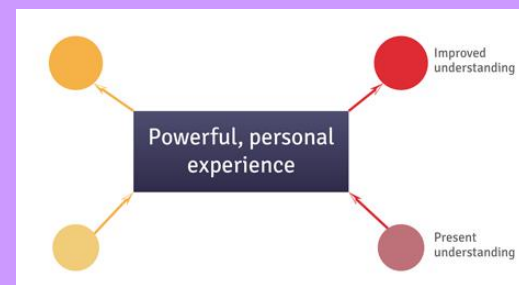
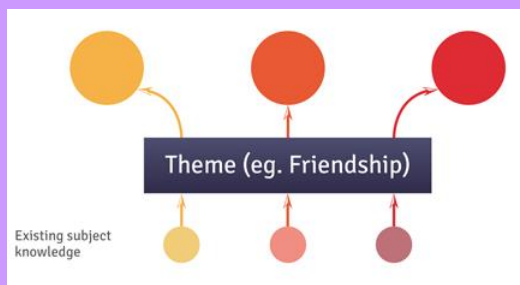


Year 3 – Africa/Safari

A cross-curricular approach



Barnes' (2015) theme-based model (above) could be used as a cross-curricular approach to teaching, using a theme to generate exploration through several different subjects. For example, using Africa as a theme could generate learning in a wide variety of subjects: Geography (WAG, 2008), by using maps and co-ordinates to locate Africa and identify similarities and differences between here in Wales and Africa. Literacy (WG, 2016a) by developing thinking and oracy skills by using P4C (EEF, 2015) to talk about wild animals found in Africa for example and is it ok to keep one as a pet. Developing their reading through guided reading on books about Africa and asking questions (EEF, 2017), developing writing skills through letter and diary writing (EEF, 2017). Numeracy (WG, 2016b) by developing their numerical reasoning and number skills by incorporating Africa into the tasks for example, on holiday using money to buy things, using the skills in a real life context. Digital Competence (WG, 2016c) by composing a diary entry in the form of an email, developing strategies for finding information online about a topic, i.e. Africa and by collecting data from the class on their favourite animal found in Africa, entering it into a system (for example J2Data on hwb, 2018) and analysing the data.

Ty'n y Wern Primary School is a great example of how schools can introduce cross-curricular themes that help develop a range of skills including, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Their annual arts Festival and Welsh heritage projects involve the community and identifies Welsh culture (Estyn, 2016).

The benefits of using this approach are it works well to inform and motivate children (more needed). However, when using this approach, if teachers are not confident, knowledgeable and plan the lessons well then there can be tenuous links and unclear aims which limits the learning. It is very important to have specific subject targets, outcomes and purposes so the learning objectives are clear.

The curriculum in Wales is changing. Teachers could use cross-curricular approaches by giving pupils the opportunity to develop skills in rich contexts which they can transfer across the curriculum and use in every day life. Preparing children with skills for life.

Here is what Donaldson (2015) says about Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence in the new curriculum and how we should apply it:

Competence in literacy is essential for learning across the curriculum. It is not only about understanding the essential components of spoken word, syntax and spelling but is about how we teach and learn it through rich contexts which can be reinforced, extended and applied.

Competence in numeracy is essential for independent living and work. Children and young people need regular opportunities to deepen their understanding of number, to reinforce and use their number skills in different contexts.

Having the ability to use digital technology skills creatively is an increasingly common feature of the modern workplace. Essentially we are preparing children and young people for jobs that do not exist yet. The digital competences should not primarily be predicted on rapidly changing technologies, but should focus on pedagogy, deeper skill development, transferability, and understanding, as well as potential application of these competencies.

Barnes' (2015) multi-disciplinary cross-curricular approach (above) aims at using a single experience or theme to develop higher levels of understanding and performance in two or more disciplines. This approach has been developed and can be seen in the Sottish Curriculum of Excellence (2008). An example one could use for this approach could be a Safari theme with the development of Literacy and Digital Competence.

If money for resources take children to a safari park (nearest one to Wales is West Midlands Safari Park, 2018) or read 'The Akimbo Adventures' by Alexander McCall Smith (2013). The book contains three adventures about a boy who lives in Africa and protects different animals. After the visit or reading the book split the children up in groups of four. Each group will have a different animal and their task is to research information on that animal (for example, habitat and food) as a group and present their information using the online tool or application of Popplet (2018). From the digital competence framework (WG, 2016c) pupils will be developing strategies for finding information using different keywords and techniques, creating and editing multimedia components and organising a range of text, image, sound, animation and video for selected purposes.

Using the information from the Safari visit or book reading give the pupils the opportunity to develop their writing skills by writing a diary entry: 'A day in the life of a Safari worker or Akimbo...' The literacy (WG, 2016a) skills pupils will be developing are: writing for different purposes and readers, choosing words for variety and interest, including relevant details, information or observations in their writing and writing accurately using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling (EEF, 2017). Johnstown Primary School are a great example of how a school can combine literacy and digital competence as an on going project, they have a school online learning blog. Children adopt the role of a journalist and assume responsibility for editing and validating their newspaper style blogs before publication to the wider school community (Estyn, 2018).

The benefits of this approach are an increase in pupils' confidence, improvement of all skills across the curriculum (literacy, numeracy and digital competence), children are more engaged in the learning experiences and pupils learn to work collaboratively.

However, this approach requires high degrees of planning, confidence and teacher knowledge. Limitations could include more focus on certain subjects rather than all subjects.

