

	Targets	How I have applied this
Target 1	Reinforce the question/title in the intro to help clarify the content from the start.	Referenced the topic throughout the assignment to promote clarity.
Target 2	Provide counter arguments as well as progressive arguments.	Recognised a variety of opinions to create debate, and develop my personal stance.

Reflective Portfolio

- **Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching.**
- **Good teaching and learning sets tasks and selects resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest.**
- **Good teaching and learning ranges within and across Areas of Learning and Experience.**

Consider the 3 pedagogic principles outlined above. Discuss these principles in relation to practices in education, showing secure understanding, identifying strengths and areas for development for each principle.

Introduction:

In 2009, there was nationwide discussion over the standards and future of education in Wales following poor PISA results, highlighting the demand for evolution in the Welsh education system (OECD, 2014). In recognition of this, the Welsh government commissioned Professor Graham Donaldson to conduct a review of education in Wales, spanning almost a year, and taking insight from over 700 people (National Assembly for Wales Research Service, 2015). Donaldson's review, "Successful Futures", emphasised how the previous curriculum was dated, advocating for a new curriculum that prioritises a more holistic approach to learning, better preparing students for the modern challenges (Donaldson, 2015). From his findings, Donaldson provided recommendations for the new curriculum, which aimed to cater to the needs and ambitions of education in Wales (Welsh Government, 2018). An example of a recommendation which has helped shape the Curriculum for Wales 2022 is the use of progression steps rather than phases and stages of learning. Donaldson recognised that progression within an Area of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) is an individual process for learners, rather than strictly linking to age. Proposing that progression steps within each AoLE would serve as a more flexible and individualised 'road map' for pupil progress (Donaldson, 2015). There are six AoLEs in the Curriculum for Wales 2022 which provides a framework for integration of the key areas of study, encouraging cross-curricular learning, which enables pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding to different contexts (Welsh Government 2022). This idea that learning and progression is a continuous individual process is supported by the work Vygotsky, which recognises how progression can differentiate between individuals due to their personal contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Donaldson's report recognised the ethos, principles and pedagogy of foundation learning, previously known as the foundation phase, as a strength of

prior educational practices in Wales (Estyn, 2017). Foundation learning can be described as not a race, but rather a journey that children embark on at the beginning of their education, supported by educators, to get them where they need to be in their learning process (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, n.d.). There are 12 pedagogical principles central to the Curriculum for Wales, outlined by Donaldson, which align with the underlying pedagogy of foundation learning. Whereby, they emphasise the need for a holistic and child-centred approach to teaching and learning, valuing play as a facilitator to transfer and develop skills across multiple AoLEs (Welsh Government 2023).

Good teaching and learning means employing a blend of approaches including direct teaching.

The pedagogic principle outlined above implies that good teaching and learning involves utilising a variety of instructional practices, including direct teaching. Direct teaching can be defined as a teaching method which involves clearly defined instruction and learning outcomes, where the teacher plays a key role by delivering content directly to students (Sullivan, 2009).

Potential benefits of using direct teaching include being able to clearly relay information to students and make sure that all students have the appropriate knowledge for the subject at hand, rather than assuming that all pupils have the same level of prior knowledge. Hattie's work on visible learning underscores the value of the teacher's role and direct teaching in their students' ongoing learning. Hattie suggests that what teachers do matters, in the sense that their passion for a subject that they are teaching can be infectious and passed on to students through modelling (Hattie, 2009).

However, some other theorists are of the belief that children learn better when they are directing their own learning in a more hands-on approach. For example, Piaget was of the opinion that self-directed problem-solving is at the core of how children learn and develop, as through their own autonomy the child is able to begin making sense of the world around them (Halpenny & Pettersen, 2014). Therefore, it is imperative to consider that direct teaching should be used alongside other approaches to teaching and learning, in accordance with the pedagogical principle. For example, hands-on experiences. Hands-on experiences play a crucial role in foundation learning, as it allows students to develop their understanding of the world through experiential activities. The pedagogy behind foundation learning underlines the importance of children learning through play, as it can be an excellent vehicle of experimentation, creating optimal opportunities for trial and error, risk taking and decision making (Welsh Government 2015). It can be argued that these contrasting views place emphasis on the importance of having a blended approach in order to achieve good teaching and learning. In applying a broad range of approaches to teaching and learning, the practitioner can ensure that they are catering to the individualised needs of pupils within their learning environment, promoting success and attainment for all.

Opposing views to this principle can include the perspective of those who believe that one approach can be superior over others. Such as constructivists, who believe that direct teaching puts too much focus on the exchange of knowledge, rather than the importance of

students being active in their learning and constructing their own understandings (Tobias & Duffy 2009). To ensure progress, an area of development within this principle could be the suggestion that the teacher should remain aware and reflective in their approaches to teaching and learning, to maintain a high standard, as it is a key professional responsibility. In the modern educational environment, particularly in the world of AI and improved digital literacy, there is great importance in teachers continuing professional learning and development. In doing so, the practitioner can expand their skill set and evolve, which can be a highly effective method of improving teaching quality (Grigg, 2022). Upon my bridging experiences I was able to see how the use of blended approaches can achieve good teaching and learning. This included the children engaging with a hands-on activity following direct instruction from their teacher. The children had complete autonomy in their learning and could work independently alongside others or in groups. This facilitated a holistic approach within the learning environment, while also catering to the diverse learning styles and abilities within the class. In my future practice I will implement this pedagogical principle by employing a range of approaches including direct teaching to aid my ability to provide good teaching and learning experiences, and be reflective in what approaches I am using to ensure that they are catering to the needs of all learners. This will inspire my own personal growth and development as a teacher, by encouraging me to refine my approaches, and therefore continuing professional learning and development (Grigg, 2022). Potentially, this may also help students feel more supported in their learning and promote a positive learning environment.

Good teaching and learning sets tasks and selects resources that build on previous knowledge and experience and engage interest.

The principle above suggests that children's prior knowledge and the use of relevant materials can be a valuable scaffold in good teaching and learning by enhancing engagement. A method of implementing this principle could include the recognition of contexts that impact pupils, and appropriately tailoring resources and activities to incorporate elements of their prior knowledge with opportunity for expansion. This approach is supported in the four purposes driving the Curriculum for Wales, which aim to create learners who are active members of society that are prepared for modern world challenges (Welsh Government 2019). To support this, educators can recognise the context of learners, to create more meaningful teaching and learning opportunities that are relevant to their lives, interests and community. In Vygotsky's work he acknowledged that learning is a process that begins well in advance to a child starting formal education, whereby early exposure to concepts can allow students to begin constructing their own ideas through their pre-school experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). The knowledge acquired in school can build on the foundations of preconceived ideas, and teachers can utilise this to encourage learning and progress, using resources that engage pupils' interest (National Research Council, 2000). For example, in foundation learning pupils are introduced to the use of number skills, like reliably counting objects (Welsh Government 2014). Possibly, pupils may already have existing knowledge of quantity, through play and social interactions at home, and having an appreciation of this could increase the effectiveness of formal teaching and learning in school.

However, a significant challenge in implementing this principle could be that it does not explicitly recognise the differentiation in prior knowledge and experiences of pupils. Not all students will have the same opportunities as others, reasoning for this could include factors such as socioeconomic contrasts and access to resources. In 2022 it was reported that 78% of children in low-income families miss out on days out, and 65% couldn't take part in out of school activities (Child Poverty Action Group, 2022). This stresses the importance of schools and educators in providing exciting and fun learning experiences for children, so that they can have the chance to try new things and develop their interests.

The professional teacher should proactively engage with social justice, acknowledging the social injustices that exist within the classroom (Arshad et al, 2019). Whereby some pupils are more privileged than others across different variables. In this regard, teachers should act as the agents of change by adopting inclusive pedagogy. Especially in foundation learning, where the teacher should facilitate learning in response to pupil needs, continuously building and reflecting on practice using modern research (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills, n.d.). Perhaps, by collaborating with professional colleagues and pupil carers, to provide tasks and resources that accurately reflect the needs, experiences and prior knowledge of pupils to support good teaching and learning (Pantić & Florian, 2015). This notion is supported by Freire, who posed the value in educators employing a transformative approach to education rather than oppressive, in doing so teachers can create a learning environment that empowers learning for all (Freire, 2014).

In my future practice I will select tasks and resources that build on previous knowledge and experience, to foster pupil engagement and interest in their learning. One way I could implement this is using Assessment for Learning (AFL), to gauge the extent of pupil prior knowledge by class discussions relating to the topic of learning. For example, if exploring Welsh culture as a part of humanities, there could be exchanges about the places students have been that link to this area of learning, like castles or churches. This AFL strategy will improve my understanding of pupil misconceptions, or identify gaps in knowledge and experience within specific Areas of Learning. In doing so, I can tailor teaching strategies and explore solutions in experience to maximise learning for all pupils (Spendlove, 2009). Examples of this could include a visit to a local Welsh heritage site within the school community, keeping any potential costs low and learning relevant to the pupils, or even reading a book. Employing inclusive pedagogy will be at the core of my approaches to teaching and learning, whereby I will challenge any potential barriers to learning for pupils and purposefully collaborate with others to challenge injustices within the school community (Pantić & Florian, 2015). The philosophy behind AFL supports this, whereby teachers should be formative in their approaches, enhancing all pupils' capabilities in moulding their strategies around them (Spendlove, 2009).

Good teaching and learning ranges within and across Areas of Learning and Experience.

The pedagogical principle that good teaching and learning ranges within and across AoLEs suggests that there is significance in having a holistic approach to teaching and learning, which can be achieved by utilising the relationship between the areas of learning. Dewey argues that education should reflect the interconnected nature of society, to support learners in their approach to understanding the world (Petrović, 2016). Educators have a duty to pupils in providing meaningful learning opportunities that reflect the world around them, focusing on developing relevant skills for their future (Kerry, 2015).

Application of this was evident in Bridging School A, in a year 2 maths lesson exploring capacity. In this lesson, pupils had to estimate the capacity of multiple vessels, including water bottles and jugs, before measuring them using water and a measuring jug. This hands-on activity created links across Areas of Learning, reinforcing mathematical skills and application of scientific concepts, by creating and testing hypotheses. This activity inspired significant and relevant dialogue between pupils, encouraging language and communication skills, making pupils more confident in their understanding and use of new terminologies. In these discussions, pupils were able to link their learning to real life contexts, establishing links between experiences and ideas, which is an integral part of foundation learning (Rowley & Cooper, 2009).

The world outside the classroom is interrelated and so are the ways that we interact and overcome challenges within it. This can be incorporated in educational practices through cross-curricular pedagogy, allowing students to explore relationships between the Areas of Learning and Experience. In doing so, students can develop deeper, transferable skills, rather than separating subject learning (Barnes, 2015). John Dewey's education philosophy agrees that subject-centred curriculums can be ignorant of children's future, as they are not as accurately reflective of the world, demoting the value of creativity and adaptability (Petrović, 2016). The Curriculum for Wales recognises this, promoting cross-disciplinary planning within and across Areas, to foster connections across learning, combining knowledge, skill and experience (Welsh Government, 2020).

An effective way of integrating cross-curricular learning to foundation learning can be the use of everyday objects. Everyday objects can assist the development of visual literacy, which can be applied within and across the AOLEs (Griggs & Lewis, 2018). Visual literacy is a skill that is increasingly relevant to pupils as our society becomes more visually driven from technological advances. Additionally, using every-day objects in cross-curricular approaches can expose pupils to alternative thought processes, like how objects can differentiate in use or meaning to others based on their personal contexts, encouraging broader cognitive and social-emotional development (Griggs & Lewis, 2018).

However, there is an argument that the overall effectiveness of cross-curricular approaches to teaching and learning can vary from each student. For example, Montessori suggests that developmental stages can impact a child's readiness for a specific area of learning (Halpenny & Pettersen, 2014). This implies that in some cases, pupils may benefit from a separate subject approach, so that they feel appropriately supported. In recognition of this,

educators should conduct regular assessment of pupils' progress, to ensure that teaching approaches are prompting development and attainment for all.

Personally, a challenge when implementing this principle may be lack of confidence in specific subject areas, making it difficult to make connections across disciplines in some instances. For example, I can be less confident in mathematics but excel in creative areas. In recognition of this I could seek to collaborate with more knowledgeable colleagues during planning. Engaging in dialogue with professional colleagues is an effective way to support progression, creating optimal opportunities to share ideas and gain alternative perspectives (Burnett & Cremin, 2018). This collaborative approach could improve lesson and planning quality, gaining additional insights into good practises from their opinions and prior experiences. Interdependent learning and collaboration plays a pivotal role in professional development, and can enhance outcomes of pupils from making alterations in practice to improve teaching and learning (Welsh Government, 2013). Overall, I will promote good teaching and learning in my practice by having a holistic approach, drawing across the AOLEs to make learning increasingly relevant to pupils and their futures.

Conclusion:

To conclude, the pedagogical principles central to the Curriculum for Wales, align significantly with the pedagogy surrounding foundation learning. They put emphasis on the value in holistic education, and being able to link learning to the current societal climate through meaningful learning experiences (Welsh Government 2023). The Curriculum for Wales further reinforces these principles in its four purposes, encouraging pupils to be prepared for modern challenges and active members of society (Welsh Government 2019).

Good teaching and learning involves using a variety of instructional methods to ensure that pupils have an understanding of subject matter and are then able to apply it in relevant contexts. Teachers have an explicit role in inspiring pupil progression, and need to recognise that their attitude to learning can have great significance in motivating their students (Hattie, 2009). Variety in instructional methods can allow for the needs of more pupils to be met, by catering to their individual learning styles. Students can be motivated further in their learning process when their prior knowledge is incorporated, using relevant materials to encourage engagement in good teaching and learning. While incorporating this into practice, teachers should remain aware of differences in pupil experiences, proactively engaging with social justice to promote progress for all pupils (Arshad et al, 2019). Inclusive pedagogy can help connote good teaching and learning, by acknowledging obstacles to learning and challenging them to create equal opportunities for success within the classroom (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Recognition of pupil contexts outside of the classroom can be beneficial in educational practices, in allowing pupils to develop transferable skills relevant to their future (Barnes, 2015). This is achievable through application of cross-curricular pedagogy, allowing students to explore relationships within and across the Areas of Learning and Experience (Barnes, 2015). The ability to create links between learning experiences and ideas in relation to real life contexts is an integral part of foundation learning, and is increasingly relevant in today's working world and learning climate (Rowley & Cooper, 2009).

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I believe that a pivotal part of implementing these principles in the future will be constantly using research to develop my practice as a teacher. Following engagement with research surrounding all three principles, varying in opinion and age, it can be concluded that teaching is a profession that cannot be explicitly mastered. The requirement for re-evaluation of practice to uphold good teaching and learning is continuous, particularly as our society continues to evolve (Burnett & Cremin, 2018). In being informed with relevant research, I can refine my approaches to better reflect my teaching environments, effectively expanding my skill set to improve the quality of teaching (Grigg, 2022). Engagement in development opportunities like workshops or collaborative planning with colleagues may also be an optimal opportunity to improve implementation of the principles. As they provide a platform for valuable dialogue to share perspectives, experiences and opinions that can shape practice (Burnett & Cremin, 2018). In recognition of this, I will also share my expertise in areas that other colleagues may struggle, when possible, to promote a professional working environment that uplifts others to support good teaching and learning. Interdependent learning can be pivotal in practitioner progression, potentially enhancing pupil outcomes by improving teaching and learning approaches. (Welsh Government, 2013).

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