

MA (Education) Module: Leading Effective Learning and Teaching (Pedagogy) - M7X01462

This assignment aims to review research and literature which has informed my professional practice. The first section of this text aims to discuss the importance of different pedagogical principles in the Curriculum for Wales, (CfW) England and internationally. Drawing comparisons, exploring effective methods to implement as well as any possible implications for teachers in Wales.

The section which follows will contain a SWOT analysis and strategic plan to be presented to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at the writer's setting, exploring the implementation of pedagogical principles to consider when implementing the CfW, outlining possible challenges and solutions.

The final section of the text will be a poster presentation with the intended purpose to engage classroom practitioners in a dialogue about the implementation of the CfW.

Section 1: A review of relevant research and literature linked to pedagogy

The Curriculum for Wales which is set to be implemented in schools across Wales in 2022 was born out of the Successful Futures document written by Professor Graham Donaldson (Donaldson, 2015). It was created following a review of the curriculum, spurred on by a damning report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012). At the core of Donaldson's Successful Futures document and the Curriculum for Wales documents (Welsh Government, 2020) are four purposes which ultimately aim to support 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.

The following portion of this assignment will focus on pedagogy, providing a critical analysis of a range of pedagogical principles. Pedagogy can be described as the thought process behind the most effective methods of teaching a curriculum. It is not simply the methods and activities teachers plan to use in order to ensure learners meet lesson and curriculum objectives but rather the reasoning behind the choices teachers make about their methodology in the classroom. In order to help learners to meet modern educational challenges, as is the aim of the new Curriculum for Wales, then teachers will need to update their stock of methods. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) places emphasis on teachers not viewing these changes as additional but instead as a "normal response to addressing the daily challenges of a constantly changing classroom." (OECD, 2012)

William (2013) further emphasises the importance of pedagogy in the classroom when he states in a YouTube video, "pedagogy trumps curriculum every time. A great curriculum badly taught is always a worse experience than a bad curriculum well taught" (2013). His statement places weight on teachers being willing to develop new methods and engage with research. Teachers are already stretched with a high workload and therefore the task may be too large for individual practitioners to resolve themselves without further guidance.

Husbands and Pearce (2012) outline nine claims which they believe form effective pedagogies, they have formulated these claims from research. Many of the nine claims are similar to those outlined by Donaldson in the Curriculum for

Wales (2020), however the overarching message for these principles to be successfully implemented into a school setting and be successful for the learners within it is that “The most effective successful classroom practices work these ideas together in systematic and sophisticated ways, and the best teachers are active in building relationships between them.” (Husbands and Pearce, 2012, p.12)

Leahy et al (2005) further emphasise the importance of teachers being considered in their approaches and making links between approaches to ensure the learners in their classrooms make progress. For example, explicitly sharing learning intentions and success criteria and therefore demystifying lesson expectations allows pupils to think about how best to engage with tasks in order to succeed.

Donaldson summarises twelve pedagogical principles in the Curriculum for Wales, these principles can be divided into two subcategories; the theory behind teaching practice and the methods that are created from this theory. A consistent focus on the four purposes is at the core of Wales’ pedagogical philosophy, with connections between Areas of Learning Experience (AOLEs), Assessment for Learning (AfL), literacy, numeracy and digital competencies, and collaboration feeding into this core focus. Authentic contexts for learning are at the heart of effective teaching methodology, with independent learning, engaging interest, promotion of critical thinking and problem solving, a blend of approaches and challenging learners to achieve high targets create effective teaching and learning.

A good starting point when thinking about pedagogical principles and the new CfW would be to ensure teachers have a strong understanding of their pupils’ academic abilities and social backgrounds, to be able to make effective choices about approaches to use within their classrooms.

Making connections between experiences is a central idea of the Curriculum for Wales in both the curriculum documents for the Curriculum for Wales and in the twelve pedagogical principles. Therefore, it is vital that teaching staff are aware of the experiences the learners they are teaching have had and also provide opportunities for learners who have not had the same chances such as experiencing theatre performances, museum visits and trips abroad.

A criticism of the pedagogical practices outlined by Donaldson Practitioners is that they offer very little guidance to teachers about how they should make changes in their practice, however this could be a strength as practitioners could therefore be granted more autonomy to make the choices which are effective and best-suited to the pupils they are teaching, in order for this to work well teachers need to be trusted in their decision-making and do so through careful consideration of what works best for their learners and also by taking note of what pedagogical research has found to be effective. It must also be noted that less emphasis should be placed on specific ‘effective’ teaching approaches, and more upon the “careful planning, good organisation and considered implementation as part of a range of strategies” (Stronge et al, 2007).

Examples of pedagogical practices in Wales, Finland and England

As previously mentioned, pedagogical methods are developed using a combination of factors as Sisman-Ugur et al (2002) state “Teachers’ actions in the classroom...are underpinned by the ideas and values that they have about education.” (p. 10, 2002)

This suggests that although the need for a new CfW was to target a lack of consistency across schooling, poor Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test and GCSE results compared to other European countries, this could be at risk of remaining the case as individual teachers will inevitably have different ideas and values of what education should look like. These differences of viewpoint were evident during a Learning Day when colleagues expressed their pedagogical values on a spectrum after viewing two different promotional videos of schools which differed enormously. Differences in values are not only apparent at an individual level, but are also evident at the school level. Wales is a country which has higher than average levels of unemployment and poverty which can dampen down young people's aspirations and lower the expectations of the teachers working in schools with high percentages of disadvantaged pupils.

In a recent visit to a secondary school, I observed how the head teacher established a common approach to teaching and learning in order to tackle a culture of limited expectations held by both teaching staff and pupils. When ESTYN visited the school to report upon this new approach they remarked upon how in a short period of time the school's approach "enabled staff to establish shared pedagogical principles and a common language for discussing teaching and learning." (ESTYN, 2018) This shows how vitally important a strong leadership team and collaborative school culture are in order to successfully develop more effective teaching and learning strategies.

A newly enthused staff body were encouraged to participate in a range of professional learning opportunities as well as ensuring consistency in methods. Thanks to greater consistencies, learners are better behaved and are working more independently;

Pupils like the daily routines and consistency of practice across the school. They feel this has given them greater ownership of their learning. (ESTYN, 2018)

The transformation of a common school-wide pedagogy has not only had a positive impact on the culture within the school but outcomes have improved considerably too. With the percentage of students leaving the school with Level 2 (5A*s-C) rising from 29% in 2012 to 55% in 2017.

A change of viewpoint when developing effective pedagogy in this setting has been crucial. This reinforces the argument Simon (1981) raises when he states that planning for learners is effective as the teacher is able to create basic principles of teaching and then modify these in order to meet more specific needs. (p. 131, 1981)

Since the CfW aims to target current problems within Wales' education system it is important to consider effective systems from elsewhere in the world. Finland's education system is considered as one of the most successful in the world with Finnish students scoring well in international exams such as PISA. In Finland, children don't begin formal education until they are seven years old as they are not seen to be ready at that point. Instead, there is an emphasis on physical activity and learning through play.

Finland's educational principles are based around the constructivist education theory wherein learners find meaning themselves by using what they have experienced outside of the classroom as well as the knowledge they come into contact with in the classroom. This principle has been seen as effective and is explicitly signposted as good practice in the CfW draft document where learner knowledge should be built upon by practitioners who know their learner's backgrounds as well as what they have learnt previously. Evidently, knowing the values, beliefs and backgrounds of

our learners is an important aspect of teaching which in turn can impact planning of curricula and the content built into them.

Another element of constructivism which is shared by what has been written in the CfW draft is ensuring teaching is learner centred as Richardson (2003) notes paying attention to individuals and respecting backgrounds, beliefs and values held is what it means to have a learner-centred approach. (p. 1626, 2003)

Although an understanding of the circumstances of learners to ensure accessibility to lesson content is crucial, this could in fact result in the opposite to the desired effect. Teachers who teach in deprived areas may develop narrower curricula and lower their expectations since their pupils may not have access to or an interest in areas which have been traditionally taught. For example, a music teacher choosing to focus on popular music rather than introducing learners to classical music or an English teacher deciding not to teach Shakespeare. Teachers may therefore do a disservice to their pupils, by submitting to inequality rather than challenging societal inequalities. As Brooker (2000) points out;

Once such differentiation has occurred, the child's chances of accelerated progress and a steep learning curve may be progressively diminished. (p. 285, 2000)

This is an argument which has brought rise to debates amongst educational professionals. In a recent education networking event the idea of 'cultural capital' where pupils are familiar with the culture of their society, which has traditionally had less importance in schools where pupils are from poorer backgrounds. In many of the sessions, similar messages were conveyed that it is the duty of teachers, regardless of their catchment to avoid a conveyor belt curriculum where we teach a topic and move on without ensuring all learners have grasped the understanding they need to move on as this punishes the poor. A school leader who decided to abandon the traditional approach of teaching topics and moving on found that the school community felt that the school was failing their children as they weren't covering as much content as they were used to, his response to the community was that his school "is a place of learned people and everyone can succeed." This is an approach which would be controversial to begin with, which he agreed was the case with his community, however by putting more of an onus onto the parents and providing the community with a relentless message stating they are doing a good job started to sway opinions. Learners gained motivation from getting things right as it feels good to succeed.

At a session held by David Williams and David Didau a similar message was reiterated; "all capability comes from knowledge", therefore the more you know, the more thought you can have about it and then be creative and experimental with this knowledge. Again, the pair commented on the impact socioeconomic backgrounds of the children we teach can have on progress asserting that this is the factor which most affects the progress made by learners. This impact has systematically privileged the most advantaged learners and disadvantaged the least advantaged since "the most advantaged learners succeed despite the curriculum." Therefore it is important that the curriculum teachers in Wales decide to teach their pupils must work best for disadvantaged learners as what works best for them, works best for all.

If learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are to succeed when competing against affluent learners, in education or later on in life, educators need to ensure they are given opportunities to fill the cultural capital gaps which have formed due to not having certain experiences such as travelling, visiting museums and the theatre.

One English school has made it their mission to ensure their pupils have these opportunities. Chanting poetry during break times, debating topical stories during a 'family' lunch time, reading in all lessons, are some examples of this. This idea is also written into the curriculum;

It thus becomes our duty to give our pupils the knowledge to access and the ability to participate – from a position of knowledge – in these aspects of our society. (2018)

Thanks to this ethos and a pedagogy which is didactic and teacher-led the school, which has an above average proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, enjoyed some of the best GCSE results in the country. Expectations are not watered down by any member of staff, as a consequence, learners have "very positive attitudes to learning and show powerful determination to achieve as well as they can." (OFSTED, 2017)

After researching the pedagogies of the two examples outlined above, it has become clear that the task of designing the correct pedagogy for learners in Wales is not going to be straightforward. Furthermore, since the draft CfW gives little to no pedagogical insight it is likely that there will be different methods being developed across Wales. This should have a positive impact on the teaching in Wales, as teachers are able to create bespoke curricula, with methods which are in tune with their learners' needs. However, it is important that teachers allow time to regularly design, implement and review the impact of their pedagogy to ensure learners are making progress. The process should include pupil voice feedback, as is outlined in the CfW, in order to further tailor methods to pupils' needs, interests and values.

Assessment and the CfW

According to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) 40% of the Welsh schools inspected in 2012-13 needed to improve teacher assessment, with assessment being the most common area of improvement in inspection reports. This therefore suggests that this area needs to be focussed on by schools when implementing the new CfW.

One possible issue for the education system in Wales could be that historically there has been multiple ways to grade learners; levels and Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3, grades at GCSE and A Level, standardised scores for literacy and numeracy tests etc. The grading system in Wales needs to be coherent to ensure consistency across a learner's school career.

The Welsh Government sets out how it envisages assessment within Chapter Six of the draft CfW publication (2020). The chapter states that assessments should assess what matters, be clear about the purpose of assessments, promote the use of various methods, engage learners, be reported on for parents, avoid unnecessary paperwork and inform school development plans. These are ambitious targets as currently there is no explicit support to inform teachers about what these look like in practise.

At the moment, the vast majority of assessment outcomes are awarded on a 'best-fit' approach. As an examiner I have been trained on how to award grades for GCSE work, the majority of the time being expected to make judgements on a subjective level rather than being given more objective rules to award by. Therefore, it is possible for disparities to

appear which has been the case in recent years with exams being re-graded and found to be one or two grades better than originally awarded. Another adverse property of best-fit assessment is that the grade or level given provides very little actual information about what has been achieved by the learner. There can be a wide variation of what a level 6 piece of work can look like in different subjects; consequently the levelling system has lost significance. It is also possible to mask poor performance in certain areas if pupils are stronger elsewhere due to this best-fit approach. Moreover, due to the pressure put on teachers to show progress through their pupils' levels KS3 data is even less reliable, as asserted by a headteacher who had just watched a presentation by Allison about method they had devised which abandoned the use of levels "our KS3 teacher assessments are always bang on target or above...but our GCSE results are awful!" (Allison, 2015)

The problem of vague level descriptors does not seem to have been solved, with the draft curriculum documents supplying practitioners with ambiguous achievement outcomes some seeming impossible to evidence. For example, looking at the achievement outcomes for progression step 4 of the Health and Well-being AoLE; I can make appropriate dietary choices that allow me to maintain an appropriate energy balance. (Welsh Government, 2019) It is unclear how practitioners are to assess this, as some teachers may read that they are expected to police pupil food choices at break and lunch time. Since many learners are sent to school with snacks and lunches prepared at home by their parents assessing this could cause friction between school-parent relationships.

Within the new CfW documents it is clear that more formative assessments are expected to take place continuously, with less emphasis on high-stakes testing which can narrow the curriculum. Formative assessment needs to be an essential and natural part of the teaching process and not a superficial bolt-on.

A method of assessing formatively which has grown in popularity is retrieval practice and interleaving and spacing. The idea of desirable difficulties; making things more difficult in order to improve learning is an idea first explored by Bjork (1999). According to Bjork there is a distinction to be made between effective learning and performance of learners. Performance; the act of doing tasks is short term whereas effective learning is long term. Retrieval practice tasks take advantage of Bjork's findings since every time a memory is retrieved, that memory will become more accessible in the future. Although frustrating, teachers need to view forgetting as a friend and make use of the forgetting time and then revisit knowledge at the optimal time.

Ebbinghaus (1880) developed a forgetting curve, whereby he calculated the rate of forgetting after the moment of learning. This was done through learning a variety of knowledge for example sequences of numbers. From his experiments, he was able to plot a graph showing the percentage of information retained and the time it took to forget this information. From this, educators could plan to retest their pupils when they are on the verge of forgetting. Although this may be a laborious task to begin with, once this becomes common practise in schools, the higher the storage strength will become for pupils to retain knowledge and therefore the slower the information will decay and less re-testing will be needed.

Spacing and interleaving has also become a popular method for teachers to use instead of end of unit tests. Firth (2018) asserts that spacing boosts memory since revision of material is more effective if spaced out over time as forgetting is reduced. Interleaving on the other hand sees learners revisiting previous material at the same time as

learning new topics and skills, “this is more difficult in the short term but more effective in the long term.” (Sherrington, 2017) Bjork describes the challenge associated with spacing and interleaving as “desirable difficulties” (2012) Due to these, it is suggested that teachers should

...plan appropriate cycles of high-frequency, low-stakes, spaced and interleaved review and put knowledge content at the forefront of curriculum planning...metacognition and elaboration are helpful strategies for building stronger schema. (p.109, 2017)

Wiliam outlines the significance of formative assessment and what teachers do after an assessment has taken place, suggesting teachers provide feedback that moves learners forward, “assessment is, indeed, the bridge between teaching and learning.” (Wiliam, 2011) From this view, again it is of vital importance that teachers know their students well enough to give realistic targets for improvement and thus teacher-student relationships need to be good enough that learners implement whatever improvements the teacher suggests as, “in the absence of relationships, these things are less likely to happen.” (p.155 2017)

Another development point the CfW emphasises is promoting group work including self and peer assessment. Wiliam (2018) emphasises that group work is most effective when students are involved in creating success criteria as this develops learner responsibility as an active learner, provides them with an understanding of what is expected, and allows for the development of reflection skills. Formative peer feedback is advantageous for the person receiving the feedback as well for the person receiving feedback. In a video clip where Wiliam explores the benefits of self and peer assessment he reinforces the advantages of both when he states;

Because, in thinking through what it is that this piece of work represents and what needs to happen to improve it, the students are forced to internalise a success criteria and they're able to do it in the context of someone else's work, which is less emotionally charged than your own.(Self and Peer assessment, 2018)

In order to ensure learners are equipped to provide themselves and their peers with effective feedback it is crucial that teachers train their pupils. For example, exposing learners to exam mark schemes and asking learners to create revision videos and animations.

Although there are a myriad of opportunities which effective training can provide teachers for effective teaching and learning there are also challenges which can present themselves when asking learners to self/peer assess in the classroom. The following bullet points outline some of the challenges posed by using self/peer assessment in the classroom;

- Some pupils may be reluctant to show their work to their peers.
- Mixed ability classes could mean that despite the teacher's training of the pupils, there may still be some learners who are unable to grasp the task at hand and may struggle to effectively feedback on work another pupil has done.
- Learners being over generous with their feedback.
- Poor handwriting leading to peers not being able to understand what they've written and therefore unable to provide effective feedback.

Nevertheless, the initial challenges can be outweighed by the potential progress which can be made by learners when receiving quality feedback. When the opportunity of giving and receiving quality feedback is presented in the

classroom, learners appreciate the time their peers have taken to assess their writing and the suggested improvements they provide. This is further emphasised by Berger's (1990) statement that since it is easier to alter another person's work, this practice should result in an increased confidence when proofreading their own work.

The gap should shrink between students' ability to detect and diagnose correctly problems in their own and others' writing at these higher levels and their knowledge of how to fix the problems. (p.26, 1990)

Berger's study also found that the students who participated seemed to prefer peer feedback but this was only once relationships were established between the learners and they had undertaken some self-evaluative exercises to ensure understanding of writing criteria. She found that 48% of the self-feedback group rated peer-feedback more favourably than self-feedback even though they had only tried that method once. (p.28, 1990)

Another recommendation outlined within Chapter Six of the CfW draft is that teachers need to use a wide range of assessment methods to ensure all outcomes are assessed. An example of some of these "more imaginative approaches" are performance-related presentations, portfolios, role-plays and experiments. Teachers across Wales are undoubtedly already using these methods within classrooms, but there is now the expectation that these are used in a more formal sense, wherein recordings are taken to evidence learners accomplishing an achievement outcome. This recording of evidence could prove difficult for the day-to-day teaching of a full timetable and this is where practitioners need to be more creative and resourceful and use digital technologies effectively.

During a trust group discussion it became apparent that primary school practitioners already feel they are effectively developing digital portfolios of their pupils, with the majority stating that learners often record themselves displaying a certain skill or performance during lesson time and then share this with their teacher through various apps. Secondary practitioners were less au fait with the technologies which are being used by their primary school colleagues and expressed trepidation about allowing their pupils out of class in order to record themselves; furthermore secondary colleagues stated that digital technology is very sparse within their settings. This is interesting as this unwillingness/inability may further exacerbate transition issues which are presenting themselves when pupils move from primary school where they are given more freedoms into a more controlled secondary education setting. Consequently, teachers are likely to require support if the outlined impact of assessment is to be recognised. There will also be a need for more emphasis on collaborative working between teachers of all key stages to agree standards and moderate results to reduce possible bias.

Singapore is another example of a country which performs well in PISA rankings. Their pedagogical approach towards assessment is mirrored in the CfW documents in multiple aspects; the purpose of any assessments is explicitly explained to learners, there is an emphasis on problem solving and creativity, collaboration is important, they use written reports as well as verbal presentations to assess learner ability. However one difference is that assessments are carried out by teachers who use centrally specified criteria to assess their learners, this would not work within the CfW since content, tasks and assessments will be different depending on the setting. In a study by Koh and Luke (2009) it was found that when teachers in Singapore had had more professional development focussing on assessment setting, this contributed to an "improvement of student learning and performance." (p.4, 2009)

According to Sharratt (2019), assessments should start with big ideas, exploring pupils what they already know and deconstructing learning goals and co-constructing success criteria. Teachers should provide their students with descriptive feedback for pupils to then be able to self and peer assess and set their own goals. For Sharratt, it is essential that “assessment drives instruction” and must inform what the teacher teaches their students next. (pp.134, 2019) One issue that this method of thinking about assessments may cause for teachers is that they find they must change what they have taught traditionally since that topic may not fit in with learning intentions or what matters, in the case of CfW. Sharratt gives the example of removing the topic of Halloween from her scheme of learning as she would have had to shoe-horn it into her teaching, rather than it being a natural fit for her overall big idea.

School visit

In order to gather an understanding of what is considered as effective pedagogical practice, I visited a primary school which has been highlighted as developing innovative methods in response to the new CfW.

After reading and discussing the draft documents, this South Wales primary school decided to “pare back” everything they had previously done. For example, the Headteacher adopted a Foundation Phase Model throughout the school up to and including Key Stage 2 classes. The school has placed more emphasis on the use of purposeful use of digital technologies and installed seven computers in each class. They also decided to remove all displays, instead having one display board per classroom. The reasoning behind this was to aid pupil transition between years and also to ensure optimal pupil concentration.

The school also decided it was important to involve members of the wider school community, with Teaching Assistants (TAs) organising community cooking sessions and there is also a community food bank on-site. Additionally, class teachers hold informal parent-teacher meetings within the first two weeks to ensure the transition between classes is as stress-free as possible for the pupils. Moreover, parents are able to notify the class teacher of any issues which may impact upon their child which can then inform teaching and learning methods the teacher employs. Meetings are only supposed to run for up to ten minutes, so the additional workload implications of this are minimal. Another way in which the school involves its community is by using digital technologies (Seesaw app) to update and inform parents and carers about their child’s work as well as their behaviour. Overall, parental and community engagement has increased and positive relationships are being developed as a result of these initiatives.

Another pedagogical move was towards a relationship policy whereby pupils are given agreed bespoke rewards and sanctions, with teachers facilitating pupil voice to gather this information. In addition, pupil voice has been utilised to inform enrichment afternoons which run once a week. Pupils are able to choose a club to attend which is run by TAs or outside agencies. Accordingly, teachers have more Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time or use the extra time to attend professional learning opportunities.

This visit opened my eyes to elements of practice that I was uncomfortable with. For example, my classroom has multiple displays due to learners needing reference materials which are quick to locate within lesson time. I use my displays constantly when teaching and when I originally saw bare walls I thought this would be an impossible task for me to achieve. However, since reflecting and reading more about the power of displays I found that research suggests that more bare space in classrooms is less distracting and therefore learners are more engaged in the lesson. For

example when Lovell (2018) comments on displays in classrooms and their impact on engagement, he found that in a more sparse classroom environment only 3 percent of children's attention strayed to display boards instead of to the teacher when giving instructions compared to 20 percent of time spent by children when in a highly decorated classroom.

Another aspect of the schools' practice which I feel my setting could introduce, is more of an emphasis for community collaboration. Engagement from parents and carers in my setting is at times poor, this needs to be targeted and a good starting point could be inviting the community into school for well-being sessions, such as cooking sessions.

A further aspect that could be implemented in my setting is using pupil voice effectively to inform planned activities. For example, in the summer term we hold well-being days where staff and outside agencies deliver sessions. Instead of doing what we've always done, we could ask pupils what issues they are concerned about the most so we can plan and deliver more relevant, purposeful sessions. These sessions could be run by TAs and thus freeing up teaching staff to participate in professional learning opportunities. However, this could have cost implications as it would mean training or employing more TAs.

Conclusion

By drawing on a variety of sources from a body of research, this text has explored how the idea of pedagogy can contrast depending on an individual's beliefs, values and experiences of education. The concept of pedagogy can also differ depending on an individual's background and setting.

The text also considers how ideas from past educational theories and studies can be relevant for today's curriculum development with regards to the CfW.

Although the task to implement Curriculum for Wales in schools presents itself as challenging, it also presents educators with an exciting opportunity where teaching professionals are able to be increasingly innovative and creative in their curriculum planning and delivery. The text has also outlined effective practices from two countries which are regarded as being some of the best countries for learner progression in the world; it is important that Wales learns from the successes of these countries as well as take note of any errors that have occurred to ensure the same mistakes aren't made again.

It is equally important to look at and learn from effective practice within Welsh schools, remaining open minded about new practices and not being afraid to try new things. Welsh teachers will need to be increasingly reflective and plan with their learners at the centre of all they do. To this end, hopefully the Curriculum for Wales will indeed "best meet their present needs and equip them for their future lives in the 21st century." (Donaldson, 2015)

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Section 2: SWOT analysis and detailed Strategic Plan

The following section will provide a SWOT analysis identifying potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of implementing the Curriculum for Wales in a particular setting (School A). Following this SWOT analysis, a strategic plan will be developed to be delivered to Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

<u>Strengths</u> • Teaching relevant topics in an engaging way will improve engagement of learners. • Teacher ownership of how and why we are teaching what they are teaching. • Staff body which is enthusiastic about developing new methods of teaching for progress.	<u>Weaknesses</u> • Ineffective use of peer/self-assessment. • Overemphasis of cross-curricular themes, rather than cross-curricular skills. • Inconsistencies across school are already an issue. • Assessment is not effective enough.
<u>Opportunities</u> • More emphasis of pupil voice and peer/self-feedback improves the confidence and understanding of learners. • Opportunity for teachers to develop schemes of learning which are more relevant and purposeful for their learners. • Collaboration with fellow colleagues.	<u>Threats</u> • Lack of training. • Lack of time to plan, implement and review. • Misconceptions of Curriculum for Wales. • AfL approaches are not well understood.

Strategic Plan September 2020 - July 2022

This Strategic Plan is a two year plan, from September 2020 until July 2022, reflecting our values and a determination to make the difference. It has been developed following discussions with colleagues and completion of the above SWOT analysis. The Strategic Plan sets out the future priorities for our school setting in view of the changes needed to effectively implement the Curriculum for Wales.

Our vision

At our school, staff are committed to the education and well-being of each individual child who joins us. We want to inspire all our learners by providing a wide range of opportunities both within and outside the classroom, at our school and in our wider community. Our aim is to maximise potential, to nurture self-belief and confidence, and to broaden horizons. We want to make a difference, to make sure that all our students leave us as independent, life-long learners, equipped with the skills they need for a fulfilling and enjoyable future.

Context of the plan:

Following discussions about the draft Curriculum for Wales document, the following six areas have been identified for development in order to effectively implement the new CfW:

1. Creative approaches

The CfW draft document outlines the importance for practitioners to develop and implement innovative approaches to pedagogy; however the document fails to elaborate this.

2. SLT support

In order to raise standards and improve progression, as are the aims of CfW, then the Senior Leadership Team must be leading the movement. SLT must provide opportunities for upskilling; allow staff to visit other schools to observe effective teaching and learning. These opportunities should be available for all staff in the school.

3. DCF and LNF mapping

Digital technologies are developing rapidly; as a school it is our duty to ensure learners are provided with relevant opportunities to develop their DCF skills. Literacy and Numeracy are at the core of all we do. Learners

must have the chance to develop these skills in all Areas of Learning Experience (AoLEs) not just Mathematics and English.

4. Transition

Collaboration is key and we must ensure we are doing all we can to ensure the transition period between Key Stages is as smooth as possible.

5. Modelling work

It is crucial that learners develop an understanding of exemplar work and therefore we must celebrate successes. In doing this, learners will develop valuable proof-reading and editing skills along with a deeper understanding of what is expected from them in exams/assessments.

6. Assessment

Employ a variety of assessment methods, including more emphasis on low-stakes formative assessments. We will also ensure learners are provided with many opportunities of assessing themselves and their peers.

VISION	DRIVING ACTIONS: In the next two years we will work hard to...	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	BY WHOM?
Creative approaches	1. Develop pedagogy so that teachers are using a variety of methods to engage learners. 2. Involve learners more in their learning.	Ensure all staff are given the opportunity to attend CPD with a focus on metacognition. → all staff members to disseminate this information in meetings/briefing/INSET → Learning walks as part of QA to focus on range of pedagogy. Engage learners in termly pupil voice activities. → Use this information to inform the choices of content/AfL techniques. → Staff to have the information gathered from PV shared so they can review and adapt their teaching methods/ topics.	SLT L&T lead All staff SLT All staff
Success Criteria: ✓ All teaching staff to include CPD in Performance Management targets. ✓ Majority of lessons observed to display more creative approaches to pedagogy. Support put in place when needed. ✓ Termly pupil voice. Potential barriers: ⌘ Cost implications of days off timetable/cover. ⌘ Implications to consistency in learning if staff is not present to teach due to CPD. ⌘ Increased workload due to continuous review and adaptation of teaching.			
SLT support	1. Support staff in their journey of planning, implementing and reviewing teaching practice in preparation of the CfW. 2. Promote collaboration within departments/schools.	Carry out a survey to gauge staff levels of understanding. → Provide staff with bespoke training linked to the results of survey. Allow staff to conduct learning walks at effective schools in order to share good practice.	SLT
Success Criteria: ✓ Training provided to target any misconceptions/support needed. ✓ INSET/CPD time allocated for staff to conduct learning walks. Potential barriers: ⌘ Cost implications of days off timetable/cover.			

📁 Implications to consistency in learning if staff is not present to teach due to CPD. 📁 Cost implications of outside training providers. 📁 Staff unwilling to visit elsewhere.			
DCF and LNF	1. Embed DCF and LNF strands into curriculum of all AoLEs, ensuring these are linking into prior learning.	Map curriculum content collaboratively across AoLEs and signpost possible opportunities to embed DCF and LNF strands. → Share this across AoLEs in order to make effective cross-curricular links. → Review progress through book looks and pupil voice. → Share best practice on Skills Google Drive.	DCF & LNF Leads AoLE Leads SLT, DCF & LNF Leads All staff
Success Criteria: ✓ All subjects (and AoLEs) to map and signpost LNF and DCF on their curriculum. ✓ All subjects (and AoLEs) to share pupil work on the Skills Google Drive on a termly basis. ✓ Progression to be evidence during book looks and pupil voice on a half-termly basis. ✓ Teachers in charge of DCF and LNF to carry out learning walks and report on these, providing staff with effective practice and development points. Potential barriers: 📁 Increased workload for teachers in charge / lead teachers. 📁 Digital technology (skills site). 📁 Implications to consistent approaches of teaching DCF/LNF strands for non-specialist literacy, numeracy and digital technologies teachers.			
Transition	1. Develop transition processes	Forge greater links with cluster primaries. → Visit colleagues to develop/review SOW. → Taster days in primaries to allow pupils to build relationships with staff. Provide opportunities for sharing of best practice. → Learning walks (here/there).	SLT transition lead. All staff SLT
Success Criteria: ✓ More transition activities to be planned and delivered during the year. More than once a year. ✓ SOW to signpost where topics and content overlaps with primary topics/content and show how they will build on this prior knowledge. ✓ Termly pupil voice focussing on engagement. Potential barriers: 📁 Cost implications of days off timetable/cover. 📁 Implications to consistency in learning if staff is not present to teach due to visiting primary schools. 📁 Increased workload due to continuous review and adaptation of SOW.			
Modelling work	1. Ensure success is not ' <i>mystified</i> '.	Create and share success criteria with the learners. Train pupils how to self/peer assess using exam board mark schemes. → Display WAGOLL/WOW walls. → Collate digital library of best work.	All staff
Success Criteria: ✓ Where possible, teachers must construct and share success criteria with their learners in lessons. This should be visible in books. ✓ WAGOLL/WOW walls etc. visible and used in classrooms. Potential barriers: 📁 Cost implications of printing.			

 Misconceptions of what effective answers for exams/assessments are due to non-specialists teaching subjects.

Assessment	1. Move away from summative assessments towards low-stakes formative assessments. 2. More emphasis on peer/self-feedback. 3. Face-to-face discussions to be held between teachers and pupils.	All staff to employ AfL techniques in lessons, making use of interleaving and spacing alongside retrieval practice. → Develop a bank of effective AfL techniques/resources to be used across AoLEs. To reinforce pupil understanding as well as reduce workload. → Teachers to track progress made by pupils over time e.g. in mark sheets/ iDoceo and use this data to inform teaching and report to parents. School-wide criteria for effective peer/self-feedback to be created, shared and embedded in lessons. → Displayed in classrooms and pupil planners. → Evidence of this to be tracked in book looks. Teachers to arrange regular discussions with pupils about strengths and weaknesses following teacher marking. → This could be whole-class feedback. → Teacher-Pupil feedback where possible. Increased balance between informal and formal feedback. → Pupils need to see feedback as a positive part of drafting and redrafting.	All staff
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Success Criteria:

- ✓ AfL techniques to be observed in learning walks and full lesson observations.
- ✓ All teachers to track and report on formative assessments.
- ✓ Peer and self-feedback to be present in all pupil books. This will be assessed during book looks.
- ✓ School-wide criteria to be developed and displayed in all classrooms. This will be assessed on learning walks.

Potential barriers:

-  Time implication for staff completing feedback discussions with pupils.

Section 3: Academic poster

When looking at existing academic posters, I have found that there is not usually too much text, however if there is text then there are clear sections on the poster to make it easier to understand and navigate. This is why I have chosen to wrap the different sections I have chosen to discuss in clear text boxes. I have used different colours for each text box to show that although they are all linked within the discussion, they offer different elements to the discussion (benefits, challenges, next steps etc.)

I originally wrote the next steps section as a bulleted list, however during trust group discussions, it was suggested that this be developed into a flowchart. Since there are no start/end points for the next steps section, I chose to create a linear flowchart. Reflecting on this aspect of the poster, I feel the flowchart could be further improved by making the font bigger and highlighting the most important and necessary steps.

Another suggestion during discussions with colleagues was to make the title larger and clearer, therefore I have changed the font for the title so it stands out in the centre of the A3 sheet. I chose to include an image the four purposes in order to remind colleagues that they are at the forefront of anything we do whether it's developing the curriculum or pedagogical principles. Originally, however, the image I had chosen from the official CfW draft was not clear enough, therefore I chose to use an infographic created by Impact Wales which is clearer and brighter.

I also added a visual representation of interleaving vs blocking, this is to promote further discussion on this method and also allow colleagues who have not heard of this strategy before to see it expressed without too much reading.

My colleagues believe my poster is clear and easy to understand. They also mentioned that they could easily pick it up and use it for training and professional learning purposes without needing to do too much background reading. The writing I have included is bulleted to reduce the likelihood of overloading the audience with information, however there are lots of messages which could lead into further debate or research. In order to improve this, I would insert links to further reading/videos by using QR codes.

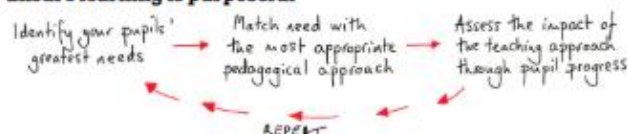
Pedagogy? → Discourse of theories and policies.

→ The relationship between learning, teaching and culture.

- Effective pedagogy equips learners for life.
- Effective pedagogy engages with valued forms of knowledge. What are ours?
- Effective pedagogies involve clear thinking about longer term learning outcomes (WM) as well as short-term goals (AO)
- Effective pedagogy does not mean the approach of teaching but rather the reasoning behind the selection process. → **Why choose X activity or task Y?**

Our teachers need to:

- Show adaptability
- Build on prior learning
- Take risks and reflect upon effectiveness
- Share objectives explicitly
- Combine knowledge and skills (equally)
- Plan lessons which challenge and engage
- Encourage pupil voice and a culture of enquiry
- Ensure learning is purposeful



"Pedagogy is of central importance to good teaching and to effective learning"
(Successful Futures)

Benefits

- Teaching staff uniting towards a shared aim rather than being an island.
- Behaviour improvement due to more successfully meeting the needs of the child.
- All children are able to voice their needs/preferences and are therefore more involved in the teaching and learning process.
- Individualised feedback (learning conversations and real-time marking) has more of an impact than traditional marking.
- Making connections within and across AoLEs fosters a more collaborative method which models to pupils effective collaboration and ensures fluidity of transition through the school/between classes.
- Sustained effort from pupils to achieve realistic goals.



A dialogue on pedagogy in preparation of Curriculum for Wales

Challenges

- Possibility of reduced standards when trying new methods.
- Lack of funding for necessary technology.
- Misconceptions exist and biases make testing invalid/lacking a purpose.
- Learning needs to be planned for not just activities. **Activity trap (Waters)**
- Do some AoLEs have signature approaches whereas others can be more flexible?
- How do we build interleaving and spacing into assessments?

Next steps

Creative approaches

CPD opportunities need to be made available for all teaching staff to upskill, with a particular focus on metacognition.

DCF and LNF

Lead teachers are to begin mapping DCF and LNF strands into content covered in the new CFW.

Embed more consistent modelling of work

Prepare learners for success by showing them exemplar work. E.g. WAGOLLS. Success should not be mystified.

SLT in a supportive role

Staff within management roles must provide support to all staff on this journey and lead the way and model best practice.

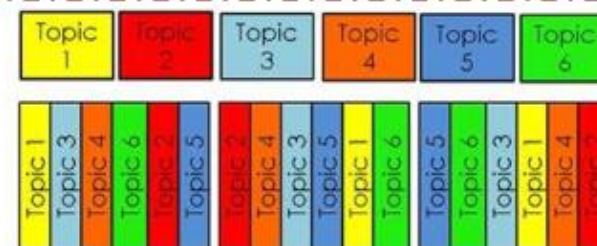
Transition

There need to be more links made between feeder primaries and us. Plan unit topics and lesson content with this in mind.

Assessment

Less high-stakes assessments and more peer/self feedback. These skills need to be taught to learners.

www.presentationgo.com



References

- Alexander, R. (2008). Pedagogy, Curriculum and Culture. In K. Hall, P. Murphy, & J. Soler, Pedagogy and practice. Culture and Identities (pp. 3-27). London: SAGE publications.
- Nind, M. & Lewthwaite, S. (2015) Principles for effective pedagogy - NCRM quick start guide. Manual. NCRM.
- Teaching in Focus 21
- www.impact.wales