



APPENDIX GA36c

LEVEL 6 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Student name:	Nicholas Thomas	Student ID number:	1702851
Programme:	BA in Education with QTS		
Module:	Cross Curricular Responsibilities: Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competence		
Module code:	ECAD6012	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Rachel Wallis	Internal Verifier:	Rachel Wallis
Assignment Title:	Looking forward: A critical analysis of literacy, numeracy and digital competence as cross-curricular responsibilities.	Word count (or equivalent):	2, 500
Submission deadline:	20.12.19 (23:59)	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	31.1.20
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 40%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		
4. Practical Application Skills		
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)

Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)

Up to 1 week late (40% Max)

Over 1 week late (0%)

%

This piece is discussing some of the issues and benefits of the inclusion of cross curricular responsibilities in the upcoming reformed curriculum. The cross curricular responsibilities in literacy, numeracy and digital competence are intended to be included in all lessons through a child's journey in compulsory education. There is already a statutory requirement of cross curricular learning in the shape of The Literacy and Numeracy framework (September 2013), the upcoming changes to the curriculum adds digital competency to these compulsory frameworks. The discussion will revolve around the introduction of the three cross curricular responsibilities and the issues and benefits of implementation. Firstly is the government bodies and agencies that support the change. There will then be discussion into implementation and some suggestions on countering issues that may arise, with a case study as an example of good practice.

There are many reasons why the use of cross curricular teaching is increasing in Wales, many government documents and policies have been written with reference to the formation of our new curriculum that all call for cross curricular teaching to some degree. In 'Qualified for life' (Welsh Government, 2015) they outline the steps to and essential blocks of building a new curriculum, one of these is to further develop cross-curricular responsibilities. The new developments include the addition of digital competence as an equal partner to literacy and numeracy. This document states that the suggested blocks of the new curriculum will aid in the attainment of the four purposes in 'Successful Futures' (2015). The successful futures document also states the importance of these cross curricular responsibilities in creating learners that will be successful in a modern world where problems do not arise with simple one subject answers, there is often a need for problem solving skills from across areas of learning. The document Education in Wales: Our national mission Action plan 2017–21 (2017), notes that by 2021 Welsh Government aims for the learners within the new curriculum to have relevant high level skills in numeracy, literacy and digital competence. The goal requires government, authorities and schools to each play a role in creating this future, from creating policies to ensuring learners have ample experiences of each responsibility. There has also been many reviews into education with some largely affecting future curriculum reforms. The Rose report (2008) in England highlighted many issues with the system at the time. Rose suggests a return to a system slightly similar to that before the introduction of the national curriculum where practitioners taught through topic based lessons. In detail he suggests creating a mixture of quality cross curricular study and stimulating subject teaching. This

thought is potentially mirrored in Professor Donaldson's suggestions for a new Welsh curriculum following his review of learning in Wales. *Successful Futures* (Donaldson, 2015) promotes three cross curricular responsibilities in literacy, numeracy and digital competency, alongside Areas of Learning and Experience; that are wider learning disciplines. Rose also uses the term 'Areas of Learning'.

An older report written by Alexander, Rose, and Woodhead (1992) notes the difficulty with the implementation of a fully topic based curriculum, where if applied poorly can lead to the fragmentation of learning and superficial teaching where students learn many different skills and topics but fail to fully develop this knowledge. This document also suggests that certain subject lessons are still beneficial to primary learners. Subjects such as art can become lost in topic work, where learners will create simple drawings to accompany written work. This issue is also highlighted by Barnes (2011) who labels this method the 'Tokenistic' approach where a subject is tacked onto a main focus lesson to give the illusion of cross curricular learning. Both Barnes and Alexander, Rose, and Woodhead advise against practice such as this due to the poor standard of teaching and learning it produces. These recommendations should be applied to the inclusion of the three cross curricular responsibilities in literacy, numeracy, and digital competency. These areas and skills cannot be simply tacked on to existing lessons as that would not produce adequate learning of the skills within the responsibilities, the skills will become an afterthought and lose importance (Alexander, 2009).

The importance of cross curricular teaching and learning of literacy, numeracy, and digital competence is clearly significant to Professor Donaldson and the Welsh Government. Both the 'Successful Futures' and 'Education in Wales: Our national mission Action plan 2017–21' documents clearly state the need for high standards of literacy, numeracy and digital competency among learners (Donaldson, 2015; Welsh Government, 2017). Donaldson (2015) writes that literacy, numeracy and digital competency need to be regularly visited to deepen understanding of these skills that are "essential to independent living" (p.40), he adds that the visitation of these skills cannot be repetitive and 'drill-like' as this will hinder the connections between the skills and the real life use of said skills. The introduction of these skills as cross curricular responsibilities hints at the use of Bruner's 'Spiral Curriculum' (1960) where the curriculum will allow learners to revisit skills and build on previously acquired knowledge. Bruner writes that this method will aid in effective learning, but concedes that there must be a balance between the range and depth of learning. All skills must be options to be revisited and built upon without

recycling the same skills repeatedly. The skills must also be taught in enough depth to allow the learners to become empowered and wish to build further knowledge. We must be cautious not to dilute subjects in the goal of cross curricular teaching (Bruner, 1960; Pollard, 2002; Barnes, 2011). This leaves a dilemma of creating and planning a curriculum that fits perfect to allow the depth and range of learning. To create a perfect spiral curriculum would be a difficult task and without further concrete research into its benefits, the method will only be applied in conjunction with other constructivist theories. This difficulty may be mitigated following the suggestion of only three cross curricular responsibilities and not a whole curriculum. Many writers (Kerry, 2011; Barnes, 2015; Scoffham, 2009, Alexander, 2009) and theorists such as Dewey, Montessori, and Froebel note that a learners understanding and developing knowledge is not compartmentalised into strict subjects and teaching must allow for learners to create links between learning and various contexts, The theory of learning rarely changes drastically only the content. They generally agree that this would be best done through cross curricular teaching methods. Haylock and Cockburn (2013) suggest the benefits of cross curricular learning on young children in numeracy and mathematics. They write that one corner of learning in mathematics is concrete experiences, noting that children learn through connections with the real world. An example they give is a child counting walking up the stairs, the physical action of climbing the steps helps to guide the child through the idea of numbers becoming larger and to the sequences of numbers. The linking in this instance can be used to connect different cross curricular lessons across many areas. The authors note that a simple method to improving mathematical understanding is to connect learning with other experiences which can be reasoned as cross curricular learning.

Latham (2002) notes that language skills can benefit from being taught in different scenarios but suggests that the largest benefit is that more skills can be included in each lesson. Goodman (1996) on the other hand writes that literacy development begins before school, he suggests that children are learning from experiences and that teachers should utilise this, by continuing to allow them to learn through varying language experiences. Noam Chomsky (1965) believes that we as humans have a natural ability to develop our language and communication skills. Both of these linguists would suggest that the learning of language and communication is best done through cross curricular teaching practises. Didau (2002) would probably disagree, he writes that literacy should be taught through a progression model in specific structured lessons that focus on literacy and not 'added-on' to regular lessons. Depending on the practitioner either model could be seen

as 'better' and would be down to pedagogical beliefs. Personally one would think that Goodman and Chomsky are correct for early development and general skills but would need a method similar to Didau's to advance skills beyond general levels.

Joan Dean (2001) has noted her concerns around the continuity and monitoring of learning when conducting learning in a cross curricular method. This could be an issue with various learning objectives or outcomes across subjects occurring within a singular lesson, teachers may find it difficult to track and then progress the students learning effectively. The students might not be learning consistently from lesson to lesson and some cross curricular skills may not be revisited for several lessons, this would create issues with progress. The pupils will find it difficult to recall what they did wrong if the feedback was given several days or even weeks previously. To counter this in his writing around the structure of his spiral curriculum Bruner (1960) notes that practitioners must use formative assessment when using the spiral curriculum. His curriculum creates an environment where all subjects are taught in a cross curricular fashion with the ability to revisit areas. This is similar to the method in which the three responsibilities will be included into the curriculum. His recommended use of formative assessment to address the continuity of learning ensuring that the learners are given the opportunity to develop a skill during the class. As opposed to receiving feedback at the end of a lesson and then being unable to further develop learning due to the lessons moving forward. The practitioner must also ensure that the skills are progressed by effective planning, where skills are moving forward with the pupils possibly by using approaches to scaffolding learning as suggested by Vygotski (1978).

In a report into the standards of literacy and numeracy education across the wider curriculum as cross curricular skills in the foundation phase, Estyn (2017) found that the delivery of literacy and numeracy is often very rigid and structured around directed tasks lead by an adult. Additionally half of the schools inspected did not plan work effectively, failing to ensure that the pupils developed their skills across all areas of the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy was planned as accompanying tasks carried out by a teaching assistant or class support as opposed to ingrained into the main focus through enhanced provisions. Although this report focuses on the foundation phase some points can be transferred. There is generally no enhanced or continuous provision in key stage 2 but the intent of the cross curricular responsibilities is to ensure that the skills are taught in

various contexts within a larger lesson or topic where the skills can be revisited holistically by the pupils, and not as drills as stated earlier. This would equate to an enhanced provision as seen in the foundation phase. ESTYN (2017) suggests to regularly plan these opportunities to apply knowledge in an array of settings rather than to simply practice basic skills is essential. If schools are in need, Estyn states that the local authority should ensure that teachers receive the opportunity to train and up-skill to ensure the effective delivery of literacy, numeracy, and digital competency skills.

A case study on literacy and numeracy cross curricular practices conducted by ESTYN in 2014, notes some good examples of practice. Although this case study is around the schools implementation of a cross-curricular Literacy and Numeracy Framework in 2012, it can also apply today with the inclusion of digital competence to the cross curricular responsibilities. Firstly, the school developed training following guidance from the Welsh Government that was delivered by the school leadership team. The schools teachers were then asked to assess themselves and their previous lessons against the upcoming (at the time) framework. This practice highlighted many areas that had been insufficiently covered by current practices, although the school felt that it had implemented the cross curricular responsibilities well beforehand. The school then designed a internal framework of what skills best fit into the skills in the wider curriculum. The teachers planned around both curriculum skills and the linked cross curricular skill. ESTYN reports that this internal framework promoted the use of a wide range of skills being developed throughout the school and is an example of good practice. This case study highlights both initial poor implementation and a development of practice to improve teaching. The issues this particular school displayed are again prevalent across many schools in Wales with the inclusion of digital competency into the cross curricular responsibilities formally the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (ESTYN, 2018b). ESTYN recommends that schools audit teachers knowledge and improve them through development plans as well as mapping the development of the DCF across the curriculum to address any weaknesses. This suggestion highlights an issue with cross curricular responsibilities, schools are unaware of how they are performing in the delivery of literacy, numeracy, and digital competencies. Schools that place high importance on the responsibilities may still be underperforming as the range of skills taught may be poor, with some skills being 're-taught' regularly. Robin Alexander (2009) also writes on the importance of carefully crafting a curriculum and teaching plan to ensure that teaching is effective. Adding that

one must be cautious when selecting what subjects are combined and what remain separate. This case study is a excellent example of an issue of adding cross curricular teaching into a curriculum as well as an example of overcoming the problems schools will face. ESTYN's (2018a) Summary of findings for 2018 they suggest an additional issue with the addition of digital competency to the curriculum, the varying degrees that schools have implemented the DCF framework. It has been several years since its publication but without a concrete timeframe schools have had different approaches and internal timescales on how they have included the framework. This will cause schools to have different practices and again as in the case study those practices may be ineffective albeit that the schools have the best intentions.

The benefits of cross curricular teaching is seen by the Welsh Government following is implementation under council of Professor Donaldson and his review of the Welsh curriculum. The report suggests the implementation of the cross curricular responsibilities to be beneficial to a child's successful development. A very similar report conducted by Rose (2008) also comes to the same conclusion. Concerning implementation there are numerous suggestions by the writers noted above on how to proceed. The connecting issue with most of the suggestions is planning. The ESTYN case study highlights how necessary it is to plan effectively adding the need to reassess planning regularly to ensure skills are covered effectively. A view supported by Barnes, Bruner, and Pollard. Whom suggest the importance of ensuring that skills are covered in enough depth to promote effective learning. From this, effective cross curricular learning can be beneficial to a students' learning but here must be assurances that the school effectively plans and reassesses the internal curriculum frameworks that teachers will then plan around. Ensuring a wide array of coverage and depth of understanding of the cross curricular responsibilities.

There will also be a need for retraining of teachers in updated DCF skills. The changing nature of technology must be followed by an adaptable curriculum. Successful Futures (2015) recommendations the competences should not primarily be predicated on rapidly changing technologies, but should focus on pedagogy, deeper skill development, transferability, and understanding, as well as potential application of these competencies. This could mean that a teachers pedagogical skill may need to be reevaluated and adjusted to accommodate the new responsibilities. Personally, my skills in planning literacy, numeracy and digital competencies must be updated as I have fallen into the traps outlined above where skills are covered repeatedly and a wide array of skills are

being left uncovered. This is bad practice and must be corrected to efficiently incorporate the new responsibilities into the curriculum.

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