

# Assessment in the Curriculum for Wales

As schools consider assessment in Curriculum for Wales, they need to have regard for



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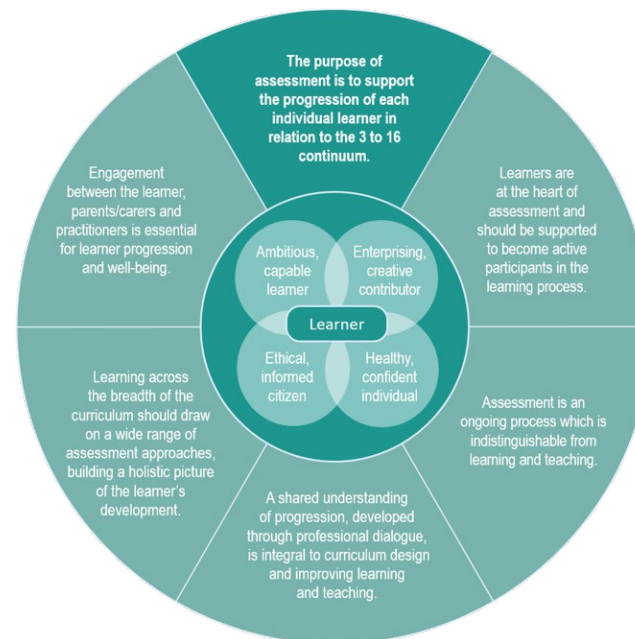


Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## The three roles of assessment:



## The purpose and principles of assessment:



## This supporting material sets out:

- » The roles and purposes of assessment in Curriculum for Wales
- » What assessment should and shouldn't do under Curriculum for Wales
- » Ideas for how schools can identify, capture and reflect on learners' progress over time
- » Questions and prompts to support the development of high-quality assessments

It draws and expands upon a range of guidance documentation:

**Supporting Learner Progression:** Assessment Guidance

**Designing your Curriculum:** developing a vision for curriculum design

It is vital that schools do not think about and plan assessment in isolation; **assessing progression** must be considered as part of **curriculum design**.

**Effective assessment is built upon an understanding of what it is you are looking to find.**

Purposeful curriculum design, and clearly identifying the intended progress you want learners to make, allow you to consider what will best show you that progress. This is the basis of assessment design.

## Curriculum Design

What is the purpose?  
What is the essence of learning?  
What are the learning intentions?



## Progression

What does progression look like in respect of that learning?



## Assessing Progress

What will show me that progress is being made?  
How will I be able to see that learners truly understand?

School leaders should ensure that practitioners value the above relationship and should recognise that one approach to assessing progress will not suffice.

Assessing progress is more involved than comparing snapshots of assessment / attainment data out of context. School leaders must arrange their evaluation and improvement activities so as to ensure that a broad view of learner progress (in line with the principles of progression) can be established and reflected upon (including reviewing if practitioner expectations are high enough).

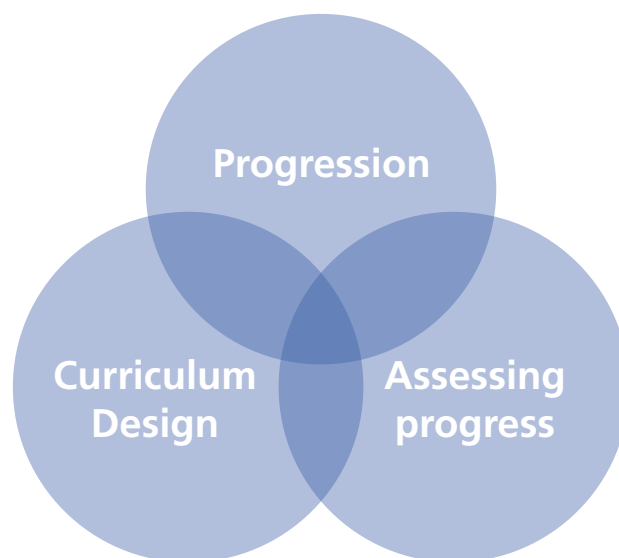
## Built from curriculum design and an understanding of progression

### Assessment cannot be detached from curriculum design and understanding progression.

It must be an ongoing process that is embedded within day-to-day planning and practice as it is fundamental to the learning process.

**Progression** in learning is a process of increasing depth, sophistication, engagement and learner control, rather than covering a body of content; it is not linear and different learners are likely to progress in markedly different ways. **Assessment planning and practice, built into the curriculum and classroom practice, should recognise this.**

**Assessment** under CfW is about continuously assessing learner progress. It may be useful, therefore, for schools to think about **'assessing'** rather than 'assessment'. This implies an ongoing process indistinguishable from learning and teaching rather than a one-off event.



**Practitioners should assess all learners across the 3 to 16 continuum based on the progression articulated in their school or setting's curriculum and in their planned learning intentions.**

### When designing their assessment arrangements schools/settings...

#### Should:

- » Use the Principles of Progression and the descriptions of learning to inform what this progress should look like and the expected pace of progression in their curriculum.
- » Assess the progress outlined in their designed curriculum.

#### Shouldn't:

- » Use the descriptions of learning as a series of criteria to be directly assessed against, or assess against these descriptions with discrete assessment tasks, independent of learning and teaching activities.
- » Undertake specific assessment activities designed to make a judgement about whether a learner / group of learners has/have "achieved a progression step"

## Developing assessment arrangements



Schools/settings should plan a range of **assessment methods and techniques** that are fit-for-purpose and support progression across the breadth of the curriculum.

Assessment methods **could...**

- » Be specific to individual areas of learning and experience (Areas);
- » Apply across more than one Area (including cross-curricular and integral skills);
- » Be specific to learners with additional needs.

Assessment methods **should...**

- » Accord to the needs of the learner (taking into account a learner's developmental stage and any barriers to learning);
- » Be focused on the learning intentions and support real understanding;
- » Be used to identify whether a learner needs to consolidate learning, whether further support is needed and/or whether the learner can progress to the next steps in learning;
- » Include observational assessment which allow practitioners to look for evidence of embedded learning (informed by a good understanding of child development across the 3-16 continuum).

**Learners should engage more directly in the assessment process**, as they progress along the 3 to 16 continuum. To do so effectively, learners need to develop their **affiliation, autonomy and agency** within the school/setting environment (*see [Learner wellbeing and assessment: mutual support systems](#)*).

This will support their progression as they seek to become increasingly effective as learners.



**Specific assessment arrangements required in Curriculum for Wales include:**

**Statutory personalised assessments:**

These are designed to help a practitioner and learner understand how a learner's reading and numeracy skills are developing and what the next steps should be. **They are designed to support learning and teaching.**

**On-entry assessment arrangements:**

When a learner enters a school/setting, practitioners should ensure they understand where they are in their learning (taking account of information provided by those who have previously supported the education of the learner, where relevant) and use that information to plan next steps.

*This does not include moving to reception year from within a maintained school's nursery or primary-secondary transition. This will be part of the more usual transition arrangements (and the development of a shared understanding of progression between schools/settings).*

## Supporting individual learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis



**Supporting individual learners on an ongoing, day-to-day basis** should allow practitioners to respond to the individual needs of the full range of learners within their classroom. When designing a range of assessment methods and approaches, practitioners must consider carefully the inextricable link between the pedagogical understanding of **curriculum design, progression and assessing progress**.

Focus on the individual learner, identifying strengths and areas for improvement (and, where relevant, any barriers to learning).



Ascertain next steps required to move learning forward, including any additional challenge and support required.



Achieved by embedding assessment into day-to-day practice in a way that engages the learner and makes it indistinguishable from learning.

Establishing clear learning intentions which shape the learning activities (engaging learners in this process, where possible).

Reflecting on own practice to inform next steps in teaching and planning for learning.

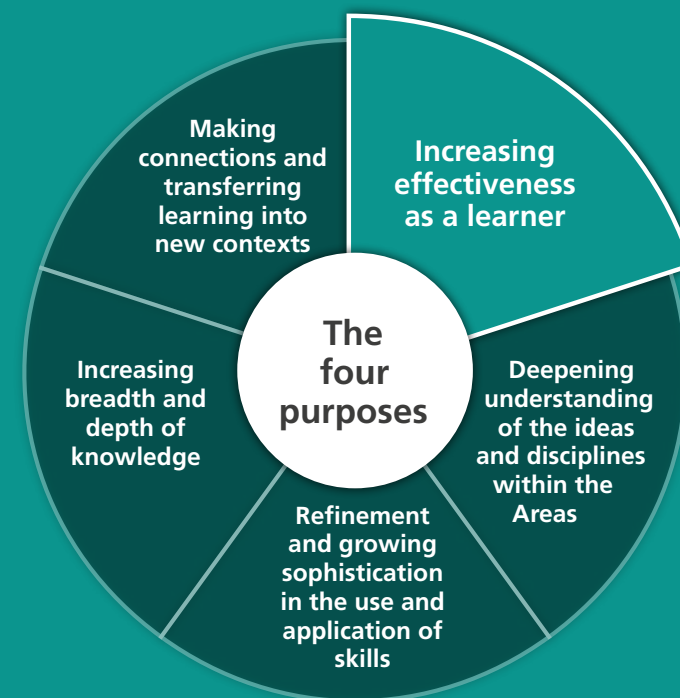
Providing relevant and focused feedback that moves their learning forward and which actively engages learners, encouraging them to take responsibility for, and reflect on, their learning.

Evaluating learning, including through observation, questioning and discussion.

Creating a culture which promotes learner well-being through assessment practice.

As learners progress, supporting them to think about their own learning more explicitly, and develop their skills in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning.

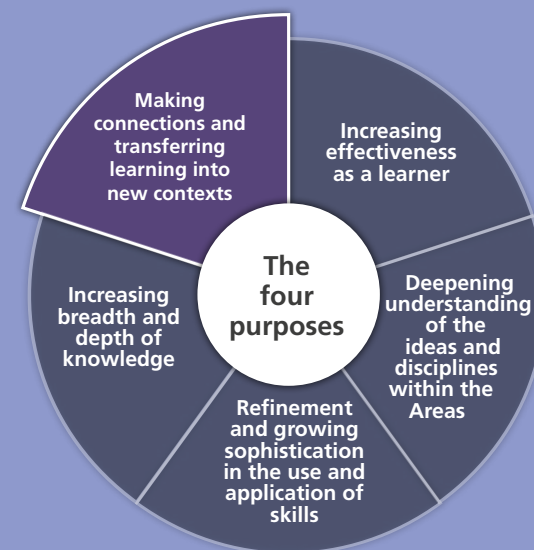
Learner engagement in this process helps them to progress as they become increasingly effective as learners.





- » Assessing learning in order to support the development of deep understanding will allow learners to make progress.
- » As schools challenge themselves to think about whether their curriculum design challenges learners to consolidate their learning and apply their skills, they will also need to consider the appropriate methods for assessing that learning.
- » Schools will consider ways that their assessment arrangements allow them to discern how well learners are growing in sophistication in their use and application of skills, and to support those who need it.
- » Assessing progression will need to take into account ways to support learners as they deepen their knowledge within areas and disciplines.

- » Curriculum and assessment design should provide opportunities for learners to develop their ability to make connections in their learning (within and across areas)
- » Schools should ensure that learners are being challenged to apply their understanding in unfamiliar contexts
- » Practitioners could consider the integral skills (e.g. critical thinking and problem solving) as they design these opportunities.





## Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time and understanding group progress



As time passes, practitioners will want to **identify, capture and reflect on individual learner progress**. It is important that this relates to the curriculum that has been designed and the understanding of progression that has been established. Practitioners will want to step away and reflect on progress in accordance with the learning intentions that have been established for the period of time in question. (The length of this period will vary depending on the learning that has been planned).

Pausing to reflect upon this, and capturing the most relevant and significant aspects of progression, should also allow practitioners to **understand how groups of learners are progressing**.

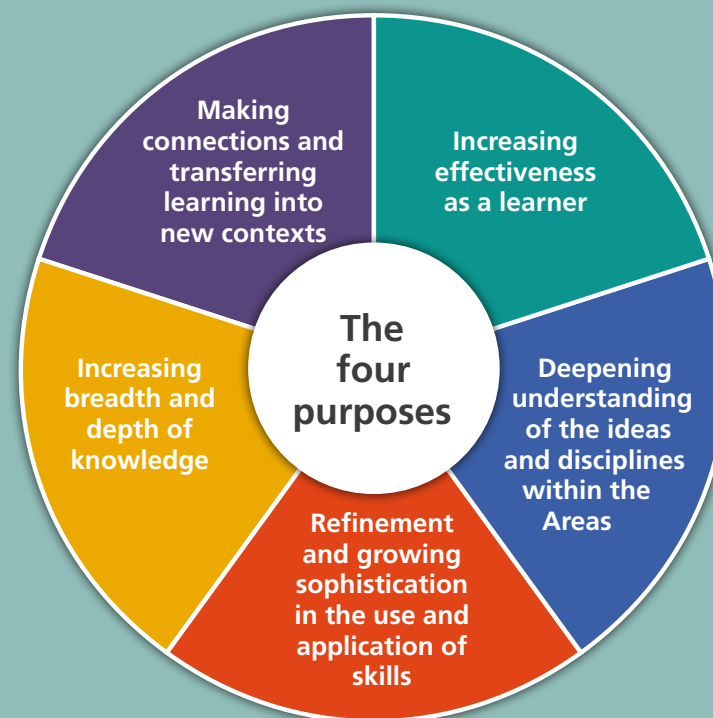
Supporting individual learners on  
an ongoing, day-to-day basis



Identifying, capturing and reflecting  
on individual learner progress over time

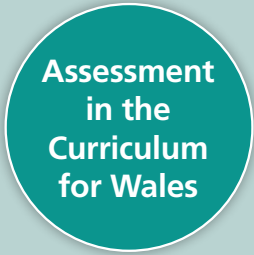


Understanding group progress  
in order to reflect on practice



When practitioners need to identify, capture and reflect on individual learner progress over time and understand group progress in order to reflect on practice, the principles of progression can be used as an organising framework for their considerations.

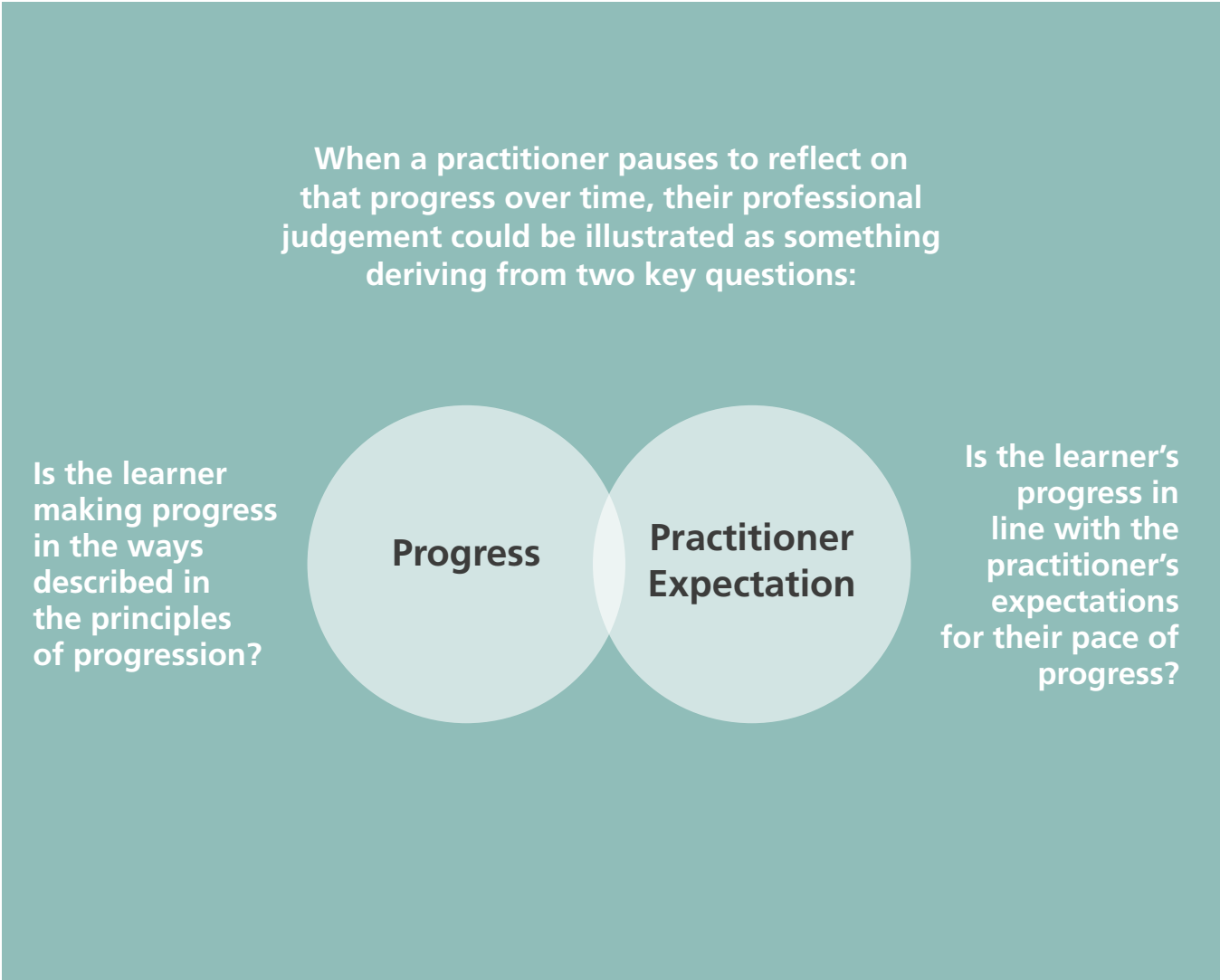
This can then be further supported by the practitioner's professional judgement as to the appropriateness of the pace of that individual learner's progress (in light of their expectations for that learner).



# Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time and understanding group progress

This crucial stage of pausing to identify, capture and reflect on individual learner progress will naturally be informed by the ongoing, day-to-day assessing of progress that a practitioner will have been engaged with.

Combined, they form the basis for communicating strengths and next steps to the learner and their parent/carer.





## Identifying, capturing and reflecting on individual learner progress over time and understanding group progress

Schools and settings will benefit from consistently recognising the inextricable link between the pedagogical understanding of curriculum design, progression and assessment as they reflect upon the progress that learners are making.

### Progress

**Is the learner making progress in the ways described in the principles of progression?**

- » Consider the holistic development of the learner and how they are learning;
- » Consider the Principles of Progression (in conjunction with the Statements of What Matters). Are they becoming more effective? Broadening and deepening their knowledge?
- » Focus on the learning intentions for this period of time (e.g. unit of work) – these will have already been planned as the key elements for progression

**A practitioner's professional judgement surrounding an individual learner's progress over time should be supported by the school's:**

- » continually evolving shared understanding of progression;
- » professional learning arrangements;
- » internal evaluation and improvement activities.

### Practitioner expectations

**Is this learner's progress in line with the practitioner's expectations for their pace of progress?**

- » These expectations relate to the curriculum that has been designed and the understanding of progression.
- » This professional judgement represents something individualised and personal to the learner.
- » The Descriptions of Learning provide broad checkpoints of progress. The relationship between the learner's progress and their age should only help to inform a practitioner's professional judgement in order to ensure appropriate support / challenge.
- » The practitioner should reflect on what they know about the learner and their progress, and ensure that their expectations are sufficiently challenging.
- » They will also consider their curriculum in light of their evolving and shared understanding of progress.

# The principles of progression supporting practitioners, learners and their parents/carers



In **curriculum design**, practitioners design learning with **purpose**, identify the **progress** they want to see, and design **assessment** to support that progression.



When they assess a learner's progress, practitioners are looking to find:

1 Is the learner making progress in line with the principles of progression?

2 Is that progress in line with my expectations for this learner?

3 What are their next steps?



Assessment built from the principles of progression and focused on the learning intentions helps inform:

Dialogue between learners and teachers...

*"You have really improved your investigation skills. You are able to... Your next steps are to..."*

...with parents and carers...

*"Joe has started to ask some really challenging questions. He now needs to develop his use of..."*

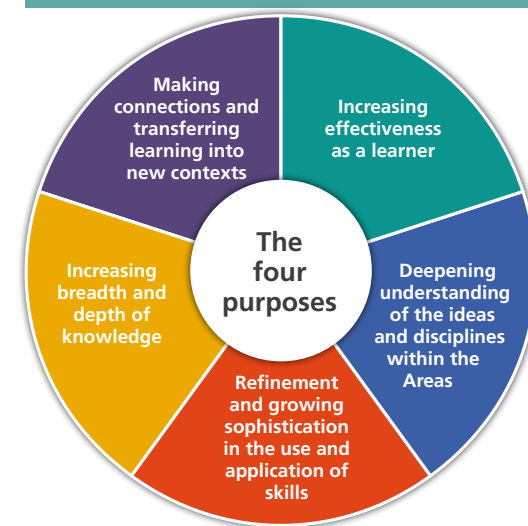
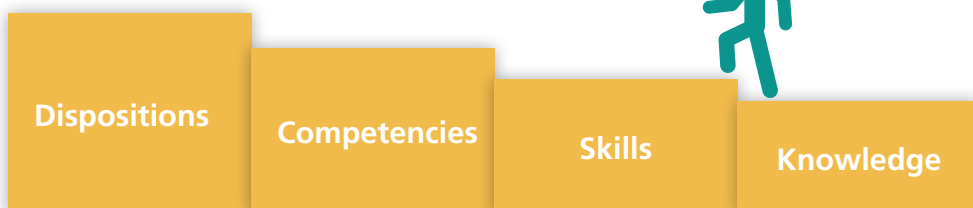
...and a learner's perception of their own progress

"I like to ask questions and then work hard to find out the answers. An example of this is in humanities where I have..."

This requires understanding a learner's progress on an ongoing, day-to-day basis, and their progress over time.

The school's assessment arrangements must support these principles.

This information on progress should appropriately inform self-evaluation and improvement.



# Prompts to support the design of high-quality opportunities for assessing learner progress



## Establishing the purpose of the assessment

Assessment should inform the progress of the learner.

Whilst it will be mostly on an ongoing formative basis, designing high quality summative opportunities are also necessary for identifying, capturing and reflecting on learner progress.

Recognising the purpose of assessment will support the coherent planning of curriculum and assessment design.

There should be a considered balance between formative approaches that inform next steps in learning and summative approaches that capture what has been learned.

## Designing a range of appropriate assessment opportunities

When designing a particular assessment opportunity, consider when the assessment is best scheduled to enhance learning as opposed to fulfilling a pre-designed process.

Consider how the assessment opportunities require learners to build on prior learning and connect this to their current learning, rather than as a standalone event.

How are you assessing understanding?

How is this different from when assessing the development of knowledge or skills?

How are you capturing an understanding of how learners are transferring their learning to new contexts, demonstrating breadth and depth?

## Designing high-quality assessment opportunities

Is the rich task\* design free from bias?

Is the language/instructions clear and accessible for all learners, considering cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

Are any instructions/command words clear and fit for purpose?

Does the assessment reflect the learning intentions?

Will learners see any rich task as worthwhile and having relevance to them?

Is it an authentic experience for the subject discipline?

Is the success criteria clear and reflective of the Area of Learning and Experience it assesses within?

## Reflecting on assessment arrangements

What has the assessment(s) demonstrated to you about learner progression?

How are the outcomes of assessment arrangements used by learners and practitioners to inform future learning, e.g. what is your marking telling you?

How will you support learner progression next lesson/term/year?

Are there a range of assessment methods used to support understanding?

What has the assessment(s) demonstrated to you about individual and group progression?

How will this inform your future curriculum design on a short, medium and long term basis?

\*a rich task is a task which allows a learner to apply their learning to an authentic situation