Maritime Futures

HOW *to* GUIDE

How to design a careers driven and local context curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

An effective curriculum helps students to be educated for life.

At Cowes Enterprise College we believe there is no single best approach to curriculum design but that there are common principles of well-designed curricula which provide a framework for creating, developing and evaluating a local careers driven curriculum.

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What's your big idea?

At Cowes Enterprise College, our big idea is a KS3 local context curriculum based on learning through the maritime industry. This reflects our ethos that values authentic work relevant to the real world. It's a broad offer and is delivered in discrete subjects, with interdisciplinary links, through an enquiry approach via projects and expeditions.

Develop your own big ideas by considering:

As a school based on the coast of the Isle of Wight, with a panoramic view of the Solent and a long history of links with the maritime industry, choosing to make links with this sector was easy. For us it gave our students connection to their local context along with access to a dynamic, outward looking, international industry based locally. This might be different for your local context, use local people as well as staff to help formulate ideas for a curriculum connected to your local context.

Check that your chosen direction can be securely connected to the existing National Curriculum and that the rigour of the subjects you already deliver is maintained. We were able to look at Science, Technology and the Maths existing curricula as a starting point combining the Humanities (particularly Geography) element too.

We were fortunate enough to draw heavily from the Maritime 2050 government report to help us articulate the need in the maritime industry for more school based education to contribute, in a small way, to the wider national employment gap. There may not be an equivalent document but it is vital to use labour market information to inform your curriculum development to ensure the pathways exist for students once they leave a school setting.

How do you sell the concept to key stakeholders?

Once you have arrived at your ‘big idea’ it is important you gather a team of experts around you. For the curriculum to be relevant it needs input from those who are at the cutting edge of development in that area. At Cowes Enterprise College we assembled a maritime advisory board to consult on the curriculum development ideas our teachers had. This meant we made sure we were meeting the industry need as well as enriching and deepening our own curriculum and student experience.

We consulted a range of stakeholders for input at draft stage including student and parent voice in order to persuade stakeholders, including teachers, parents, governors and the local community, that there are strong, transferable arguments for a local careers driven curriculum.

Image: Permanent Secretary of State for Education, Susan Acland-Hood visiting Cowes Enterprise College in 2021.

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HOW CAN CAREERS TEACHING ADD RELEVANCE?

How can careers teaching add relevance?

At Cowes Enterprise College, our curriculum is relevant and exciting. All of our KS3 students complete projects in industry standard facilities, present work to experts for review and are taught and mentored by employers throughout the year. Employers also make guest visits to speak to our students.

Consider where careers teaching can add relevance to your big idea:

We selected our industry partners carefully ensuring there was a robust curriculum link to what they could offer our students and we had to be convinced that work with external providers did add to the depth of knowledge students gained in the classroom. This meant that there were tangible links for students to see and experience between the robust knowledge they were learning in classrooms and a real industry and career.

Look carefully around you for your local facilities. Use existing networks of parents and governors to discover hidden connections. An example of a key local partner for us is CECAMM (Centre of Excellence for Composites, Advanced Manufacturing and Marine). At CECAMM, students are able to put into practice theory learnt in both technology and science lessons. There will be a range of dynamic industry based in your locale - it is a matter of finding them.

Local employer relations are very important to a careers driven curriculum. Combined with labour market information, employers will see the benefit of working cooperatively with schools for their own community outreach and future recruitment. Through these links we were able to highlight employment, apprenticeship and degree opportunities to our students which may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

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How can you embed careers teaching for all students?

At Cowes Enterprise College, we have mapped careers across and beyond the curriculum for Years 7 to 13

Realise

How embedded and wide ranging is your careers work? Use the Compass tool to audit your current provision: https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info

Reflect

What do you need to do next to deliver excellent careers teaching in your school across the Gatsby benchmarks?

Remember

A well-conceived curriculum driven by careers will meet the Gatsby benchmarks. It is essential to invest in careers. Ensure that there are the appropriate leadership positions and structures in place across the school to support your careers work.

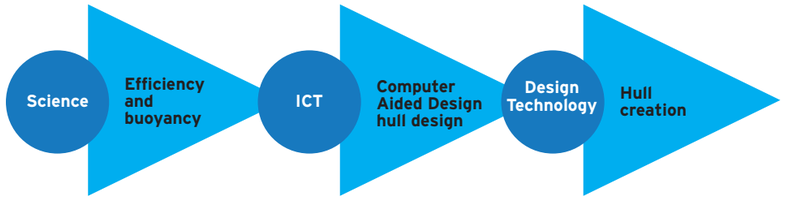
React

Does anything feel like a barrier and how can you move through this?

Could interdisciplinary planning support your big idea?

At Cowes Enterprise College, our broad curriculum develops learning from the National Curriculum and beyond through discrete subject delivery, but also has an interdisciplinary focus on learning through the theme of maritime across relevant subjects.

Example of a Year 7 Interdisciplinary link



Remember interdisciplinary teaching can help students to make links across subjects and the world of work, demonstrating why knowledge from one subject is important in another:

- How can you make sure planning across subjects keeps a focus on conceptual understanding and subject links?
- How can you ensure a consistent methodology and language is used across subjects?
- How can you enable students to see the strength of each individual discipline but in a connected way?
- What subjects are best suited to making interdisciplinary links around your big idea?

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COULD INTERDISCIPLINARY PLANNING SUPPORT YOUR BIG IDEA?

Pitfalls of an interdisciplinary curriculum

- Try not to feel like you need to involve every subject
- Avoid surface area links that do more damage than good
- Prevent driving an interdisciplinary model forward without having grounded knowledge from subject leads
- Preserve the integrity of individual subjects

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WHAT CAN SENIOR LEADERS DO TO SUPPORT CURRICULUM CHANGE?

What can senior leaders do to support curriculum change?

At Cowes Enterprise College, we provide weekly co-planning time for all teachers to enable them to work together to plan our Maritime Futures curriculum, including across subject areas. We have also created leadership responsibility roles to facilitate subject level change. We understand that this curriculum will cost more and budget accordingly, fundraising locally to support this.

How can this work for you?

- How will you empower staff to step forward?
- What CPD is needed to build teacher knowledge and confidence?
- Can teachers be given additional planning time?
- What can be taken away from middle leaders to enable greater capacity to implement change?
- What resources will help support the change?

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APPENDIX

WHAT ARE THE STAGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION?

What's the big idea?

- Discuss initial ideas with external employers and industry consultants
- Map out the big idea of the curriculum with middle leaders and teachers
- Identify key knowledge and skills along with overall learning journey steps

How do you sell the concept to key stakeholders?

- Re-engage employer and industry contacts to consult on the draft curriculum
- Get a variety of stakeholder voice

How can careers teaching add relevance?

- Check that any employer engagement or student experience is tightly linked to the curriculum
- Use local facilities to enhance your provision.
- Ensure you utilise your employer links with older students too, to secure their destinations.

How can you embed careers teaching for all students?

- Audit your current provision
- Do you meet the Gatsby benchmarks?
- Is there the investment and leadership structure to ensure the careers delivery will be effective?
- Identify and remove barriers

Could interdisciplinary planning support your big idea?

- Identify links carefully across subjects. Don't force the connection else it runs the risk of being surface level
- Ensure the subject curriculums have consistent language to aid students in linking their learning across disciplines

What can senior leaders do to support curriculum change?

- Make sure that staff feel empowered to take the lead in their curriculum with appropriate CPD
- Look to develop capacity to ensure middle leaders are freed up to drive forward the changes
- Enable a culture of creativity and experimentation

For Cowes Enterprise College Case Study and Maritime Futures curriculum map go to:

https://cowesec.org/curriculum/maritime-futures

For Cowes Enterprise College Careers Resource go to:

https://cowesec.org/for-students/destinations

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