

National Network Conversation:

Curriculum and Assessment Design Summer 2023

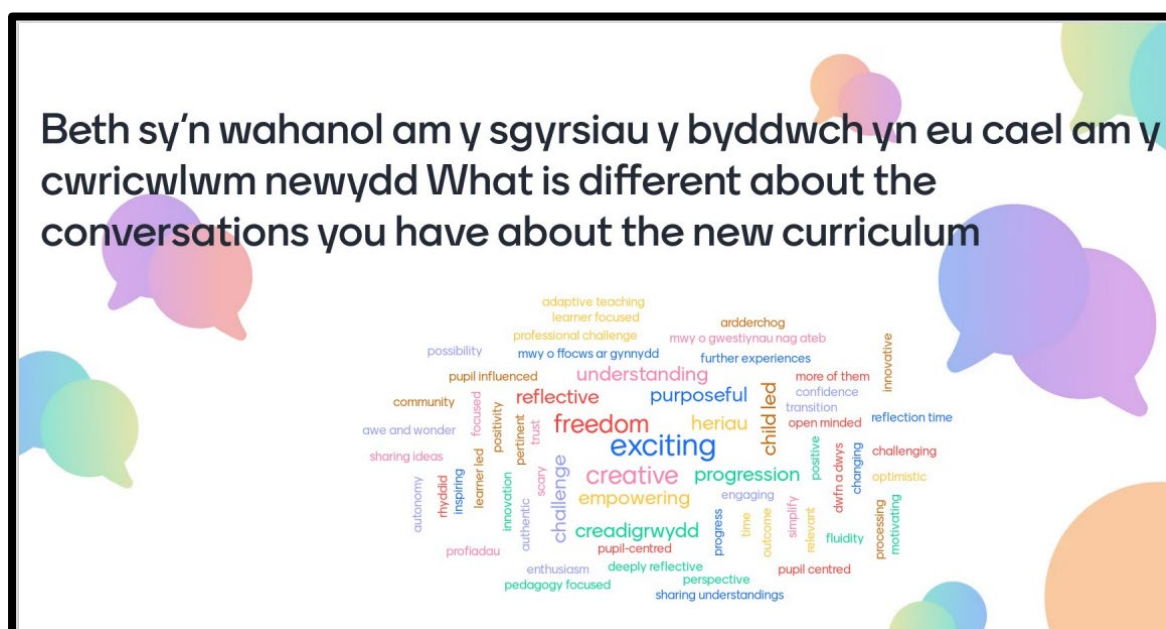
Building on the **2021 to 2022 Curriculum Design conversations**, this National Conversation in Summer 2023 focused on supporting practitioners and school and setting leaders to reflect on their leadership of the curriculum and assessment design processes since September 2022. Again, it was a privilege to hear from practitioners in all types of settings from across the whole country to inform our understanding.

'I think the broad 'system' audience is an excellent approach - it really helps to make it a truly national, all-encompassing discussion' (Practitioner participant, Summer 2023)

This National Conversation provided an opportunity to:

- chat with other practitioners from across Wales about the type of curriculum conversations that are supporting effective curriculum and assessment design
- evaluate how schools and settings are developing the culture and environment conducive to effective curriculum and assessment design
- signpost to resources that can support leading curriculum conversations in schools and settings that enable learner progression

A video of this National Conversation and its resources can be accessed by registering on the [Eventbocs.wales website](#). These can be used to support your curriculum journey in your school/setting or cluster.



What you told us about leading curriculum and assessment design across Wales?

- All schools and settings articulated the need to establish a culture conducive to establishing the Curriculum for Wales, including evaluating their approaches to pedagogy and professional learning.
- Many discussed the steps they had taken through using the [Schools and Learning Organisation](#) (SLO) model and [Journey to Rollout](#) as guiding principles in supporting their school improvement journey.

- All schools and settings discussed the value of developing a focus on supporting learners to realise the four purposes. This enabled leaders to evaluate the quality of their curriculum and assessment design through this lens, supporting new habits in purposeful learning.
- Many schools articulated this being a challenging process, often in need of bespoke support for individuals to develop this new way of thinking about curriculum design.
- Establishing the understanding of what a purpose led curriculum should look like can at times be too abstract for some. To plan purposeful learning is such a departure from the previous national curriculum expectations for just learner outcomes; it is taking time to develop. Many practitioners described 'getting used to this' but that it is sometimes challenging to 'keep on this track' if the culture of the school or leadership is still in the 'old mindset'.
- Many schools talked about seeing the most beneficial way of this working in learner assessment. The focus on formative assessment is informing the design of curriculum in a much more responsive way. The focus is on the needs of learners and their next steps in learning which is informing planning in a more purposeful way. Supporting learners to be comfortable in being challenged in their learning is a crucial element of ensuring the culture of the classroom supports this reform.
- In plenary, many practitioners agreed with the sentiment that as a profession we are being 'increasingly comfortable with being uncomfortable' with the demands of curriculum reform renewing rigour in the profession. However, it was recognised that the culture established in schools and settings by innovative leadership is a crucial support mechanism in enabling this.
- There is still much fear in the profession of 'getting it wrong' and the impact this could have on school inspection. There was a collective belief that we have the agency and the capacity in Wales to 'get it right'.

'We need to be brave and back ourselves!' (Practitioner participant, Summer 2023)

- Relationships was a reoccurring theme of this conversation. The relationship between teacher and learner is vital for successful learning. Equally it was felt that professional relationships and establishing networks within and across schools is a key enabler in creating a supportive culture. All schools mentioned the positive impact of working with others within and across schools and clusters in establishing a shared understanding of progression and supporting curriculum design.

Next steps:

- The outcomes of this conversation will inform the following:
 - A revised [Journey to Rollout](#) consultation in Autumn 2023. The revised guidance aims to respond to specific curriculum design needs and support schools and settings with a practical guide to maintaining a manageable iterative design process.
 - A range of supporting materials will be published in Autumn 2023 to support specific needs identified around the relationship between curriculum and assessment design and cluster working.
 - Supporting materials that help schools and settings with establishing a well sequenced and coherent curriculum across the 3-16 continuum that enables learners to realise the four purposes.
 - Future Curriculum and Assessment design conversations throughout 2023-2024.

We continue to appreciate the facilitation and attendance of all practitioners involved in these conversations. Please look out for future sign up in the next academic year.