

ECAD4008 - Professional and Pedagogic Studies: Leading the Learning: what, how and why am I teaching?

Targets – From ECAD4013

	Targets set;	How I feel I have improved this target during the below assignment.
1	To follow the Harvard Referencing Guidance (Use of brackets etc.) and not to become too reliant on text.	I have completed a 'Harvard referencing course' online as well as looking through multiple resources supplied by the university to complete a correct Harvard reference
2	To engage with an appropriate range of literature and to ensure that all literature mentioned within assignment is noted within the referencing list also.	I have this time explored many literature examples from the UWTSD online library as well as through google scholar and other reliable sources by searching keywords.
3	To become more critical in your writing, to support your choices/judgements with supportive and counter arguments throughout your response.	I have set aside time to ensure that I have time to look back through my work and see where I be more critical in more work

Title -

- Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching,
- Good teaching and learning sets tasks and select resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest,
- Good teaching and learning ranges within and across Areas of Learning and Experience.

Consider the 3 pedagogic principles outlined above. Discuss these principles in relation to practices in education, showing secure understanding, identifying strengths and areas for development for each principle

Introduction –

The Welsh curriculum over the last ten years has changed dramatically. Moving into a more pupil-focused curriculum which can be designed and adapted as the school wishes (Welsh Government, 2018) The reform came into effect in 2016, with all children being taught the new reformed curriculum from 2026. (Welsh Government, 2023). The turning point for the Welsh government was in 2011 when the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) from 2009 was 'significantly lower' than the average across the world. (OECD, 2017, p9) This sparked the Welsh government into a consultation regarding the curriculum and consulted with many different people with the OECD and Graham Donaldson (OECD, 2017, p9). The reform put the pupils and the teachers at the heart of the curriculum, allowing for professional standards to be improved as well as specific Areas of Learning and pupil pedagogy. (OECD, 2018, p15). The Welsh government collected evidence from Estyn reports, families and visited sixty schools from nursery to sixth forms along with Professor Donaldson (Graham Donaldson, 2015, p3). When collecting information, Professor Donaldson and the OECD found plenty of positives 'Foundation Phase, National Literacy and Numeracy, Framework (LNF) Routes for Learning, Welsh Baccalaureate, Welsh language and bilingualism.' (Welsh Government, 2018, p3), as teachers we must feel comfortable and confident in what we are teaching and have the best knowledge and professional skills to benefit our pupils. During this consultation period it was noted that the teachers felt the curriculum was 'out of date' and that they felt like they had no control over what they can/can't teach. They also feel that the pupils Assessment for learning was too strict and did not suit all child, and lessons were too formal, and they needed a bit of fun. (Graham Donaldson, 2018, p4) They also noted that children interacted better with a child centred approach (Donaldson, 2018)

Donaldson recommended that there were 4 key purposes of the Welsh curriculum;

- ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives
- enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work
- ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world
- healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society

(Donaldson, 2018, p34)

Within Wales, the term 'stage not age' has been implemented in turn with the new curriculum for Wales twenty-twenty two. As I said earlier the old FP (Foundation Phase), within Wales is now known as 'Foundation Learning' moving away from the traditional Early Years (three to five), Key Stage One (five to seven) and Key Stage Two. (Welsh Government, 2017) Foundation Phase before it change to foundation learning stated seven steps which were known as the 'foundation phase framework', this was a statutory framework (Welsh Government, 2015 p7) which like the current six AOLE (Areas of Learning and Experience) has strands and elements. The main difference was that within these specific elements, there were instead year-specific targets and 'are able to' suggestions. (Welsh Government, 2015). Within the Welsh Curriculum today within AOLE's we have progression steps, which gives a wide range of 'achievement outcomes' (Donaldson, 2018 p7) This in turn encourages the children into education which has a wide variety of experiences allowing them to 'grow and mature', which as above is a key part of the Welsh curriculum. The enquiries from 2011 produced the new curriculum for Wales

which improves a child's holistic development, whilst also allowing the schools within Wales to feel in control with what they teach the pupils. Overall, the twelve pedagogical principles laid out the foundation to ensure that the four main principle of a child learning is at the heart of a child centred approach, and the curriculum. (Donaldson, 2018).

Looking at theory, there is a specific similarity between the new Welsh curriculum and Piaget's theory of 'cognitive development.' (Piaget.1936) Piaget although focused on specific age did not believe that children were expected to achieve these stages and understood that child's overall development is not the same in every child. Piaget laid out 4 stages within his theory (McLeod, 2024) Foundation learning within Wales is three to seven years. Piaget proposed that children within the preoperational stage are aged between two to seven. Aligning with the foundation learning, within Wales. Piaget suggested that children learn best through play, more specifically role play, as they are aware of the world but feel that everyone around them sees the world in the same perspective as themselves. This is clearly impleated accross the new curriculum in foundation learning.

Main Part 1 - Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching

When looking at this pedagogical principle it can be stripped two ways. This could be looking at the teacher's way of teaching, for example social constructivist, and it could also be looked at in the terms of how the teacher delivers a specific what matters statement across the six AoLE's. However, in my personal view the above statement relate to how effective teaching is delivered and in what environment. When looking at teaching practices, ages, and skill level of the pupil effects how the lesson is delivered. In secondary school and university, learning is mostly in the case of direct teaching.'

Direct teaching is known as behaviouralist (Teresa Cremin, and Cathy Burnet, 2018, p163), more recently the idea of direct teaching is more than just the teacher telling the children information. Vygotsky believed that social interaction is the way that children learn and that looking at the zone of proximal development is an area of which a pupil can achieve independently. However, this achievement is built upon with external resources. (The education hub, 2021, page/a) Direct teaching today and used within the new curriculum includes direct teaching and with it comes whole class discussion between the pupils and the teacher. There is a stigma surrounding direct teaching, its known as a traditional wat of teaching, and whilst the curriculum has changed so has assessment for learning. To close the attainment gap within Wales, the government proposed a new way to assess pupils' knowledge, this is known as assessment for learning. Something we will go deeper into in part three. Looking in contrast at Piaget's theory, the belief from the theory is that a teacher is there to facilitate and support a child's learning rather than direct teaching. (McLeod, 2024, p3) Instead, Piaget's believes that the children must be taught via a child centred approach. Essentially learning must completed and encouraged by the child themselves, ensuring they are engaged and interested. (Macleod, 2024)

Piaget believes discovery learning is imperative to a child's holistic development. Allowing the child to explore and play with materials, instead of the work being given to them with information already congregated. (Macleod,2024) During discovery learning, assessment for learning is imperative. As we as teachers are giving the children resources and continuous provision, we must understand what level

they are at. (Teresa Cremin, and Cathy Burnett, 2018, p66) It is important that teachers are available within the class to witness and observe how a child interact with a certain activity. Whilst on enrichment, it was noted that on every discovery area there was a class list with red, orange, and green lights. This indicates whether the pupils understand to a progression step and whether the resources we are giving them are needing alterations. The tasks that were presented to the children were full of colour and were easy to grab and interact with meaning that they were accessible to all in the class, even those with poor fine motor skills, or those with language barriers and learning difficulties.

Whilst on the note of discovery learning both Piaget and Vygotsky do agree on one thing, social interaction and play is at the heart of child's holistic development. Although Vygotsky, does believe more that children learn through play, and Piaget says that play is an integral part of understanding where a child is on the development scale. (Nikolay Veraksa, Yeshe Colliver & Vera Sukhik, 2022, Psum). Both believe that play should be a part of learning. Within discovery learning, we have role play and outdoor play, both role play and outdoor play is an exciting way to get the children hands on but keep the learning continuing both in and out of the classroom. Outdoor play is a fun and engaging (Pickering 2017) way for child to learn without the confinement of four walls and in the presence of peers. Outdoor learning can be placed into many of the AoLE's, however if we look at health and wellbeing for example; after playtime or an activity that has been particularly challenging for the children, brain breaks in the outdoors can be a relaxing way to bring the children's attention back into class. (Teresa Cremin, and Cathy Burnett, 2018, p219). Role play initiates the holistic development of a child (McLeod, 2024) Whilst on enrichment days in a Nursery/Reception split class, it was noted the amount of discovery role play areas there were around the classroom. On observing the children, you could see them having interactions with one another like what we would expect in the real world. There were children playing in Parrell (Welsh Government, n.d) they were observing other children play, then find another group of peers and worked alongside them almost mirroring the speech and movements they were completing. By the end of the day, the children were making a link between the cafe they were playing in and the outside world. One child said, 'After school today, I am going to go home and give my money to the waiter and watch the cook carefully cook my food' - During exploring time, one observation I did note, that not one child needed to be led by an adult, all the discovery learning was taking place by the child and needed no input from an adult within the class.

Main Part 2 - Good teaching and learning sets tasks and select resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest,

'Learning is most effective when children are actively engaged in ideas that stimulate their interest' (Donaldson, 2022) Child's best interest must be at the heart of the school's design of a curriculum and that includes what resources and level is needed to push them. As we talked about earlier, Vygotsky believed we should first work out a child's Zone of Proximal before we can plan and ensure what we are teaching them is stretching them and keeping them engaged. (Vygotsky, 1978) Looking at a circle with three layers, the centre of the circle is what the child can do unaided (independently), the next layer is the zone of proximal, this is the layer of which the child can complete a task but needs guidance from an adult. At this stage, we as teachers in Wales will be looking a progression steps. If a child has completed

progression step 1, we will be looking at how best we can resource materials for them to be able to complete the next step with assistance whilst also keeping them engaged (Welsh government, 2017)

Looking at the report written by the OECD, something that Wales needed to develop was making sure that we as schools and teachers meet the diverse needs of all our students, as stated in the Education Act 2002. (OECD,2012) The OECD stated that Wales needed to close their attainment gap and instead focus on 'the individual learning needs' of all children across Wales. (OECD, 2017, p46) - The strength of the new curriculum in Wales is that instead of the government impeding a compulsory curriculum across Wales, they are instead given a flexible framework which can be utilised in the best interest of the schools. Although this framework is flexible it still however does not mean it will suit all children across Wales. For this reason, there are plenty of resources available to teachers; how we use these resources depends on our focus what matters statements.

According to the OECD – Improving the Curriculum, 'only 22% of students reported that for most or all of their lessons teachers give different work to classmates who have difficulties learning and/or those who can advance faster, and teachers hardly ever put students in small groups (16%) or ask them to get engaged in planning classroom activities or topics (9%) (OECD, 2017, p51) - Mixed ability groups although via this OECD statistic is perceived as negative, whilst the children work in groups, they are using peers. Think, pair share is a wonderful way to get the children into social interactions, which encourages the quieter pupils the opportunity to talk with those more confident. During my time in school whilst in 'family groups' the children were always encouraged to speak to their partner and discuss before asking the teacher. I believe mixed ability group with teaching staff is a great resource to teach with.

The world today is all based around technology, children see technology in their car, house and in the classroom, this can be a great tool for individual, group, and whole class work. There are endless amounts of possibility for the children to expand their further knowledge. The children may be aware how to turn the iPad on, however they do not know how to take a picture or paint a picture. Within the classroom the children. Whilst on placement in Nursery it was noted by me how much background knowledge children had with the use of iPad, all children were able to demonstrate 'turning the device on and off.' As fantastic technology is, it is believed that technology showed no improvement in children in Foundation learning across literacy and language (OECD,2015), instead technological resources helped children in self-confidence and other 'non-cognitive outcomes' (Russell, Grigg, 2022, ch4p2)

As shown in the last paragraph, resources can be helpful to learners. However, if these resources are not used in the correct way, they will instead not be beneficial.

Main Part 3 - Good teaching and learning ranges within and across Areas of Learning and Experience.

The twelve pedagogical principles are imperative to a teacher's understanding of effective practice within a classroom (Donaldson, 2015) The principles are there to open the minds of teachers within

Wales, and remove the old narrow stigma of statutory curriculum instead in its place is a statutory framework allowing more creativity and flexibility within a classroom (C4W, n.d, p9). Teachers are dealt 'best practice' and how they interact with this information is shown through the way they teach. Teachers are expected to expand the pupil's knowledge on the six AoLE's, three cross curricular skills and four mandatory elements. However, the curriculum set out by the school should not be focused on the theme and instead should focus on one of the progression steps and overall, the curriculum must relate to all the twenty-seven 'what matters statements' (C4W, n.d. p12). However, according to Bronfenbrenner and the ecological theory a child's overall development can be affected by the support network around them (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) it was noted that although teacher to student bonds were greater within Welsh schools, the quality of teaching was lacking. Adding the idea of designing a curriculum increases the pressure of which they had not need to experience before. (OECD, n.d, p27).

As a teacher we have a duty to give a child a well-rounded education (David Cameron, 2022), 'broad and balanced curriculum was originally used to describe the pro-motion of pupil's spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and social development, whilst preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life (DfE, 1989). This statement is like the 4 principles of the new Welsh Curriculum, especially 'ambitious learners' there is arguments that some teachers/schools do in fact favour certain subjects or in the case of the new Welsh curriculum favour AoLE's and Cross Curricular framework. However, it is believed that the best primary schools demonstrate 'excellence in the basics' (literacy, numeracy, technologies, and personal development) that enabled pupils to achieve well in a broad and balanced curriculum (Rose, 2008). The Welsh curriculum Area's of learning and Experience correlate to, New Zealand, Australia, and USA (Donaldson, 2015, p25) they all have a child-centred skilled approach at heart. Whereas before we would look at history as a subject within primary school and foundation phase, history, religious studies, and geography all come under 'Humanities' (Donaldson, 2015), for teachers in Wales, all the six AoLE's and their progression steps are free to view online via HWB.com. This links to the professional standards of a teacher, ensuring they are up to date and can effectively collaborate with the school on how best to approach the school's curriculum. (Welsh Government, updated 2023)

From my experience with the nursery, the classroom and discovery area were full of science and technology, humanities, health, and wellbeing. All these subjects will require different teaching, resources, and provision. Humanities, within the AoLE itself is geography, within what matters statement '2.3.1 Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, past, present and future.' (Welsh Government, 2022) the children within the class have roleplay from places and jobs within the real world. There is a post office, a cafe, and a house kitchen. I find this fantastic, as well as jobs outside of the home, the children were also able to socialise in a home kitchen and play family, of which within the classroom there was inclusive books of families, and it was great to see the children imitate this with one another. As well as roleplay children were learning about post office and letters. The children were tasked with writing a letter to the school headteacher playing the address and stamp on the letter. The children then took the letter on a trip to the local post office and watched the letter be processed and sent to the teacher. The children then took all their knowledge back into the class where they imitated what they saw in the roleplay post office. As fantastic the trip was to the local post

office, the teacher admitted she would have preferred to take the children further afield after the tour to a child's role play area in the next local authority but due to budget within the school a teacher to child ratios this would have been too difficult.

Conclusion and reflection.

Throughout the year we have worked on ECAD4008, we have looked at the six AoLE's and worked on an in depth understanding of what the new curriculum means for teachers and the pupils. In my opinion, the final piece that ties the curriculum together is the cross circular framework. The old curriculum was outdated (OECD,2015) it lacked an understanding of what 'child-centred' really meant. This new curriculum and focus on student voice really puts the pupils at the core of learning as well as giving the teachers of Wales a clear understanding of what is expected of them. I know that when I go into BA1, I have the best knowledge possible on pedagogy to make clear and concise lesson plans that will benefit my professional standards as well as the quality of education to my students. Using different techniques throughout the course of my BA1, I really love the idea of discovery learning as its child lead. Especially when we look like at digital competency allowing the child to discover themselves with limited adult input gives them non-cognitive skills such as self-confidence and independence within a skill which is highly imperative in today's world.

Overall, I feel the Welsh curriculum has been developed into a promising place, with plenty of opportunities for schools, teachers, pupils, and families to have inputted in what they/their children are taught. I still feel however we cannot make a complete conclusion on the fact of whether it is having a positive impact on children's education until the results of the next PISA tests after 2026.

Refrence list,

- The Welsh Education Reform Journey A RAPID POLICY ASSESSMENT. (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/The-Welsh-Education-Reform-Journey.pdf>.
- Arthur, J. and Cremin, T. (2014). *Learning to teach in the primary school*. London: Routledge.
- GRIGG, R. (2022). *Becoming an Outstanding Primary School Teacher*. Routledge.
- Donaldson, G. (2015). Successful Futures Looking at the Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/succesful-futures-a-summary-of-professor-graham-donaldsons-report.pdf>.
- Mcleod, S. (2024). *Piaget's Theory And Stages Of Cognitive Development*. [online] Simply Psychology. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html>.
- Department for Education (2010). *The Importance of Teaching*. [online] Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b4029ed915d3ed9063285/CM-7980.pdf>.
- Front. Psychol. (2022). Early child development in play and education: A cultural-historical paradigm. [online] Available at: Early child development in play and education: A cultural-historical paradigm.
- OECD (2014). *Improving Schools in Wales: An OECD Perspective*. [online] Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/Improving-schools-in-Wales.pdf>.
- The Welsh Education Reform Journey A RAPID POLICY ASSESSMENT. (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/The-Welsh-Education-Reform-Journey.pdf>.
- Yr Adran Plant, Addysg, Dysgu Gydol Oes a Sgiliau Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills Play/Active Learning Overview for 3 to 7-year-olds. (n.d.). Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/storage/52aae98d-65ed-4065-9222-1a7876e150de/play-active-learning-overview-for-3-to-7-year-olds.pdf>.
- Welsh Government (2020). *Developing a vision for curriculum design - Hwb*. [online] hwb.gov.wales. Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/developing-a-vision-for-curriculum-design/#curriculum-design-and-the-four-purposes>.
- hwb.gov.wales. (n.d.). *Resources - Hwb*. [online] Available at: <https://hwb.gov.wales/resources>.
- Hargraves, V. (2021). *Vygotsky's philosophy of education*. [online] THE EDUCATION HUB. Available at: <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/vygotskys-philosophy-of-education/>.
- The Curriculum for Wales - Statements of What Matters Code WG21-78. (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-11/curriculum-for-wales-statements-of-what-matters-code.pdf>.
- Kerry, T. (2015). *Cross-curricular Teaching in the Primary School : Planning and Facilitating Imaginative Lessons*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge.