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Faculty of Social Sciences

**Future Schooling, Education and  
Learning Approaches:  
2030 and Beyond**

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# Future schooling: the rhetoric and myths

- Teaching for jobs that don't yet exist
- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- Skills or knowledge?
- The teacher – a guide on the side or a sage on the stage?

## Some issues

- Either/or-isms
- Instrumentalism – a narrow economic view of education
  - But what about the person – the human being?
  - And what about the cohesion of society? Social Justice?
- What does it mean to become an educated person?

# Three functions of education

- According to Gert Biesta, education should focus on three overlapping (and sometimes in tension) functions:
  - **Qualification:** the skills, knowledge and dispositions that should be developed by an educative process
  - **Socialisation:** induction into the society that is
  - **Subjectification:** the process of becoming the unique human that one might possibly become
- Implications
  - Critical, engaged citizenship – not just fitting in, but being an informed agent of change in society
  - Employability
  - Societal as well as individual imperatives – particularly social justice and cohesion
  - But also nurturing individuals' talents

# Schooling today

- A complex and contradictory terrain:
  - A 'disciplined environment' that constrains agency and creativity
  - Exam factories
  - Performativity, driven by accountability demands (attainment data, inspections)
  - The curriculum
    - Over-specification of narrowly defined, pre-specified outcomes – tick box approaches – curriculum development by audit
    - A sabre-tooth curriculum – subjects trump knowledge and skills
    - Confused enactment of CfE - fragmented provision that loses sight of the big picture

**But**

- Nurturing and safe spaces
- Dedicated and caring teachers

# Mind the gap

‘The problem that arises with the current guidance available for teachers is that there is a gap between the macro level of defining pedagogy (as it applies to schooling) and its relation to classroom practice – a gap that results from having thrown out the baby of educational purpose along with the bathwater of curricular content. By over-emphasising the importance of learning as a process and confining our intention to the relation between learning and teaching, rather than focusing on the triangular interrelationship of curriculum, learning and teaching, and meaning. A problem exemplified by the pairing of a motley collection of learning experiences and outcomes with a performance management cycle as a core construct on which to base teaching CfE.’ (Reeves, 2017)

# Modern curriculum development?



*"It doesn't seem to fit very well."*

*"No matter. The principal said we had no choice."*

# Education in 2030 – what do we need?

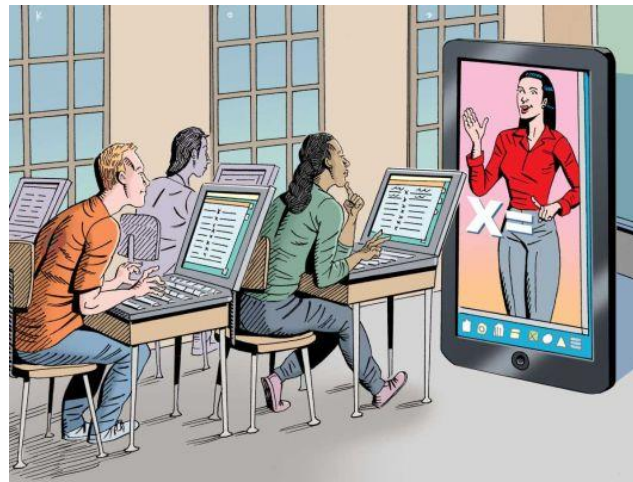
- A coherent and progressive curriculum
- Teacher agency
- Schools that educate





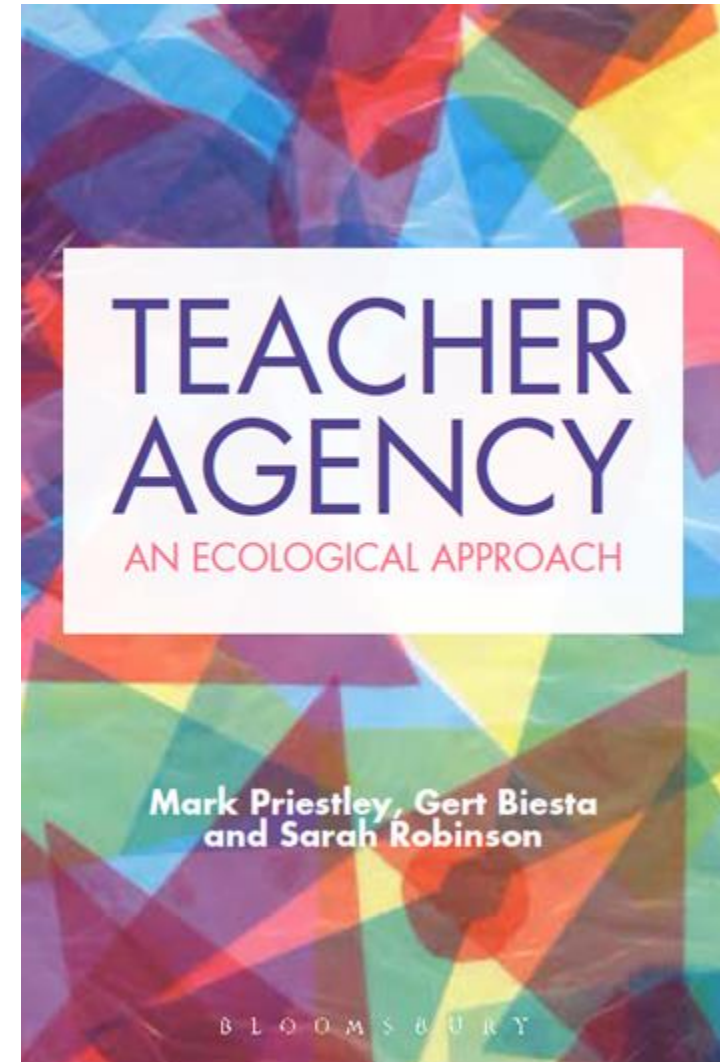
# A coherent and progressive curriculum

- What we need
  - Educational purposes as the starting point for curriculum development
    - What are schools for?
    - What should an educated person look like?
  - Fit-for-purpose practices?
    - What knowledge? What skills? What dispositions? Democratic intellect. Media/information literacy? Powerful knowledge.
    - What methods – powerful pedagogies? How we learn is as important as what we learning in shaping intellectual capacity. New media?
    - What provision? Challenging the dominance of the traditional timetable. Knowledge not subjects?



# Teacher agency

- Requires teachers who:
  - Think educationally
  - Can take the initiative – the activist professional
  - Have expansive aspirations for education
  - Are able to work collegially
- Teachers as active agents, not just agents of change
  - Teacher capacity is important
  - But we also need to address the cultural and structural domains of teaching
  - A context for teaching that does not disable excellent teachers



# Schools that educate

- **Not**

- A narrow focus on exams, content of traditional subjects
- An equally narrow focus on activity, employment skills
- Environments that discipline and constrain

- **Instead**

- Fitness-for-purpose
- Knowledge-rich curricula
- Schools as vibrant civic societies
- Schools where students practise and learn citizenship
- A focus on education, not 'learnification' (Biesta) – where what we learn and why we learn it is as important as the process of learning, and where learning does not get reduced to meaningless activity

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