning. Committing to learning Gaelic is not a short-term endeavour, rather has become a way of life for many learners. Leading learners and new members in Gaelic Nova Scotia communities toward authentic and rich Gaelic and Gaelic cultural experiences may satisfy a hunger that appears to be growing in Nova Scotia.<sup>7</sup>

Since the introduction of TIP and GaB, communities have enthusiastically engaged in learning Gaelic. Over the last fifteen years or more, diverse learning groups have developed across the province. Am Blas Againn Fhìn report suggested over 200 people were learning Gaelic in 2006-07. In 2017, the OGA data suggested that up to 505 adults are learning Gaelic in communities, mentorship programs, Gaelic College and Highland Village programming, and Government of Nova Scotia Gaelic language sessions.<sup>8</sup> In 2020, 62 Government of Nova Scotia employees registered to learn Gaelic language through GaB.<sup>9</sup> Further analysis of the learner profiles might reveal a new learner demographic. When comparing programs over time, the regularity of class locations has changed; for example, Cape Breton Municipality region (excluding Christmas Island) didn't continue to apply for funding through GLIC. The ever-growing interest demonstrates a willingness by learners to invest their resources in learning Gaelic.

The project leaders' closure reports provided solid suggestions for improvements to community programs. They offered wisdom around program arrangements that could improve Gaelic learning. Ongoing learner-feedback and communication with learners was suggested. Reports also recommended more in-depth GaB orientation and becoming more acquainted with learners' language needs could ensure learner engagement. One group suggested forming a community Gaelic learners' advisory group.

**Observation:** Communities taking responsibility for building their own learning groups may gain greater capacity as Gaelic language clusters develop across Nova Scotia. Connecting with community advocates or Gaelic champions

<sup>7</sup> Data provided courtesy of the Office of Gaelic Affairs, 2020

<sup>8</sup> Data provided courtesy of the Office of Gaelic Affairs -Aireamhan a tha 'sas ann am Programan Gaidhlig, 2017

<sup>9</sup> Data provided courtesy of the Office of Gaelic Affairs, 2020

and with provincial leaders is essential in order to envision the future of community GaB programming. Continuing to elicit the voices of champions of Gaelic programming is key for future program development.

The history of Gàidhlig aig Baile in the province demonstrates that there has been considerable effort made in supporting the development of small groups of secondary bilingual (someone who has acquired a second language after having acquired a first language)... Gaelic learners across Nova Scotia. In some regions, attendance at the GaB classes has increased, specifically in the Halifax region, where numbers have doubled in the last 10 years. While smaller communities like Whycomagh and Baddeck have experienced a decrease in participation. It is important to recognize that a community like Christmas Island, has consistently offered community classes over the past 15 years, since receiving early training on TIP.

**Observation:** This change in location or participation in classes is possibly a reflection of the population trends within the province. As Halifax Gaelic speakers grow, they could become leaders in our province, facilitating more spaces for fluent Gaelic speakers to gather, work and instruct Gaelic. Finding a way to disperse our fluent Gaelic speakers across the province could create more community pockets of learners. It matters that there are new Gaelic speakers and that the culture continues to grow and thrive for the next generations. Community consultation on the role of Gaelic language and culture in the lives of future Nova Scotians has been on going. It is important that the voices of all our learners, instructors, community leaders, and Gaelic speakers collectively gather at the Gaelic table.

Nova Scotia Gaelic communities have played an active role in being the custodians of their language programs. The reports substantiate that community organizers have put in place language programs so that Gaelic could be reclaimed, legitimized, and transferred. Customized adult Gaelic learning environments were described. The communities of learners reveal the remarkable role fellowship, songs, stories, and the voice the elders have offered to our Nova Scotia communities.

**Observation:** As community groups and learners customized their learning programs it might be ideal for all community groups, instructors, and learners to review the creativity found in the community projects and in turn to outline expectations for the delivery of GaB. Ensuring Gaelic learners and Gaelic instructors meet each other's goals and expectations was not generally discussed in the reports. Creating a level of consistency in GaB program content and instructor delivery could guide learners to enrol in a program that meets their needs. Focusing on the Gàidhlig aig Baile learners' view and capturing their experiences and/

or suggestions could support consistency in GaB delivery. The commitment of Gàidhlig aig Baile instruction has been more than a contract or a small job, it's a choice talented instructors have made to engage in a relationship with learners to ensure the essence of the Gaelic language and culture are shared. The collective experiences of both learners and instructors could offer the following:

1. insights into the learners' progress and next steps
2. the benefits of present program offerings
3. the balance found between GaB learning challenges and successes
4. the relationship with learners in their collaborative groups
5. the creation of learning materials reflecting local culture, and the possibilities of a new direction for on-line Gàidhlig aig Baile programming

## Current Research on the Adult Gaelic Learners' Experiences

*"Language is the primary tool for our Gaelic initiatives and requires treatment as such. It is not, however, the end game of itself, but rather a delivery system for maintaining the people's cultural stuffing: the product of their social expression. One could say that for the want of a language the culture was lost. For the want of a culture the language was lost. It would be cliché to point out that these are not separate issues. The beating heart of the matter ultimately becomes that for the want of both a people is lost..."*<sup>10</sup>

Given the increased interest in Gaelic language learning, questions around who are the adult Gaelic learners and what compels them to commit time and resources in the pursuit of learning, is now relevant. Learning what this pursuit has contributed to the lives of learners, the instructors, and the lives of other Nova Scotian communities is important. The learners' voice was a good source to help explore these questions. Qualitative research is a journey of explanation and discovery and doesn't partition data into statistics. Qualitative research has both the participant and the researcher bringing their past and present experiences forward. By surveying, profiling and engaging in interviews with the research, a deeper understanding of the experiences of learning through Gàidhlig aig Baile and the participants' Gaelic life and learning story were illuminated. The following questions guided the research process:

1. Who are the Nova Scotia adult Gaelic learners?

<sup>10</sup> Building a Nova Scotia Gaelic Cultural Nation by Seumas Watson, "The Many Ways to Gaelic Language Fluency", Designing for Cultural Revitalization Course, NSCAD University.



2. What has been the design of Gaelic learning programs in Nova Scotia? Are there consistencies within adult Gaelic instructional program plans?
3. Are adult Gaelic learning programs and environments equitable and accessible?
4. Are specific learning preferences addressed in adult Gaelic learning programming? Is there evidence of a learning philosophy around GaB instruction?
5. Nova Scotia adult Gaelic learners' motivation to learn is a critical piece in understanding the best programs to offer learners. What motivates the Gaelic learners, language reclamation, adult intellectual pursuit, or social entertainment? Has it influenced how successful learners are in meeting their language goals?
6. Whether the adult Gaelic learner sets intentional learning goals, or learning plans and if so, what are their goals? Do opportunities exist in Nova Scotia to meet learning goals and whether adult Gaelic learning programs offer sequential learning?

## Highlights from the Research: Surveys and Interviews

Inquiries around best Gaelic learning programs continues to demonstrate a desire for content-rich programming that is reflective of Nova Scotia's Gaelic culture, efficacious teaching practices, innovative pedagogy, and a program that meets the learning needs of adult Gaelic learners in Nova Scotia. The participants in this research, certainly gave voice to a desire to connect with regional Gaelic content and the language of Gaelic Nova Scotia tradition bearers. A research participant, who came to Nova Scotia to study at a local university, took a Gaelic elective and a few years later sought out opportunities to advance her knowledge of Gaelic language and culture. When asked if she could speak to anyone in Gaelic (alive or dead), she said that she would speak with Màiri Alasdair Ruaidh | Mary, daughter of Red Sandy, a fiddler from the last century. The participant shared the depth of knowledge that can be gleaned from Gaelic elders, and the considerable corpus of Gaelic songs and stories found in Nova Scotia, "She had beautiful Gaelic and dialect, she was a fiddler, and I would ask her opinion on life at the time, I'd like to learn about farming and horses," <sup>11</sup> she said.

The voices of 21 diverse adult Gaelic learners are captured in Appendix 3 and Appendix 4. The participants represent a diverse demographic of Nova Scotia Gaelic learners who have all committed substantial time to learning Gaelic. The majority of the participants have been learning Gaelic for 5 years or more. One beginner learner had committed a week's vacation in early February 2020 to learn in a 25-hour immersion program in Port Hood. Another has spent more than 10 years attending

community Gaelic classes. Most learners have expressed an interest in learning Gaelic in a home setting but many had also been learning at educational institutions. Although most learners indicated that they preferred to learn with others, most had also spent more than 50 hours learning independently over the past two years.

The thirst for Gaelic learning opportunities requires more examination as online programming becomes more readily available. According to the survey results, all the participants listen to audio clips of Native speakers, text or speak Gaelic on their phones between programs, incorporate Gaelic language activities through social media. The recent creation of a Scottish Gaelic Duolingo App has offered a very user friendly system to practice Gaelic skills (see Appendix 3).

The learners have overwhelmingly praised the GaB methodology and many have described it as a tool that early in their learning journey brought them closer to fluency. From this research, approximately 43% (or more) of the participants have reached functional fluency and others credit GaB instructional practices as key in their success moving through the emergent learning stages, from beginner to intermediate (see Question 9, Appendix 4).

### *In the learners' voice:*

- GaB is great
- It's a perfect starting point
- It's fun
- It's hands-on
- It's repetitive and interactive
- There's a balance between stress (of learning) and support
- My father would have learned Gaelic (like I have) if he had started with GaB

Contrasting views were also heard, indeed, one research participant stressed that Gàidhlig aig Baile is just one more learning tool, and not an ideology (see Question 9, Appendix 4).

### *In the learners' voice:*

- There has been variation in instructor methods
- inconsistency (exists) in immersion experiences
- It lacks research
- Reading and writing becomes important (in the learning process)
- Know your learner
- Preparedness is important, it is helpful when the instructor is passionate and their heart and soul are in it

**Observation:** The participant responses and critiques may highlight possible shortcomings of Gàidhlig aig Baile. The responses reveal the need to ask more questions around consistency in program delivery, standards associated with delivery expectations, when to officially introduce reading and writing, and the role of instructor techniques and preparedness. These issues may be addressed with further research, ongoing planning, and input from learners and instructors.

<sup>11</sup> Participant's response, Question 3, Appendix 4

The learners' views on Gàidhlig aig Baile demonstrated that the learners are considering the methodology or techniques that work best in their learning process. (see Question 9, of Appendix 4).

#### *In the learners voice:*

- There's a need to assess learners as GaB can be a perfect starting point
- The whole system might need a refresh...it is not intended to be forever
- GaB provides a superficial level of expression
- The deeper conceptual values are not easy to pass on through GaB

Delivering quality GaB programming has required substantial expertise: Gaelic fluency, significant planning on the part of coordinators, creative output by instructors, an ability to show up in a home-type setting or community hall where willing participants await instruction, and an intuitiveness to know the learner's needs. (see Question 9, of Appendix 4).

#### *In the learners voice:*

- Teachers that are fluent Gàidhlig aig Baile instructors, invest in them
- New instructors need training, we need to plant new seeds.
- Instructors are good at reading learners, they know when to save us.

**Observation:** The instructor's and learner's intuition is profound. Setting up GaB learner programs that interconnect the learning needs and preferences would require more formalized GaB lesson plans and even a curriculum. Overall, learners were clear and their suggestions may be condensed to two main points: 1. understand the needs of the learners and the learning groups and 2. create a Gaelic only learning environment.

Half of the research participants indicated that travel and weather could prohibit their attendance. As Gaelic language programming is now being delivered in an online format, the barrier to learning Gaelic around travel and time-of-day for a learning session could be mitigated. Based on the number of online learning options available, learners are making adjustments to learning through online platforms.

**Observation:** Reinvigorating dialogue around Gàidhlig aig Baile and spending more time on the content of community programs could continue to produce quality programming into the future. With an increase in online offerings, the cost of Gaelic programming per learner might be adjusted. As quality online GaB programming continues to develop, the price for programming could reflect best practices. Online programming could also make access to classes less reliant on travel and lessen the need for rental space.

Learners in this study have indicated that they have been actively pursuing Gaelic through community class sessions, immersions and on their own. GaB has traditionally relied on the instructor leading the learning process. Over the years, some learners have admitted that they have entrusted the instructors' knowledge of the learning process to direct them toward language acquisition. The balance between instructor-led programs and programs where learners work independently, to date, has not been fully considered.

The research participants indicated that almost all of them speak Gaelic between classes and have spent 100 hours or more, in the last two years, learning independently. The learners advised that learning to read and write Gaelic helped them unlock the richer Gaelic content found in collections. The learners reported that their journey toward fluency included an assortment of strategies (see Question 5, Appendix 4)

#### *In the learners' voice:*

- Review the lessons and the recordings
- Learn the idiomatic phrases
- Embrace mistakes
- Speak as much as possible
- Listen well, over and over
- Listen to other Gaelic speakers

The majority of participants surveyed shared that they have been learning Gaelic for five or more years. Many learners in this research project have spent over 150 hours learning Gaelic in the past 2 years and their descriptions of themselves varied. Specifically, a third of the participants identified themselves as beginner-intermediate, a quarter as intermediate learners, and about forty percent as fluent. No measurable data was available on the learners' progress or how they determined their levels.

**Observation:** Further research into GaB might help instructors and learners investigate the effectiveness of GaB on language acquisition, and subsequently advise learners on how they might develop individual Gaelic learning plans. The Am Blas Againn Fhìn report stated that "anecdotal information suggests students are progressing; however, there isn't any measurable data on the students' progress. Clear learning goals have not been identified for the immersion classes, which makes evaluation difficult."<sup>12</sup> A deeper analysis might suggest that learning opportunities, exposure to native Gaelic speakers, and variations in instructional styles might have played a role in Gaelic acquisition. Mapping out learners' pathways could be helpful.

Many fluent learners in this research who participated in immersion programs reported favourably on the immersion environments. These settings generally have offered 100-400 hours of Gaelic immersion instruction, and some programs had

even included a live-in immersion program. Most participants in this research have expressed an interest in participating in future programming that offers GaB immersion opportunities. Many of the learners shared that their desire would be to have 25 hour-long immersion programs in a week and up to 2-4 weeks of live-in immersion.

**Observation:** *With the advancement of on-line programming, what might be an alternative to Gaelic immersions? Highland Village's Pop-Up Gàidhealtachd, the OGA's Online Gaelic Instruction, the Gaelic College's online Learning Program, and Explore Gaelic, are some examples of forums where learners are advancing their skills. With thoughtful planning, and a more in depth look at the immersion online experience, GaB could become an essential medium to deliver intensive instruction. Further research is likely necessary to develop a better understanding of whether the learner meets with success through an online Gàidhlig aig Baile delivery.*

Learners' intentions specific to language reclamation, whether it's an intellectual pursuit and/or social activity, may have strongly influenced how successful learners are in meeting their language goals. Inevitably, the participants' responses varied and painted a picture of how motivation played a substantial role in the time and effort the learners had committed to learning Gaelic. During the interviews, the participants were asked to map out their Gaelic language journey (see Question 2, Appendix 4).

#### **In the learners' voice:**

- I don't think there is an easy answer, immersion is the best way
- I recommend Na Gaisgich Òga
- There's just better (richer) conversations with someone fluent
- Language lessons, reading poetry, learning songs, speaking with Native Gaelic speakers
- Its very social
- Participated in GaB classes from Beginner to Intermediate, sometimes concurrently
- The Gaelic College Christmas Weekend. It was fun and I met people interested in Gaelic.
- You reach plateaus, get past that, then another
- It's powerful to learn together
- Grandma would talk to me in Gaelic
- Dr. Ken Nilsen, a lot of his material came from Dannie Cameron's stories and idioms
- I was part of a Gaelic choir and learned Gaelic songs from Mary Jane Lamond
- Trying to keep Gaelic alive so my descendents have Gaelic.
- Sang songs within the community and even organized church services in Gaelic.

Fifteen years ago, Michael S. Newton surveyed Gaelic learners and he found that Nova Scotia Gaelic learners indicated that

they had benefited from the native speakers and the cultural contextualization they had offered.<sup>13</sup> Almost all learners in this research project indicated that hearing and listening to native Gaelic speakers had been instrumental in bringing them along the language acquisition journey (see Question 1 and 3, Appendix 4).

#### **In the learners' voice:**

- My favourite part of the GaB experience was listening to Gaelic speakers and when I began to understand
- Being with native Gaelic speakers was a wicked experience
- I loved having Gaelic speakers in GaB class
- When my grand aunt was dying I spoke Gaelic to her
- A fluent Gaelic speaker, it will make you push yourself
- Native Gaelic speakers are endlessly encouraging
- The late AJ MacDougall - the way he would describe his early morning walks
- The late Mary (Vincent) and Vincent, it was a great spot to go

Within this research project, the adult learners also stressed the positive role of song, music, story, community plays, milling frolics and socializing in Gaelic as the favourable spaces where they could use their Gaelic. Their words reflect the opportunities that exist in developing relationships in the Gaelic Nova Scotia community (see Question 1 and 2, Appendix 4).

#### **In the learners' voice:**

- Learned (Gaelic) with Gairidh Dòmhnallach
- Milling frolics, it was like an explosion
- Milling frolics were magical
- I returned to NS and learned Gaelic, through Cum Sios, Daltachas, Bun is Bàrr and with Shannon (MacMullin)
- I befriended a learner at the AGA and we took private lessons with Angus MacLeod
- Attending the Daltachas program in Halifax with Lewis MacKinnon
- At A' Togail na Gàidhlig, we made meals together, sitting around conversing
- I started doing Gaelic plays with Jessica McLennan
- Visiting Gaelic speakers like: Margie (Beaton) and Effie (Rankin).

Over the years, academics' research has highlighted Nova Scotia's Gaelic community. Academic papers, books (with Gaelic stories, songs and poetry), Mac-Talla, and online platforms like An Drochaid Eadarainn, Am Bràighe, and other collections have supported learners' language hunt. More recently, learners have been able to take advantage of other programs that the Office of Gaelic Affairs has offered. OGA has developed two programs that provides opportunities for learners to enhance their Gaelic skill sets. For example, the OGA's Bun is Bàrr and Daltachas programs have been named by nine research participants as pivotal in their learning journey. Other programs

<sup>13</sup> Micheal S. Newton (2005). "This Could Have Been Mine"; Scottish Gaelic Learners in North America.

or opportunities have also been identified as influential learning opportunities: the Gaelic College's An Cùrsa Bogaidh course, participation in the Highland Village's Stòras a' Bhaile program, and working as an animator on the Highland Village site, joining choirs and theatre, and enrolling in Celtic Studies programs at StFX and CBU.

**Observation:** *As new learners continue to commit to learning Gaelic, they may want to investigate these programs and join with others on a more intensive learning pathway.*

Learning with others or with a core group of learners has been highlighted as pivotal in supporting one's learning process. Naturally, when acquiring new skills, learners' aspirations are often dispersed with interruptions and even learning doldrums. Self-doubt can trigger learning slumps and learning hiatuses and may negatively impact one's motivation to continue to attend programs. The interviews provided some insights into the psyche of the Gaelic learner (see Question 2, 5, and 6, Appendix 4)

#### **In the learners' voice:**

- People are hard on themselves, a trait in all of us
- People are super supportive, everyone has something to relate to
- The fellowship between one another was like coming home
- Learning buddies and a buddy system is important
- Have a good group to work with
- Connect to others, know how to party
- Be an activist for Gaelic and inspire others
- In an immersion group, you are not in a position to be embarrassed
- There's criticism of self

A primary principle identified for successful GaB programming has been the "Gaelic only" rule. Indeed, not following the "Gaelic only" rule has been identified as a major obstacle in learning Gaelic in a GaB program. In addition, finding the best language programs and learning in supportive environments was suggested (see Question 6, Appendix 4).

#### **In the learners' voice:**

- There's too much English in classes
- Folks are not committed to Gaelic only
- Keeping to a Gaelic only rule
- Interruptors in classes (English and too many questions)
- Navigating learning Gaelic by yourself can be self isolating
- Hearing recordings of Native Gaelic speakers is an obstacle, Stacey (MacLean) has a good way to guide you
- A program like Bun as Bàrr was so helpful, learning from elders
- A lot of independent programs with grammar focus, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, had grammar
- An Cùrsa Bogaidh was good, you had to be determined
- Covid-19 is stopping me from keeping my momentum going

Some English as a Foreign Language research suggests visualizing and setting a goal is effective in enhancing language communication.<sup>14</sup> Visualizing a situation in which you envision yourself speaking a language within a context, for example in the work place, or in a family setting, may be a helpful language learning strategy. The participants were asked to imagine themselves conversing in Gaelic to an individual (dead or alive) and asked what they would speak about. The response reflected the deeper motivations that sit in an individual's heart and mind when committing to learning Gaelic. A kinship connection was evident, as well as an opportunity to learn more about a Gaelic way of life. Uncovering history and traditions, aspects of rural life, and learning a song, framed their responses. In addition, some learners shared that they imagined their future self speaking Gaelic with a partner or with children. These deep rooted responses speak about the act of reclamation as motivation in Gaelic language learning (see Question 3, Appendix 4).

#### **In the learners' voice:**

- My great grandfather, he struggled to learn English, I'd ask him what it was like in a time when (Gaels) we're transferring from Gaelic to English
- My father's father, I would tell him I remember him, our people, our language
- Speak about older times, the milling frolics
- Speaking Gaelic makes it clear that I am not English
- I'd speak Gaelic to my future relatives
- My grandmother
- I love the Gaelic humour, they'd laugh at the simple and basic things
- I'd also speak to my friends in my core group
- My great-uncle, he is the family tradition bearer, I am becoming the tradition bearer

No one spoke about keeping Gaelic alive, rather they spoke about the healthy connections they have made with both living and deceased Gaels. The Gaels' voices continue to influence the learners on their learning journey. A sense of joy and belonging was heard. Learning the language and connecting with one of Nova Scotia's cultural beacons appears to have stimulated a quality of life and enriched the learners' well-being and health.

**Observation:** *Learners clearly were speaking about a deeper connection with Gaelic, how it has touched something inside themselves and is changing who they are. Their voices suggest that Gaelic is changing their world view. The learners have stressed the importance of culture, fellowship, elders, and community. Exploring the benefits of learning a heritage language may bring us closer to understanding what Gaels were naturally drawn to for comfort, a part from basic food and shelter, that is a Gaelic community.*

<sup>14</sup> Munezane, Yoko. (2015). *Enhancing Willingness to Communicate: Relative Effects of Visualization and Goal-Setting*.



Naturally pausing and reflecting can assist in determining whether to keep going on the language learning trail. The learners shared their “aha moment” or experiences that encouraged them to keep learning Gaelic. Creating learning spaces where a learner is able to let go of inhibitions and speak Gaelic was recognized as a key piece to acquiring Gaelic. The research participants stressed the need to stay in Gaelic, and the development of Gaelic relationships that helped them improve their confidence (see Question 4, Appendix 4).

#### *In the learners' voice:*

- I was able to recite a whole story, word for word, in Gaelic
- When I'm speaking with people like Effie Rankin or people in Scotland
- Understanding the recordings of Sruth nan Gàidheal
- When I see others progressing and your own progress, all the work is not in vain
- After an immersion in Port Hood, I went to a store and I couldn't think in English
- The first joke I understood... listening to songs and following what is being related
- When I told a story in class and I wasn't prepared, I was able to BS my way through it
- Comfort level is so important, comprehension comes when you don't expect it
- Listening to recorded songs and I can follow them
- Ken Nilsen was teaching, I said, oh my God, I'm actually speaking
- The first time at GaB immersion in Port Hood, the Gaelic never ended.

**Observation:** The learners described an array of places where they felt comfortable sharing Gaelic, songs and stories. Learners generally search out places to share what they have learned. Safe spaces to learn permits learners to fully express themselves. Bihan-Gallic (2020) suggests learners look for places in which others like them will gather and speak Gaelic. Safe spaces offers learners places where they do not experience anxiety and can speak Gaelic with confidence.

Learners were asked to take inventory and notice what learning strategies were beneficial in keeping them engaged and productive. The learners unanimously said, staying in Gaelic was central to their learning success. The learners clearly felt speaking Gaelic as much as possible and practicing what was learned is pivotal. They stressed finding opportunities to integrate Gaelic into daily routines is essential. One learner said, “bring the language into your life”. Many advised that Gaelic songs was a preferred technique for increasing Gaelic acquisition (see Question 5, Appendix 4).

#### *In the learners' voice:*

- Listen to songs, stories, BBC Scotland
- Learn the songs and you will get insights into Gaelic
- More laughter, way more singing, stories are better in Gaelic
- Be as vocal as you can be

- Beag air bheag
- Sing Gaelic, I can't sing worth a darn, but I picked up a little bit
- Make mistakes
- Teach others
- Listen to Gaelic
- Listen to the recordings of songs, listen to Gaelic speakers
- You need to go for it

When interviewed the learners provided advice on Gàidhlig aig Baile instruction. These tips could be linked to the participants' learning preferences. This suggests that through over hundreds of hours of learning Gaelic, learners have discovered learning blueprints along their learning trail that benefitted them. This information may strengthen the delivery of GaB instruction (see Question 8, Appendix 4).

#### *In the learners' voice:*

- It has to be fun, mix it up with games, stories, and conversation
- Describe the sounds of Gaelic
- Be open to dialects
- Gaelic only
- Pronunciation is very important
- Repetition
- Know when to correct the learner
- Need to understand sentence structure
- Guide us with pronunciation rules
- Learners have to get comfortable with not understanding what's going on
- Encouragement goes a long way
- Some instructors are just natural, some are not
- Good to have a variety of learning mediums
- Guide us with pronunciation
- Teach reading and writing
- Bring the elements of the community into the language
- By the fourth or fifth day, your brain is figuring out the patterns

**Observation:** Pronunciation, dialect, and repetition of the sounds associated with Gaelic was mentioned most often by the participants. It could be that hearing new sounds in Gaelic is challenging for learners and in turn impacts the speaking of the language. Investigating how GaB instructors offer innovative opportunities for learners to make the sounds and repeat the words or phrases, might be useful. This is an important consideration with Zoom classes. Good quality audio recording would be essential for learners. It seems that the learners' comments reflect the importance of the diverse skill sets required for instructors when delivering GaB.

It seems the learners also found every opportunity to engage in a Gaelic-only experience. Learners have stressed that Gaelic became part of their lived experiences. A number of learners

have also travelled distances to seek out Gaelic conversations and some have even committed to summer work opportunities to facilitate the consolidation of their language skills and to connect with their Gaelic identity. Highland Village and the Gaelic College are two workplaces where Gaelic learners have been hired and where fluency is an asset and/or a requirement. When asked if Gaelic informed their identity, they described how it connected to other aspects of their life (see Question 7, Appendix 4).

#### *In the learners' voice:*

- Gaelic is a bigger part of my life
- it 100 percent informs my identity
- You relate to things differently, Gaelic is how I view the world
- I really love the stories
- When listening to music, it comes out of me
- I speak Gaelic every day, there's a closeness and a vulnerability
- I use Gaelic in my life, in my work
- Music connects you to Gaelic
- There are little rituals connected to the seasons, then something reminds you of a song
- There's some overlap between Gaelic and music
- It's the way I express myself
- I'm very traditional
- I love Gaelic, I didn't have it in me, but I'm trying to fill the void
- Now I'm identified as someone who knows Gaelic (in my community)
- I brought it into my work
- Gaelic stories connect you with the Gaelic people
- I identify with the Gaelic songs

Gaelic speakers have been enriching Nova Scotia communities, institutions, work places, families and friendships for generations. The corpus of Gaelic songs, stories, music, sound recordings, and more recently books and films enable learners and other Nova Scotians to avail themselves of this linguistic and cultural heritage in greater depth. This depth is affirmed and reflected in promotional ad campaigns such as those created by Tourism Nova Scotia, enticing travellers to visit the province and experience its Gaelic language and cultural assets.

The inspiring voices of the Gaelic learners, found in Appendix 4 of this report, described their daily experiences within a profound and personal context to what observers may only access in a tertiary sense through promotional ads and brochures referencing Nova Scotia Gaelic language and cultural heritage. As consumers of Gaelic programming, the learners want more than a language, they are investing in how a language might shape and offer them a better version of themselves. The 21 voices in this research paper believe that learning Gaelic has positively impacted the way they think. Where might Gaelic language, culture and identity fit into the lives of our new generations, and ultimately our new ancestors?

## *Considerations for Future Adult Gaelic Learners*

### *Ongoing Research*

Gàidhlig aig Baile was found to be a desired learning methodology, by the majority of the participants in this research. Investment in this unique Nova Scotia learning product could advance more Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia. It is essential that the cycle of producing and delivering a GaB program be ongoing, where gathering feedback from the learners and implementing and revising GaB occurs. It is recommended that GaB be continuously researched and compared with past goals to ensure instructional practices are consistent. Tweaking GaB with the learners' needs in mind will continue to keep GaB relevant as online learning expands. An annual plan to gather data from learners and instructors in order to make learning Gaelic more comprehensive might also include secondary research on other second language learning teaching models and practices. With clear GaB goals, and a comprehensive plan for gathering data on what successful learning looks and sounds like, the instructors' teaching design will then closely match the language program with the learner. The results of the survey (Appendix 3) provide a broader view of the adult Gaelic learner in Nova Scotia. Though the research participant sample size was 21, the voices do represent a cross section of learners from across the province. This data could inspire other researchers to delve deeper into the adult learners' educational journey.

### *Gàidhlig aig Baile Delivery*

Revisiting the Gàidhlig aig Baile's program goals and reshaping the goals to reflect current research on learning Gaelic, could be helpful for the enthusiastic group of Nova Scotians who are pursuing this heritage language. Through the research conducted, it was evident that that learners indicated that they were prepared to invest in it. Recently, Government of Nova Scotia employees were surveyed and indicated their interest in learning Gaelic as well. Delivering efficacious GaB learning modules may ensure this effective learning program launches learners along the continuum of language acquisition. Expanding the present teaching guide, *Leabhar-lùil do Thaoitearan Gàidhlig aig Baile*, to include online delivery strategies, lesson planning strategies, and curriculum planning could support learners moving from beginner Gaelic to an intermediate level. The learners described the intermediate stage as a place where they began to use more independent strategies for learning Gaelic. The research participants clearly outlined that at the intermediate level of Gaelic learning, where reading and writing was introduced, learners were more readily able to expand participation in immersion programs, hone their learning strategies, and enroll in university and other institutional Gaelic programming. Throughout all of the work involved in advancing GaB development, continuing to celebrate learner

progress and successes remains central to furthering Gaelic language, culture, and identity in Nova Scotia.

### *Investing in Instructors*

Gathering Gaelic instructors together has promise, as the instructors' collective knowledge and desire to improve their skills sets will reflect a consistent instructional practice, and in turn, could encourage the mentoring of new instructors. This is a pivotal time for GaB instructors as more Gaelic instruction moves to online platforms. This may be a time to offer a revised Gàidhlig aig Baile instructional program and internship. Investing in innovative and effective online Gaelic instructional practices while incorporating GaB principles is important. The learners' choice to enrol in learning programs or participate in Gaelic learning spaces has never been so varied. Choosing quality online Gaelic learning programs can be attained by investing in instructional techniques and strategies. Learners now have more opportunity to be savvy consumers; where they can compare prices, quality of programs, and even solicit endorsements and make reviews of program offerings. Offering Nova Scotia designed online GaB programming has promise for instructors and new Gaelic learners across the province, country, and internationally.

### *Learners' Guide*

Elevating the voice of the learners in an ongoing review of Gaelic language programming would be strategic. As Gaelic learner numbers are currently expanding within the province, the current learners' language journey could benefit other learners. The learners' experience with Gaelic story and song provided a sense of satisfaction and a deeper understanding of Gaelic language and the values embedded within it. Ensuring that local Gaelic Nova Scotia content is incorporated into Gàidhlig aig Baile programming ought to be prioritized, making GaB a unique Gaelic learning tool that other Gaelic regions may benefit from.

Mapping out learners' pathways to fluency might offer clues into what a beginner Gaelic learner might expect. A Gàidhlig aig Baile learner's guide book could include the following: an overview of Gàidhlig aig Baile methodology, strategies for learning Gaelic, a description of resources available to support Gaelic acquisition, a list of programs offered in Nova Scotia, even a "gaelicadvisor" review of programs or a gaeliccourseconsultor.com software that outlines options for learners. The guidebook could also have a section for the learner to reflect on the language learning process. A learner may need to periodically ask the questions: am I learning something important? and is the learning connected to my personal story? and where might I incorporate this new Gaelic skill?

Examples of learning journey blueprints could help support new learners in mapping out a possible pathway to acquiring Gaelic.

Though they all shared common milestones, learning strategies, and even obstacles that interfered with the journey, the research participants' Gaelic acquisition journeys differed. Developing signposts for Gaelic learners to notice, may support learners on their journey. Often early in the process of acquiring a language, learners need encouragement and reinforcement that learning Gaelic is possible. A guidebook could support learners to understand the big picture in acquiring languages, and may help cushion some of the setbacks that may be encountered. A customized guidebook could also include: a solid orientation around GaB principles, discuss issues around listening and responding in Gaelic, offer insights into the depth of the language, provide examples of milestones along the acquisition journey, and describe the array of Gaelic Nova Scotia resources that are available.

### *Tempering Technology*

The ever-changing technological aspects of learning online and its remarkable ability to reach new learners is exciting and presents numerous opportunities. More examination is required so that adjustments are made for online GaB delivery that incorporates its guiding principles. Reviewing current online GaB programming and assessing online international language program delivery formats could shore up quality Gàidhlig aig Baile online delivery. While there is no one teaching style that fits all, the key components of GaB need to be observed; creating a medium for interactive Gaelic conversations and the building of a community of learners. Delivering online Gaelic language programming can easily default to traditional drill exercises (e.g., loading on grammar, vocabulary, and listening) or a gamification learning system (e.g., Duolingo) where learners get instant feedback on their acquired skills sets. Reinterpreting GaB principles to fit the online platform could be beneficial. Investing in the development of a comprehensive GaB online curriculum that highlights effective strategies which encourages listening and speaking in a collaborative way. With online platforms such as Zoom, it is frequently challenging to create an atmosphere that encourages vulnerability and the conversational strategies that are associated with sensory learning. The unique Gaelic content, found in the collections of stories and songs, can become a vehicle in delivering GaB instruction and the values associated with the methodology. Creativity and technological savviness will be required to ensure quality programming continues to flourish. Incorporating the GaB principles and Gaelic Nova Scotia's content in an online platform has the potential to reach new learners. Taking advantage of online platforms may play a significant role in developing new Gaelic learners, locally and abroad.

## *Gaelic Communities*

Appreciating a communal space for sharing and transmitting Gaelic values was described by learners. Gaelic language hubs could be set up across the province for Gaelic speakers where the “Gaelic only” rule is honoured. Gaelic language hubs could reinforce language learning but could also be part of a social enterprise or action that supports language learning in Nova Scotia. When learners were asked about whether Gaelic informed their identity, they overwhelmingly said yes, and then described the places where they express their Gaelic identity. Creating spaces where learning buddies may connect and congregate to speak Gaelic and foster each other’s language journey could be worthwhile investigating. The GLIC reports certainly described the role of community in learners’ language journey. The research participants actively sought out collaborative spaces where they could speak Gaelic. Gaelic hubs could be places where the learners might connect in person and thrive.

Diversifying Gaelic spaces where Gaelic can be shared and social cohesion is encouraged are pivotal for learners to utilize their Gaelic language and cultural skills. Recognizing that the new Gaelic voices are searching for creative spaces for making Gaelic communities work is important. Social enterprises could be possibly supported by municipalities and communities that not only foster Gaelic language and culture expression but also other skill sets. Advancing Gaelic entrepreneurial businesses could help to shore up employment that support Gaelic skills. Thoughtful consideration to intentional Gaelic communities, outdoor Gaelic language hubs, environmental action stations, coffee houses , e.g., Srùbag air do Bhois (Together in the Hospitality), could ensure that Gaelic Nova Scotia cultural arts thrive. Connecting with organizations like MAGIC, the Gaelic Narrative Project, Eskasoni Cultural Journey, Black Cultural Centre, the Acadia Community Farm, Membertou Mi’kmaq Medicine Walk and others enterprises could foster cross cultural relationships, sustainability, build capacity, and even offer shared opportunities for mentoring. Indeed language hubs could be shared with other cultural communities across Nova Scotia to reduce costs and maximize mutual support for Nova Scotia’s diverse languages and their attendant cultural arts and expressions. Engagement of Municipal governments presents opportunities to explore additional partnerships that may be developed to assist in the support and promotion of local Gaels and their Gaelic language and cultural assets.

## *Investment in Internships*

Gaelic internships could be offered by some of the Gaelic Nova Scotian institutions, for example, Highland Village and the Gaelic College. Internships that support the integration of Gaelic and other skill sets could provide a safe-guard, ensuring the vibrancy and thriving of the Gaelic language and cultural community in the province. Volunteer work, social work groups or internships could be developed to ensure Gaelic is connected into other aspects of a learner’s life. Learners described how learning Gaelic has been life changing, specifically as they worked with Gaelic elders. Bun is Bàrr, Cum Sios, and Daltachas programs linked learners with elders, Gaelic mentors and instructors within communities across NS. Within the Bun is Bàrr and Cum Sios program, apprentices learned at the knee of an elder. A new narrative has been created, in which many Nova Scotian’s wish to avail of an opportunity to reclaim Gaelic. Further investment in these programs and advancing skill-based internships could make Gaelic language and cultural skills more valued employable skills. As the Gaelic College, Highland Village, and other cultural enterprises expand, on-the-job training opportunities or internships could be created by colleges and universities, with Gaelic language and culture being seen as a valuable assets in the workplace. An investment in language and cultural skills will contribute to the lives of the learners and impact those of other Nova Scotians.



## Conclusion: A New Collective Narrative

Highlights of how Gàidhlig aig Baile enriched the learners' experiences and advanced a fellowship with Gaelic elders and NS's Gaels, was revealed in the learners' accounts of their learning journey. Hearing the colourful stories around learning Gaelic has been insightful. Gàidhlig aig Baile is a method that has assisted in shaping the trajectory of learners towards a community of Gaelic speakers. The learners' narratives described not only specifics on how to learn Gaelic, but also spoke about the values associated with Gaelic traditions. Gaelic has been often associated with sustenance, a sort of food, and even the "taste of Gaelic" a phrase to describe one's accent or pronunciation. A Nova Scotia Gael, the late Mary Ann Cameron, once said, "Gaelic was my first food".<sup>15</sup> These words describe the deeply intrinsic value associated with learning Gaelic, which the learners' in this research shared. As GaB programming continues to evolve, planners would be wise to ensure that the ethno-psychological (the study and impact of culture, tradition, and social practices and the shaping psychological processes)<sup>16</sup> benefits of connecting community members through language and its cultural expression are fully considered and incorporated into future action areas. The knowledge and use of Gaelic within Nova Scotia has facilitated a shared value among learners. Every learner who expresses their Gaelic identity with others creates a collective action that counters a mono-lingual/cultural world view. Linking Gaelic learner's stories together reshapes the narrative: that for generations, the Gaelic language and its cultural arts and expression have been impacting the lives of Nova Scotians.

### *In the voice of the learner:*

- It's connected to my spirit
- There's power in speaking Gaelic
- Sometimes, I even speak (Gaelic) to the crows
- It's brought me places
- I don't care what people think, I'll never be part of the negativity
- It's saved my life
- It's like I have feet in two ponds
- He had enough Gaelic, so they couldn't make fun of him
- There's overlap with Gaelic and music
- Gaelic is a spiritual language, it connects to the land
- His Gaelic songs are slick
- It takes time to get a good tongue on it
- I had a hunger to understand things (Gaelic), that drove me
- It's how I view the world
- It's like a slippery fish, you'll need to learn (it) over and over again

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<sup>15</sup> <https://youtu.be/wbiEKDjzgTU>

<sup>16</sup> Belsiyal, C., Xavier (2016). *Ethno-psychology and its Application - Review*. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 7 (4): October-December, 241-249.

## Appendix 1: A Summary of Clasaichean na Coimhearsnachd / Community Classes from 2009-2010<sup>17</sup>

Organization	Instructor(s)	Number of Learners	Hours	GLIC Investment
Gàidhlig Agam	1 instructor	5-7 learners	40-50 hours	\$1,700
Dobson Yacht Club (Westmount Gaelic Society)	1 instructor	10 learners	60 hours	\$1,450
Comunn Féis am Baile Beag	1 instructor	10 learners	72 hours	\$3,845
Whycocomagh and District Historical Society	1 instructor	17 learners	not cited	\$450
Comunn Féis Mhàbu	2 instructors	12 learners	60 hours	\$5,213
Grand Mira Community Centre	1 instructor	14 learners	20 hours	\$725
Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-bhaile	3 instructors	18 learners	30-36 hours	\$2,580
Comunn Féis an Eilein	2 instructors	20 learners	30 hours	\$2,160
Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-bhaile	4 instructors	19 learners	30-36 hours	\$2,470
Sgoil Ghàidhlig Baile a' Chlamhain	1 instructor	10 learners	20 hours	not cited
Grand Mira Community Centre	1 instructor	10 learners	20 hours	\$725
Comunn Féis am Baile Beag	1 instructor	Beginners	30 hours	\$1,730
Comunn Féis Mhàbu	1 instructor	12 learners	66 hours	\$2,306
Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-bhaile	4 instructors	21 learners	204 hours plus 48 hours	\$2,306
Westmount Gaelic Society	2 instructors	10 learners	not cited	\$2,830
Celtic Music Interpretive Centre	1 instructor	10 learners	20 hours	\$1,350
Whycocomagh and District Historical Society	3 instructors	7-12 learners	16 hours	\$1,430
Inverness Development Association	1 instructors	10 learners	32 hours	\$920
St. Andrews Gaelic Society	2 instructors	4 advanced learners	25 hours	\$4,260

<sup>17</sup> Analysis of GLIC Program by 17 program officer, Frances MacEachen of OGA 2009-2010

## Appendix 2 - An Overview of GaB Language Learning Programs from 2012-2019

Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<i>Dian-Oideas na Gàidhlig</i>						
<b><i>Cainnt is Cànan - GaB Immersions</i></b>  <b><i>(June 2017 - Jan 2018)</i></b>  <b><i>Cape Breton and Chezzetcook</i></b>	up to 5 GaB instructors, with one main GaB instructor	up to 11 learners 110 GaB immersion hours and 35 hours of Gaelic community activities	Total cost: \$13,704  Reg. Fees: \$6,604 (collected)  up to \$862.50/ learner -\$6/ hour  In-kind \$1350.00  D-OG Funds \$5,750	- 6 weekends (day long),  Highland Village 2 week immersion (residential)	- GaB methodology  - Detailed orientation  - Home setting and historical home settings  - Gaelic Language and Culturally related social events scheduled  - Flexibility for work and personal commitments  - Outdoor activities  - Comfy setting  - Group work, daily practice, GaB activities  - Encouraged to record classes,  - Provided recorded video summary clips  - Have Fun together makes learning memorable and more effective	- Fewer evening social gatherings  - A great deal of planning and administration required  - Learner preparedness might require a more personalized orientation and clarification  - Time for Gaelic conversations  - Ensure a comfortable home environment  - Balance between men and women is ideal  - Program is potential model for future immersion programs

Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<i>GLIC Applications</i>						
<i>Ar Cànan 'S Ar Dualchas (Oct. 2012 - Sept. 2013)  New Glasgow</i>	3 instructors	up to 13, with average 8 per session  hours of instruction not indicated	Total cost: \$4,915  Reg. Fees: \$1,680  \$130/ learner  In-kind \$1,000  GLIC \$2,630	10 days of GaB immersion over 5 weekends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Worked with recording of Gaelic tradition bearers</li> <li>- Worked on listening, reading, and pronunciation</li> <li>- Increased vocabulary and sentence structure</li> <li>- Practiced Gaelic and included Gaelic conversations</li> <li>- Positive experience and increased confidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-register and pay in advance to secure placements and attendance</li> </ul>
<i>Celtic Music Interpretive Centre Sgoil Ghàidhlig Shiudaig (Jan. 2015- June 2015)  Judique</i>	GaB instructor Native Speaker	15 learners  32 hours of instruction	Total cost: \$4,830  Reg. Fees: \$1,120  \$75/ learner  In-kind \$1,840  GLIC \$1,870	16 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incorporated Gaelic, stories, songs, skits, conversation</li> <li>- Students indicated they were comfortable</li> <li>- Encouraged recording of classes</li> <li>- Gaelic elder, AJ MacDougall included</li> <li>- Increase in attendance</li> <li>- More confident in their conversational skills</li> <li>- Diverse age group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Satisfied and “would like to do the same thing next year”</li> <li>- Beginners felt challenged, more time prepping beginners on class format</li> </ul>



Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<b>Whycocomagh and District Historical Society</b>  <b>Gaelic Lessons</b>  <b>(June 2014- Nov. 2014)</b>  <b>Whycocomagh</b>	GaB local instructor	7 learners  hours of instruction not cited	Total cost: \$2,060  Reg. Fees: \$900  - \$129/ learner  In-Kind \$230  GLIC \$930	GaB evening classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnered with community Historical Society.</li> <li>- Native Speakers</li> <li>- Joined with other community classes by times</li> <li>- Gaelic phrases, conversation, stories, songs, and traditions</li> <li>- Social gathering</li> <li>- Invited to participate in school, concert, and community events</li> <li>- Enjoyable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Program schedule can be interrupted by severe weather conditions</li> <li>- “We would not do anything differently”</li> <li>- Ensure there is no overlap with other local GaB programming</li> </ul>
<b>Gàidhlig Agam</b>  <b>Gàidhlig aig Baile classes</b>  <b>(Jan. 2017 - April 2017)</b>  <b>Baddeck</b>	Song instructor GaB Language instructor	8-10 GaB learners  30 hours of instruction	Total cost: \$2,696  Reg. Fees: \$920  - \$92/ learner  In-Kind not cited  GLIC \$ \$2,620	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 evening GaB classes, beginner and new to Gaelic (3 hours)</li> <li>- 6 Gaelic Song classes</li> <li>- GaB immersion day for 11 learners</li> <li>- Gaelic youth group session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Added a youth group to support younger learners</li> <li>- Recommend hosting in the home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dates changed as teacher availability and learner schedule conflicts occurred</li> <li>- Home as a learning environment</li> <li>- Evenings to facilitate attendance</li> <li>- More social media to promote classes</li> <li>- Regular planning meetings</li> </ul>

Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<p><i>Comunn Gàidhlig Antaiginis</i></p> <p><i>Càirdeas is Còmhradh sa Bhaile Mhòr</i></p> <p><i>(Jan, 2017 - March 2018)</i></p> <p><i>Antigonish</i></p>	2 instructors	10 learners  hours of instruction not cited	<p>Total cost: \$ 3600</p> <p>Reg. Fees: \$740</p> <p>~\$74/learner</p> <p>In-kind \$1,150</p> <p>GLIC Funds \$ 1,860</p>	2 x 10-Week conversation classes and 4 x 1-day immersion sessions	<p>- Develop conversational Gaelic, increase vocabulary, make and strengthen social bonds, learn about Gaelic Antigonish</p> <p>- Increased immersion opportunities in Antigonish</p> <p>- Là Fhèill Pàdraig, a Gaelic medium celebration (céilidh) occurred and fostered a sense of Gaelic identity</p> <p>- Participants wanted to connect with ancestral heritage</p> <p>- Developed a positive attitude and raised profile in the town</p>	<p>- Program ran into summer months and scheduling of immersion boat trip postponed.</p> <p>- Budget adjustments necessary as items cost more or less</p>

Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<b>Inverness Development Association</b>  <b>Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced Gàidhlig aig Baile classes</b>  <b>(Oct. 2017 - April 2018)</b>  <b>Gillisdale/ Inverness</b>	2 GaB Instructors  2 Native Speakers	25 learners  108 hours immersion	Total Cost: \$7,708  Reg. Fees: \$2,297 (possibly more)  ~\$92/ learner  In-kind \$1,900  GLIC funds: \$2,555	- 36 x 3-hour evenings classes  - Beginner 2 and Intermediate levels	- Several students were able to advance in skills and motivate others  - Opportunity to socialize with native Gaelic speakers  - Learners are attending Gaelic activities in other communities  - Beginner 1 class didn't have a large uptake so five orientation visits with native speakers were arranged for beginners  - Class content specific to local and Gaelic Nova Scotia dialects and culture  - Use of local recordings connects with Gaelic identity  - While classes are challenging, learners report they are a high- light of their week.  - Host discussion meeting and evaluations with the local advisory group of students	- Planning for Beginner 1 Gaelic  - Involve learner advisory group in the program and administration of the program

Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<b>Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Àrd-Bhaile</b>  <b>Gaelic Language Sessions</b>  <b>(Sept. 11, 2018 -Dec. 6, 2018)</b>  <b>Halifax</b>	3 GaB instructors	30 learners  25 hours per group	Total cost: \$5,729.59  Reg. Fees: \$3,950  -\$131.70/ per learner  GLIC Funds: \$1,950  In-kind not cited	- 4 GaB classes and informal weekly practice sessions  - 2.5 hour classes over 10 weeks  - Advanced classes 2 hours a week - All Level, Advanced Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced	- Classes held in the home, school, and Skype  - Focus ranged from greetings, sentence structure, nouns and adjectives, prepositional pronouns and questions, verbs, nouns, counting and time, to irregular verbs, Gaelic culture, poetry, transcriptions, oral collections  - Weekly coffee hour	- Classes in homes can be challenged by availability and learner allergies  - Continued use of sound files from Sruth nan Gàidheal, Am Bràighe, An Drochaid Eadarainn, & Caint mo Mhàthar
<b>Ag Ionnsachadh Le Chéile</b>  <b>(Nov. 2018 - Feb. 2019)</b>  <b>Christmas Island</b>	2 GaB instructors  Local Gaelic speakers	20-25 learners  hours of instruction not cited	Total cost: \$3,100  Reg. Fees: \$240  \$900 Inkind (Gaelic speakers free - \$350)  -\$12/ learner  GLIC \$1,800	- 10 weeks, over 4 months (2 - 5 week sessions)  - Beginner and Intermediate level  - Learners from Central CB, Sydney region, Frenchvale	- Attracted Gaelic speakers, members of Féis an Eilean, and community members at large.  - Focus, conversational Gaelic  - Local dialect and locally composed songs and stories were basis of curriculum  - Relaxed, stress free, learning environment	- GaB methodology attracts more Gaelic learners  - Beginner Class and a combined Intermediate class (included a variety of learner levels)  - Winter weather can be challenging for those travelling and completing classes  - Conversational Gaelic achieved during classes



Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<b><i>Féis Mhàbu</i></b>  <b><i>A Community Adult Gaelic Immersion Program</i></b>  <b><i>(Nov. 18, 2018 -Feb. 3, 2019)</i></b> <b><i>Port Hood</i></b>	1 GaB Instructor  1 Native Gaelic Elder  1 Language Mentor for practice sessions  2 visits with local Gaelic speakers  3 Gaelic elders participated in final session  Céilidh	10 learners  30 hours of instruction  10 hours of Gaelic conversation	Total cost: \$5,765  Reg. Fees: \$940  ~ \$85/learner  In-kind \$300  GLIC \$4,825	- 10 weeks, 3 hours a week = 30 hours of GaB immersion  - Fun, hands-on GaB activities such as: games, cooking, skits, cards, céilidh	- GaB instruction  - Safe collaborative learning process  - Ongoing tracking, reflection and feedback of learning process  - Ongoing planning, ensure building on previous weeks language  - Incorporated local traditions, idioms, dialects  - Utilized recordings of Gaelic speakers as a homework component  - Participation in an elective mid week practice session  - Establish relationships with Gaelic elders	- Pre-learning plan, immersion is a leap of faith for the Beginner  - Keep contact with learners to ensure they are comfortable with language level in an immersion environment  - more discussion with OGA to help support Gaelic learning plans  - Get to know learners' language needs and match up learner programs

Program/ Date	Instructors	Learners	Cost	Description	Comments	Suggestions
<b>Sgoil Ghàidhlig Baile a' Chlamhain</b>  <b>Non-Immersion Gaelic Classes</b>  <b>(Sept. 23, 2019 - Mar. 9, 2020)</b>  <b>Port Hawkesbury</b>	1 Instructor Guest Speaker  Visited Native Speakers	7 full time  1 part time  hours of instruction not cited	Total cost: \$2,327  Reg. Fees: \$745  -\$100/learner  GLIC \$1,650	- Classes with instructor, recordings, interviews, archives, guest appearances	- Reclaiming language  - Commonly used Gaelic phrases, new vocabulary, conversation  - Connecting with archival recordings, and songs  - Verb tenses  - Guest speakers and céilidh experiences  - Visited a local PH Nursing Home and native Gaelic speakers	- Display Flag of the Gaels at all classes  - Be well organized with people  - Thanked OGA on Facebook and in local paper  - Classes can form lasting bonds, contact with each other weekly.  - Prepare for the unexpected- Covid-19

## Appendix 3 - Results of Survey of Adult Gaelic Learners

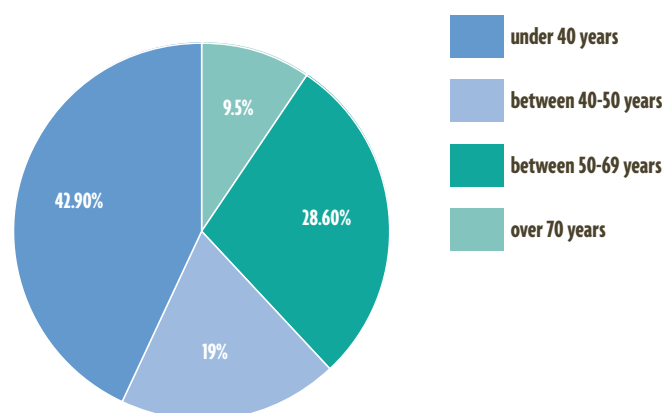
Postal codes indicated that the 21 participants in this research project are learning Gaelic across Nova Scotia. Specifically, the participants in the research lived in the following communities:

Sydney  
Jamesville  
Trenton  
Whycocomagh  
Westmount  
Glendale  
Scotsville

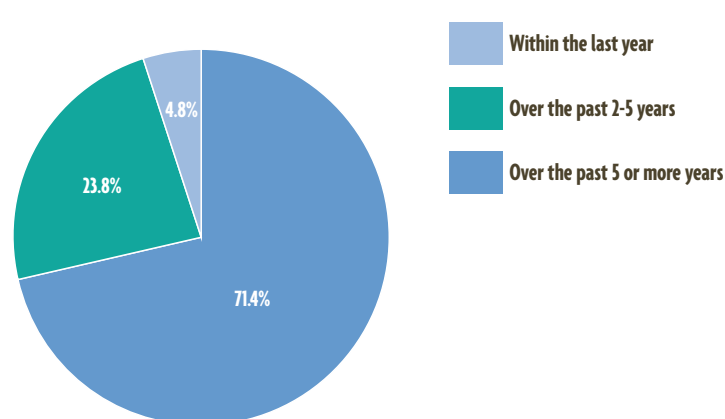
East Bay  
Baddeck - 2  
Wreck Cove  
Mabou  
Port Hawkesbury  
Margaree  
Port Hood

Dartmouth  
Halifax - 2  
Chezzetcook  
Inverness  
Pictou County

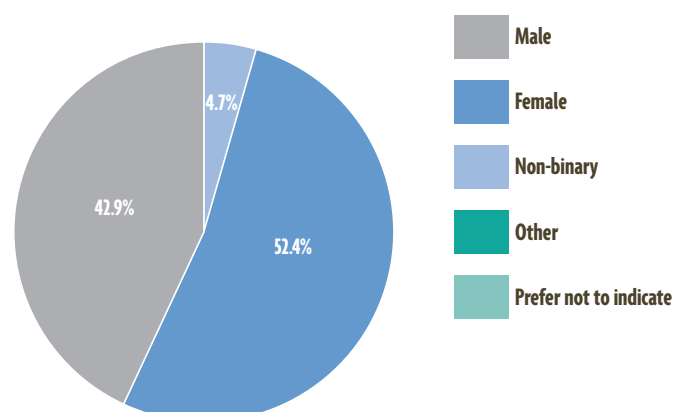
In order to learn more about who is the Adult Gaelic Learner in Nova Scotia, are you:  
21 responses



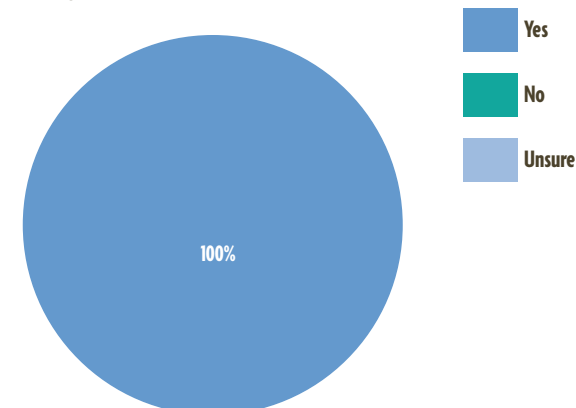
When did you begin to learn Gaelic?  
21 responses



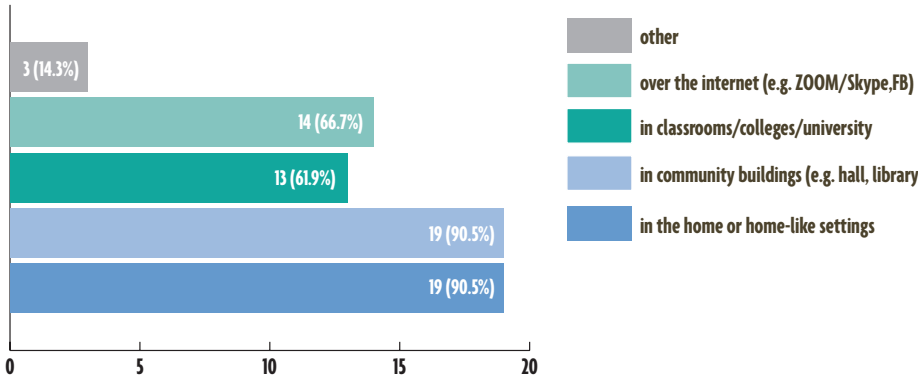
In order to learn more about who is the Adult Gaelic Learner in Nova Scotia, are you:  
21 responses



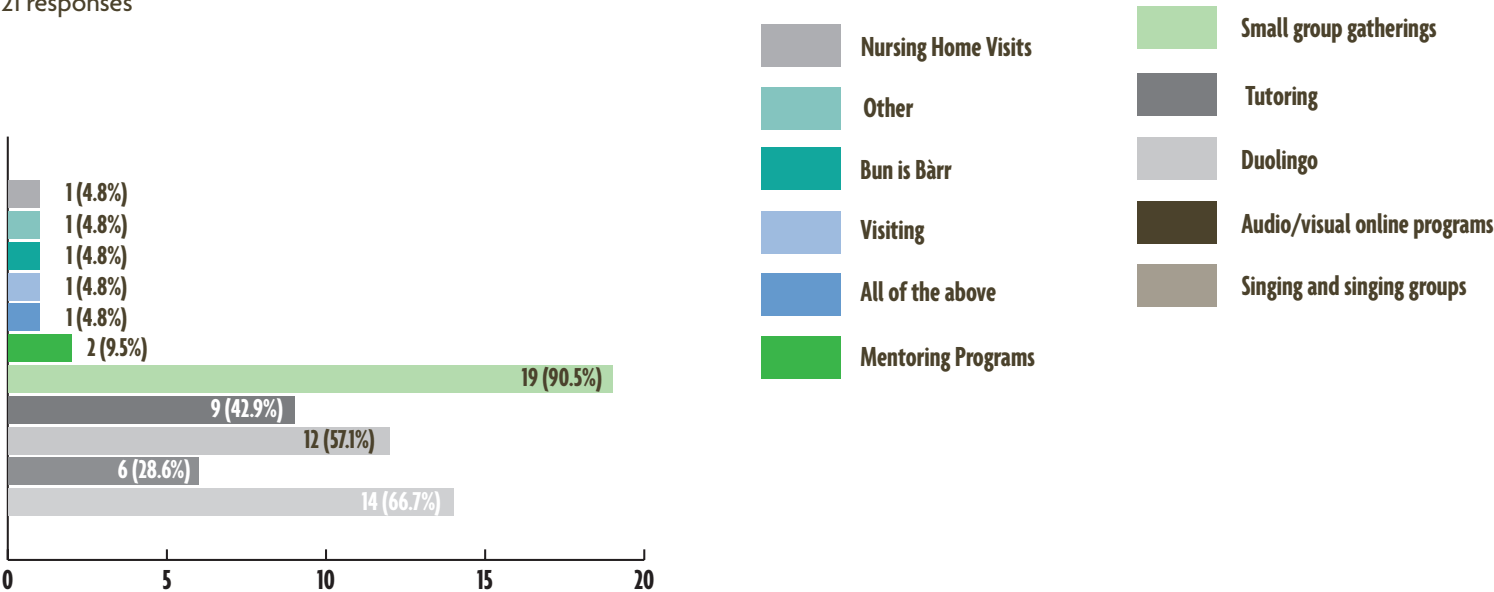
Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) is a community-based instruction model that is used by Gaelic instructors. Have you participated in Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) class(es)?  
21 responses



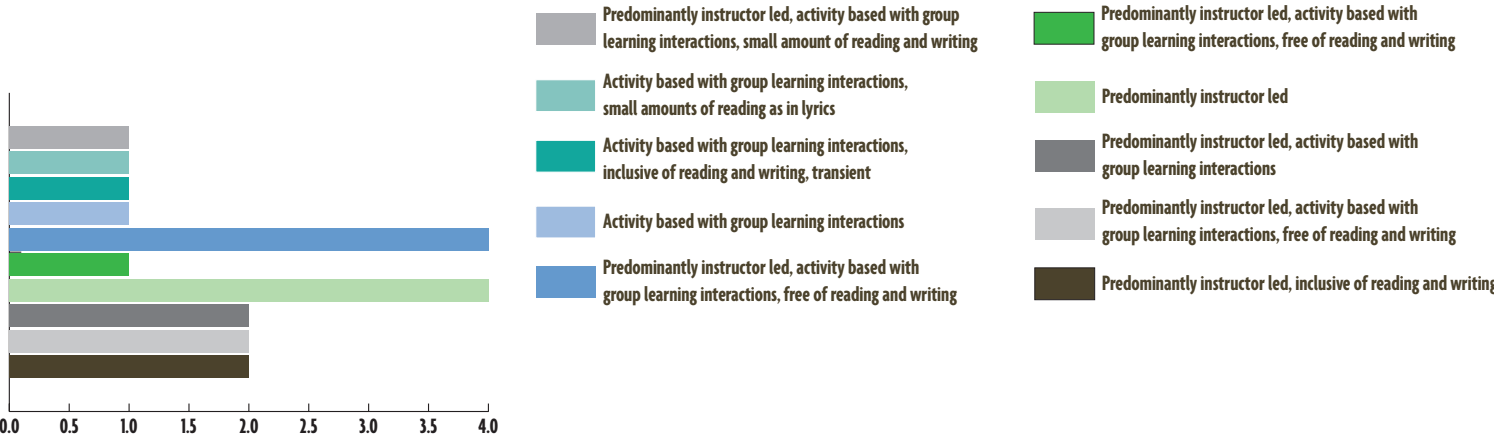
Where have you participated in adult Gaelic learning programs?  
21 responses



What other adult Gaelic learning programs have you participated in?  
21 responses



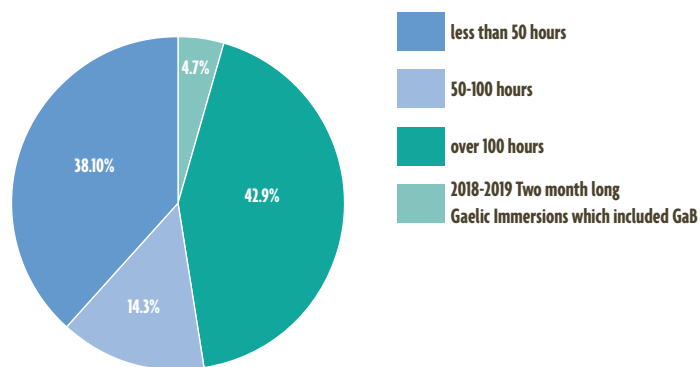
Has your Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) learning environment(s) been:



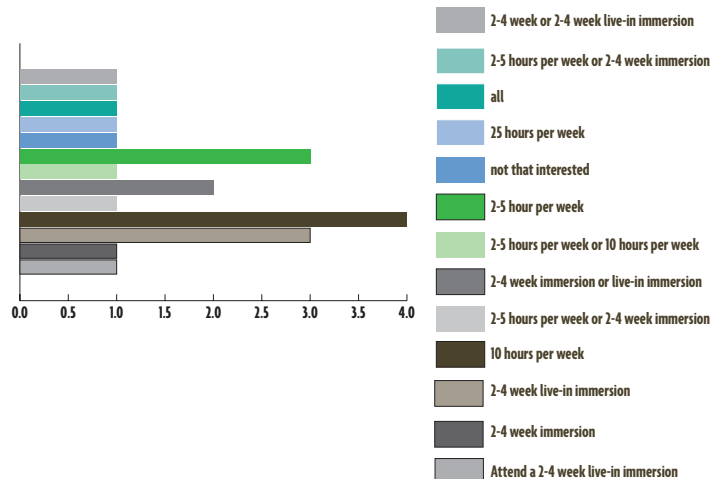


How many Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) directed learning hours have you participated in over the past 2 years?

21 responses

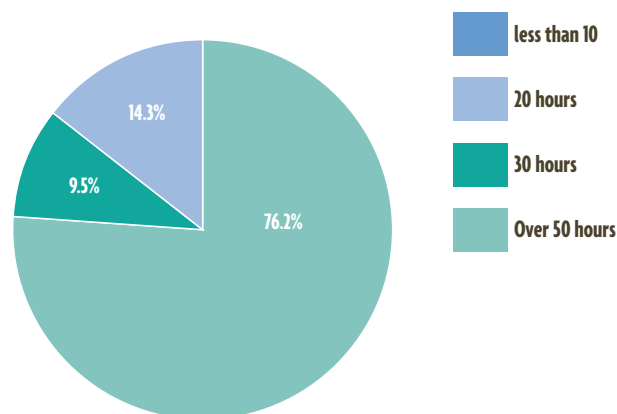


If you had a choice to participate in an ideal Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) adult Gaelic learning environment, would you attend:



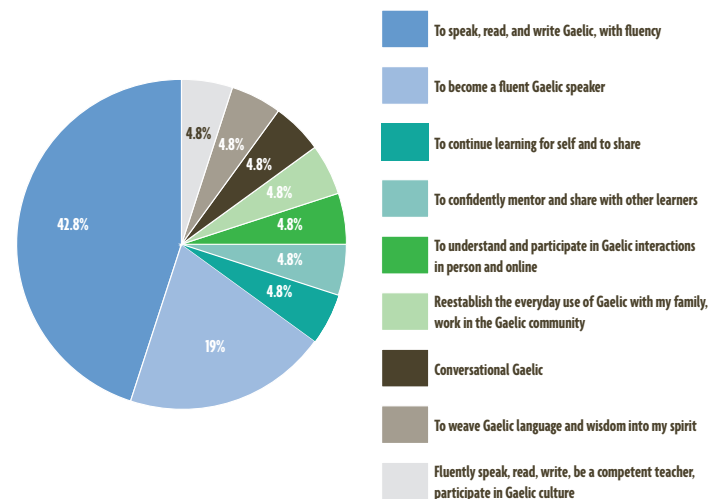
How many hours have you independently participated in learning Gaelic over the past 2 years?

21 responses



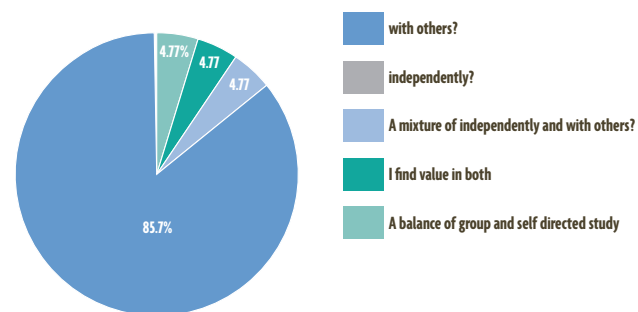
What is your Gaelic learning goal?

21 responses

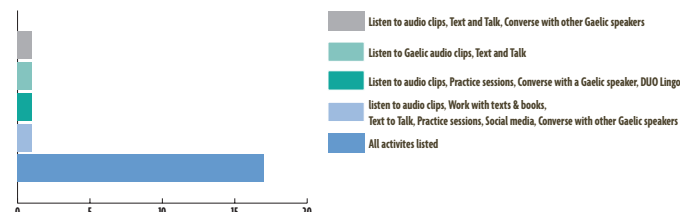


Do you prefer to learn

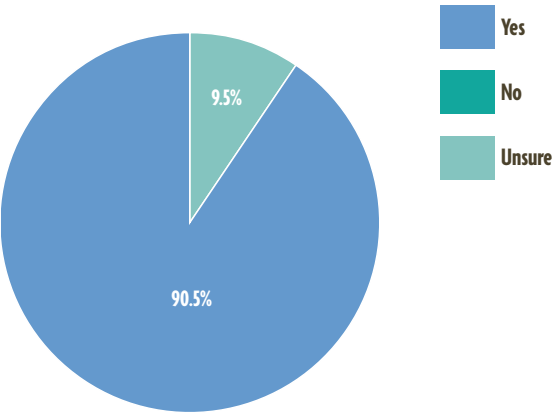
21 responses



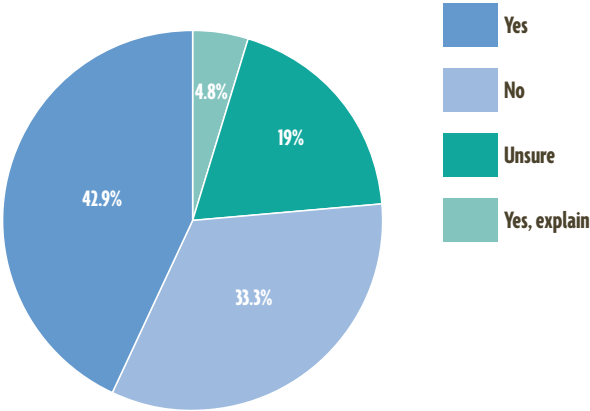
What other Gaelic language activities have you participated in over the past 1-2 years? (Listen to audio clips, Work with texts and books, Gaelic Text & Talk, Practice sessions, Social media, Converse with other Gaelic speakers)



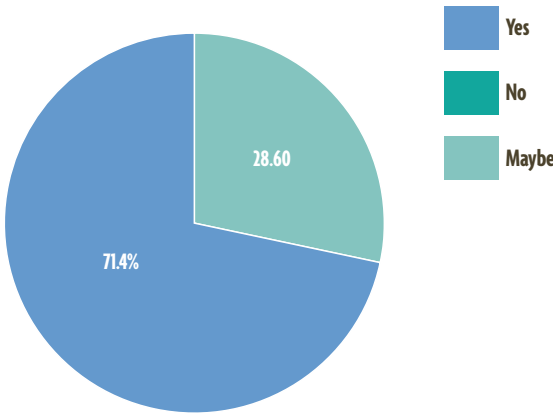
Do you communicate in Gaelic between classes/programs?  
21 responses



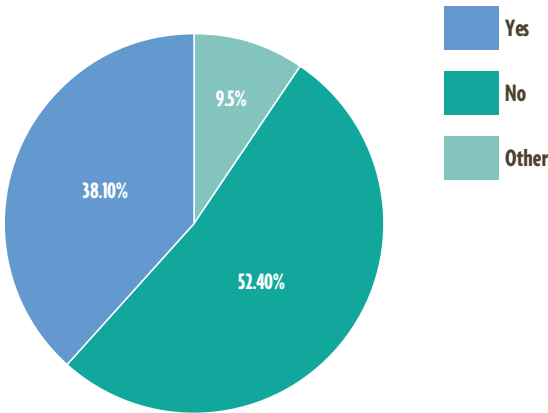
Have resources (costs or time) prohibited your participation in Adult Gaelic learning (e.g. classes or immersions)?  
21 responses



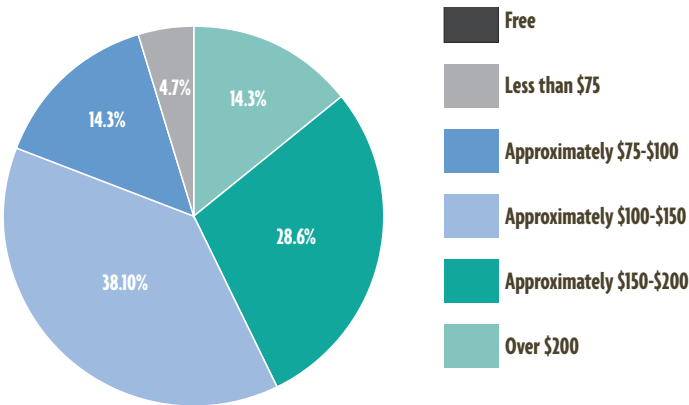
Should a Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) class/program incorporate in-person and/or video clips of Native Gaelic speakers?  
21 responses



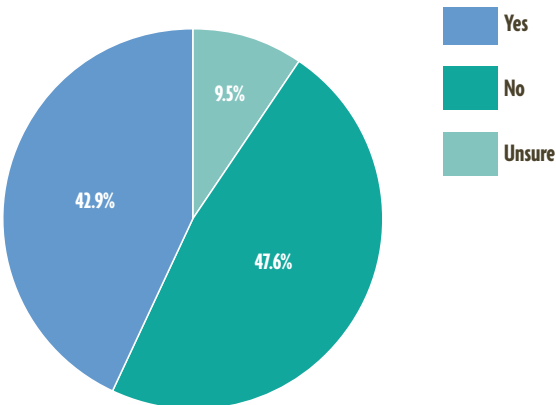
Has travel or distance prohibited your participation in Adult Gaelic learning (e.g. classes or immersions)?  
21 responses



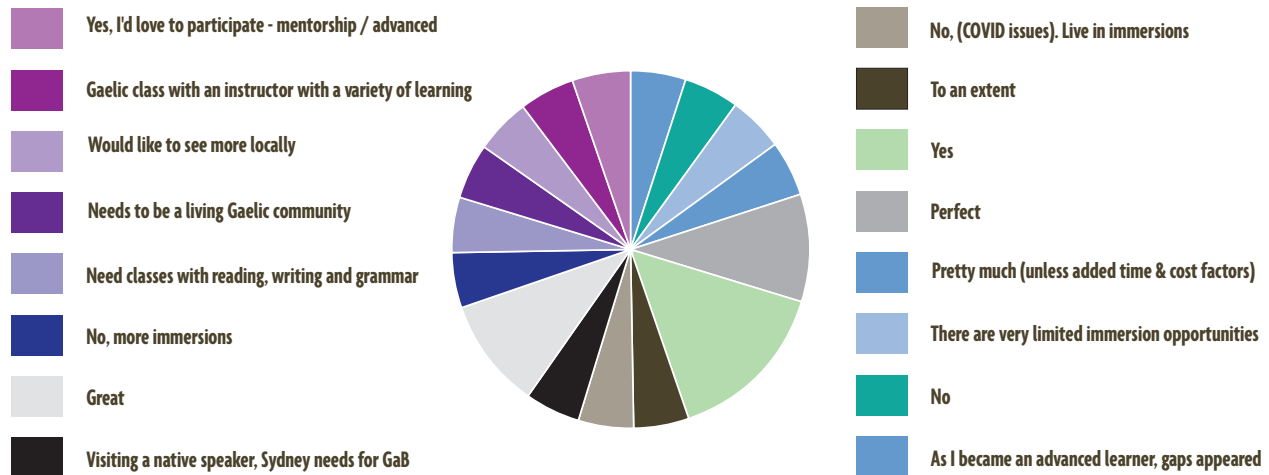
How much are you willing to pay for 20-25 hours of Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) instruction?  
21 responses



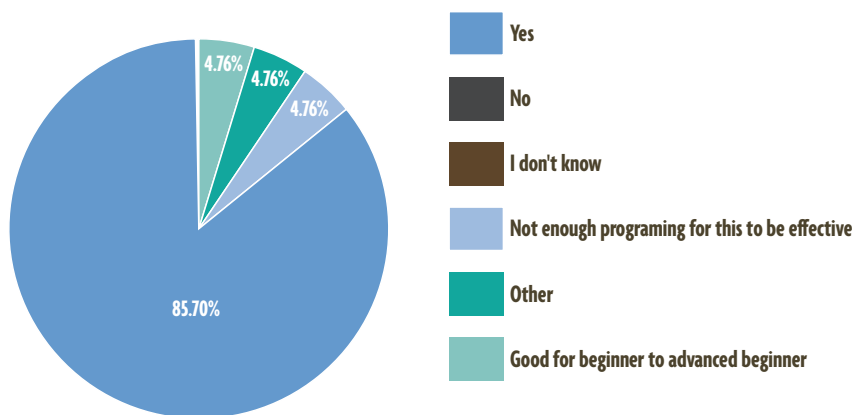
Has Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) instructor availability or program availability been a barrier in attending adult Gaelic classes?  
21 responses



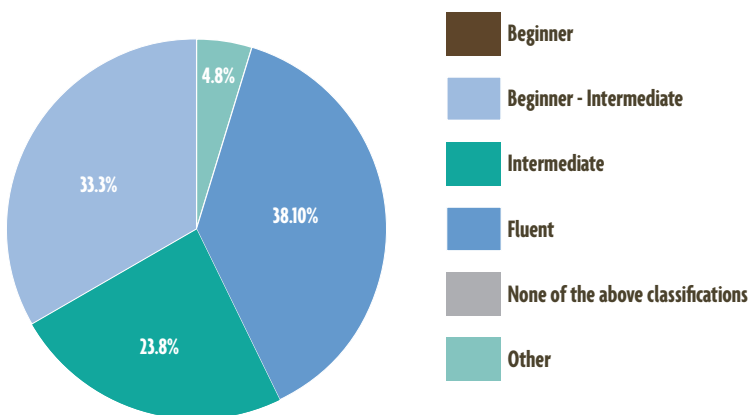
Do the present Adult Gaelic learning options available in Nova Scotia fit with your specific Gaelic learning needs?



Would you recommend Gàidhlig aig Baile (GaB) learning programs as a way to learn Gaelic?  
21 responses



As a Gaelic learner, do you identify as a:  
21 responses



# Appendix 4 - Summary of Interviews

## 1. Tell me about an experience you had learning Gaelic, through Gàidhlig aig Baile. What did your class look like or sound like? 2. What inspired you to continue to learn Gaelic?

- My first and only experience was a week long GaB immersion... by the 3rd and 4th day I was catching on to the language. I didn't know what to expect, I was surprised that all ages and (Gaelic speaking) abilities were involved in conversational Gaelic. It was everyday conversation, (the instructors) used theatrics, acting out, passing props to each other...it was relational learning. I think I would go again.

- Classroom experience at university was disappointing, the GaB methodology was definitely disadvantaged in a classroom... photos not conducive to natural learning environment....

- A' Togail na Gàidhlig was an amazing GaB experience, a big step in language learning was being at milling frolics and being with native speakers was a wicked experience.

- I started off with community classes....then day long workshops ...then we started with TIP (GaB).... my speaking was much better, much better, with the repetitive speaking...it was fun, a lot of fun!

- An Cùrsa Bogaidh was my first GaB experience...2 1/2 -3 hours a day...with reading and writing in the afternoon. We were in Taigh Céilidh most of the time ...most intense and very fun, lots of camaraderie in the class. We did reading and writing and did stories... translating stories helped....it was pretty small stories, for example, Jack and Jill. It was hard. Then we moved to traditional stories. I enjoyed being immersed and it was a chance to practice.

- The classes (weekly night class) were big, quite large, and I was uncertain. I didn't get anything out of it at first, I stuck with it, as it was informal, no pressure, never put us on the spot. The more I stayed (in class), the more I understood. Four -five years, in there was a switch. It was very strict, no English, a tough love thing. Other classes are not as strict.

- We were living in a house (A' Togail na Gàidhlig house), we just used Gaelic. We went to the beach, we made meals together, sitting around conversing...one-on-one interaction. There were different levels of Gaelic ...we learned from classmates. The beach, is a visual memory, an experiential memory.

- Always looked forward to it (class). They are family!

- My entire learning experience has been with GaB.

- When I first went to GaB classes, it was a little strange, it put me on edge, and now I completely understand why. My favourites parts (of GaB classes) was listening to Native speakers and when I started to understand. there were hands-on activities and we would pretend to be Peter Cole. It was nothing but fun! As Willie Fraser said, "too much fun in it"

- It was hands-on...I was able to do more with Gaelic (through GaB classes). There was encouragement... they prompted you... good starters to get me going...filled gaps with my learning.

## "I was able to do more with Gaelic through GaB classes."

- Real life scenario triggers your memory. It was very stressful, learning (about the) sounds was very helpful. (In immersion) sound analysis was quicker...helped solidify words.

- There was GaB in Daltachas. English was not spoken...improved my comprehension.

- GaB lots of repetition...not uncomfortable when corrected... helped with recall. It worked pretty good when she would pair us. Overall GaB, we were pretty lucky (to have it).

- We laughed a lot, so much fun. Good learning pace...but sometimes too repetitive. I loved having Gaelic speakers in GaB. Learning Gaelic is a decolonization action.

- Funnest time that I had. There is a level of vulnerability... (you) have to explore your comfort level ...people are super supportive, everyone has something to relate to. GaB is very intense...very uncomfortable. It's emotional.

- In the beginning, you were always doing something (making marag, beds, and setting a table). It was a chance to speak Gaelic and understand more. I'm not a good auditory learner, seeing (items) was good. The instructor was always adjusting.

- Lots of fun, we were having good time (together). Lots of level of learning. Gaelic is a very spiritual language, how the language expresses itself. (In a GaB) listening comprehension was better and then speaking.

- So much laughing...jovial feeling...feeling at ease learning Gaelic... the fellowship between one another... it was like coming home. A contextual experience.

- For me, the more I did, the more holes I had (in my Gaelic learning). There's lots of talking starting off in my classes and if necessary, I take the time to explain grammar rules...I check for understanding. The whole idea of not writing things down is very silly, it helps with recall. It's another tool in the tool box. GaB is a tool in the tool box, to learn Gaelic. At the end of class, it is essential to spend sometime in English to correct assumptions. GaB has been made into an ideology, we need to modify and adjust methods.

- GaB was very helpful....keep in Gaelic. At Na Gaisgich Òga, I got along well, we wanted to stay in Gaelic, we would catch ourselves.

- It meant different things to different instructors....way too much English. (Some people) were terrified to speak the language, this is so challenging for instructors. Learners had different goals. Developed a sense of community.

## 2. If you had to map out your Gaelic language learning journey, to date, what would you include?

- I made this a priority in my life....I don't think there is an easy answer...immersion is the best way. Any (Gaelic) conversation is helpful. In 5 one-hour conversations, I learned the most and the fastest. If you are being challenged (speaking with a Gaelic speaker), the speaker is modelling Gaelic, speaker faster, picking up on my mistakes...there's just better (richer) conversations with someone fluent.

- I learned off and on for 10 years. Learned (Gaelic) with Goiridh. I recommend Na Gaisgich Òga... I am conversationally fluent, "I don't have to think in Gaelic. I'm not as far along as I want to be."

- Heard Gaelic at home. Language lessons, reading poetry, learning songs, speaking with Native speakers. When I was learning songs and translating them, I was hearing the vocal repetition...it was helpful. You have to consider the kind of class you are drawn to.

## “Participated in GaB classes from Beginner to Intermediate...”

- Participated in GaB classes from Beginner to Intermediate... sometimes concurrently. AGA, 6 week immersion, Bun is Bàrr, Stòras a' Bhaile, learning in the community with Native speakers, Mentorship programs. GaB training, employed at Highland Village. I built relationships and journeyed with a core group of learners.

- (Carmen's Classes) are lot's of fun, it's very social. Stories were helpful....learning about the oral tradition... folklore...myths.

- It's been a long one....reach plateaus, get past that, then another.... Confidence and skill can interfere with the (learning) flow....often judging oneself. Milling Frolics was like an explosion! I worked at Highland Village. In 2000 (onward) there has been more classes, week-long classes, Hector MacNeil was gifted at bringing action into the language.

- Night (GaB) classes gave us the fundamentals, with games, weather, feelings...repetition.... there are good teachers, amazing. (We're) a group of learners who travel together. Then week long immersions in Port Hood, Daltachas for grammar rules, Bun is Bàrr. ... Duolingo is good for spelling, transcribing tapes, and conversational Gaelic (is helpful)...There are certain thoughts on GaB...GaB gets you interested.

- Grandma would talk to me in Gaelic. Gaelic was like a mystery language. The Mabou Céilidh Milling Frolics were magical! Then after school Gaelic classes in Mabou, went to Scotland and then learned our history. There can be a feeling of being isolated.... "my Gaelic is not good enough, I'm not good enough". ... the Gaels' Jam created a space of accepting, more Gaelic relationships developed.

- Hearing Gaelic at home. Then in school, with Maureen MacKenzie, we performed songs in school. At 18/19, I met Jeff, he was passionate (about Gaelic). There was a Dead Zone, until 7/8 years ago. Now, GaB classes... its powerful to learn together, at different levels of frustration (LOL). People are hard on themselves, a trait in all of us.

- To start, I heard about relatives who spoke Gaelic, even names connected to Gaelic. I learned Gaelic at St. FX University in the Celtic Studies Program. Dr. Ken Nilsen, a lot of his material was Dannie Cameron's idioms.... transcriptions of recordings. Then Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. Mac-Talla was online, so I was reading it. I returned to NS and learned Gaelic ...Cum Sios, Daltachas, Bun is Bàrr and through Shannon I got to know the community.

- First there was the Gaelic College Christmas Weekend. It was fun and I met people interested in Gaelic. Then I took Gaelic at St. FXU, An Cùrsa Bogaidh, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Daltachas (2 times) and began visiting Native Gaelic Speakers. The Céilidh House pledge is important.

- Heard Gaelic in my early life. Then Kaye MacDonald, at the Sydney Gaelic Society, was inspirational, she advanced a group of learners. I completed all levels of the AGA except last one, I passed my exams. I befriended a learner in the AGA and took private (Gaelic) lessons with Angus MacLeod, for a few years. I also took lessons at Beaver Cove. It was a relaxed atmosphere, no pressure, so much fun.



- Heard Gaelic growing up. I was bumming language at the Pulp Mill, from the men who spoke Gaelic. I loved it! Took GaB in Scotsville and GaB immersion in Port Hood.

- I was part of a Gaelic choir and learned Gaelic songs from Mary Jane's CD. Two and half years ago attended a one-month immersion and participated in Stòras a' Bhaile. trying to keep Gaelic alive so my descendants have Gaelic. When you are oppressed for a long period of time, you turn it inwards, and you become an oppressor of yourself, your own identity.

- Gaelic classes were full immersion with Goiridh Dòmhnallach. Learned about early history and started making connections. Took evening classes from AJ MacDougall and now with Pauline MacDonald. Moved back to Cape Breton and took step dance lessons and then piano...learned Niel Gow's Lament. Once I met other musicians, noticed the kids were not like others on cell phones. I joined the Gaelic College Pipe Band. At an arts college, I was removed from Gaelic but practiced fiddle and keyboard in my room. Began to fuse Gaelic and new music sounds. I started to listen to Gaelic songs, sounding out Mary Jane's songs. Returned to Gaelic College where I heard youth speaking Gaelic, fluently. Then I took an immersion in Gaelic, then Cum Sios, and connected with the ancestors. Participated in Stòras a' Bhaile. Also an immersion in Port Hood too.

- My grand parents were native speakers, and I recall it was hard to understand their English. When my grandaunt died, I spoke Gaelic to her. She was good Gaelic singer. When she died there was no Gaelic incorporated into her funeral, I was pissed off. I started to take Gaelic classes at Scotsville and Whycocomagh. I started doing Gaelic plays with Jessica MacLennan, and began to read and write Gaelic.

- I took Gaelic as an elective at StFX, I switched to Celtic Studies. participated in An Cùrsa Bogaidh, then a directed study course with Mike Linkletter. Attended Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, and visited and lived with a family in Uist. I started to visit elders. I started to use songs as I worked at Highland Village. Started to socialize in Gaelic. Learning to read and write Gaelic permitted me to work more independently. In Daltachas, we worked on becoming conversationally fluent.

- Began Gaelic in classes where we translated Gaelic and even read Gaelic. Sang songs within the community, even organized church services in Gaelic. Eventually classes became more community-based GaB classes. Worked with a core group of learners.

- I heard my father use bits and pieces. Enrolled in Celtic Studies, and was introduced to immersion at the Gaelic College. Attended Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. I worked at Highland Village and began accessing songs. I have lots of friends in the Gaelic community.

- Introduced to Gaelic from my family, as I heard Gaelic from my grandparents. Attended Gaelic College for fiddle classes and

took Gaelic where I learned the Our Father and O Canada in Gaelic at the College. I attend céilidhs and enjoyed Gaelic songs; of course I would hear Còisir an Eilein. This piqued my interest. Started using Duolingo and attended my first GaB immersion last winter in Port Hood. You have a lot of fun, need to laugh at yourself.

### ***3. Imagine yourself conversing in Gaelic, who would you want to chat with? what would you chat about?***

- A fluent speaker..it will make you push yourself...otherwise I don't have to do much work! They model better speech and offer richer text.

- My great grandfather. He struggled to learn English, I'd ask him what it was like in the time when (Gaels) were transferring from Gaelic to English.

- Pretty much anybody, fluent people. Native speakers are endlessly encouraging, they encouraged me so much....they were there...gentle souls.

- My father's father, my grandfather. I never got to speak with him. I'd love to listen to him, I'd like to deeply understand what dialect he spoke. So many (Gaelic) things are just on the edge of living memory.... I would have genealogy questions, I'd have a boatload of them...what daily life was like, philosophy, customs, folklore, beliefs, proverbs. I would tell him that I remember him, our people...it encompasses so much. There is a tremendous amount of joy and relationships, but it is not easy, lots of self-discovery on the journey.

- My great-grandfather, he started the theological college in Pictou County. I'd like to hear his perspective and listen to his sermons.

- Margaret Mac Phee in Baddeck. I'd speak about older times, milling frolics...talk to her about my husband's father.

- I'd speak Gaelic with my partner, all the time. I'd talk about normal stuff. Gaelic has a positive association with life, compared to English. Gaelic offers you a kind of secrecy or individualism. With Gaelic there is no shadow of what you are supposed to be, you be yourself.

- My future partner, my family...an intimate (Gaelic) relationship. The Gaelic community has saved my life, it has healing pieces.... the English world didn't fit right.... Gaelic is about identity, that people can't see. Speaking Gaelic in public makes it clear that I'm not English. ...other cultures mirror back my culture.

- I'd like to talk to my grandparents...have a conversation in Gaelic about how the barn ran, (how) the hay was mowed...the old well...the saw mill driven off the brook.... uncovering your

history. Also the late Mary “Vincent” and Vincent, it was a great spot to go.

- Probably Donald Ban (1790), I'd ask him what it was like living (as a Catholic) in a Presbyterian community... his older children went to Antigonish? Why did he go to Nine Mile River?
- I hope to speak Gaelic to my future relatives!
- Jean MacKay, her mind is so very alert. I'd talk about old times....the Wreck Cove old store, the Milling Frolics.
- Alex Frances MacKay at the pulp mill, Mary and Vincent, my father and grandfather, and my second cousin Pàdraig Aonghais Shine MacEachern. I'd want to know how they think in Gaelic. There were so many critics (of Gaelic) at the Mill...they could cut them up, like a secret code to Gaelic .
- My great uncle, Godfrey Cameron. I'd get him to tell me all his stories, he had a wealth of them, he was (the family) tradition bearer. He spoke Gaelic, there's just so much I would ask him... I don't feel the tradition bearer, but maybe it's that oppressive voice telling me that.
- AJ MacDougall, the way he would describe his early morning walks... his love of nature....his description of nature....he was easy to learn from. His death hit us hard.
- I would talk to my grandmother, and ask her about life in Grand Mira... ask about recipes for biscuits and ribs...about small kitchen gardens...about root crops and root cellars.
- I would like to talk to anyone who instructed me. My grandmother....my wife's mother, Murdina MacKinnon. She passed away with her Gaelic mind!
- Màiri Alasdair Ruadh, she had beautiful Gaelic and dialect. She was a fiddle player...I would ask her opinion on life at the time. I'd like to learn about farming and horses.
- My great grand mother in Salmon River. She was a Gaelic speaker. I'd also speak my friends in my core (Gaelic) group. Jimmy Mac Kay, I just love listening to him, his songs are so slick and good. Also Allan MacLeod. He knew a lot about carpentry.... Colin Mac Intosh, he's a singer and ran a sawmill.
- My grandmother, just day to day conversations. I love the Gaelic humour, they'd laugh at simple and basic things. Joe Peter MacLean, a musician who spoke Gaelic.

#### ***4. Tell me about a time you reflected and said, “I’m actually speaking and understanding Gaelic”***

- In Daltachas, there was no English, I had a deeper understanding as a learner. Also, moments when actors turn to me to ask me (things) in Gaelic.
- At a Gaelic class, last year. We started reciting stories, I was able to recite an entire story, word for word, in Gaelic. I said, “Oh my god I did that”. Most in the class were fluent in Gaelic. I felt very proud, in front of Gaelic speakers. I was the only person under 30...I didn't mind, I'm motivated.
- When I'm speaking with people like Effie Rankin, or people in Scotland. Talking to my mother... she would understand me. Talking to different people.
- When I speak with elders and I understand them. At an advanced class, it was a perfect environment...welcoming, patient. Understanding recordings on Struth nan Gàidheal.

***“Just recently, at a house, the conversation was all in Gaelic and I understood 80-90%.”***

- We were working on Jack and Jill, it was team work...seeing others progressing, and your own progress... all the work is not in vain. The speaking part is harder, I just clam up...practice, practice, practice.
- Different times...within the last three years being in Gaelic conversation ....I would be going to breakfast (in Boisdale), there were different levels of learners, I could keep up (Gaelic) with them. Janet Cameron was wonderful, she made sure everybody was staying in Gaelic. I didn't think about it first, unconsciously responding (in Gaelic). Different times with Angus ML....The book, “Cò rinn e?” I told this woman, “Oh I read that book”, that's when I started to clue in to his or her (ownership), when I got to see the language .... it was an awakening!!!
- I don't have a silver bullet moment....I measure my progress when I'm really in tune with what's going on. When I don't need to think about it...in the first week of immersion in Port Hood, at the store, “I couldn't think in English..”
- The first joke I understood....conversing while emotionally charged at immersion house.
- Just recently, at a house, the conversation was all in Gaelic and

I understood 80-90%. Also I had to tell a story one night in GaB class, I was unprepared...I was able to BS my way through it (in Gaelic)...the story was authentic....kept the audience listening...it was humorous....they were waiting for the punch line.

- Listening to songs and following what is being related...more recently .... more opportunities...even freestyle Gaelic songs are made. Mornings are better...well rested and a better speaker.

- Having supper in Gaelic, all were speaking Gaelic. I asked myself, “how did I end up here?”

- At a Gaelic Immersion, I said, “Wow. I’m doing pretty good work”.

- Your comfort level is so important.....comprehension comes when you don’t expect it...

- I was speaking Gaelic...I spoke to my friend...I was overjoyed. Dorothy Pottie and I became very close.... it was difficult to hear her but she spoke Gaelic, I could understand her. When you have a close connection, you’re interested in what you are saying in Gaelic to each other.

- I went to a pub, had a brief conversation...whipped into Gaelic”, it was spontaneous, no inhibitions, not self conscious. Also songs....Gaelic is carried through songs...singing Gaelic songs, able to “take (me) myself out of it”

- One night going to class, Jessica MacLeannan was a real good help. Like a switch...I understood a lot more...I was able to communicate more, the inhibitions disappeared. Also when Jessica and I started singing together....

- Very early on...I had a hunger to understand things, that drove me. More recently, listening to recordings of songs and I can follow the songs and understand.

- At Halloween...Ken Nilsen was teaching...we were chatting, I said, “Oh my God, I’m actually speaking Gaelic”. I spoke more fluently at a Port Hood immersion.

- Bun is Bàrr program increased my confidence with visiting, that was a moment...love the songs...sometimes “baptism by fire”.

- First time at GaB immersion in Port Hood, the Gaelic never ended...I was getting the gist of what people were saying...during lunch time...eating, talking about the food and the weather.

## **5. As a Gaelic learner, do you have preferred techniques or tips to share with other Gaelic learners?**

- Practice, and when you have a chance to speak, speak as much as possible. Bring the language into your life; listen to songs,

stories, BBC Scotland etc...

- When you write it down, it helps to recall. Listen to recordings and listen more than once. “If you want to get something done, you have to do the work”! Goiridh and John Shaw are examples.
- Speak as much as possible. Embrace mistakes...learn the songs and you will get an insight into Gaelic...ask questions...say it, connect, repeat.

- Gaelic only rule is important. Connect with social spaces, embody what you learn. Tons and tons of positive reinforcement. “Blessed Heroes are willing to make mistakes”!

- Review lessons and recordings....add in reading and writing.... it takes a lot of time. Learning buddies and buddy system is important. Repetition....Practice in small group sessions...Review

- Do a lot of listening to Native speakers, over and over. Master one thing at a time. Learn the idiomatic phrases. Listen to different dialects. Songs are important. Record classes.

- You need to have fun...teach it as if you are a baby, and then jump into reading. Have a good group to work with (on Gaelic). Read kids books.

- Connect to others, know how to party. Three hour classes will not get (you) to fluency. You have to give your life over to it. More laughter, way more singing, stories are better in Gaelic. Be as vocal as you can, don’t be afraid. “Beag air bheag” ...Keep making mistakes...Practice.

- I’d like to listen more...I’m self conscious about Gaelic pronunciation, make the Gaelic sounds, more time on pronunciation will set up more success. Listen to Struth nan Gàidheal, the recordings of people from Cape Breton. Write in Gaelic. Read in Gaelic (Mac-Talla)

- Take advantage of as many opportunities, its never going to be enough time! Listen to recordings. Be an activist for Gaelic, inspire others. LISTEN.

- Be relaxed. Listen well, over and over. Have a learning buddy, speak once a week. Listen to Caint mo Mhàthar and An Drochaid Eadarainn.

- Take a word and find the roots of the word. Sing Gaelic, I can’t sing worth a darn but I up a little bit. Listen to songs, review if necessary, patterns evolve for learning.

- Speak it. Make mistakes....find comfort with each other...(we’re) all going through the same thing. There’s already enough English influence on Gaelic. Feelings of not good enough and insecurity, this is a trauma.

- Put phrases on the cupboards....Teach others....Use with a partner...

- I learn more from experience, need to trust that... if you are not a text-book person, don't like notes, you don't have to. Let yourself learn at a comfortable pace. It's your ancestral language, I shouldn't have to force feed myself, Gaelic. I'm glad to have the opportunity to honour my bloodline, and follow cultural practices. But I'm in Unama'ki, I also value learning it in tandem with Gaelic. Makes them both stronger.

- Listen to Gaelic speakers, listen to the first word or command if you are new. Tape and review the class, a pre-requisite for better recall. Ask yourself, "How would Carmen say it?"

- Seek out opportunities to speak Gaelic...use Gaelic with people around me. Listen to recordings, work on small goals. Listen to the songs.

- Record the class, review it, listen to Gaelic. Speak Gaelic, less reliant on the printed word.

- Listen to recordings, listen to other Gaelic speakers. Know where to place your tongue in your mouth (for pronunciation), You need to go for it, as it's a second language. Try not to be afraid to speak. Use different sources: An Drochaid Eadarainn.

- The immersion provided opportunity for success. In the immersion, you're not in a position to be embarrassed. Be animated. Lots of props are great in GaB.

## 6. Take me to a time when you encountered obstacles while learning Gaelic?

- There are only so many classes or learning opportunities in a region. There is too much English in classes and sometimes the classes are paced at the level of the slowest learner. A balance is required. It's better with a trained teacher.

- Lots of people don't support the language...People say, "you are never going to get anything out of this". I just ignore these voices.

- Be accepting of mistakes. There's a buffet of ways to learn and instruct. "Learning can be like a slippery fish....you'll need to learn over and over again".

- Folks are not committed to Gaelic only. Sometimes there's no one around to converse with...not learning anything. Sometimes there are plateaus, a program like Bun is Bàrr was so helpful (learning from elders). Distance was a challenge, cost was a challenge. Ensure programming has the "plus one" component.

- Making time for practice and commitment.... also the resources for practice. Travel can be costly, and winter driving. 3 hour classes are too long, sometimes not productive. Sometimes classes at night there is a fatigue factor.

- Recalling and remembering. Correcting is helpful. Time and distance, as there's a lot happening in other communities. Night driving and the cost of driving. Fewer learners in the Sydney area and the loss of Sydney Gaelic Society building.

- Need a weekly schedule. Personal preference is a 10 month immersion...be in Gaelic all day and night. COVID-19 is a huge obstacle. Keeping to a Gaelic only rule... not thinking in Gaelic. Not a lot of immersion opportunities for Intermediate learners.

- Living in Halifax, the environment was not conducive to learning Gaelic. What you believe (about your learning) can be a self-inflicted obstacle. It was discouraging before GaB and Bun is Bàrr. People can become functionally fluent, it's achievable!!!!

- Interruptors in classes (English or too many questions). Listening and absorbing the Gaelic.

- I didn't do the Gaelic stuff, I wasn't connected to other Gaels and Cape Breton. Advocates (Shannon) connects people to programs. Navigating learning Gaelic by yourself can be self isolating. The song tradition...knowing the history behind them, this doesn't happen in the Anglophone context.

- Finding good programs Monday to Friday. Life style has to be flexible, scheduling can be an obstacle. Putting the time in can be an obstacle. Month-long immersions mean losing wages.

- The whole language can be an obstacle...connecting Gaelic is a difficult thing and some learners feel discouraged. Hearing Native Gaelic speakers is an obstacle. Stacey has a good way to guide you.

- Attitude can be an obstacle. Know yourself as a learner. There's criticism of self, "We need an exorcism". Reading and writing terrified me. You go from crawling to walking. Attitudes about speaking Gaelic...feeling ashamed and shy. My father said, "I have enough that they can't make fun of me".

- Availability of programming, financial aspect, distance. No kids classes for some time.

- I was my greatest obstacle...confidence. I started from scratch, and was uncomfortable when I was around fluent speakers. Need to build trust with learners and the instructor.

- In Scottish programs, it was like a classroom situation...it was anxious making...it wasn't like GaB. It was a very colonized approach to learning. Also even jealousy while listening to two fluent speakers banter back and forth and you don't know what they are saying, you want to leave. There's been a lot said about the attitudes toward Gaelic, but I don't dwell on negativity.

- Weather, driving at night, and organizing in the community. Ciphering the differences in community dialects. Spaces that are too much like a classroom, limited props. Opportunity for classes, finding venues, travel distances. My age is an obstacle.



- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig was frustrating as it was a grammar program, I was craving cultural content. Ensure to value program based on cultural content.
- Finding people to teach. Program leaders, taking ownership. Cost and financial responsibility - taking time off work, long drives to classes, hotels in Cape Breton. Some Native speakers can't attend, or people on pensions can't do it, "\$1000 is like a million dollars to me".
- Lot of independent programs with grammar focus. University too, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, had grammar. An Cùrsa Bogaidh was good, you had to be determined.
- COVID-19 is stopping me from keeping my momentum going. Professional job keeps me from being super scheduled, therefore learning could be sporadic.

## 7. Is Gaelic connected to other aspects of your life? Does Gaelic inform your identity?

- Absolutely, I'm learning Gaelic, I volunteer, and work developing films in Gaelic. My priority is to acquire the language and use and practice it. I need to make Gaelic a bigger part of my life. I don't care what people think...I'll never be part of the negativity.
- 100%, it informs my identity. While it's a big part of my life, it's not the only thing. I have other interests, I love sports (basketball and track). About 25% of my social life involves Gaelic...my school peer group, not at all interested.
- It's connected to everything...the song and stories. It's not just a language, it's more, it's a different way of thinking. Your thought process changes, you relate to things differently. Gaelic, is how I view the world.
- It informs all parts of my identity, having said that, it is like two separate lives. It hasn't been possible to integrate two parts of my life. It's like I have feet in two ponds or like carrying two world views. The identity piece is super complicated. Being a Gael, is a practice of shared cultural expression, that centers around the language.
- The ancestors were Gaelic, and had deep respect for the land, sustaining food production, and supporting community. Descendants of the Gaels are almost left out, and traditions are not passed on. I really love the stories...talking to people about continuing the tradition...stories are ignored...a Gaelic world view.
- It does... "when listening to music, it comes out in me". It's what's in your heart. All day long, my head is full of Gaelic... sometimes I even talk to the crows in Gaelic.

• I speak Gaelic everyday. There's a closeness, a vulnerability. The non-professional experiences gives me a greater satisfaction, I associate it with Gaelic values. I try to bring Gaelic into my English life. At work, I have a white board with Gaelic expressions.

• Yes, I use Gaelic in my life, in my work. Most of my really good friends are Gaelic learners. The quick wit is so valued. It is a way of seeing the world and interacting with it (generosity). I can't express myself completely in Gaelic, especially emotions.

• Yes, if you hear an old Gaelic air, music connects you to Gaelic. Sometimes, when you hear a tune, people will say there's Gaelic balls in a tune! Gaelic is largely misunderstood, it got a raw treatment, they pounded it out of you... Gaelic is something you have to balance... at work, I use Gaelic, to be bad, at a morning production meeting, I'll say a spiel in Gaelic. "There's power in speaking Gaelic".

• It has, but only recently. Agriculture fits with Gaelic ideas, the weather, planting, the seasons. I'm learning songs, there's little rituals connected to the seasons... then something reminds you of the songs. I've gone from being a learner and now bringing Gaelic into my life. Biggest challenge is there is not anyone to talk to (in my community)...so singing in the field.

• I socialize in Gaelic. At fiddle sessions, Gaelic is spoken. There's an overlap between Gaelic and music, like Alex Frances MacKay's fiddling. Gaelic is now integrated in my life. but from Primary to 12, I never heard the word Gael mentioned.

• It's connected to my spirit. I grew up in a devout Presbyterian family, and within it the community, and sense of spirit was all around me. As Joe Neil MacNeil said, "the people were poor but lived in abundance," I think this is aspirational. The way they express themselves... the hospitality, generosity, relationships are part of it. There's a gloomy side, a sadness inside us ...living in the present but a longing ..... for community.

• I'm very traditional, I like events where its traditional music, I give the stink eye when people are clapping along! As the old folks said, "God damn the New Brunswick style". The old guys (John Hugh MacEachern and Duncan Fraser) would say, "stomp your feet, but don't start that clapping". Humour...cutting people up (LOL), they (the Gaels) were loving the humour and the way of life.

• My very first trip to the Gaelic College, at the immersion, I started speaking Gaelic. I spoke Gaelic, the whole car drive home. I was really determined to learn. I decided I was going to learn! Also Daltachas was all in Gaelic.

• Yes it informs my identity and with my children. My oldest knows, I love Gaelic. "It has taken me to new places." I didn't have grand parents who spoke Gaelic, I didn't have it in me, I'm trying to fill the void".



- John Shaw did a talk in the winter about his research about Gaelic Culture, and he said that “unlike a lot of cultures that demonstrate their cultural expression through architecture and monuments, Gaelic exists within the hearts and minds of community members.” This concept has struck me, it is foremost in the self - sharing stories and songs, good social energy, visiting family and connecting to elders, nature and places.

- Now I’m identified as someone who knows Gaelic or a go to for Gaelic. My comprehension is very good. Doing skits was so fun, people (the community) enjoyed the Gaelic. Sometimes I phone and speak Gaelic, or driving to Gaelic class, I loved it.

- Yes, more than I ever thought. So much of my life is now around music and Gaelic. Being a Gael...language, people, place, culture are connected. There’s a value in living here, you get to know a place through Gaels.

- I grew up without Gaelic. But now (a learner), I brought it into my work with displays, workshops, and within a social context. Now there’s a (Gaelic) social club...singing in the choir, Christmas songs and religious songs. People loved it, one man had tears in their eyes as his grand father was the last speaker in PEI. We now have Àite nan Gàidheal!

- 100%, the Gaelic stories connect you with the Gaelic people. Language is an enormous part of being a Gael, it is shaped one’s heritage, by the culture around.

- For sure, I guess I thought of myself as Scottish, not Gael. Especially from the music side, I identify with the Gaelic songs, my grandmother speaking Gaelic, the Gaelic stories.

## ***8. You are becoming knowledgeable around your language learning, what advice or tips would you offer the instructors?***

- Understand the learner group. A good introduction and orientation. Stay in the language, Gaelic only. Mix it up with games, stories, and conversation is most important. It has to be fun. The classes can really influence the learning process.

- “Don’t give up on Gaelic learning, it takes time to get a good tongue on it and understanding”. Describe the sounds of Gaelic. Stop saying, translating and another word for it

- Realize you are there for the learner, the number one priority.

Be kind , encourage, use constructive critique, be open to dialects. Make it fun!

- Gaelic only! Do not let students steer the ship... no note taking.

- Pronunciation is very important. Repetition, a variety of methods, support learners. Experience the instruction with hands-on activities. After 1st year, reading and writing needs to be introduced.

- Have knowledge of learning styles and incorporate this, hit all the senses. Hear quality good Gaelic. Know when to correct the learner (not mid sentence). Go to different classes and get different instructor points of view. Use songs...you will hear sentence structure and description, it helps with word order...

***“Encouragement goes along way! Invite learners to participate. Never had an instructor who did a bad job.”***

- Need to understand sentence structure. Listen to Gaelic, transcribe tapes as a group...good for recalling spelling and good grammar. We need to say it (Gaelic), write it, and understand it. You need to have fun in order to be vulnerable.

- I’m an instructor now. Orientation is very important. Adult learners put barriers in front of themselves. Learners are not used to being bad at things, learners need to get comfortable with “not understanding what’s going on.”

- Use more audio-visual, dig into the archives. Base the classes on GaB. Nice to hear Native Gaelic speakers.

- Encouragement goes along way! Invite learners to participate. Never had an instructor who did a bad job.

- Shouldn’t worry about how they teach, but how learners learn. More Gaelic cultural content. Teach to the student and not the subject. Some instructors are just natural, and some are not. Each instructor is different with a certain style of teaching.

- Passionate about teaching is #1! Good to have a variety of learning mediums. GaB is great, but need a mixture of methods, and a little more formal with reading and writing.

- Give the answer in the question. Guide us with pronunciation rules. Keep it light, relaxed and keep learning. Instructors are doing a good job. A writing course in Gaelic, teach grammar and reading without English.

- Listen to the learners, see what they want to learn. Two-hour

sessions are plenty long. Always have fun. Always have songs, they are joyful. Stay connected, relationships bind you and help you get out on a snowy day.

- Gaelic spaces are up and down. Gaelic is a bit transient right now. Gaelic is an indigenous language, connect it to the land.
- Maintain the 'Gaelic only' rule. We need the teachers right now, bit of panic, we don't want to lose momentum. Positive energy keeps you learning..."it just sticks you, then." No Gaelic Boot Camps... with 4 nights a week, was exhausting, just about fried.
- I have been on both sides of the fence. Give students what they want. Make it as easy as possible. Pivot in the class when the learners are not having a good time, bored, or confused.
- Once you get to intermediate level, do different material... Sometimes we get the same old poem, story, song. You can tell when it is done on the fly. Know your audience and what they have already covered. Preparation is important. It's helpful when the instructor is passionate and their heart and soul are in it. Provide a better understanding of the back story of NS Gaelic and Mi'kmaq people.
- All instructors are so different! Bring the elements of the community into the language. Blend GaB with reading and writing, it makes self learning easier.
- Immersion takes away the safety net. Through GaB better understanding on how a sentence is made. It use base sentences with a focus on the verb. By 4-5th day of immersion, your brain is figuring out Gaelic patterns.

## 9. Is there anything else you would like to share about GaB?

- GaB is great for Beginners but breakthrough takes too long with GaB. Community is a piece in learning Gaelic, and when fluency is possible, then there is a deeper sense of community. We need more intensive immersion experiences. More conversational Gaelic.
- Fun and hands on activities are good, find a balance. You have to do the boring stuff. You have to sit down for hours with grammar.
- GaB is a useful learning tool, but there are many tools. GaB provides a superficial level of expression. The deeper conceptual values are not easy to pass on through GaB. We need to have an honest discussion and develop guidelines around Gaelic instruction. It is essential to understand the level of the students and adapt to students. You have to be kind to

people, the learner. There are a good number of people in Nova Scotia who want to learn to speak, but if we are losing learners, we need to look at this..."If we have the right teachers and the right methodologies, then we shouldn't lose learners."

- GaB is a social learning tool. Currently research, development, practice, and training are non-existent. You know when learners are learning, its visceral and they feel rewarded. Two-to three week GaB immersions create a learning community.
- There's always something new to take from GaB. It's repetitive and interactive. Some personalities may be more attuned to GaB; shy people may be less intimidated. Some levels of instruction (beginner) might lean toward GaB. Sometimes instructors can intimidate learners. Zoom is harder, sound quality can be an issue. "With this new format, the breadcrumbs are missing".
- Not a lot of Intermediate levels and opportunities!! There is a balance between stress and support with GaB. Instructors are good at reading learners, they know when to save us.
- Mistakes are a necessary part of learning. It's an emotional journey around learning Gaelic. Gaelic is central to everything; learning it is like being in the ocean, after you go under, the wave lets everything you don't know wash over you.
- GaB is fantastic, good for Beginners, begins to close the gaps, but not intended to be forever. Reading and writing became important in learning Gaelic.
- Have teachers that are fluent. GaB instructors, invest in them.
- Make connections between Gaelic and NS history. I can imagine working in Gaelic.
- Need to assess learners, GaB is a perfect starting point. Sometimes better to have different teaching styles. Gaelic is doing a better job than French to produce resources.
- All styles of instruction is good. You do different things with different instructors. The whole system might need a refresh.
- Gaelic humour is important. Love Gaelic dialogue, makes learning more interesting.
- Method is great, the right approach. NS speakers are being brought to fluency more quickly. Need intermediate level programming.
- It renewed my interest in getting back into learning Gaelic.
- Gaelic music exists everywhere, when you are open to it and listen for it. Gaelic song is an emotional exchange, it's not a financial one. Expectation at a céilidh house is to listen, once an instructor had to tell the audience, "these songs are very old,

people took time to learn them, please shut up.”

- We need organizers of programs.
- New instructors need training., we need to plant seeds. Get something more consistent going for community programming, making it easier for communities.
- Our community actively sought out learning opportunities.
- My father would be speaking more Gaelic if he had started with GaB.

***“I’d now be more comfortable going to immersions. I’m going to keep working on it.”***

## ***Appendix 5 - List of Best Practices from Cruinneachadh nan Taoitearan, May 2009***

- *Encouragement all the way!*
- *Speak naturally.*
- *Repeat, repeat, repeat.*
- *Teaching is assisted by body movement, which adds additional unaccustomed meaning, by repetition, and (the use of) supportive learning material.*
- *Fun, humorous, light.*
- *If at all possible, teaching will take place in the home.*
- *From the beginning, acquaint students with useful expressions, e.g., “Chan eil mi 'ga thuigsinn” - I'm not understanding.*
- *Teaching the language through the language.*
- *Local material (from Nova Scotia).*
- *A community of learning without anxiety. An explanation of the question should be given to the students in advance.*
- *Sociability - tea and bannock*
- *The students ought to be given information about the course in advance.*
- *Put fluent speakers to use in the classes at every opportunity.*
- *Great weight should be put on the connection between speech and activity, e.g., have a cup in your hand when you give the word for it.*
- *Patience.*

# Appendix 6 - Gàidhlig aig Baile Guiding Principles used by Sgioba nan Taoitearan

- *staying in Gaelic pays off in the long run - it minimizes two levels of work, thinking in the mother language, i.e. English or other and then translating into the target language, Gaelic*
- *to come to a greater level of fluency is an input – output equation; the more time put in the greater the output vis-à-vis fluency*
- *dialects are important and are honoured – if a learner has learned a specific Gaelic dialect, find ways to honour this while instructing; encourage learners to speak the dialect they learned to speak*
- *objective is to provide good instruction specific to good pronunciation and good structural Gaelic, including idiomatic speech*
- *repetition, repetition, repetition*
- *use of hand gestures;*
  - i. *instructor drawing his/her hand towards himself/herself indicates to learner to repeat question/phrase/vocabulary*
  - ii. *instructor drawing an 'air' question mark indicates that phrase being learned is in the form of a question*
  - iii. *instructor drawing an 'air' question mark and shaking head from left to right indicates a negative form of a question*
  - iv. *instructor extending hand out towards learners indicates that learner answers and/or responds to a question*
  - v. *instructor gesturing with a hand and/or closed hand and thumb pointing in a backwards direction over either shoulder indicates past tense of a verb or a concept that has occurred in the past*
- *use of body language and hand gestures to communicate language such as;*
  - i. *I don't know*
  - ii. *I don't remember*
  - iii. *I don't understand*
  - iv. *Wow! / Think of that! / Do you believe that? / Get out of here!, i.e. Go on with you!*
- *provide answers in full sentences; get learners to speak using full sentences and phrases*
- *minimizing and being vigilant about the amount of time the instructor speaks-the objective is to get the learners to speaking and comprehension*
- *listening, waiting and then assisting a learner with question/answer*
- *avoid getting caught up in ensuring that learners understand everything; if something isn't working, i.e. instructor senses students are having difficulty with comprehension, leave the topic and move on to another*
- *inform learners that comprehension comes through amount of time exposed to language being spoken, context and use of repetition; if a learner is struggling with comprehension, that is completely natural and topics covered are revisited frequently; comprehension will come in time*
- *interactive-getting learners to speak/ask questions/give opinions is the objective*
- *get learners to join in in helping another learner remember a question/a response/vocabulary, etc.*
- *take a phrase/vocabulary that a specific learner is challenged with and bring it to the group; say phrase/vocabulary and then get group to repeat; take focus off of individual learner*

- *low stress/enjoyable/fun/humour*
- *weaving in of Gaelic cultural references; rhymes, segments of songs, quarters of the year, cultural/feast days, vernacular beliefs, spirituality, worldview*
- *use of the five senses: taste, touch, smell, see, hear*
- *scaffolding language*
- *can use contemporary context while avoiding challenging topics, i.e. “Do you like Justin Trudeau’s beard?”; etc.*
- *encouragement and positivity– everyone who undertakes this work is a hero because they are involved in an action that is counter to the mainstream*
- *welcoming learners in to the learning space (reference The Circle Way Pocket Guide)*
- *refer to Gaelic language learning as sessions rather than classes, conveying an informality around learning*

*i. get learners to stand up and turn around in a clockwise direction to indicate that they are now in a Gaelic-speaking zone*

*ii. learner does an action or brings with them an item to communicate that they are now moving into a Gaelic space*

*iii. make a cup of coffee/tea and bring with to learning circle and enjoy-similar to being on a visit*

*iv. encourage learners to take with them props, objects, pictures, useful items, precious items; represent yourself in the circle, take with you something precious*

*v. avoid providing the Gaelic to learners for questions they have in English. Communicate that you will provide the answer in the Gaelic language learning session.*

*vi. Inclusion of charades*



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