

Expressive Arts AoLE:

Submission to Curriculum &
Assessment Group: December 2017

(Revised following CAG feedback during AoLE workshop 11 December 2017)

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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

The pioneer group for the Expressive Arts AoLE considered papers and presentations from a number of disciplinary experts during this term to assist the thinking in developing the 'What Matters'. At the outset, one of the pioneers presented Professor Mark Priestley's views on curriculum design and 'What Matters', following his workshop to representatives of the AoLEs. Ernest Spencer from

CAMAU presented CAMAU's interim report – 'Learning about Progression' which discussed examples of curricula which had used similar approaches. Experts were commissioned to put forward their opinion on 'What Matters' in their disciplines.

Reports and presentations were received from:

Emma Thayer, Drama Lecturer, School of Education, Cardiff Metropolitan University ('What Matters in Drama');

Non Stevens, Wales Manager, Into Film with 3 best practice teachers presented 'What Matters in Film';

Professor Chris Collins, Head of Music, Bangor University presented a paper on 'What Matters in Music' and also considered the 'What Matters' across the AoLE.

Initially the group considered 'What Matters' in each discipline and then from that work, considered the commonalities between the disciplines and developed the current strands of 'What Matters'.

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

The Expressive Arts are taught through exploration and practice, resulting in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. 'Doing' is an essential part of 'What Matters' in the Expressive Arts and promotes the four purposes through the interconnecting creative learning processes of 'explore and experience, create and express, respond and reflect', -these underpin the 'What Matters' concepts.

By communicating effectively in different forms and settings, fostering curiosity and challenging themselves to take creative risks and critically evaluate, learners will develop resilience and gain confidence to make connections and apply skills and knowledge in different contexts to become **ambitious capable learners who are ready to learn throughout their lives.**

To become **enterprising, creative contributors** learners will express ideas and emotions through different media in order to improve the everyday lives of themselves and others; develop the confidence and understanding in their own learning, empowering themselves to take measured risks and grasp opportunities so that they are **ready to play a full part in life and work.**

By engaging with a range of art forms that span time, place and culture, through understanding and respecting the responses and interpretations of others, learners will appreciate the impact of their own interactions, becoming **ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world.**

By participating in various expressive arts performances and experiences, developing technical skills and personal competences including self awareness and collaboration which foster fun and enjoyment, learners will become **healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.**

2. Revised titles for strands of 'What Matters'

Artistic communication takes many forms

Humanity reflects itself through the arts

Creative experiences enrich our lives

Experience and practice develops technique

Creativity exists in us all

One additional 'What Matters' statement

Knowledge of artistic elements deepens understanding

Artistic communication takes many forms

Learners should be able to use and appreciate various forms of Expressive Arts so that they can communicate their ideas and feelings, which enrich their lives through developing self-expression and empathy with and for others.

This concept prioritises the development of communication skills, both as an artist and audience by investigating ways of communicating ideas, identities and feelings. The relevance of this concept allows learners to communicate through the arts and about the arts. The communicative aspect of this concept offers opportunities to merge disciplines and promote links with other AOLEs. This concept promotes all four purposes and can be taught across the continuum of learning.

Humanity reflects itself through the arts

Through the Expressive Arts, learners will be able to explore and experience historical events, time periods and society, both locally and in the wider world so that they can gain an understanding of themselves and others. This will enrich their lives through developing empathy, tolerance and an appreciation of the importance of all cultures.

This element of the Expressive Arts has strong links to the **Humanities AoLE**. Learners will explore the context of the Expressive Arts, and will also gain an understanding of history, culture and society. Learners will engage with art that was born directly out of or inspired by key periods in time, political movements and societal change. Learners engage with contemporary issues in an informed and empathetic way. In developing analytical and critical thinking skills, learners will display an increasing level of sophistication and comprehension of the arts in the context of the world around them.

Creative experiences enrich our lives

Learners will develop a true and valid self awareness, through exploring the Expressive Arts, so that they can sustain and improve their own wellbeing. This enriches their lives through becoming confident and resilient individuals able to support their own and others' success as life long learners.

This concept prioritises the development of the skills necessary for reflective and confident individuals. Through exploration and an understanding of self, learners will be able to respond to their own and others' creativity. Through Expressive Arts, the development of empathy and confidence will support the learners' mental, physical and emotional resilience, across all aspects of their journey through life. In times of

challenge, learners will be able to make connections and have the capacity to deal successfully with change.

This concept is directly linked to the **Health and Well being AoLE** and can be experienced across the 3-16 continuum.

Experience and practice develops technique

This statement focusses on the acquisition and development of the technical skills required to progress in the Expressive Arts. Learners will experience a variety of Expressive Arts skills in different genres, so that they will participate with ever-increasing complexity and technical skill, making meaningful contributions, which enrich their lives by providing opportunities for continued lifelong learning.

The skills developed through the Expressive Arts are central to the core of the subject. These are developed, informed, enhanced and refined through diverse Expressive Arts experiences – this demonstrates that some skills are multidisciplinary and that some are specific to particular art forms. The transferable skills developed by the learner, such as problem solving, communication, collaboration, evaluation and analysing will enable learners to participate successfully in activities outside of the classroom and in their future vocations. There are clear opportunities for differentiation, which as learners progress, will become increasingly complex.

This concept promotes the four purposes and can be taught across the 3-16 continuum.

Learners compose, devise, choreograph and create new artistic pieces to demonstrate the ability to explore and create original ideas which enriches their lives through being able to understand their own and others' responses.

The creation of new ideas fosters learners' abilities to select and prioritise subject knowledge by developing original responses through exploration and discovery. By taking measured risks through the creative process, learners become more independent and confident decision makers in and beyond the school. Creativity, originality and discovery, inclusively, to be able to demonstrate their individual responses and progress; it encourages learners to take ownership of their ideas and artistic work, thus enabling them to become ***ambitious, capable learners***, and ***enterprising, creative contributors***.

This concept has strong links with the LLC AoLE through communication, Health and Wellbeing through the development of confidence and emotional and physical

wellbeing, Humanities through the discovery of various existing stimuli and Science and Technology through the exploration, creation and risk taking involved in the creative process. This concept can be taught across the 3-16 continuum.

Additional 'What Matters' put forward with a skeleton rationale

Knowledge of artistic elements deepens understanding

Short rationale:

This statement encourages learners to transfer discipline-specific knowledge in other contexts both in and beyond the school setting.

3. A further developed 'What Matters' key concept

Experience and practice develops technique – a narrative of progression

Acquisition of technical skills begins with exploration leading to the control of discrete elements of the relevant art form e.g. responding to sound, making marks. Learners will develop an understanding and appreciation of techniques and skills used to produce specific Expressive Arts outputs, e.g. illustrating an event/singing a simple song, and will ask and answer questions about Expressive Arts experiences which will develop in complexity as their learning journey progresses. Overarching skills will enable learners to use a variety of media and means of creative expression, however some skills are discipline specific. Learners will experience these skills and use/combine them to fit the purpose. Learners will practise and refine skills with decreasing support, learning how to critically reflect on their own and others' works. Learners will experience expressive arts created by others, which is a rewarding experience in its own right, but will also inspire and develop appreciation of the Expressive Arts. Learners will experience a varied and diverse learning journey relating to their own and other cultures. Expressive Arts naturally aligns itself with language and communication as well as offering a valuable tool to develop the teaching of science and technology (sound waves, colour, environmental art, photography), maths (rhythms, ratios, proportions, time, spatial awareness), humanities (cultural context, place and time) and health and wellbeing (mindfulness, physical movement, body awareness, proprioceptive).