

Introduction to Practical Support Materials: Video Transcript

Slide 1

This video provides an introduction to practical support materials which have been developed from the work and thinking of those involved in the second phase of the Camau i'r Dyfodol Project.

These new materials have been designed to support system wide shared understanding of Curriculum for Wales. They enable professionals to engage with the processes and resources created in the second phase of the project. Participants wanted to create support materials that would be meaningful, manageable and usable by practitioners in their own professional settings.

We will briefly explain the project before going on to explain the thinking behind the creation of the support materials.

Slide 2

The Camau i'r Dyfodol project is a three-year project designed to support curriculum realisation by working collaboratively with practitioners and other education professionals from across Wales. Funded by the Welsh Government, this project involves a partnership between the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and the University of Glasgow working co-constructively with education partners professionals in Wales.

In phase 1 of the project, we did three things.

We explored what we could learn from the existing literature about the relationships between curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and learning progression.

We developed an approach to co-construction that would support different people from across the system to come together and work collaboratively in phase 2 of the project.

And we had conversations with teachers, practitioners, regions, and other middle tier partners and organisations, to understand how people were approaching the realisation of Curriculum for Wales.

Phase 2 centred on the work of a co-construction group that brought together 67 education professionals from across the system. The purpose of this group was to think through some of the opportunities and challenges involved in realising Curriculum for Wales. This group included the complementary expertise, knowledge and skills of practitioners from primary, secondary and special schools, members of Welsh Government, Regional Consortia and partnerships, Qualifications Wales, Estyn and members of the Camau i'r Dyfodol Project Team.

Slide 3

So, what did the construction group actually do?

Members of the Co-Construction group met through a series of online and whole day in-person events over a 7-month period.

During this time, they engaged in significant thinking about the opportunities and challenges involved in realising Curriculum for Wales in their local contexts and nationally. The co-construction group formed into smaller sub-groups to explore particular areas that they thought were important to their own settings local contexts and to the system more widely. As part of this, each subgroup thought about any challenges as 'knots' to be explored and unravelled to move forward with curriculum design in practice.

A range of different approaches was used within groups such as think maps, jam boards, reflective questions, and prompts for further thinking.

Groups also shared thinking with other groups who asked questions and made suggestions to challenge thinking. Practitioners involved in the groups asked the Camau team to provide additional theory and research to help clarify curriculum design and unravel the knots that they were working through.

In addition to this, a series of four national network conversations allowed thinking to be shared with others and refined.

Reflecting on the co-construction process, one participant said: 'it's challenged me to think... what am I holding on to? Am I looking backwards rather than looking forwards on where we should be going' Another said: 'I found it a really interesting process to be involved in... I found that level of research and engagement really, really interesting... and if it's something I can go into, I can research and I can find different examples and then pull back and relate it to my practise.'

Slide 4

So, what did the co-construction process show?

The process showed that Curriculum for Wales was being understood in different ways by members of the co-construction group. We will explain more about these different understandings in [Section 1](#), but for the moment what this meant was that they also held different understandings of how to realise Curriculum for Wales in practice. This was significant because some of these ways of understanding were more aligned than others with Curriculum for Wales as a purpose-led curriculum.

As one participant helpfully said about the process of understanding and realising Curriculum for Wales: "I think it's safe to say that the journey to Curriculum for Wales has not been linear, has it? It's in every aspect, isn't it? You've been forward and you need to go back and revisit..." So the idea of reflection and reconsideration is a helpful one in consider

for how practitioners make sense of new curricula. This is what is called sensemaking, and we consider this in the next slide.

Slide 5

During phase 2, the co-construction process became recognised by participants as important for supporting ongoing sense making and developing shared understandings about Curriculum for Wales.

Sense-making is an important part of curriculum realisation described by Dolfin et al. (2020, p.129) as 'an active, cognitive, and emotional process in which a person attempts to fit new aspects and demands into existing knowledge and beliefs.' Sense-making is an important process in any complex or large-scale reform and can take place over several years.

Participants thought it would be helpful for curriculum realisation if materials could be developed to support other practitioners in their own ongoing sense-making.

As the co-construction process evolved, participants' ideas about the nature of these materials also evolved. For example, one participant explained how they had thought carefully about whether to finish phase 2 with a product such as examples or case studies, or finish with a process that professionals could engage with. Another talked about the importance of not reducing things to checklists and of needing to encourage professionals to go 'back to the essence of the learning' in thinking about Curriculum for Wales', to think about 'why is it important that our learners know that? What will that enable them to do? Another talked of wanting to create something to help practitioners reflect 'but in your setting... evaluate what you've got, think about it.'

Participants decided that the co-construction process is what should be shared, rather than creating a set of stand-alone resources or exemplars.

Slide 6

The result of the co-construction process was the creation of these practical support materials, developed from the work and thinking of the co-construction group along with international evidence that was gathered in response to this thinking.

As one participant said: '[we] want to share our journey with others now, I would say and get them thinking about the things that we have encountered.'

These support materials have been created for use by individuals, schools and clusters. Another participant said that the idea was for the materials to be there to 'take away' and support thinking at all levels.

Slide 7

The practical support materials are divided into three main sections, as noted along the top of this overview diagram. These sections are designed to be used in the order they are presented here, with one section building from the last. The first section is called: 'Understanding Curriculum for Wales'. The second is called: 'Assessment and progression in a purpose-led curriculum' and the third is called: 'Curriculum realisation: from national to local contexts'.

All sections have a similar structure. They begin by exploring some key ideas, they then provide opportunities to explore things further, before sharing materials that can be used to help put thinking into practice.

The materials begin by focusing on Curriculum for Wales and what curriculum model it aligns with most fully. Without first understanding this, it becomes difficult to know how to realise the curriculum in practice. Seminar 1 explores more fully what is meant by a process approach to curriculum design before practitioners are supported to reflect on this in terms of their own practice.

Section 2 then considers what a process approach means for thinking about assessment and progression. In the final section, we explore what international evidence tells us about curriculum realisation and relate this to some of the voices of those involved in the co-construction group.

There are a variety of ways to engage with these materials. We provide video inputs, downloadable summaries and resource sheets, transcripts and reflective questions that allow you to use these ideas and approaches as part of the on-going process of curriculum realisation in your own settings.