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Can the New Welsh Curriculum achieve its purposes?

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The New Welsh Curriculum sets itself apart from its predecessors through the use of explicit aims; these are the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum. At the same time, it sets out six Areas of Learning and Experience which incorporate traditional school subjects and emphasise the importance of providing a broad and balanced education. In this paper, I ask whether these two strands, the Four Purposes and the six Areas of Learning and Experience, can be united into a single coherent curriculum. I argue that if the curriculum is entirely driven by the Four Purposes, then much of the content associated with traditional school subjects in the Areas of Learning and Experience is redundant. On the contrary, if the Areas of Learning and Experience are prioritised, then the Four Purposes are unlikely to be met. In response, I propose that the content associated with Areas of Learning and Experience can be understood a prerequisite for meeting the Four Purposes, but the content is not sufficient on its own. This reconciles some of the tension between the two curriculum strands, but means that the Areas of Learning and Experience will need to be supplemented by additional activities in order for the New Welsh Curriculum to achieve its purposes.

Keywords: curriculum; aims of education; philosophy of education

The New Welsh Curriculum

Since devolution in 1998, the Welsh education system has diverged from the National Curriculum which previously covered both England and Wales. The New Welsh Curriculum, which is due to be introduced in 2022, brings together previously piecemeal changes into a single new curriculum for Wales. The decision to focus on explicit aims is a significant addition to the new curriculum. The Four Purposes are designed to guide the entire curriculum, whereas the previous National Curriculum dictated which subjects ought to be taught and the content to be taught within each subject without defining overarching aims of education. In this paper, I will explore whether the aims-based nature of the New Welsh Curriculum is compatible with the broad and balanced subject-based curriculum set out by the New Welsh Curriculum's Areas of Learning and Experience.

In the New Welsh Curriculum, the Four Purposes state that 'all our children and young people will be:' (1) 'ambitious, capable learners who are ready to learn

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throughout their lives’; (2) ‘healthy, confident individuals who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society’; (3) ‘enterprising, creative contributors who are ready to play a full part in life and work’; and (4) ‘ethical, informed citizens who are ready to be citizens of Wales and the world’ (Donaldson, 2015, p. 31). The 2019 consultation document summarises these Four Purposes as aiming to ensure ‘that our young people are able to lead fulfilling personal, civic and professional lives’ (Welsh Government, 2019e, p. 3). The New Welsh Curriculum can be described as providing an aims-based education, where the aims of education are to enable people to lead fulfilling personal, civic and professional lives. This is what sets the new curriculum apart from its predecessors.

While the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum distinguish it from previous curricula, the New Welsh Curriculum does not make an entirely clean break with the past. Alongside the Four Purposes of the curriculum, there is another curriculum strand labelled ‘Areas of Learning and Experience’. This part of the curriculum consists of six Areas of Learning and Experience: ‘expressive arts, health and wellbeing; humanities; languages, literacy and communication; mathematics and numeracy; and science and technology’ (Welsh Government, 2019a, p. 6). With the exception of health and well-being, these include explicit reference to traditional school subjects in their guidance documents. For example, the humanities Areas of Learning and Experience includes ‘geography, history, religious education, business studies and social studies... classics, economics, law, philosophy, politics, psychology and sociology’ (Welsh Government, 2019d, p. 3).

The content of the curriculum, in terms of what is likely to take up most teaching time in schools, is set out by the Areas of Learning and Experience. Since these are composed of groupings of school subjects, the bulk of curriculum time is likely to take the form of an introduction to a broad and balanced range of traditional school subjects. This is acknowledged by Donaldson in his 2015 review of the National Curriculum requirements for Wales when he claims that maintaining an ‘identifiable core of disciplinary and instrumental knowledge’ (2015, p. 38) and a ‘broad and balanced education’ (2015, p. 20) is a priority.

These two strands of the curriculum: the Four Purposes and the six Areas of Learning and Experience, are designed to solve problems with the National Curriculum. Donaldson outlines its shortcomings:

Despite successive modifications, the philosophy, form and content of the current national curriculum require significant change. There was a recurring view that the curriculum had become unwieldy, overcrowded and atomistic, and that it was inhibiting opportunities to apply learning more holistically in “real life” situations, or to use that learning creatively to address issues that cross subject boundaries... in addition, separate subject planning, combined with a narrow interpretation of how best to develop literacy and numeracy skills, was sometimes inadvertently resulting in a narrow and repetitive set of experiences. (Donaldson, 2015, p. 35)

In response to the atomistic, piecemeal nature of the previous curriculum, the proposals set out by Donaldson, and enacted in the New Welsh Curriculum draft involve developing an aims-driven curriculum rather than a subject-driven one. Despite this, Donaldson continues to stress the importance of providing a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum.

The intention seems to be that the Areas of Learning and Experience and the Four Purposes of the curriculum will work together, with the Areas of Learning and Experience contributing towards the Four Purposes, and the Four Purposes guiding the Areas of Learning and Experience. The consultation document for the New Welsh Curriculum stresses that neither strand ought to take priority over the other: ‘the intention is that there is to be a duty on the Welsh Ministers, the local authority... governing bodies and head teachers to exercise their educational functions to secure that the general requirements of the new curriculum are met (i.e. that the curriculum must be broad and balanced and achieve the four purposes)’ (Welsh Government, 2019e, p. 20). The New Welsh Curriculum requires both strands to be taken seriously: it would not suffice to achieve the Four Purposes while shunning the broad and balanced subject-based education of the Areas of Learning and Experience, or to provide a broad and balanced subject-based education while downplaying the Four Purposes.

If this is the case, then it seems that the two parts of the curriculum are intended to work together, with ‘each of the Areas of Learning and Experience... mak[ing] distinct and strong contributions to developing the Four Purposes of the curriculum’ (Donaldson, 2015, p. 38). The Areas of Learning and Experience should ‘provide a rich context for achieving the purposes of the curriculum; be internally coherent; employ distinctive ways of thinking and have an identifiable core of disciplinary and instrumental knowledge’ (Donaldson, 2015, p. 38). This intention is carried through into the draft curriculum guidance which explains how each Area of Learning and Experience, with its ‘core of disciplinary and instrumental knowledge’, can and ought to contribute to meeting the Four Purposes of the curriculum. Given this focus on disciplines or subjects, and the claim that a broad and balanced curriculum is as important as the Four Purposes, it is fair to characterise the New Welsh Curriculum as composed of two strands: a broad and balanced subject-based strand, and a purpose-driven strand.

The draft curriculum includes additional requirements aside from the Areas of Learning and Experience: ‘the cross-curricular responsibilities of literacy, numeracy and digital competence’; ‘relationships and sexuality education’; ‘religious education’; and ‘the Welsh and English languages’ (Welsh Government, 2019a, pp. 11–14). In this paper, I will focus on the Four Purposes and the Areas of Learning and Experience because they are sufficient to highlight the tension between an aims-based education and a broad and balanced subject-based education. This paper will explore whether, and how these two strands can work together.

The coherence of the New Welsh Curriculum

The problem presented by New Welsh Curriculum is whether the Four Purposes and the six Areas of Learning and Experience constitute the coherent unified curriculum intended. The curriculum guidance provided by the Welsh Government holds that both strands of the curriculum carry equal weight and that the Areas of Learning and Experience contribute to the Four Purposes. This is evident in Donaldson’s stipulation that schools will have a duty to provide both a broad and balanced curriculum

and meet the Four Purposes. The problem raised is whether the Areas of Learning and Experience are the best vehicles for meeting the Four Purposes, and how a subject-based curriculum might contribute towards achieving these purposes.

This problem about coherence is important for two reasons. The first is that the New Welsh Curriculum commits to providing schools and teachers with the autonomy to 'make school-level decisions within a common framework' (Welsh Government, 2019a, p. 6). This level of autonomy puts a weight of responsibility on schools and teachers to decide how to implement the New Welsh Curriculum. If the New Welsh Curriculum is unclear about the relationship between the Four Purposes and the Areas of Learning and Experience, then teachers will be left with the task of resolving difficulties themselves. They might puzzle over what to teach in order to bring about the Four Purposes, how much of the planning and resources from previous curricula they can continue to use, or which of the subjects suggested in the Areas of Learning and Experience they ought to focus on. These are not trivial decisions; clarity about the relationship between the two curriculum strands is needed to avoid placing the burden of decision-making on schools and teachers. It is also possible that individuals will reach different conclusions about how to implement the curriculum; this risks undermining the 'common framework' of the New Welsh Curriculum as students in different schools might encounter different curricula.

The other reason for worrying about the coherence of the curriculum is that any school curriculum is imposed on children; their liberty is curtailed by the requirement to spend time at school undertaking the activities prescribed by the curriculum (White, 1973, p. 6). If curriculum activities lack justification, then time spent on them is potentially an unjustified use of children's time. In the case of the New Welsh Curriculum, the inclusion of specific aims of education helps to make the case that the curriculum is justified insofar as it helps students to lead fulfilling personal, civic and professional lives. However, if the Areas of Learning and Experience do not contribute to these aims, then either some independent justification for the Areas of Learning and Experience is required, or they are surplus to the aims of the curriculum. An account of how the Areas of Learning and Experience contribute to the Four Purposes is required to justify their place on the curriculum.

The tension between aims-based curricula and subject-based curricula is highlighted by the ideas underlying subject-based curricula. For example, subject-based curricula were historically seen as at odds with professional aims. Adler and Mayer explain that the sort of broad and balanced subject-based curriculum which dominates the history of Western education traditionally aimed to provide students with the 'arts of liberty or the life of freedom, the political freedom of the citizens or ruling class and the economic freedom of the leisured to engage themselves in political intellectual or aesthetic activity' (1958, p. 19). Studying a broad and balanced range of subjects was seen as a worthy pursuit for the leisured classes; whereas a narrowly focused, vocational curriculum was appropriate for meeting professional aims. The two were cast as at odds with one another.

Another example of the tension between a subject-based curriculum and an aims-based curriculum is the prevalence of arguments for providing students with a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum justified by the intrinsic value of subjects.

O'Hear asserts that 'the disciplines are taught and engaged in for their own sake, because they are recognised to be valuable in their own right and part of any fully civilised existence' (1981, p. 4). If a subject-based curriculum is intrinsically valuable, then it is taught for its own sake, not for the sake of broader aims. Hirst expands on this idea with the claim that a broad and balanced curriculum 'is not a vocational education, not an exclusively scientific education, or not a specialist education in any sense' (Hirst, 1974, p. 30). This sort of justification for teaching a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum contrasts it with the sort of aims driving the New Welsh Curriculum.

Accounts of the relationship between subject-based curricula and broader aims of education draw attention to the absence of a clear rationale for the contribution that a subject-based curriculum can make to broader aims. White criticises the English National Curriculum for failing to provide this sort of rationale, instead, he claims that the English National Curriculum falls back on curriculum norms: 'new patterns have been overlaid on old, but the old shine through' (2004, p. 179). Perhaps the subject-based strand of the New Welsh Curriculum is also backward-looking. Some account of how the Areas of Learning and Experience can contribute to the Four Purposes is needed if White's criticism is to be overcome. Drawing together the Four Purposes and six Areas of Learning and Experience into a coherent curriculum would provide a justification for including a subject-based strand alongside broader aims.

The redundancy of the areas of learning and experience

The New Welsh Curriculum guidance recognises the need to reconcile the Areas of Learning and Experience and the Four Purposes and provides detailed guidance about how each Area of Learning and Experience can contribute to meeting personal, civic and professional aims. In this section, I show that this attempt at reconciliation falls short of providing a coherent unified curriculum. This is because teaching a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum does not directly lead to personal flourishing, professional success or civic engagement. In each case, alternative ways of meeting the aims can be imagined which are more straightforward and direct than the subject-based approach of the Areas of Learning and Experience. The result is that the subject-based curriculum suggested by the Areas of Learning and Experience does not directly meet the Four Purposes of the curriculum and, as a result, much of the suggested content is redundant. I will outline three examples taken from the curriculum guidance to demonstrate this problem.

The first example comes from guidance about the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience. This Area of Learning and Experience is composed of a broad and balanced array of subjects including art, drama, film and digital media and music. These are linked to the Four Purposes by curriculum guidance: (1) through exploring new challenges, students are helped to become ambitious capable learners; (2) students are helped to play a full part in life and work through working collaboratively in teams, and through becoming critical thinkers where 'critical appraisal' is 'key to the creative process'; (3) thinking critically and working in teams 'develops

their resilience, which in turn supports them to become healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society'; and (4) 'from this [creative] experience [students] are supported to become ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world' (Welsh Government, 2019c, p. 5).

The problem with this guidance is that the contributions from the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience are not conceptually connected to the subjects covered. The purposes could be met equally effectively without any content from art, dance, drama, film and digital media and music. There is nothing about these subjects which specifically aims to being about personal, professional and civic aims in a way which other activities are unable to do. Students could be introduced to new challenges through studying other subjects, or from trivial or non-disciplinary activities such as playing a sport or planning a pizza night. Students could work in teams without engaging with any of the disciplines in the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience. They could engage in critical thinking about abstract questions, mathematics or logic instead of through the arts. It is also unclear whether or how creative experiences might create ethical informed citizens. The guidance does not explain how or why the arts are well-placed to play these roles. Since the ways in which the Expressive Arts Area of Learning and Experience contribute to the Four Purposes are not closely related to the content of the subjects involved, the subjects covered are likely to be largely redundant to meeting the Four Purposes; teaching the subjects listed goes over and above the demands of the Four Purposes. The New Welsh Curriculum does not provide an adequate rationale for the inclusion of the subject-based elements of the Arts Area of Learning and Experience. Without the redundant subject-based elements, it is unclear what the Area of Learning and Experience would look like, or how it would be distinct from the other five Areas.

A similar problem emerges from the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience. The guidance claims that engaging in contemporary and historical issues through exploring human experiences and contemplating different perspectives contributes to developing 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world' (Welsh Government, 2019d, p. 5). However, this purpose could be met with minimal input from humanities subjects. A single case study taken from history might suffice, or a course could be specifically designed to explore global and local citizenship without relying on traditional humanities subjects. The guidance also suggests that learning about students' locality through the humanities will help them to 'become ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives' (Welsh Government, 2019d, p. 5). No further guidance on why or how is offered; the worry is that the subjects associated with the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience could be replaced with equally effective activities from other areas of the curriculum, or new activities which are not subject-based. There is little specific to the humanities which creates ambitious, capable and lifelong learners. The guidance goes on to claim that engaging in discussion, and exploring their locality will 'help support the development of healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society in Wales and the wider world' (Welsh Government, 2019d, p. 5). Engaging in discussion and exploring the local area could both be achieved without subject-based

content from the humanities. Again, it seems that the much of the subject-based content associated with the Humanities Area of Learning and Experience are not essential to meeting the Four Purposes of the curriculum.

The Science and Technology Area of Learning and Experience guidance states that learning about the scientific method and engaging in scientific inquiry will contribute to the development of ‘ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives’ (Welsh Government, 2019f, p. 5). While this might be the case, the curriculum guidance does not explain why or how. Second, the guidance claims that ‘through robust and consistent evaluation of scientific and technological evidence, learners are then supported to become ethical, informed, citizens of Wales and the world who will be able to make informed decisions about future actions’ (Welsh Government, 2019f, p. 5). Insofar as learners become informed by the content of the science and technology subjects, it is plausible that they will become better equipped to make informed decisions. However, it is less clear how evaluating scientific and technological evidence leads the ethical citizenship. Also, if evaluating evidence leads to ethical, informed citizenship, then there is no requirement that the evidence comes from science subjects, thus casting doubt on the value of science and technology subjects as a means of meeting this end. Finally, the Area of Learning and Experience guidance claims that ‘knowledge of their bodies and the ecosystems around them’ helps learners to live healthy and fulfilling lives’ (Welsh Government, 2019f, p. 5). This seems a reasonable claim, but the learning required to fulfil this purpose is much narrower than the broad subject content suggested by the Area of Learning and Experience. Students need not study much biology in order to understand how to live a healthy lifestyle. In this way, much of the emphasis on scientific subject seems redundant to meeting the Four Purposes.

In summary, the subjects associated with the Areas of Learning and Experience make a limited contribution to the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum. By this, I mean that the Four Purposes could be met without much of the broad and balanced subject-based curriculum strand presented by the Areas of Learning and Experience. This casts doubt on the unity of the New Welsh Curriculum because it does not seem like the two strands are well connected to one another. If the definition of ‘curriculum’ used in the guidance is taken seriously, then ‘curriculum’ includes ‘all of the learning experiences and assessment activities planned in pursuit of the four purposes of the curriculum’ (Welsh Government, 2019b, p. 6). If this defines the New Welsh Curriculum, then much of the broad and balanced subject-based curriculum strand of the Areas of Learning and Experience falls outside of the New Welsh Curriculum: it does not directly contribute to the Four Purposes. As it stands, it is unclear why the Areas of Learning and Experience appear as extensive as they do; and it is unclear whether they are capable, or whether they are the best means to meeting the Four Purposes. If the Areas of Learning and Experience are, as suggested, meant to provide a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum, and some of this subject-based strand does not directly contribute to the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum, then it appears that some of the content covered in the Areas of Learning and Experience is redundant, and so lacks justification.

The areas of learning and experience are not sufficient to meet the four purposes

The New Welsh Curriculum guidance highlights, rather than resolves the tension between the Four Purposes and the Areas of Learning and Experience. In each of the examples covered in the previous section, claims made about the contribution of the Areas of Learning and Experience to the Four Purposes do not fully justify the place of a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum strand in the New Welsh Curriculum. More direct ways of meeting the Four Purposes can be proposed which do not require much, if any, reference to traditional school subjects. In this section, I will outline the sorts of activities which might be able to directly meet the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum. Since these are not subject-based, and are central to realising personal, professional and civic aims, I argue that teaching the six Areas of Learning and Experience on their own is unlikely to fully achieve the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum.

The civic aims of the New Welsh Curriculum are to create 'ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world' (Welsh Government, 2019a, p. 5). Civic aims of education have sometimes been linked to a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum. For example, Nussbaum states that 'becoming an educated citizen means learning a lot of facts and mastering techniques of reasoning' (1997, p. 14). This seems within the remit of the Areas of Learning and Experience which include subject-knowledge, and mastery of disciplinary thinking. However, Nussbaum stresses the insufficiency of a subject-based curriculum, since civic education 'also means something more. It means learning how to be a human being capable of love and imagination' (1997, p. 14). Nussbaum emphasises the importance of the arts and humanities in contributing towards this end, but the task of 'learning how to be a human being' is broader than becoming acquainted with arts and humanities subjects.

Gutmann claims that civic education involves 'education in character and in moral reasoning' (1987, p. 51). While a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum might contribute towards this, the task set out goes beyond what is traditionally conveyed as part of a subject-based curriculum; a course in the subject of morality, which would contribute to moral reasoning, might fall short of educating for character unless it explicitly focuses on this aim. Similarly, Brighouse links an education for democratic citizenship to three dispositions: 'a disposition to abide by the law'; 'a disposition to engage in political participation through legal channels to achieve justice and in pursuit of certain of one's own interests that it is legitimate to pursue'; and 'the disposition to engage in political participation in a spirit of respect and a willingness to engage in public reasoning' (2005, pp. 64–67). While studying subjects such as history, geography, psychology, political science, philosophy, *etc* is likely to contribute towards these dispositions, it is unlikely to be sufficient.

In order to fully realise the civic aims of the New Welsh Curriculum, additional activities to those suggested by the Areas of Learning and Experience are needed. It seems plausible that spending school time engaging in democratic practices such as dialogue with peers, involvement in school governance, engaging with local government, undertaking community service or voting in mock (or, policy permitting, real) elections, would be important contributors to someone's civic education. These

activities fall outside of a subject-based curriculum, but are direct approaches to achieving civic aims.

The personal aims of the New Welsh Curriculum are to develop ambitious, capable, healthy, confident, enterprising and creative individuals. A broad and balanced subject-based curriculum has often been linked to personal flourishing, and some rationale exists for how the Areas of Learning and Experience might contribute to the personal aims of the curriculum. For example, Plato thought that education ought to involve 'physical training and mental or moral training... poetry, music, mathematics, and dialectic' because this sort of curriculum develops virtues (Morgan, 1999, p. 49). Plato held that a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum which pursues truth leads to flourishing because acquaintance with truth is part and parcel of the good life. However, even if we agree with Plato that flourishing involves the pursuit of truth, it does not follow that the pursuit of truth is all that is required to live a flourishing life. Something, in addition to the subjects referred by the Areas of Learning and Experience, is required to bring about personal aims of education.

A curriculum which is serious about helping its students to become ambitious, capable, healthy, confident, enterprising and creative individuals would need to focus directly on these traits. It might involve modelling and habituating good behaviour, discussing and supporting students' life choices, being kind and loving towards students, supporting and guiding them, liaising closely with parents, guardians and other social institutions, and so on. Flourishing, or the capacity to flourish, seems connected with upbringing, and a curriculum which aims to facilitate flourishing in its students should be concerned with bringing children up in a kind, loving and careful way. This falls outside of a subject-based curriculum. The Areas of Learning and Experience can contribute to flourishing, but are not sufficient to bring about this curriculum aim.

Finally, the New Welsh Curriculum involves professional or vocational aims. A broad and balanced subject-based curriculum has, in the past, been defined as an antithesis to vocational education. For example, Peters uses the distinction between vocational training and a broad and balanced introduction to theoretical activities as a method of analysing the concept of education (1966, p.53). Nonetheless, there have been attempts to reconcile professional aims with a subject-based curriculum. Winch points out that a broad and balanced education is 'a prelude to the making of autonomous choices concerning a vocation' (2002, p. 108). However, a subject-based curriculum is not sufficient; a serious attempt to prepare children from their professional lives ought to inform them about vocational options, train them to perform specialist tasks involved in the jobs which they choose to pursue, and help them to compete for paid work. A subject-based curriculum does not involve activities which directly do this, and so the Areas of Learning and Experience will need to be supplemented in order to meet the professional aims of the New Welsh Curriculum.

The personal, professional and civic aims underlying the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum can be addressed using the Areas of Learning and Experience, but teaching the broad and balanced subject-based curriculum embodied by the Areas of Learning and Experience is insufficient for achieving the Four Purposes, and in many cases is likely to fall short. A serious attempt to meet the Four Purposes would

need to take a direct approach and feature activities such as partaking in democratic practices for civic education, learning about vocational options for professional education, and spending time with nurturing and caring adults for personal education. These are not the sorts of activities which naturally fall under a subject-based curriculum, and as a result they are not activities which are suggested by the Areas of Learning and Experience.

A rationale for the areas of learning and experience

Despite the fact that the Areas of Learning and Experience are insufficient to bring about the Four Purposes, and that curriculum guidance fails to explain why much of the subject-based content of the Areas of Learning and Experience is needed to bring about the Four Purposes, a rationale for the Areas of Learning and Experience can be provided. I suggest that a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum, such as that which is set out by the Areas of Learning and Experience, is valuable because being well-informed about the world is a precursor to being in a position to achieve the Four Purposes. This is suggested by Gutmann who says that schools can help ‘children to learn how to live a good life in the nonmoral sense by teaching them knowledge and appreciation of (among other things) literature, science, history, and sports’ (1987, p. 51). Brighouse makes a similar point that ‘an autonomous life cannot be led without the information about the world in which it is led’ (2005, p. 23). I propose that a well-curated subject-based curriculum is a prerequisite for meeting the Four Purposes, but that it will need to be supplemented by additional activities, as outlined in the previous section.

As it stands, the New Welsh Curriculum guidance takes a piecemeal approach to the relationship between the Areas of Learning and Experience and the Four Purposes: particular parts of subjects are identified as making specific contributions to particular Purposes. However, an alternative is to make the claim that being broadly informed about the world is a prerequisite to becoming ambitious, capable lifelong learners; enterprising, creative contributors to life and work; ethical, informed citizens; and healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives. If this is the case, then a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum contributes towards achieving the Four Purposes. It is difficult for students to meet the Four Purposes of the curriculum unless they have a good grasp of the content communicated by a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum. The Areas of Learning and Experience are valuable insofar as they inform students about the world; and, being informed about the world is valuable insofar as it contributes to being able to effectively interact with it. Without having a broad and balanced understanding of the world around them, students will not be well-placed to lead the sort of life which the Four Purposes of the curriculum aim towards.

This is different from the existing rationale for the Areas of Learning and Experience which sees them as incidentally contributing towards the Four Purposes. The existing rationale points out how the subjects encompassed by the Areas of Learning and Experience happen to contribute towards the Four Purposes, even if more direct approaches might be more effective. On this revised view, that being well-informed

about the world is a pre-requisite to meeting broader curriculum aims, the Areas of Learning and Experience are central to even beginning to try to meet the curriculum aims, because without being well-informed, the possibility of achieving the personal, civic and professional aims of the New Welsh Curriculum is hampered. This revised account of the relationship between the Areas of Learning and Experience and the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum would add clarity for those implementing the new curriculum. On this account, Areas of Learning and Experience ought to focus on content which is central to meeting the Four Purposes. A good model for this is presented in the guidance for the Science and Technology Area of Learning and Experience: (1) knowledge of scientific evidence and technologies supports decision-making about how one ought to live ones' life; and (2) knowledge of ones' body supports living a healthy life. Being informed in this way, through content associated with scientific subjects, is directly related to being able to live a flourishing life.

Taking a similar approach to other Areas of Learning and Experience is also possible. Within the expressive arts, exploring emotions through music, drama, film and the visual arts informs learners about their own emotions and can contribute to their emotional well-being. Being informed about historical and geographical subject content can help learners to act with sensitivity at home and worldwide, making them better citizens in light of what they know about the world. This connection between and broad and balanced subject-based education, and the Four Purposes of the New Welsh Curriculum helps to articulate one way in which the Areas of Learning and Experience contribute to the aims of the curriculum. It also provides clarity about what ought to be taught within the Areas of Learning and Experience. Schools ought to teach information about the world which helps students to make sense of it and interact effectively with it so that they will be more able to live flourishing lives. Schools ought not to go into too much detail about subjects where this detail does not support the Four Purposes.

However, this account of the relationship between the Areas of Learning and Experience and the Four Purposes only goes some of the way to resolving the problem raised by their coexistence on the New Welsh Curriculum. The remaining problem is that, although the broad and balanced subject-based curriculum provided within the Areas of Learning and Experience is a prerequisite to achieving the Four Purposes, it is not sufficient. A well-informed person is in a better position than an ill-informed person to live a flourishing personal, professional and civic life, but to seriously educate for these aims still involves directly addressing the Four Purposes through carefully tailored activities and experiences which lie outside of a subject-based curriculum. While being informed by the Areas of Learning and Experience is a precondition to achieving the Four Purposes, it are not sufficient, and the Four Purposes will need to be directly addressed by carefully designed additional activities.

Conclusion

As it stands, the New Welsh Curriculum presents itself as driven by Four Purposes. At the same time, it is composed of Areas of Learning and Experience which cover a broad and balanced array of subjects. The New Welsh Curriculum is committed to both of these two strands, with guidance claiming that 'that the curriculum must

be broad and balanced and achieve the four purposes' (Welsh Government, 2019e, p. 20). It also holds that the Areas of Learning and Experience, with their 'identifiable core of disciplinary and instrumental knowledge' are the means by which the four purposes will be met: 'each of the Areas of Learning and Experience... make distinct and strong contributions to developing the Four Purposes of the curriculum' (Donaldson, 2015, p. 38).

As it stands, the guidance provided does not explain how the Areas of Learning and Experience provide 'distinct and strong contributions' to the Four Purposes. Instead, it is possible to imagine more direct ways of meeting the Four Purposes. Additionally, if a traditional subject-based curriculum is implemented, then much of the content taught will be redundant to meeting the aims in the way specific by curriculum guidance. However, it is possible to provide an alternative account of the contribution that a broad and balanced subject-based curriculum makes to meeting the Four Purposes. If the Areas of Learning and Experience are understood as prerequisites to achieving the Four Purposes of the curriculum, then their place as part of the New Welsh Curriculum is neither redundant nor trivial. The alternative account proposed is that the content encompassed by the Areas of Learning and Experience informs students about the world. Being well-informed about the world is a precondition to meeting the personal, professional and civic aims set out by the Four Purposes.

This alternative rationale about the contribution of the Areas of Learning and Experience to the New Welsh Curriculum offers those tasked with implementing the curriculum greater clarity about what ought to be taught in the Areas of Learning and Experience. They ought to primarily teach content which helps learners to meet the Four Purposes through informing them about the world around them. Furthermore, the proposed rationale justifies the place of the Areas of Learning and Experience on the curriculum. However, the Areas of Learning and Experience are not sufficient to meeting the Four Purposes, and that other activities which directly address the Four Purposes are needed to adequately meet the aims of the New Welsh Curriculum.

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