



Flying The Welsh Flag

ECIE5004

Celebrating Language and Culture Belonging to
Wales

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Rationale

The language of Wales has changed significantly over time, historically Wales has seen a significant decline in the number of Welsh speakers from 902,000 in 1831 to 656,000 in 1931 as Welsh was seen as an “inferior” language and children were “actively discouraged from using it”, especially in a school environment (Trudgill, 2000). The “Welsh Not” punishment for speaking Welsh in school was commonly used and stigmatised the Welsh language (LingoDigest, 2024). If a metadiscursive regime “objected to, corrected, made fun of” a child for their metalinguistic behaviour, then “this would eventually lead to his being socially ostracized and, in all probability, institutionalized” (Taylor, 2023). Language is a vital part of social cohesion and the “attempted imposition” of the English language was viewed as an effort to “obliterate” Welsh culture; it had a profound impact and by 1981, only 19% of the population in Wales could speak Welsh (Trudgill, 2000; Garrett, 2010).

This decline in the Welsh language was initiated by The Act of Union 1536 which caused cultural linguistic challenges and was further impacted by the Industrial Revolution, where the influx of migrant workers diluted the Welsh language (Parliamentary Archives, 2018; BBC Wales, 2014). Attitudes to minority languages such as Welsh can cause a range of sociolinguistic issues and “play a key role in whether they survive, revive, reflower, or whether they die out, as parents stop using them with their children” (Garrett, 2010). Wales began to reverse its decline of Welsh usage with political policies, namely The Welsh Language Acts of 1967 and 1993 and The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011; including the establishment of The Welsh Language Board in 1993 through the Act (The National Archives, 2024; Law Wales, 2024). These were catalysts for investment in the Welsh language and led to educational reforms, where in 1995 the National Curriculum for Wales made Welsh a compulsory subject up to the age of 16 (The National Archives, 1995). The Curriculum Cymreig was also designed to plug the gaps in the National Curriculum; promoting the diversity of Wales and teaching children about Welsh culture, economy, environment, history and language; however, its success was inconsistent throughout Wales (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, 2003).

Notably, Welsh language and culture have similar trends of decline and revival in North America and Patagonia’s Welsh language areas (Garrett, 2010). Ohio is trying to preserve and revive interest in the “Welsh language, culture and the arts”;

whereas three Language Development Officers from Wales travel to Patagonia yearly to teach Welsh and engage in cultural activities using the Welsh language (Community Foundation Wales, 2024; British Council, 2024). Therefore, identifying as Welsh is not limited to living in Wales, it is more globalised with various links to Welsh heritage and genealogy (Garrett, 2010). In Wales, there has been a significant push to reignite the Welsh language and culture since a report by Donaldson (2015) on the inadequate state of Welsh education and his recommendations for a new curriculum that was fit for modern purposes and future-proof for subsequent generations of Welsh citizens in an ever-evolving and rapidly changing world. While the suggestions from this report were being reviewed and developed, the Welsh Government launched an ambitious policy to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050 which needed dedicated investment and commitment (Welsh Government, 2017).

The new Curriculum for Wales is instrumental in the government's attempt to achieve this goal; it recognises the benefits of a "multilingual and plurilingual approach" in education, as well as the importance of creating "well-rounded" individuals who are proud of their cultural heritage and the need for children to become "ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world" (Welsh Government, 2021a). Learning theories are used in the development of any national curriculum (see Appendix A), the varying theories overlap, and this is also highlighted in the Curriculum for Wales (see Appendix B and C) with its cross-curricular approach and four purposes reflecting a sense of belonging (Welsh Government, 2022).

Schools are where children spend a large proportion of their childhood, this is where children acquire a substantial amount of "the community's normative techniques of measuring the component parts, events, activities, experiences" of life around them, at the same time they are acquiring "the skills required to participate in the very practices thus metalinguistically measured" (Taylor, 2023). Additionally, it is important to note that becoming bilingual has distinct stages of learning; Cummins (1979) states that children have basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), but these are not necessarily developed at the same level at the same time, so being socially fluent in a language is not the same as being academically proficient. However, bilingual children benefit from common underlying language proficiency (CULP), where they can understand the patterns and links between languages; this is a "positive force" in children's

development, therefore a multilingual and culturally sustaining pedagogy should be encouraged (Cummins, 2021). Hence, the activities, events, and experiences created by schools significantly impact children's language, culture, and sense of belonging.

A school's Welsh policy will have clear guidelines for teaching Welsh as a first or second language. In the author's experience of being based in a second language Welsh school, the policy aims to "foster a positive attitude towards Welsh" and "help children become aware of the part played by the language, literature and music in the history and life in Wales" (School A, 2015). The basis for this policy was the Curriculum Cymreig, which is now further supported by the Curriculum for Wales, it outlines some, but not all, of the activities used to support Welsh Language and culture within the school (Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, 2003; Welsh Government, 2022; School A, 2015). These include encouraging pupils to participate in the school's annual Eisteddfod on St David's Day and "enter the Urdd Eisteddfod National competitions", allowing children to experience immersive Welsh recital and sporting activities (School A, 2015). Other activities include using Welsh in assemblies; listening to Welsh music; singing Welsh hymns; learning Welsh in the classroom incidentally, with specifically planned lessons and interactively using technology; telling Welsh rhymes and stories, and critically evaluating texts through guided reading; using Welsh language, stories and history in drama and role-play; educational trips to Welsh landmarks or heritage sites and Urdd centres, and allowing children to explore or research topics further in by creating bi-lingual poster, presentations and videos on things they find interesting or want to learn more about.

Overview of Activities

To Promote Welsh Language

The following activities integrate Welsh language into everyday school life; to make learning Welsh natural, meaningful and enjoyable:

- Daily Welsh language practice – morning greetings, talk about the weather or how they feel today, answer the morning and afternoon registers, and say what they would like for lunch.
- Welsh language lessons through songs and stories – popular Welsh songs and rhymes, as well as traditional folk stories and poems from Wales.
- Bilingual projects – create presentations, videos or posters on topics such as Welsh landmarks, historical events or legends.
- Interactive technology tools – using Welsh language resources such as Duolingo or Hwb for interactive practice (Duolingo, 2024; Digital Learning Unit Welsh Government, 2024).
- Immersive role-play and drama – set up activities where students must act out scenes entirely in Welsh.
- Celebrate Welsh Language days - Diwrnod Shwmae and Dydd Miwsig Cymru are opportunities to encourage children to speak and immerse themselves in Welsh (Diwrnod Shwmae, 2024; Welsh Government, 2024a).
- Cultural festivals – take part in regional Eisteddfods and hold mini-Eisteddfod competitions at school; where children learn and perform music, poetry, stories, dance and drama in Welsh and create artwork of famous Welsh landscapes, themes or people with Welsh captions.

To Promote Welsh Culture

These are some cultural activities that can help children understand Welsh customs; by engaging in immersive activities they gain a deeper appreciation of Welsh traditions and their national identity:

- Organising a school eisteddfod – they gain experience of a traditional Welsh festival.
- Celebrating St David's Day – finding out about the patron saint of Wales, wearing traditional costumes and symbols, and making traditional food such as Bara Brith or Cawl.
- Exploring Welsh seasonal customs – such as the Mari Lwyd winter tradition, ask students to act out or create their representation (Rogers, 2024).

- Storytelling of Welsh myths and legends – tales of legends of King Arthur or the story of Gelert; children can also create artwork, comic strip storyboards or re-enact these stories.
- Exploring Welsh sports and games – traditional Welsh sports such as Rugby and Cnapan, teaching them about their history and cultural significance.
- Crafting and art inspired by iconic Welsh symbols – such as dragons, daffodils, leeks, Celtic knot, Welsh lovespoons and Welsh landscapes.
- Visiting Heritage sites and landmarks – for example, Pembroke Castle, the Green Bridge of Wales, Big Pit, and St Fagans National Museum. In some cases, this can be done virtually. Discuss their history and cultural importance.
- Welsh drama performances – encourage children to create plays incorporating cultural themes and the Welsh language.
- Taking part in Welsh music events or folk-dancing lessons.

To understand Welsh History

The Curriculum for Wales encourages schools to emphasise a learner-focused approach to explore local history, as well as incorporating the rest of Wales and the World beyond. Some activities include:

- Learning about their local town and/or city – looking at how it is now and comparing it to the past.
- Learning about local history and heritage sites – such as the Celts at Castell Henllys or Henry VII and the Tudor dynasty at Pembroke Castle.
- Learning about how we've arrived in the modern world – looking at Wales' history of mining, the maritime industry and how the Industrial Revolution changed Welsh culture.
- Field trips to explore the areas they are learning about – immersing children in the physical context of their history and making it memorable.
- Learning about cultural milestones such as the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.

To understand Welsh Geography

Children need to be taught about how Wales' diverse geography has shaped its history, traditions and economy, it also allows them to make comparisons with the rest of the world. This knowledge is gained through activities such as:

- Learning about geographical features – Pembrokeshire coastline or rivers for example provides a foundation to understand climate change, sustainability and resource management in a local context.
- Field trips to hike around areas of natural beauty – give children an opportunity to explore their natural surroundings and look at the habitats within them.
- Learning to read maps and see Wales in proportion to the rest of the World – learning about grid references, topography and compass directions.
- Learning about towns, counties and cities in Wales – how they were formed and their cultural significance.
- Conservation field trips – looking at protected habitats and being involved in litter picking or beach cleans, enables children to understand the importance of preservation and the impact of pollution on their environment.

Evaluation

All the activities used within schools to promote Welsh language and culture, can be woven into everyday school life and lessons. It can be drip-fed in a fun and engaging way that ignites Welsh children's passion to learn more about their heritage. The Curriculum for Wales is designed to be cross-curricular and person-centred (Welsh Government, 2022). It links well with the cognitive and constructivist theories of learning from interaction and experience, piecing together information like a jigsaw as their knowledge expands, such as Piaget (2001) theory of cognitive constructivism and Vygotsky (1978) theory of social constructivism, see Appendix D.

The humanistic approach of Rogers (1951) and Maslow (2017) is also highlighted, as all children have a right to access education in Wales, with their basic needs met

for them to thrive in a safe school environment and their voice as pupils is important as they should be actively involved in what they learn and the Curriculum for Wales is fully aligned with the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (Welsh Government, 2022; The United Nations, 1990). The behaviourism theory of Skinner (1965) reflects positive reinforcement of Welsh language and culture throughout the curriculum. The connective aspect where children are encouraged to problem solve leans into the learning by trial-and-error theory of Thorndike (2013).

Critical pedagogy, developed by Freire (2014), is reflected in the Curriculum for Wales with the promotion of critical thinking skills and social justice themes that run across various subject areas, it encourages pupils to ask cultural questions, challenging their assumptions and engage in discussions surrounding inequality and social problems, highlighting their responsibilities as "citizens of the world" (Welsh Government, 2022).

Lifelong learning is also a significant factor in the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales and aims to foster a love of learning in children so that they view it as an ongoing process rather than something which stops once they reach adulthood (Impact Wales, 2018; Welsh Government, 2022). The Welsh Government have backed this up by investing in adult education, it aims to create sustainable living in the 21st Century and an economically robust Wales that is actively part of the global economy (Welsh Government, 2012). This will also be key to ensuring the Welsh language does not fade away as it has in previous generations through migration (Trudgill, 2000).

Another area of concern is the decline of social and intergenerational family use of Welsh, which is a worry as it is seen as the "most important contributor to the survival of the language" and will hinder the Welsh Government's 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers (Jones, 2024). Interestingly, attitudes to using the Welsh language use within the family are more positive in Patagonia than in the home nation, where it is seen as having a "high level of importance" (Garrett, 2010). This attitude will hopefully catch up in Wales as more young people go through the Curriculum for Wales, as "those with higher exposure to Welsh at primary school age have more favourable attitudes towards Welsh" (Jones, 2024). Hopefully, it will also encourage more parents to learn or practice their Welsh socially, especially if their child is in a first-language Welsh school as many of these parents feel that "by

adopting the English language they or their ancestors have in some way been untrue to their cultural traditions”(Trudgill, 2000).

In 2021, the Welsh Government announced extra funding of £30 million solely for Welsh Medium education to “increase the percentage of learners in Welsh-medium education”, as a “key driver for Cymraeg 2050” and the goal of achieving “a million Welsh-speakers by 2050” (Welsh Government, 2021b). Conversely, some view this as an “arbitrary target” that has been “set as a demonstration of political commitment or as wish fulfilment for language activists” and that securing a million Welsh speakers is not an essential goal” (Williams, 2017). However, there is a glimmer that the investment and commitment to Welsh language and cultural education in schools will be successful in helping the Welsh Government reach its 2050 vision, as the latest data reports that “children and young people age 3 to 15 years were more likely to report that they could speak Welsh than any other age group” (Welsh Government, 2024b; Welsh Government, 2017).

By choosing activities that support the Curriculum for Wales’ aims for learning, schools are prioritising learner centred, holistic and inclusive approaches to teaching and learning; which creates active engagement, personalised learning, social interaction, and critical reflection. Therefore, creating a learning environment that prepares its pupils to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

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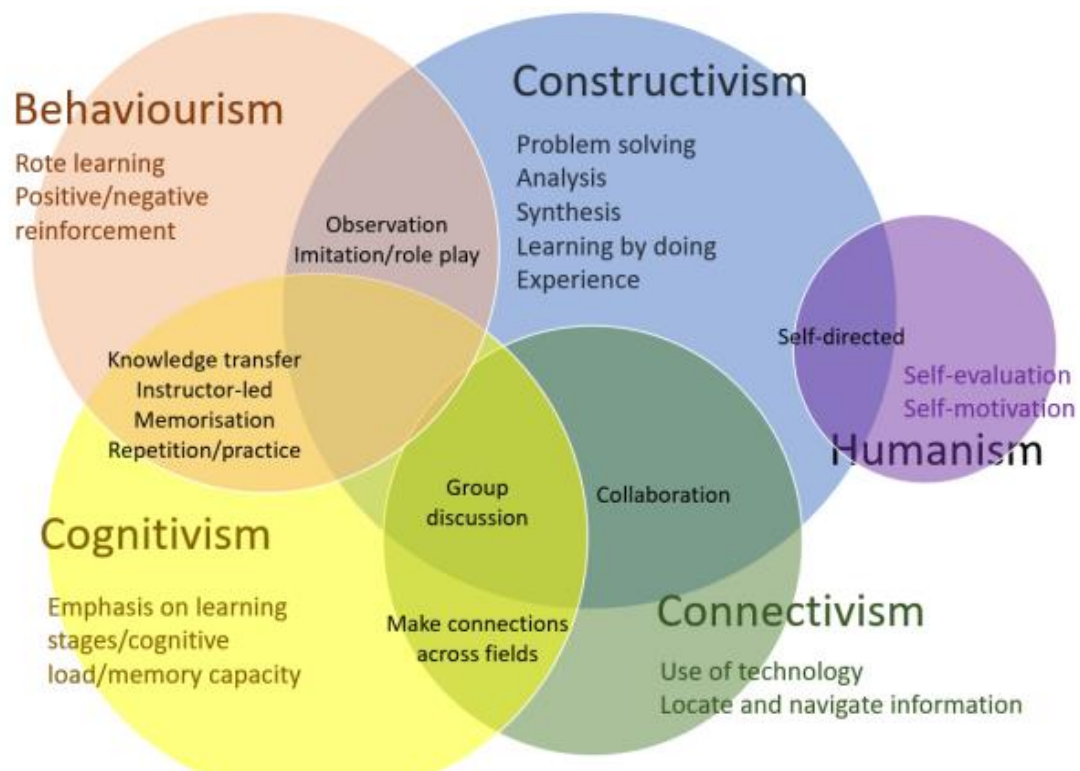
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Appendices

Appendix A: Diagram and table showing differences and commonalities between main learning theories (Ireland and Majewska, 2024)



BEHAVIOURISM	COGNITIVISM	CONSTRUCTIVISM	CONNECTIVISM	HUMANISM
External influences on learner behaviour / transferring knowledge	How learners think / transferring knowledge	Students create their own learning	Learners integrate thoughts, theories, etc. usually assisted by technology and in collaboration with others	Students have freedom and autonomy in learning
Behaviourism Memorising Rote learning Repetition/practice Observation Positive/negative reinforcement	Cognitivism Instructional explanation Teacher demonstration Repetition/practice Journaling Group discussion Make connections across fields	Constructivism Problem solving Analysis Synthesis	Connectivism Collaboration Use of technology Locate and navigate information to make meaning Make connections across fields Group discussion	Humanism Self-directed Self-evaluation Promotes engagement and self-motivation
Neo-behaviourism Modelling Imitation Repetition/practice	Cognitive load theory Instructor-led Learning designed for cognitive load limits Cognitive flexibility theory Make connections across fields	Social constructivism Group discussion Collaboration Problem solving Analysis Synthesis		

	COGNITIVISM	CONSTRUCTIVISM		
	Information processing theory Instructor-led Memorising Repetition/practice Cognitive tools theory (Egan) Learning organised in developmental stages	Social learning/social cognitive theory Observation Role play Discovery learning/inquiry-based learning Self-directed Collaboration Problem solving Analysis Activity theory Collaboration Use of tools Situated learning Field trip Work experience Experiential learning theory Learning through doing/experience Reflection Intersubjective learning Relationship between teacher and learner is central		

Appendix B: Curriculum for Wales, four purposes and for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022)

Curriculum design and the four purposes

The four purposes should be the starting point and aspiration for schools' curriculum design. Ultimately, the aim of a school's curriculum is to support its learners to become:

- 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

All our children and young people will be supported to develop as:

ambitious, capable learners who:

- set themselves high standards and seek and enjoy challenge
- are building up a body of knowledge and have the skills to connect and apply that knowledge in different contexts
- are questioning and enjoy solving problems
- can communicate effectively in different forms and settings, using both Welsh and English
- can explain the ideas and concepts they are learning about
- can use number effectively in different contexts
- understand how to interpret data and apply mathematical concepts
- use digital technologies creatively to communicate, find and analyse information
- undertake research and evaluate critically what they find

and **are ready to learn throughout their lives**

enterprising, creative contributors who:

- connect and apply their knowledge and skills to create ideas and products
- think creatively to reframe and solve problems
- identify and grasp opportunities
- take measured risks
- lead and play different roles in teams effectively and responsibly
- express ideas and emotions through different media
- give of their energy and skills so that other people will benefit

and **are ready to play a full part in life and work**

ethical, informed citizens who:

- find, evaluate and use evidence in forming views
- engage with contemporary issues based upon their knowledge and values
- understand and exercise their human and democratic responsibilities and rights
- understand and consider the impact of their actions when making choices and acting
- are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world, now and in the past
- respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society
- show their commitment to the sustainability of the planet

and **are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world**

healthy, confident individuals who:

- have secure values and are establishing their spiritual and ethical beliefs
- are building their mental and emotional well-being by developing confidence, resilience and empathy
- apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives
- know how to find the information and support to keep safe and well
- take part in physical activity
- take measured decisions about lifestyle and manage risk
- have the confidence to participate in performance
- form positive relationships based upon trust and mutual respect
- face and overcome challenge
- have the skills and knowledge to manage everyday life as independently as they can

and **are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.**

Designing a curriculum in Wales and for Wales

The Framework reflects Wales, its cultural heritage and diversity, its languages and the values, histories and traditions of its communities and all of its people.

Instilling learners with passion and pride in themselves, their communities and their country is central to the four purposes. Learners should be grounded in an understanding of the identities, landscapes and histories that come together to form their *cynefin*. This will not only allow them to develop a strong sense of their own identity and well-being, but to develop an understanding of others' identities and make connections with people, places and histories elsewhere in Wales and across the world.

It is important for this to be inclusive and to draw on the experiences, perspectives and cultural heritage of contemporary Wales. Confidence in their identities helps learners appreciate the contribution they and others can make within their different communities and to develop and explore their responses to local, national and global matters.

It also helps them to explore, make connections and develop understanding within a diverse society. This also recognises that Wales, like any other society, is not a uniform entity, but encompasses a range of values, perspectives, cultures and histories: that includes everybody who lives in Wales. This *cynefin* is not simply local but provides a foundation for a national and international citizenship. Further guidance on developing the Welsh context in learning is provided in the section on **local, national and international contexts**.

The Framework also reflects our bilingual nation. All learners should have appropriate pathways for learning Welsh and English to enable them to develop the confidence to use both languages in everyday life. Opportunities to use Welsh within and beyond the classroom (including on digital platforms) support learners to use Welsh confidently and appreciate its usefulness to communication in a bilingual Wales. Being (at the least) bilingual is not only a communication skill. Access to both languages helps unlock Wales's rich and unique literatures, geography, democracy, history and culture. To have knowledge, experience and an understanding of these supports learners to be active and successful citizens in contemporary Wales.

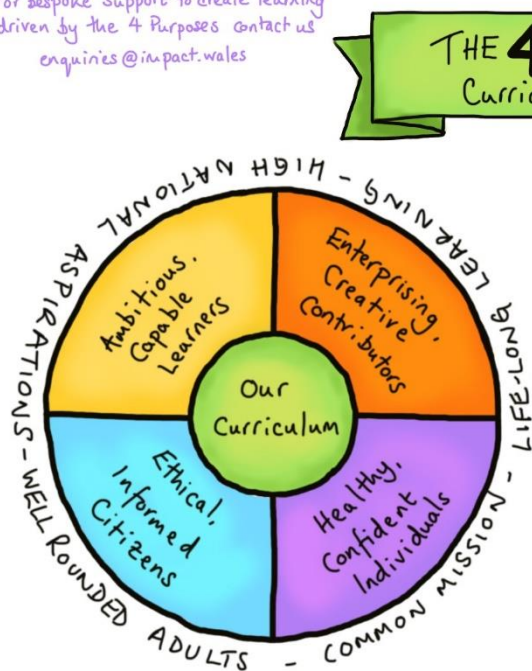
Developing learners' comfort and ability to work in two languages also provides a strong foundation for learners to engage with different languages they encounter and develop learning in other languages as they progress. Schools should ensure rich language environments for all learners and reading, listening, speaking and writing across the curriculum should be developmentally appropriate.

The **Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter)** is a national framework for all settings and schools to provide a holistic basis for planning experiences across the curriculum in order to increase learners' use of Welsh and develop their confidence in the language from an early age.

Appendix C – Overview of 4 Purposes of Curriculum for Wales (Impact Wales, 2018)

For bespoke support to create learning driven by the 4 Purposes contact us
enquiries@impact.wales

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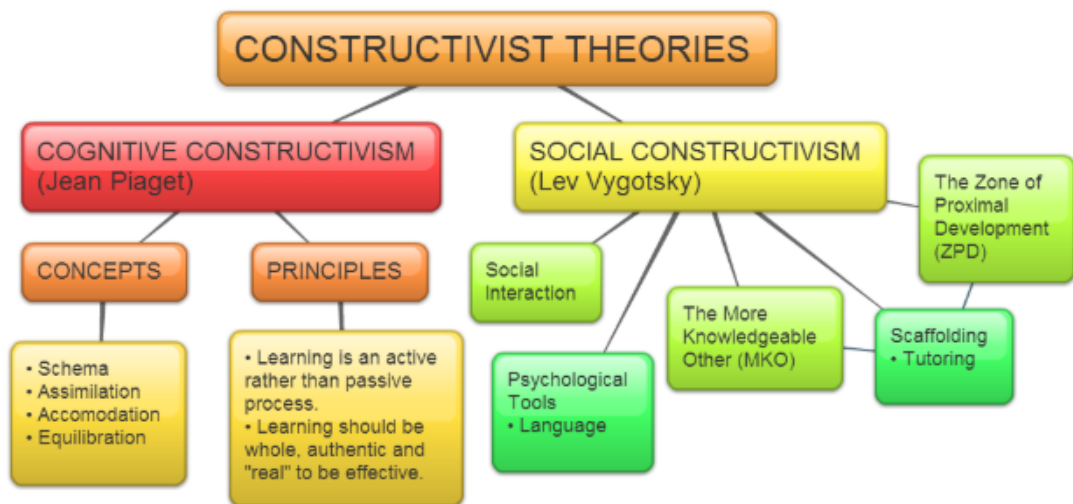


- * Why do we need the 4 Purposes for Curriculum for Wales?
 - * to set a common mission for all teachers & leaders.
 - * to support teachers & leaders to make appropriate choices about curriculum content & pedagogy
- * How should schools be using the 4 Purposes statements?
 - * as a set of guiding principles to aid planning decisions.
 - * as an evaluation tool to identify pupils' greatest needs.
- * Create a curriculum driven by the 4 Purposes:-
 - * know which of the 4 Purposes pupils need the most
 - * create teaching & learning that addresses those needs
 - * support pupils to **progress** in those areas

The 4 Purposes of Curriculum for Wales are underpinned by:

Principles enshrined by UNITED NATIONS Convention on the Rights of the Child	Welsh Language and Culture	Principles of inclusive education	Community & civic role of schools	Health & well-being of pupils
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Appendix D - Piaget and Vygotsky Constructivist theories (Main, 2021)



Types of constructivism