

Languages, Literacy and Communication AoLE:

Submission to Curriculum &
Assessment Group: December 2017

(Revised following CAG feedback during AoLE workshop 13 December 2017)

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1. Introduction

In July 2017 Welsh Government published an [update](#) outlining an approach to curriculum development and sharing early thinking about the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) outlined in *Successful Futures*. This January update describes the next stage of the development process - the identification of 'what matters' within the six AoLEs.

The 'what matters' approach is the identification of the key elements that all learners should experience during their journey along the continuum of learning. The four purposes of the new curriculum are at the heart of all discussions relating to this work.

Each AoLE will contain a series of 'what matters' statements. In developing these statements, the Pioneers have conducted extensive research and invited experts to make presentations and join debates with their groups.

This approach has been endorsed by Professor Donaldson and other leading academics. A combination of commissioned academic papers and secondary academic research has also confirmed the belief amongst Pioneers and advisory groups that this is the right approach for Wales to take in curriculum development.

The papers contain the initial drafts of 'what matters' statements with supporting rationale, to provide a basis for sharing and discussion. They are published below and reflect the AoLE groups' thinking in December 2017. As part of an iterative process the AoLE groups will continue to refine the 'what matters' statements, in parallel with work to develop the underpinning progression frameworks, and the detail of the AoLEs.

As the work progresses, a newly established Coherence Group, chaired by Professor Richard Daugherty, will ensure consistency and coherence across the curriculum. The group will evolve to become a Manageability group to provide critical challenge about the size of the curriculum and how it is to be delivered, as more detail becomes available.

Outline of approaches taken during the Autumn term 2017

Pioneers met three times during the autumn term for two-day workshops (Llandudno, Cardiff and Aberystwyth). The group considered five initial "What Matters" statements. The general scope remained constant, with one statement added and one incorporated across the others. "Identity is inextricably linked to languages, cultures and nationality" was considered integral to all LLC statements, and will be considered further as each is further developed.

The additional statement proposed by the group is concerned with 'accuracy'. There were different perspectives depending on the language and age/ability of pupils taught. The importance of accuracy was agreed but with an acknowledgement that

an over-emphasis can hinder creativity and confidence. The group will engage with LLC experts to discuss further whether accuracy should be a stand-alone concept or form a part of other statement(s)

The group wishes to emphasise that although the LLC AoLE is the natural 'home' for literacy within the curriculum, other groups also need to consider literacy specific to their AoLE, for example writing up experiments in science, using spoken language for collaborative problem solving in maths, specialist terminology, vocabulary, coding languages etc.

In developing the statements, the group has received expert input from a range of individuals and organisations including:

- Prof Enlli Thomas, Bangor University – specialist on language acquisition and bilingualism;
- Prof Mererid Hopwood, University of Wales Trinity St David's;
- Prof Neil Mercer, Oracy Cambridge;
- Catherine Rozier, Swansea University (Classics)
- Laurie Smith, King's College, London – 'Let's Think in English' project (accelerated learning);
- Members of the Global Futures Steering Group (international languages)

The LLC AoLE group has also previously engaged with Carys Lake from Gwynedd's Welsh language immersion centre; Helen Prosser, Director of Strategy for the National Centre for Learning Welsh; and members of Conwy and Denbighshire EAL Service. The group also spent a day in June at Fitzalan secondary school and had input from its EAL and languages teachers. More than 40 languages are spoken by Fitzalan's school community.

2. A statement defining 'what matters' in the context of the AoLE, outlining how the AoLE will support the realisation of the four purposes

LLC will develop ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world. Learning about languages and other forms of communication helps pupils participate effectively in education. It teaches them to appreciate and respect the needs and rights of others and helps them create diverse, cohesive and inclusive societies, locally, nationally and globally. Through experiencing, understanding and using languages in Wales, pupils will better understand their own identity, culture, community and society. Through language and literature, pupils will develop a sense of identity. They will be able to articulate, express and represent their own emotions

and be equipped to understand the emotions of others. Their sense of belonging will be strengthened; and this together with the development of their communication skills, will make them more confident individuals whose voices can be heard.

LLC will develop enterprising, creative contributors to society with an awareness of different perspectives that comes with learning languages and modes of communication. Pupils will be enabled to use their multilingual skills to solve problems and think critically together and independently. Developing confidence to use languages enables pupils to adapt to different roles, to think creatively and be prepared to take risks as they experiment with new languages. They will creatively express and develop ideas and opinions.

LLC will develop healthy, confident individuals who can articulate their thoughts and feelings, and interpret those of others, showing respect and developing strong, positive relationships so they can work with others to overcome challenges. They will use languages and literature to access information to support and keep themselves and others safe and well in the real and virtual world. They will understand how to think and engage critically with language and literature communicated in a range of media.

LLC will develop ambitious, capable learners who become capable communicators. They will use Language, Literacy and Communication skills effectively in relevant contexts through Welsh, English and their other languages, digital media (and Augmented Assisted Communication where applicable). This will enable them to become successful learners, now and in their future lives. Through meaningful, real life learning experiences and challenges, pupils will develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to develop an ambitious attitude to language learning, oracy, literacy, communication and literature.

3. Initial titles for strands of ‘what matters’

The group has developed five “What Matters” key concepts. As stated in the introduction an additional concept was identified about the link between identity, languages and cultures. This is considered integral to all LLC statements listed below.

- 1) **To use languages effectively we must understand that they are constructed, connected, and evolving.**

This matters because understanding commonalities and connections between languages provides a foundation for further language learning. Understanding how to use and connect speaking, listening, reading and writing skills enables us

to make sense of the world. Working with others we can develop new ways of communicating to suit special purposes and situations. Understanding that language is constructed, conforming to rules of grammar, syntax and spelling enables us to communicate and convey meaning with increasing accuracy. Experiencing and understanding the history of literature and actively participating in the evolution of languages allows us to respond to changes in society, culture, the environment and technology.

This concept will be taught across the continuum of learning, with increasing complexity as pupils progress and mature.

2) Using languages effectively helps us to belong, contribute, create and communicate.

This matters because languages provide an opportunity to express feelings, thoughts and ideas, opinions and views in daily activities at school, home, at work and in the community. The process of learning languages offers enjoyment as well as opportunities to problem solve, think and respond critically, experiment and be creative. Literacy describes a set of skills, including speaking, listening, reading and writing, by which we achieve these purposes securely and effectively. Literacy is not narrowly about the mechanics of being able to decode the words on a page or write grammatically correct sentences, although these are essential skills in their own right. Through language we communicate to form meaningful relationships and share a wide range of experiences to understand the world around us. Languages allow us to take an active part in society, to collaborate and develop into valued, confident, ambitious and successful individuals in a multilingual world.

3) As capable communicators we use and adapt languages for different audiences, purposes and contexts.

This matters because meaning is created by language in context. Hearing, reading/viewing, thinking about and responding to language underpins our communication development. The ability to adapt our language for various purposes, audiences and contexts develops throughout our lives. We learn how to express our own thoughts to inform, guide, persuade and encourage others. Engagement with languages in a range of genres, forms and styles provides us with the foundations for adapting our own language to different contexts and choosing an appropriate register. Our capacity for thought of all kinds is developed by making connections, questioning, expressing opinions and discussing language choice across a range of contexts.

Pupils will begin to adapt their language from an early age so that they can communicate with friends, family and teachers. Responding to increasingly more unfamiliar and complex situations as they progress.

There are links with Expressive Arts, for example in the creative use of language in poetry, drama and film.

4) Communicating accurately with others contributes to how we understand, sympathise, empathise, connect and share experiences and work with others.

This matters because we need to listen, formulate our thoughts, speak, read, write and communicate clearly and confidently in order to be active participants of our world, to understand ourselves and others. Accuracy reduces the possibility of others misinterpreting what we're trying to express. Inaccuracy in spelling, conjugation, mutations etc. can significantly impair meaning but at the same time we should be willing to take risks with language for the sake of creativity. Clarity and precision in sign language allows children with Additional Learning Needs to communicate with a wider audience. This also applies to non-verbal communication such as facial expression and gesture where accuracy is necessary to express meaning.

Accuracy in communication is important for pupils across all six Areas of Learning and Experience and in life more widely.

5) Experiencing and enjoying literature promotes critical and creative thinking, stimulating our imagination and develops our understanding of the world.

This matters because literature has the power to expand the mind and give people dreams and aspirations. Literature, including digital, film and visual literature*, oral and written texts, enhances our understanding of people's experiences, thoughts, beliefs, feelings and cultures. Literature is a product of the context in which it is created. Through the exploration, study and enjoyment of literary and non-literary works, we develop an appreciation of a creator's craft and style in education and the wider world. Literature is a vehicle for teaching empathy through concepts such as viewpoint, character, emotional release and is a stimulus for discussion and consideration of difficult material and topics. Literature stimulates an individual's imagination and may enable and enhance their creativity. It promotes critical thinking and strengthens our own capabilities as writers as we are encouraged to infer and deduce meaning and become aware of literary techniques. As both 'audience' and 'authors' we give and receive genuine responses that value voices and express identity, and in doing offers reassurance and promotes ambition.

There are links to Expressive Arts when literature (e.g. poetry and drama) is performed and through the study of visual literature. Literature will also be important in providing alternative viewpoints and in developing empathy in Health and Wellbeing and Humanities.

**Visual literature* is the term used by the Welsh awarding organisation, WJEC, to translate 'llunyddiaeth' (the study of films etc.). In Welsh, the study of visual literature complements the study of literature.

4. A further developed 'what matters' key concept

The following is provided as an initial example of further development of one of the group's key concepts, with the understanding that the CAMAU work will undertake more detailed mapping of progression in the next phase of work during the Spring term.

As capable communicators we use and adapt languages for different audiences, purposes and contexts.

Progression will encompass receptive skills (listening, viewing and reading), and expressive / productive skills (speaking, presenting and writing) and creative and critical thinking.

Oracy: Listening-Thinking-Speaking

Listening and responding to language underpins our communication development. In early years we learn to listen to language modelled in a structured environment. We develop active listening skills, process what they hear, and learn to respond and contribute. By viewing and listening to different sources, e.g. visitors to school, direct experiences, stories, drama, poetry, film and information and social media, we learn how language can be adapted for different purposes and audiences.

We learn how different cultures and communities use and adapt languages. We learn to engage personally and critically with others' ideas and feelings, recognising obvious bias or prejudice and referring to detail.

We learn to use language for different purposes and to adapt to different contexts including real life experiences, drama and poetry. By emulating modelled language, we develop awareness of the need to adapt language to communicate personally and socially, critically and professionally with friends and family, our community and workplace.

We learn to use spoken language in appropriate ways from informal talk with friends to more formal situations, e.g. presenting/participating during an assembly, talking to a visitor, questioning other speakers. We develop the use of purposeful extended talk, speaking clearly, varying expression, tone and volume to keep listeners interested and will begin to use increasingly complex, subject specific vocabulary.

As we become more proficient, we can select and consistently sustain appropriate register and style. We learn to use standard and non-standard language appropriately in formal and informal situations. As we progress, we confidently organise and extend spoken language using a wider range of syntax structures and

precise and effective vocabulary (including terminology), making significant, well-thought-out contributions to engage listener interest.

Reading/Viewing and Responding

We develop understanding, critical and creative responses to what we read and view by listening to/viewing and then through reading a range of texts from different genres including: stories, legends, dramas, fiction, poetry, news, instruction, information, explanation, persuasive and discursive texts in different medium. We are exposed to high quality texts including both formal and informal language; texts in print and dynamic texts including social and news media. By reading/viewing texts in different media, we understand the need to adapt language for different cultures and communities.

We learn to identify how texts differ when they are created for different media and audiences and begin to consider the intended effect. Reading/viewing becomes increasingly analytical by making connections, questioning, expressing opinions and discussing language appropriateness.

We develop the skills to distinguish between facts, theories and opinions and use evidence to show the differences and identify different interpretations of facts and information and evaluate their relative merits. We become selective in our critical analysis and evaluation of information, ideas, opinions, purpose, implicit meaning and/or bias within a wide range of texts.

As proficient readers we are aware of the influence of social and cultural factors on the language and content of texts. We understand that some texts contain elements of prejudice, which we learn to recognise, criticising texts and/or illustrations that are biased.

Writing/Creating/communicating

We learn about and begin to use different types of writing appropriate to purpose and reader, including the use of subject-related words. We begin to follow a structure to write for different purposes and audience. Our words are chosen for variety and interest as we develop the ability to adapt writing style to suit reader and purpose, with characteristic features of a range of continuous and non-continuous texts. By emulating constructs of language, we adapt language to respond personally and socially as well as in the community and workplace. We adapt language for more complex and unfamiliar situations, writing both independently and collaboratively in a range of media.

As proficient writers we choose and use whole-text structures to support meaning and communication for effect. We choose structures, vocabulary and register in writing for different contexts developing control of a range of forms and styles appropriate to task and purpose in an engaging manner.