

Successful Futures



Professor Graham Donaldson, constructed a review of the National Curriculum, assessments and learning structure. Donaldson (2015 p.38) highlights in his 'Future Success Report' that learning should be a continuous process from the age of 3-16 years.

Donaldson's direction

The current curriculum focuses on phases stages and levelling which he has referred as no longer effective. His view is that schools should provide opportunities for children to activate prior knowledge and build upon those foundations to enhance progression.

Welsh Government (2015)



Donaldson (2015 p.42) notes that children are expected to access a wide range of skills which will benefit them for further education and working life. These skills include the ability to think critically, solve problems, be able to plan and organise tasks, develop creatively and become aware of their capabilities and wellbeing. (Estyn, 2018 p.2)

Donaldson's 4 Purposes

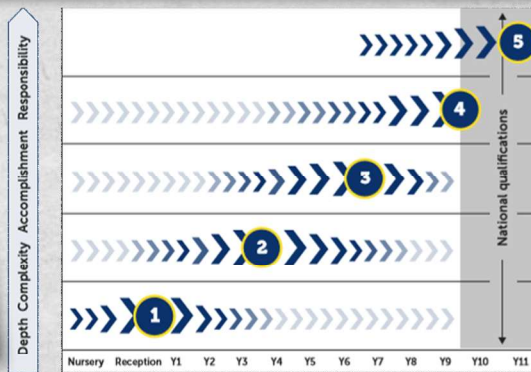


Curriculum Reform



Donaldson (2018) states 'The new National Curriculum and assessment arrangements aim to set higher standards and to make learning more relevant and engaging for the young people of Wales'.

The current curriculum was developed in 1988 and according to The Welsh Government (2015) Donaldson's report 'argues that the curriculum has become overloaded, complicated and, in parts, outdated'.



Continuous process from 3-16 years

Removing barriers to success

Achievement Outcomes in all Areas of Learning and Experience

Progression Steps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are indicative of the likely progress of most children.

AoLE

Removing stages and replacing the curriculum with progression steps

Independent Learning Week

As part of Donaldson's new curriculum proposal, school A has been selected to work alongside other pioneer schools 'to design and develop Wales' new Digital Competence Framework.' (Evans, 2015)

Concerns are voiced over the reformed curriculum.

(BBC, 2017)

What is the main objective of Challenge Week?

Removing passive learning

Encouraging pupils to play an active role in their education

To deliver a programme where pupils are provided with a variety of literacy, numeracy and digital competence tasks which they work through independently. All subject areas construct their tasks based around a particular theme. Unlike typical teacher led lessons this two week programme is aimed to encourage pupils to not only activate prior skills and knowledge but to take responsibility of their own learning experiences. The teacher during this process should merely facilitate the learning and support the child's well-being.

NUT calls for delay to Wales school curriculum overhaul

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The new curriculum puts more emphasis on digital skills

Mr Hathway, the NUT's Wales policy officer, said, "Clearly a significant proportion of teachers are unaware of the recommendations. Feedback we've had does echo that survey."

"The teaching profession itself is very much on board with what Prof Donaldson put forward, but I think there's a sense we are moving there too quickly."

"What it's asking teachers to do is change their mindset from being micro-managed to a situation where they're being told to be innovative, creative and flexible."

"It's a good thing, but it's a different skill set and they haven't necessarily equipped the teaching profession to deliver the curriculum as it's going to be."

"We don't want to rush into it, schools and teachers are unprepared for it."

"Getting it right is better than doing it right now."



Areas of Learning

Donaldson has devised a new curriculum which he hopes to be active in all schools by 2021. His aim is to move the current curriculum away from subject based learning to Areas of Learning. This reformed learning structure will provide pupils the opportunities to 'progress at different rates' Donaldson (2015).



Cross - curriculum

Expressive Arts

Health and Well-being

Maths and Numeracy

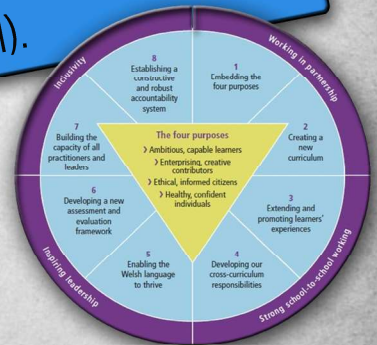
Science and Technology

Humanities

English, Literacy
and Communication

Donaldson recommendations state 'subjects serve the curriculum rather than defining the curriculum by subjects' (Cullyeducation, 2015) Donaldson proposes that learning should be categorised in to 6 Areas of Learning.

'This should encourage 'teachers to work creatively, across subject boundaries in the context of the 4 curriculum purposes' (Donaldson, 2015, p.41).



Estyn (2018 p.2) states Donaldson 'proposes that three cross-curriculum responsibilities (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) should be embedded within the areas of learning and experience.



School A highlights that DCF can enhance research skills, critical thinking and provide opportunities for pupils to activate prior knowledge and expand their understanding.

Following Donaldson's Successful Features report the Welsh Government have devised a framework set to 'higher standards of literacy, numeracy and become more digitally bilingually competent.' The Digital Competence Framework (DCF) has been implemented across schools in Wales. It focuses on developing digital skills which can be applied to a wide range of subjects and scenarios that are transferable to the world of work. (Welsh Government, 2018 pp.39-41)

Constructivism

What is Constructivism?



Piaget

Constructivism is a theoretical approach which enables children to 'construct a mental image of the world through experience, and by means of continuous updating, they align that mental image further and more precisely' Halpenny and Pettersen (2014 p.3). Piaget saw learning as an active process, children should engage in new learning experiences by focusing on social learning, collaboration of new and previously studied tasks and encourages individuals to think critically.

Ashman, 2017 states that 'constructivism underpins Donaldson's approach'.

Within education schools should ensure that teachers aim to create relevant, engaging lessons to motivate their pupils and develop independent, resilient learners with the desire to play an active role in their own education Donaldson (2018 pp.5-11).

Closing the Gap within Education

These Close The Gap marking sheets are used by all staff at the end of each topic to provide feedback.

Peer assessment sheet

Task criteria and Evaluation sheet for Challenge Week.

Speed, Distance and Time - (department name in Welsh)

Here are some examples of how School A implement peer and self assessments into the curriculum. These basic tasks encourage individuals to think critically, establish areas for improvements and develop independent learning skills which best suit them.

Social Constructivism

What is Social Constructivism?

This theory emphasizes that the child's cognitive development will depend on their cultural understanding environment and social activity McLeod (2018).

Just like Vygotski's theory of social learning Donaldson recognises that good teaching and learning is aided by social environments and positive relationships. Donaldson believed that the collaboration between pupils, teachers, family members and the community enables the child to develop social and emotional skills which can enhance development and encourage learners to access information they could not independently Donaldson (2015).

Vygotski



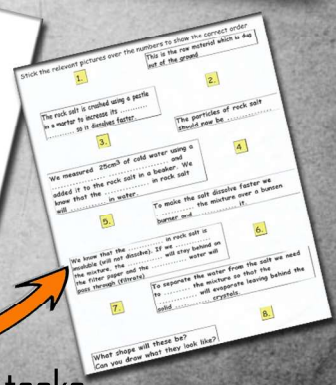
Vygotsky's concept Zones of Proximal Development.

The ZPD refers to the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can achieve with guidance and encouragement from a skilled partner' (McLeod, 2018).

The Social Constructivist learning theory has a clear link with education. It suggests that learning can be accelerated through interaction with others (Bosanquet, Radford and Webster, 2015).

'The scaffold, as it is known in building construction, has five characteristics: it provides a support; it functions as a tool; it extends the range of the worker; it allows a worker to accomplish a task not otherwise possible; and it is used to selectively aid the worker where needed' (Fisher and Frey, 2010, p.118).

School A aim to deliver an inclusive education to all their pupils. They provide those with additional learning needs scaffolding framework to optimise their learning. Differentiated worksheets and simplified tasks ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all abilities.



Examples of differentiated tasks

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