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Compare a global curriculum with a UK curriculum.

Introduction:

This presentation is going to look at Finland's curriculum and compare it to the current Welsh curriculum. It will show the two curriculums and the different use of their pedagogies. It will also compare how Finland's pedagogies are working well compared to the current Welsh methods which are in the process of being transformed.

A curriculum refers to the information taught to children within an academic environment (Nicholls, and Nicholls, 2018). It is the education provided to individuals to help them develop on their skills experience and knowledge of subjects set out by academics, or governments (Cambridge dictionary, 2020).

Main body:

Examining Finland's curriculum, it is evident that by looking at the schools and their Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results their educational system is proving to be a success in educating young individuals (OECD, 2020). Looking at the three most recent PISA exams, Finland's results have steadily grown, and they are one of the top ranked schools within PISA. PISA is a global test that schools take part in to assess the performance of the children, teachers and the school. These assessments occur every three years with the results then being presented globally (OECD, 2019).

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological system the macro influences such as PISA have influenced the way schools and governments make or change policies within Wales (Paquette and Ryan, 2001).Volante, (2018) states PISA over the last few years has been represented in the news much more often than it has when they first introduced it. This has had an impact on current policy and national pride. The published results not only highlight

the best performing school but also the lowest and in 2012 Wales set out their new literacy and numeracy framework due to the global influence of PISA (Barrance, 2019).
One of the areas that prove to be somewhat unique within the Finish education system is the assessment and testing of children. In 1991, school inspections were removed from the Finish education systems (Hancock, 2011) it is now the responsibility of the schools and teachers to evaluate the performance of their children and their teachers within that school (OECD, 2013).

The education system places the importance on the trust and vision of their teachers to assess the children in the schools (Halinen, 2018). They work with the students to encourage them to take responsibility of their learning by encouraging them to design and assess their progression throughout the school year (OECD, 2013). The purpose of assessment rather than using testing in Finland is to only imbed a supportive and encouraging environment where children feel safe to evaluate themselves in order to develop their education (Hendrickson, 2012). Rossi (1995) also agrees that assessment rather than testing allows children to understand, reflect and evaluate their decisions which helps them create life-long skills for when they leave education.

Teachers also mimic this assessment by working with the headteacher by evaluating themselves throughout the year to track and develop to improve their teaching and focus on areas to change their pedagogy approaches to better suit the children (OECD,2013). Formative assessment is used within schools to provide teachers with the knowledge to modify their teaching if needed (Black and Willaims, 1998).

The only external exam that children in Finland sit is one at the end of secondary school if they want to attend higher education (OECD,2013). This test allows universities to evaluate an individual's development so they can move onto higher education (Halinen, 2018). Due to the success of the education system in Finland sixty five percent of students attend university (NCEE, 2005). This test proves successful due to the lack of pressure put on

children throughout their school life and children in Finland take the test with pride and certainty of their ability due to their successful education system (OECD, 2010**).**

Within Wales, all children from years two to nine take part in national literacy and numeracy testing every year (Schoolrun 2020). These tests have been running since 2013 after PISA test showed Wales scored much lower than any other country in the United Kingdom (Barrance, 2019). The Welsh Government believe these tests allow teachers, Schools and Governments to track the progression of children and gives everyone a clear picture of children's performance in school (Schoolrun, 2020). Testing throughout Wales has been argued to neglect children's health and a survey taken in 2019 concluded forty two percent of children indicated that testing was putting a strain on children and affecting their school and home life (Reclaimingschools, 2019). Ward, (2018) states children's worries are coming from testing with children not being able to sleep or focus and teachers seeing changes in behaviours such as anxiety from the pressures of testing. HESA (2019) concludes that from 2013 students' attending university in Wales has fallen, due to too much pressure. However, Black et al (2003) argues assessment produces effective knowledge about children's development. Abrams (2011) also argues in favour of assessment as a principle of a Finish school stated he believed testing is necessary and beneficial to justify Finland's reformed Curriculum. While there is an argument that assessment works and is necessary, PISA result show Wales is still falling behind all the other countries in the United Kingdom (Welsh Government, 2018) and Finland even after implementing this new testing policy.
In 2018 Wales scored a total of 483 points and Finland scored a total of 520 points proving that education within Finland is justified and working.

Another area of difference between the two curriculums is how Finland's approach to education breaks down subject based learning and explores an approach that allows practitioners to teach children through multiple subjects at one time (Popa, Simona and Fitzgerald, 2014). They argue their cross-curricular approach allows children to problem solve by using several skills and a range of experiences and knowledge (Kangas, 2019).

Finland use the cross-curricular approach to allow children to understand that links between subjects happen naturally in everyday life, this gives them the opportunity to prepare for their future experiences outside of school (Darling-Hammond, 2010)**.** Teachers use outdoor play for children to learn mathematics, learn languages, develop artistic skills and build on their physical education (Kangas, 2019). Providing an enjoyable space where children can ski or garden but also build on their communication or mathematical skills (Kangas, 2019).

At present, the Welsh curriculum does not use a cross curricular approach with any of its subjects. Instead, Wales uses the National literacy and numeracy framework as type of a cross-curricular approach for developing these two subjects (Welsh Government, 2013). The Welsh Government (2013) recognise literacy and numeracy as the essential tools for young people to reach their potential in the current curriculum. However, this framework was introduced to the Welsh curriculum in 2013 after their PISA results showed they were doing worse than any other country in the United Kingdom (French, 2020). This framework is a statutory requirement that looks to develop children's literacy and numeracy skills throughout all subjects of the classroom (Welsh Government, 2017). Welsh Government (2016) at present use a curriculum where teachers teach individual subjects throughout the day, giving them an allotted time to educate the children on this subject, not using the ability to cross-teach through all subjects.

However, it is becoming more apparent that cross curricular teaching will be taught in class with the new Donaldson curriculum throughout all subjects (Welsh Government, 2015). Wales is currently transforming their current curriculum and will be introducing the new curriculum into schools and education settings in 2022 (Welsh Government, 2015). The new curriculum will consist of six different areas of learning. These six areas include, Expressive Arts, Health and Well-Being, Humanities, Language, Literacy and Communication, Mathematics, Science and Technology (Welsh Government, 2015).

These areas will be taught through a cross curricular approach allowing children to develop a creative way to develop their knowledge (Welsh Government, 2020). This approach allows

children to become active members of society that can problem solve, critically think and organise themselves (Welsh Government, 2015). Kelly (2013) argues that this approach to education will enable children to gain a wide range of knowledge and provide them with the opportunity to apply these skills throughout everyday life as they progress. By allowing children to engage in multiple areas of education, they gain skills in dealing with real life situations where connections between multiple subjects occur naturally in the everyday world (Kelly, 2013). Estyn also supports this and reported they want to see the natural links between subjects and themes within classrooms in Wales, allowing children to use their skills to help them later in life (Estyn, 2019). However, Ofsted (2002) argue that too many subjects taught at one time can cause a child to lose concentration or interest. No more than two subjects should be integrated together to give the child a clear grasp on what is being taught (Ofsted, 2002). Intern Finland's PISA results show they are one of the top-ranking schools due to their education system and one of their main approaches is cross-curricular teaching.

In conclusion, we can see that the Finish education system is thriving due to the evidence presented about its curriculum. The PISA results presented show Finland are not only doing increasingly better than Wales in the global testing's but are ranking as one of the top schools globally.

Wales however are showing that testing is becoming increasingly harmful to a child's health and wellbeing with stress, anxiety and changing behaviours within the classroom. Wales's new education reform also shows they are moving in the same direction when it comes to a cross-curricular approach to their lessons where they will introduce new pedagogies when teaching. Hopefully, with its new reform Wales will see an increase in better results and an increase of student's applying for higher education in hopes they will want to keep developing themselves on their education.

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