

THOUGHT PAPERS:

Learner Pathways: A key to successful curriculum design

Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world

Purpose

1. To update Curriculum and Assessment Board members about two thought papers on curriculum design published on 25 August 2020.
2. To invite Curriculum and Assessment Board members to contribute to, and participate in next steps.

Overview

3. The papers are the outcomes of co-design work led by Education Scotland, No Tosh and 40 partners from local authorities between January and March 2020. The papers capture the shared thinking and consensus of the group. They mark the end of the first stage of curriculum design work in each area and will be followed over session 20/21 with further practical work.
4. The purpose over the three days was to share and clarify thinking about each area [the 'what' and 'why' of curriculum design], drawing on the practical experiences of the groups and to add value to that by, at the same time, developing capacity in design skills [the 'how']. The strength of these papers lies in the fact that they have been, in effect, written by the practitioners who are actually leading on Learner Pathways and/or IDL developments in their own schools.
5. One of the participant schools in the IDL work – Hazlehead Primary in Aberdeen – developed its approaches to IDL over Term 4 as a direct result of the learning that took place in the sessions. They did this with their learners and parents throughout the lockdown period. An initial trial professional learning session in the week before the papers were released on that work with a range of headteachers was very positive.
6. The papers were included in the OECD evidence base as exemplars of curriculum co-design and were shared with local authority Directors, partners and participants ahead of publication. Responses on social media to their release on 25 August have been positive.
7. The first follow up meeting with the co-design teams took place the week after release to begin to shape the follow on plans taking account of the current recovery phase.

Background notes

8. Learner Pathways is a relatively new concept and currently an area of development and growth in schools - most evident in the senior phase and prompted

by DYW. It was identified as an area for potential development support in *CAB paper-07 (02) - Secondary Curriculum Design*.

9. IDL has long had a space in Scotland's Curriculum but it has not been developed to its full potential. The need to look at it again became evident as part of the work done to develop and share the Refreshed Narrative. Inspection evidence points to a lack of IDL practice in secondary in particular. The case for IDL and why we need to raise our ambitions for its practice in schools now is made in the paper as is a working definition which will help in taking forward the next stage of work. The Royal Society of Edinburgh/University of Edinburgh and The Wood Foundation (following its meeting with the Deputy First Minister in 2019) both have work ongoing in this area at the moment and both were participants in the project.

10. In December 2019 each local authority was invited to nominate or endorse a school leader who had expertise in the area as a participant.

11. Both papers identify a need for different ways of working and in particular to allow a more obvious space for the direct involvement of partners, such as employers, to have most impact. Initial thinking suggest that we should focus the next stage of work with Learner Pathways and IDL on the S1 to S3 stage of BGE. This is an area that has needed attention for some time, was identified in Paper CAB-07 (02) as such and discussions with school leaders over the last year/18 months suggest an appetite and will to do so. Any plans need now to be seen through the lens of current COVID-19 impact and what opportunities may lie beyond this immediate period.

12. Comments from participants

"It is a wonderful and hugely exciting paper."[IDL]

"Very well done to you and your team for pulling this together... it has been a rewarding and valuable process and I have felt valued as part of the work stream."

"This has been an incredible experience for me to work with a variety of different people and gain different perspectives in everything we covered and will be beneficial for me in the future. If anything like this ever comes up again I would love to be a part of it."

"I would like to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to be part of the group. I have learned so much and I am looking forward to developing IDL within my school."

Thanks for putting the paper together: really important messages." (Head of Service) [LP]

Points for discussion

13. The Curriculum and Assessment Board are invited to discuss:

- how this work can support curriculum design in session 20/21 taking account of recovery phase context and looking beyond this, and
- how Board members can both individually and collectively contribute to this work going forward.