Section 1

Define: Curriculum

'Curriculum' includes all the learning experiences and assessment activities planned in pursuit of agreed purposes of education, Welsh Government, (2020c)

Curriculum for Wales 2022 consists of:

- a national level framework
- school-level design and planning.

The Curriculum for Wales 2022 framework, published by Welsh Government, (2020b) in January 2020 marks a significant change in the nature of the national curriculum. The design of the curriculum is underpinned by four purposes, the fulfilment of which should be the starting point for school's curriculum planning and when taken in combination describe the behaviours and attributes that is encouraged to demonstrate when they leave school at 16.

The School Run, (2022) highlighted that the framework has been designed as a continuum of learning, to support smooth and meaningful progression for learners from 3-16.

The framework consists of six broad areas of learning and experiences and within each AoLE is a number of 'What Matters' statements which provides a focus for the key concepts, knowledge, and skills that learners should cover, Welsh Government, (2020d).

The need for reform of the current curriculum in Wales has been emphasised as essential for Wales to meet the needs of the future learners and to compete on a universal stage (Dauncey, 2015; Donaldson, 2015; OECD, 2020a).

Holland, (2020) recommends that for reform to be implemented effectively, the reform presents Wales with a key opportunity to address this gap at all levels.

This assignment analyses the potential barriers to future curriculum reforms in Wales and highlights some of the emerging barriers and difficulties to progress seen in schools preparing for the Curriculum for Wales (Estyn, 2021).

UNICEF, (2018) states that '*Play sets the foundation for the development of critical social and emotional knowledge and skills*'. Learners learn to connect with other peers through various play activities, and to share, exchange and undertake conflicts. Play teaches learners leadership as well play group development skills, right from wrong, (Walters, 2016).

Furthermore, although there is an established agreement about the centrality of play in early childhood, conceptualizations and theories of play abound (Bennett et al, 1997; Bergen 2014) this is despite the fact that play is routinely recognized as a basis for learning in early childhood.

The Curriculum for Wales framework completed a passage through the Senedd in March 2020 and achieved Royal Assent in May 2020. Senedd, (2020); Welsh Government, (2020a) states that to pass into legislation some changes were agreed to the detail of the framework and suggested supporting guidance. The detail of these changes will be made available to schools in September 2021.

However, in the Curriculum for Wales, (Welsh government, 2020a; Welsh Government 2020f) the concept of learner progression sits at the heart of the framework. The curriculum framework defines five principles of progression, which describe how learners make progress in their learning.

CSCJES, (2020) shows the depth of the five principles in more detail:

These five principles of progression are:

- Increasing breadth and depth of knowledge
- Deepening understanding of the ideas and disciplines within Areas
- Refinement and growing sophistication in the use and application of skills
- Making connections and transferring learning into new contexts
- Increasing effectiveness as a learner

Supporting each of the Statements of 'What Matters' in each AoLE are 'descriptions of learning'. Tyack, (2020) implies that building from the principles of progression, this provides a statement of what learners should learn and experience across each progression step (2–3-year period), from the perspective of the learner, framed as 'I can' and 'I have' statements.

Nevertheless, Welsh Government, (2020e) implies that the statements are not designed as 'best-fit' statements to be directly assessed against and should be viewed as the starting point for planning and assessment. The purposes of assessment as set out in the curriculum for Wales guidance are that assessment should support the learner's progress on a day-to-day basis, allowing the school to capture the learner and or the 'group' progress over time. Furthermore, Armstrong, (2015) highlights that there is an expectation that schools work in clusters and at least one other 'group' to share their approaches and examples of learner's work. The outcomes from this work should then be used to support school self- evaluation, (CfBT Education Trust, 2013).

The new curriculum has implementations that also possibly might need addressing. The Foundation Phase assessments methods are not clear, and many practitioners and professionals would argue that there are many areas for improvement, especially around assessment, Donaldson, (2015).

Staff ratio is an area of question. What is the new ratio? Are non-maintained settings different to private? As an overall form of guidance, do they have the same assessments and training provided for support staff, teachers, and other practitioners?

However, the Department of Education, (2021), implies that assessment should not be prolonged with breaks from interaction with other learners in the setting, nor should it require paperwork. When assessing, whether it is an individual learner or group their development should be drawn out by the knowledge of the practitioners and their judgement and require a collection of physical evidence. Subsequently, Welsh Government, (2021d) is already taking steps to separate assessment for learning. The guidance proposes that teacher assessment data and National Data from the National Numeracy and Literacy test at settings will no longer be circulated, Welsh Government (2018b).

As citied in Atherton et al, (2020, p.304-305) the development of the new Curriculum for Wales is largely in line with a wider shift to what Shapira and Priestley (2018, p.75) where curriculums are progressively being planned to be result focussed (Donaldson, 2015, p. 5–6). Donaldson disputes this by stating that, articulations of development in the Welsh curriculum should include a wider range of results than just 'narrower measures of attainment', this comes across perceiving and that results should be chosen by the learner's point of view, when assessments are being shown, (Donaldson, 2015, p.56,79).

Furthermore, Donaldson, (2015) acclaims 'a move' towards long-term reference points. Where it can be developed as an achievement outcome for each learner's progression steps. This should be measured at basis of three intervals, yearly and permitting practitioners to give the opportunity and to plan learning and assessments for the future measures for the learner.

Welsh Government (2019c, p.4) also illustrated that, '*As we move towards Curriculum for Wales 2022, these changes will help shift the focus back to using teacher assessment to inform better learning and teaching'.*

According to Welsh Government (2022a); Donaldson, (2015), for the Curriculum for Wales to be successful, it is crucial that all aspects of the settings' systems align with and support the curriculum and its underlying principles. The information and data that learners must assess should not be used for accountability purposes. The purpose of assessment is to support individual learner progression. Local authorities and regional consortia must not, therefore, collate and aggregate a settings level data or create specific local arrangements to gather individual learner level information, Welsh Government, (2019c); Welsh Government, (2021d).

Conversely, Education Development Trust, (2014) suggests that the use of assessment information is not for external reporting and accountability, using it effectively to support learners' progression and to help improve teaching practice, is a core professional responsibility of a setting's teaching staff. Equally, Welsh Government (2021d) refers to consultation responses have not yet been

reported by Welsh Government, but the EAS continue to work collaboratively with schools specially to shape future approaches to evaluation and improvement.

Moreover, according to Welsh Government (2019b), assessments should be used to identify. By identifying those learners who might progress to additional progressive activities, requires further strengthening in relation to the learners' outcomes. Nevertheless, Handscomb et al, (2012) indicates that learning is demonstrated when the learning descriptions in the achievement outcomes have been met secure. Additionally, Welsh Government (2019b, p 9) states that *'To support and enable practitioners to plan appropriately to meet the needs of each individual, it is proposed that a baseline assessment will be carried out for each learner within the first six weeks of them entering the Reception year'.*

This statement does not give guidance and specific indicates. Though Welsh Government (2019a) allows the practitioners to plan and guide the learners, the proposed method of assessment is individualised, whereas it also shows more 'group' assessment methods and not the individual 'unique child', which the new curriculum is trying to promote and go forthwith. Gov.uk, (2021b), says that the baseline assessment method is an online personalised assessment for learners in Years 2 to 9. More importantly, this will allow practitioners to recognise how a learner's reading and numeracy abilities are evolving. Having an online assessment, where many families do not have the access, maybe delay an 'personalised assessment', this is supported by Welsh Government, (2022c). Likewise, Welsh Government (2019b) proposes that these assessments are 'solely formative' and have not been designed to be used as an accountability measure.

Welsh Government (2015a), stocktake report had many recommendations regarding the Foundation Phase, (Welsh Government, 2015b) curriculum. The report recommends that there is a need of follow-up training in the Foundation Phase.

Suggestions were made that Training Support Officers could do an annual routine visit to practitioners in their settings and provide training modules to support implementation to enhance knowledge, well-being, and support. As demonstrated by Welsh Government (2019a) the direction from the current system of assessments where judgements are made overall by the teaching staff observing the learner's attainment in a subject at a specific age. The new achievement outcomes for each progression step, the 'What Matters' statements will not be used to make 'best fit' judgements.

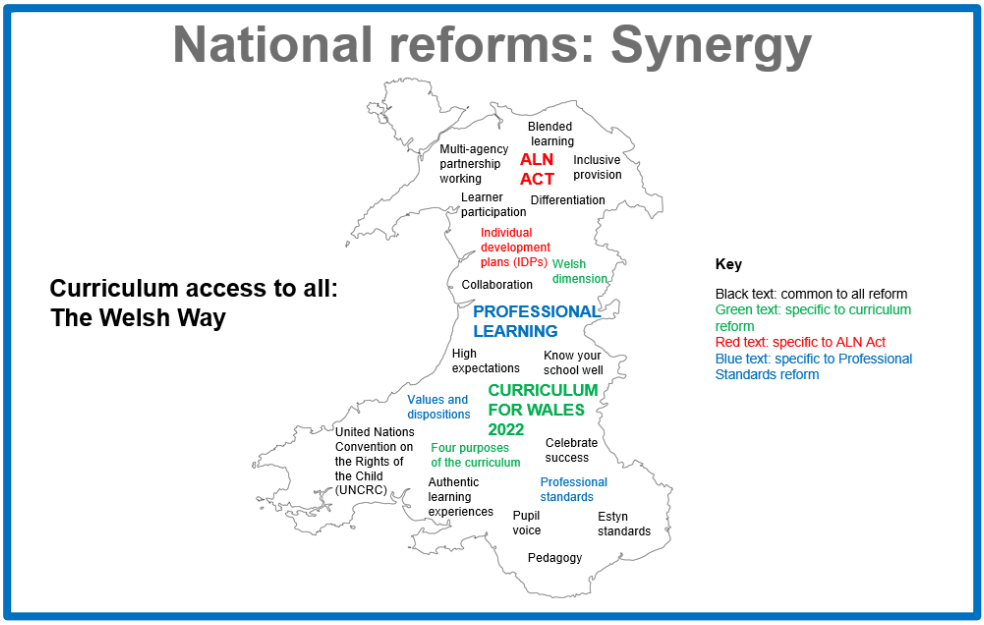
According to Early Years Alliance, (2021) the new system will be used as an 'ongoing' basis assessment to help practitioners decide whether the learners is making progress or idol in their learning progression. However, the Department of Education, (2016) implies that 'teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct'.

Furthermore, through this can be taken as a true statement of personal beliefs, teachers and other practitioners across the country will lose their judgement and confidence, relaying on an assessment once a year based on Assessment Working Group and other professional boards and committees, (Welsh Government, (2019a) allowing themselves to dictate what the learner needs and what stages and assessments are needed.

Through more, the Department of Education, (2018b) aims to help practitioners by benefiting them, giving them a clear picture of a learner's achievement. Having a plan and planning it accordingly and appropriately will benefit them and the leaner. Identifying and seeking additional support if needed and can help report matters that may needs addressing back to parents and guardians. A formative assessment will have priority under the new arrangements and focus on ensuring that learners understand how far they are in their learning and the progress they have done and possibly can do. This is supported by NCTL, (2014). The suggestions make it similar and clearer for both parties and that assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. To which it should not be conflated with external accountability and national monitoring activities.

In conclusion, the Curriculum for Wales, (2020) which was published in January 2020 and Donaldson, (2015) theory all has valid ideas, support, and guidance. Both being part of an integrated suite of reforms, that include changes to evaluation and improvement arrangements and changes to qualifications to learners. However, OECD, (2020b); Welsh Government, (2021a) indicates that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been significant, with schools and other settings, required to turn their attention to the considerable operational challenge of providing in-school, distance, and blended learning provision.

Finally, whilst this has meant that many practitioners have been able to focus on the development of their curriculum and work with cluster partners less, other learning and skills have emerged, which will support their efforts to realise the curriculum for Wales, Curriculum for Wales, (2020); Welsh Government, (2019a); Welsh Government, (2020b) ; Welsh Government, (2020e). Welsh Government, (2021a).



Source: (Powys County Council, 2019)

Section 2

Payne, (2022); Walters, (2016) states that every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. Leaners mature in every area of development at their own pace and in their own individual ways.

The term national standards refer to the values that guide training to promote quality in education. In early years, standards are defined by two key organizations. Firstly, by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2005), and then Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. Both NAEYC and DEC recognize assessment as a central factor of early years programs and other assessments. It is recommended that assessment should be used for management, regarding teaching and learning, identifying the learner's needs, and improving instruction and other programmes where inventions can be used to benefit the learners to improve their skills and abilities. Various practitioner in many establishments, help and support learners to achieve their best. (NAEYC, 2005; Sage 2020).

Equally, DEC acclaims that assessment provides information. This is useful for intervention and well-being programmes, such as ELSA, (McLean et all, 2000). Assessments to support learning and instruction, therefore can help identify learners and their need for additional support or services, within the setting and allows windows to open regarding possible more higher needs of intervention, may be needed, (Frelow et al, 2003). Practitioners should use various assessments not just one method to get the best possible results. This will help to adapt and individualize curricula and future teaching approaches and how to communicate with families, (NAEYC, 2005; Mclean, 2000).

It is recommended that practitioners should use both formal and informal screening and assessment approaches to systematically evaluate learners' growth across all domains of development and learning within natural contexts, including the early childhood classroom (Bordignon, 2004; NAEYC, 2005). DEC recommends that professionals and families collaborate to plan and implement assessment (McLean 2000).

However, a variety of assessment tools and approaches can be used. Having various checklists, norm-referenced tests, and portfolios, will enhance findings. Observations can be used to learn more about the learner's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, worries and possible challenges, that could be used for future development. Assessments can be ethnically, linguistically, and individually appropriate, (NAEYC, 2005; McLean, 2000; Donaldson, 2015). Huzinec, (2019) also mentions that the assessment process could be considered in various factors, where that it may influence learner's routine, such as starvation or lack of sleep.

Furthermore, practitioners having knowledge on what the assessments are about will help and administer and it what and or should be to connect assessment results with classroom practices

(NAEYC, 2005). Outcomes of the assessments that are done should be integrated into the new curriculum and used to modify instruction towards each learner.

"*Children benefit most when teachers engage in stimulating interactions that support learning and are emotionally supportive. Interactions that help children acquire new knowledge and skills provide input to children, elicit verbal responses and reactions from them, and foster engagement in and enjoyment of learning*." (Brooks-Gunn et al. 2013)

Research shows that young learner's learning occurs best within relationships and with rich interactions (Harvard University, 2009).
Additionally, learner's need stimulating and focused interactions to learn. To find that boost from learner's thinking skills is found through quality interactions is critical to learner's learning, Welsh Government, (2022b).
Quality interactions happen when a practitioner intentionally plans and carefully thinks about how their approach and respond to the learner. Kindalin, (2022) implies that emotionally supportive interactions help learners develop a strong sense of well-being and security. Responsive interactions are responses and communication with learners that meet their needs in the moment.
However, most interactions with learners offer practitioners the opportunity to engage, interact, instruct, and exchange information that supports healthy development and learning, Department of Education, (2021). Relationships between learners and practitioners grow stronger during everyday interactions. As learners gain new information and ideas, practitioners can encourage them to share what they think and learn, (Walters, 2016).
Furthermore, Curriculum for Wales, (2020) states that deeper thinking and learning engages learners in the moment, the joy of learning and helps them to prepare for new experiences and challenges.

According to Bodrova, (2015) Vygotsky said that "*In play a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself."*
This quote sums up the principle of a theoretical standpoint. Having a core, point is what the reader needs to know, Vygotsky's view of the value of play in learner's lives, is important for all practitioners to endure and practice.
Research has shown that there is no accurate evidence stating that, learners should theoretically play, it will help develop fine motor skills and exploration and curiosity, Chin (2008). According to Housley-Juster (2015), learners having directed play, can develop in different ways, where learners decide what to do and when. Having the opportunity to play and how they make the selections, and they decide on the ground rules. As practitioners it is vital that support and self-

directed play, is given. Opportunity is the life's; source of the knowledge being used to explore our deepest desires. Casey (2019), says that by giving learners permission allows all learners, regardless of their ability, to have interruption. Interruption can help them think to which end, and how will this end. All learners have a choice in what they choose to do. Practitioners allocated time, and with zero adult-directed activities will reassure them to think more for themselves, and or to reflect on their daily skills and accomplishments.

In comparison, Welsh Government, (2019b); Donaldson, (2015). one of the desired outcomes of the revised Early Years is that comes into force from September 2022, is a reduction in paperwork.

Although written observations and reports are not, and will not, be a requirement, many settings find it helpful to make written records and so intend to continue to create learning journals for their children going forward, Evolution Childcare, (2020). In addition, paperwork will come less, as stated by Curriculum for Wales (2020). Individual Education Plans and Pupil Centre Plans will still need to be addressed and evaluated. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a planning, teaching, and reviewing tool produced, with the involvement of parents, by the school to help a learners achieve the most they can from their education, Welsh Government, (2010).

The 'Individual' part means that it is personalised purposely for the learner's special needs, and it is used by all practitioners, additional support staff and other professionals working with the learner, Department of Education, (2015a). According to National Autistic Society (2022); Welsh Government, (2015c), the IEP should be laid out simple and clear with realistic action points. It should be agreed with parental involvement and ideally with the learner's involvement.

It should set out:

- What the learner needs to learn
- How this will be taught
- Who will help?
- When the plan will be reviewed

According to Kromydas, (2017); Kindalin, (2022) it is known that the curriculum has a system where measuring learner's attainment and using this to critic at settings can be for teachers a deep and damaging. Mentally and emotionally to learners and practitioner would not be practical. Fostering those skills and talents are needed in higher education, this will result in valued, future citizens as young learners. GDPR, (2018), states that an crucial review of the current measures should take place regardless, with a view to significantly change for the practitioner and the learners within the setting.

Additionally, the NASUWT, (2022) says that the different purposes of testing should be separated out so that tests intended to measure learners' progress and attainment are not used for school

accountability. PISA, (2015) also supports this statement by saying, if tests are used as accountability measures, they should be like the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) international tests in that only a sample of schools should take them on any occasion.

However, the Department of Education, (2015b) would argue that the results of these tests would not be communicated to parents and should not be used for judging individual settings; rather, they would give a picture of the national pattern of attainment, and the variability of attainment across groups of learners. This would therefore inform practice in all settings.

Although, managers in these teams should be overall responsible for holding each other to account through a system of peer visits and advice, possibly by groups, Department of Education, (2020). All management should have the opportunity to take part in various activities and other teams, (Gov.uk, 2020) as this would also be a form of professional development. The purpose of a visit would be to have an insight of the establishment and its practitioners and a look at all aspects of practice. If needed, raise questions, challenge, and show and demonstrate examples to support the setting to convey a better action plan, for the next term, Handscomb et al, (2012); Demie, (2013).

In some cases, some can be seen as serious concerns. A setting where a team of mentors should be obtainable to call or email to support the setting, e.g., School Challenge advisors, (Welsh Government, (2017). Department of Education, (2016) states it would be the responsibility of the educational professionals with substantial knowledge and willingness to lead schools and run the settings improvement programs. Those who could provide on-going support, settings should expect to foster the talents and see knowledgeable skills from all learners.

However, the importance of encouraging all learners should be vital, Barlow (2022). A key measure of a setting's accomplishment ought to be though the learners. Are they engaged enough in learning? Are they creative and happy? A period in that a setting moves effectively and performantly on to other educational establishments and underwrite effective members of civilisation, Department of Education, (2021).

Furthermore, Welsh Government, (2018a) implies that there should be a focus on a roughly expending-based curriculum, to which then can foster a creativity and more curiosity throughout and learning to and to end of collaboration, where it should be stimulated, rather than opposition, challenging.

'Everything is about test results; if it isn't relevant to a test then it is not seen as a priority. This puts too much pressure on pupils, puts too much emphasis on academic subjects and creates a dull, repetitive curriculum that has no creativity. It is like a factory production line chugging out identical

little robots with no imagination, already labelled as failures if they haven't achieved the right level on a test.' Hutchings, (2015).

Why do we have national tests?

According to Department of Education, (2019); OECD, (2012) ever since state-funded education was introduced, governments have come up with the idea of testing learners to find out whether the teacher is doing an effective job and they are getting value for money. Gov.uk, (2021c) states that in Britain, payment by results system during the 19th century. Inspectors visited settings to test learners, and the settings funding (and teacher pay) depended on the results.

However, Bradbury, (2019) argues that the negative impacts of this were widely noted – these included narrowing of the curriculum to the subjects that were tested; teacher and learner anxiety; teaching focusing entirely on the demands of the test; learning by rote at the expense of understanding; various forms of cheating; and a decline in number and quality of teachers and other practitioners, Whitney, (2017). One setting inspector said that teachers were 'treated as machines', Ofsted, (2015). Payment by results continued for 35 years before it was finally abandoned. National testing ceased, and inspectors took on a more advisory role as stating in Gov.uk, (2021a).

Finally, in 1888, Emerson White discussed 'the propriety of making the results of examinations the basis for...determining the comparative standing or success of schools', The Hadow Report, (1926). His conclusions are still relevant:

'They have perverted the best efforts of teachers, and narrowed and grooved their instruction; they have occasioned and made well-nigh imperative the use of mechanical and rote methods of teaching; they have occasioned cramming and the most vicious habits of study; they have caused much of the overpressure charged upon the schools, some of which is real; they have tempted both teachers and pupils to dishonesty; and, last but not least, they have permitted a mechanical method of school supervision'. (Hayes, 2021, p199-200).

Section 3 – Blog

Human Rights Education in the New Curriculum

While the current school curriculum includes some elements, Welsh Government, (2020d) reflects the human rights values and principles, supporting learners to learn about their rights is not mandatory. Twinkl, (2022) states that the process of curriculum reform offers Wales with a key chance to address this gap.
According to United Nations, (2022), placing learner's rights is essential. By creating a starting point from where all obligations to learners and young people should run; directly living out human rights values in relationships with learners and young people, in practice and pedagogy and in the systems and support learners to be the best they can be. Human rights should form the compulsory and underpin the basis of the new Curriculum, according to Welsh Government, (2019a); (2020a); (2020b).

However, the National Curriculum in Wales is undergoing transformation and the opportunity exists to tangibly underscore the education system with human rights, Curriculum for Wales, (2020); Donaldson, (2015); Welsh Government, (2020a). This ambitious change will move Wales away from a traditional to a more modern and well-being model of education where learners will be taught a subject matter, more advanced model that supports them to mature and apply all their skills in before moving onto the next stage, this is supported by Welsh Government, (2018c).

Essentially, Welsh Government, (2021c) indicates that the change of curriculum aims to make learning significantly to learner's livelihood and could potentially help to develop higher skills that will enhance them and give them a more understanding for adulthood. Welsh Government, (2021e) says that to maximise determinations is to secure the long-term economically, social, cultural, and eco-friendly well-being of Wales will need to recognise the significant role of education, whereby helping to determine their forthcoming prospects. It is through education that is generated is the new knowledge and investing time, effort into these skills, and passing vital values, similarity, and admiration on other learners in the next generations, Mitchell, (2020); Power et al, (2020). Therefore, the Curriculum for Wales will have a catalytic role that is accomplishing human rights. Human rights in education can play in realising, maintainable and making progress, growth and well- being, United Nations, (2016).

Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), UNICEF, (2019) sets out that the minimum offer to education. Designing it to provide learners with skills, reinforcing capacity which will allow enjoyment. United Nations, (2021).

Additionally, Welsh Government, (2019c); Welsh Government, (2020e) to safeguard the longstanding needs of the learners, educational involvement and a clear obligation to their rights should be included in new legislation. UNCRC should develop on many learners and in time it could be the aspect of the Curriculum and the new Assessment Bill for Wales, (Welsh Government, 2016).

According to Gov.uk, (2014); Gov.uk, (2018). The New Curriculum for Wales and the Assessment Bill should have the fullest reaching legislative to change in Wales. It will also apply exactly and solely to the practises the learners and young people demonstrate.

However, inclusion will come forthwith. Duty to the UNCRC, which the new Curriculum and Assessment Bill, a situation in where some learners will have the requirements from the UNCRC in respect of the national legislation, (Welsh Government, 2020c).

Although, according to Hoffman, (2018); Welsh Government, (2019d) again duty to the UNCRC, avoids the creation. The governmental framework for learners in Wales will ensure reliable philosophies and necessities to apply throughout educational settings and through key stage 2.

What is Human Rights Education?

United Nations, (2022), states that '*human rights are the basic freedoms and protections to which all people are entitled'*. Rights for everyone, regardless of their nationality. Rights are there to protect the public and regardless of their background, place of residence, their sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language and even their sexual orientation. Everyone is equally entitled to human rights without judgement or discrimination. All rights are all connected to one another, United Nations, (2021); United Nations (2022).

It is important to recognize this Convention as stated in UNICEF, (2011) that in addition to other human rights treaties and legislation. The Government have legal and moral obligations to respect, protect and fulfil learner's rights. These are carried throughout functions and responsibilities, irrespective of the situation, (Welsh Government, 2019c). In supporting this, human rights in education can be expended with learner's rights education. To construct an understanding and obligation for human rights and on times, learning through rights, according to McLeod, (2010); Welsh Government, (2017). Human rights should form the foundation of the new curriculum for Wales and is intimately associated with the pedagogy of teaching throughout Wales. Requirement is not just conveying knowledge. It is having the time and respect to apply these rights, all based through the pedagogy to which each learner, has the right to in the each learning and respecting setting, (Department of Education, 2014).

Furthermore, United Nations, (2011) suggests that Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training sets out three main elements of human rights education:

- Having knowledge and skills about human rights.
- Developing respect and values and attitudes.
- Motivation though social action and empowerment of citizenship

Why is knowing the human rights and learners' rights in education important?

Frantzi, (2004) says that rights in education inspires learners and to use and have rights as a frame of orientation in their relationships with others. It reassures review, forming arguments, sharing, and living according to values. McLeod, (2014) argues that rights in education urges learners to analytically examine their own attitudes and behaviours.

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